

Studies in the Residential
Architecture
of Late Roman
Thessalonica and its Vicinity

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by Konstantinos Prapoglou

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Studies in the Residential Architecture of Late Roman Thessalonica and its Vicinity

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Volumes I-II

Declaration of Authorship

I, Konstantinos Prapoglou, hereby declare that this thesis and the work presented in it is entirely my own. Where I have consulted the work of others, this is always clearly stated.

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Konstantinos Prapoglou

Abstract

Working mainly from the published archaeological record, the thesis re-assesses the chronology, design and socio-political significance of palatial and elite housing in Thessalonica (Greece) during the 4th-6th centuries AD. The first two chapters introduce the historical and archaeological context, the latter with particular attention to the dating criteria that have been employed. The following three chapters examine the specific issues of dating and interpretation surrounding respectively the 'Palace of Galerius', the early 5th century country villa at Palaeokastro, and the range of Thessalonican town houses with apsidal halls (of which a catalogue forms an appendix). In the case of the 'Palace of Galerius' the thesis finds that few of the remains traditionally associated with the palace are likely to be Galerian in date, most are significantly later, and it also discusses the layout and functions of the various components. The study of the Villa at Palaeokastro is not concerned so much with dating, rather with the definition of its plan-type, the organisation, functions and decoration of space. It draws comparison with other elite country villas of the period on the one hand, and the local town houses of Thessalonica on the other. The analysis of the town houses identifies two chronological groups, one assigned to the 4th and another to the 5th century onwards, and considers the extent to which these represent local developments and/or different traditions or have a larger historical significance, in relation to the influx of military personnel attached either to the emperor's presence in the city or to Thessalonica's role as the capital of Illyricum after 441.

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Fig.8f: House (8), mosaic in North Corridor, detail (from Atzaka 1998:fig.128b).

Fig.9a: House (9), plan, excerpt from fig.4a (from Atzaka 1998:fig.154 and Siganiidou 1971:392).

Fig.10a: House (10), hypothetical plan based on dimensions given in excavation reports.

Fig.10b: House (10), mosaic in hall, details (from Atzaka 1998:fig.179).

Introduction

This thesis is centred on one city, Thessalonica with its environs, and it aims to explore the archaeology and other evidence for later Roman residential activity. It investigates Thessalonica's claimed palace complex, town houses and rural retreats. In particular, it attempts to answer questions involving the dating of the palace, its relationship with the immediate region and its surrounding buildings, its function throughout the centuries and its connection with a number of luxurious residences that appeared in the district of the upper town, some 600m north of the palace.

Dating issues are highlighted, along with problems on identification and access to reports. The problematic nature of the excavated sites is also discussed and how this has been a great obstacle in the process of studying the available physical evidence.

The thesis also combines available data to identify two main phases of built elite activity, the 4th century and late 4th/earlier 5th century. Construction techniques and building components such as the employment of brickstamps are investigated thoroughly in an attempt to search for traces of parallel building activity across different structures with some chronological value. Mosaics with their complex decorative patterns, colour schemes and material, play a pivotal role and become a core guide in identifying possible phases, though the available architectural plans help too. Coinage is rare, however it does provide vital clues when found.

There is some topographic correlation as well as a level of historical connection, which assist in interpreting the presence of certain residences in the region of Upper Thessalonica, which seems to emerge as the new suburb of the rich and a new administrative nucleus. Exploring the city's late residential topography enrich our quest with clues on how this might tie into a network of imperial and church spaces.

A discussion of ownership demonstrates not only how the art might be a reflection of owners' tastes but also how Christianity could have had an impact on decoration and organisation of space filtered through socio-political and economic change of events.

Thessalonica's significance as a major city of the later eastern empire is attested in historical and ecclesiastical sources, however our picture of how the city might look like is hazy and unclear. Taking into consideration all available studies to date and attempting to re-visit and re-examine a number of older and potentially false conclusions on the dating and the identity of certain buildings, this thesis will shed some light on the best available samples of residential structures and explore their inter-relationship with notable public buildings and the palatial complex. Readers will have the chance to gather a more in depth and fresh outlook of the city of Thessalonica during the early Christian years and appreciate its importance and uniqueness to a greater extent.

Chapter I

Historical Introduction: Politics, Society and Economy of Roman Thessalonica

1.1 Thessalonica before the Tetrarchy

The city's roots

Thessalonica is located on the northern edge of the Thermaic Gulf (fig.1). The city was founded by king Cassander in the early 4th century BC¹ near an older settlement called Therma², which had the biggest port in the area³. According to Strabo⁴ there were 26 small settlements (*polīchnia* or *polīsmata*)⁵ in the immediate neighbourhood, two of which have been found to date to the Bronze Age (3,000-1,100 BC)⁶ and with phases up to the Archaic period⁷. We do not have a clear picture of the extent of the territory of Thessalonica during these early periods. Fragmentary findings have only been found in the two areas mentioned above, that of Karabournaki (eastern part of modern Thessalonica) and Toumba (northeast part of the modern city)⁸. Cassander named the city after his wife Thessalonike, who was the daughter of Philip II and half-sister of Alexander the Great⁹. Roads linked the city with other major urban centres such as Amphipolis and Pella. Its port soon became an important factor for the development of trade and commerce¹⁰ as well as the base for a number of military campaigns.

¹ The exact date is not recorded. Diodorus (XIX.52.2) mentions that Cassander also founded the town of Cassandreia and re-founded Thebai (XIX.54.1) which suggests 316 BC (Veligianni-Terzi 1997:67).

² For the history of Therma see Christianopoulos 1991. For an account on the location of Therma and its possible identification with the geographical location of the Karabournaki peninsula see: Vickers 1970(a):239-251; Velenis 1985:8-15; Vitti 1996:49; Tiverios 1997:59.

³ Herodotus, *Polymnia*, VII.121, 123, 127, 128 and 183. Xerxes used this port during his military campaign against Greece.

⁴ Strabo, *Geography*, VII, frag. 21.

⁵ Girtzy 2001:199.

⁶ For prehistoric Thessalonica see Soueref: at http://www.lpth.gr/gr/texts/Soueref_gr.pdf and Chourmouziadis 1997:47-58.

⁷ Tiverios 1997:61 and Tiveriou at http://www.lpth.gr/gr/texts/Tiveriou_gr.pdf

⁸ Tiverios 1997:59-62.

⁹ For the etymology of the name Thessalonike (=Thessaly victory) see Stephanus Byzantius' *Ethnica* (311, 6). The name is also mentioned by Strabo, *Geography*, VII, frag. 13 and 24, Polybius, *Historia*, XXII.4.1 and XXIX.4 and *IG X* 2.1 no. 1031. For further discussions on the name see Tronson 1984:121-122; Bakalakis 1986:53; Veligianni-Terzi 1997:67.

¹⁰ The introduction of Egyptian gods and trade relations with Delos, Rhodes and Alexandria in the 3rd century BC have been discussed by Veligianni-Terzi 1997:68. An inscription found at *Serapeion* (*IG X* 2.1, no 3) and dated to 187 BC involves a law issued by Philip V regarding the management of the finances of the temple (Tiveriou at http://www.lpth.gr/gr/texts/Tiveriou_gr.pdf). According to Nigdelis,

In the Hellenistic period Thessalonica was an autonomous city with its own local administration but a dependency of the Macedonian kingdom and its central government¹¹. Although the archaeological evidence from this period is extremely limited, it has been suggested that in its Hellenistic phase, Thessalonica extended between today's Kassandrou and Ermou Streets with an approximate size of 200ha¹² (see also Ch.II, pp.42). Its territory was divided into two jurisdictions named *Kekropis* and *Voukefaleia*¹³. The citizens belonged to tribes (*phylai*)¹⁴. The main body responsible for internal issues was the *ecclesia tou dē mou* (assembly of the people), which discussed and voted on proposals by the city council (*boulē*)¹⁵. The city also had a head priest¹⁶. Epigraphic evidence for the presence of foreigners in the city in this period is very small.

The early Roman city

After the defeat of Perseus of Macedon (last king of the Antigonid dynasty¹⁷) at the battle of Pydna on 22nd June 168 BC, Thessalonica (along with nearby towns of Beroea and Pella) surrendered to Lucius Aemilius Paullus¹⁸ and became the capital of the second of the four districts (regions) into which Roman Macedonia was divided¹⁹. The second district included the area between the rivers of Strymon and Axios as well as the area of Paionia. Macedonia was declared 'free' from the Antigonids and each of the four jurisdictions was allowed to maintain its own administrative system²⁰. The early Roman province was a lot larger geographically than today's Macedonia, extending from Epirus as far as the Evros River in Thrace.

(<http://www.imma.edu.gr/imma/history/03.html>) Italian merchants from Delos trying to avoid the Mithridatic Wars moved to Macedonia and the port of Thessalonica. See also Rizakis 1983:518.

¹¹ Veliggiani-Terzi 1997:71.

¹² Vitti 1996:78. Velenis (1989:27) proposed a much smaller area of 45-90 ha.

¹³ Stephanus Byzantius, *Ethnica*, 181, 13 and 371, 19. Papazoglou 1988:209.

¹⁴ Papazoglou 1988:209.

¹⁵ *IG* XI 4, no.665; *IG* X 2, 1, no.1028; Veliggiani-Terzi 1997:71.

¹⁶ *IG* X 2, 1, no.2: '...<I>ερέως Νικολάου του Παυσανίου..'; Veliggiani-Terzi 1997:71.

¹⁷ The Antigonid dynasty was one of the four dynasties created by Alexander the Great's successors following his death. The rest included the Ptolemaic (ruling Egypt), the Attalid (ruling Pergamon) and the Seleucid (ruling the Seleucid Empire) dynasties.

¹⁸ Livy, XLIV.45; Hammond 1972 (vol.iii):539.

¹⁹ Livy, XLV.30.2. The other three regions were Amphipolis, Pella and Pelagonia.

²⁰ Voutiras 1997:78, where there is also further discussion on the new administrative system of Aemilius Paullus.

In 148 BC, Andriscus, Perseus' successor as king of Macedon²¹, led a revolt against the Romans but was defeated by Quintus Caecilius Metellus Macedonicus²² at the Second Battle of Pydna in the same year. Macedonia was proclaimed a Roman province (*Provincia Macedoniae*) in 146 BC and Thessalonica was pronounced a 'free city' along with Amphipolis. This meant that the city became the capital of the province, kept its ancient privileges and political organisation, had the right to strike coinage but was subject to taxation (*civitas stipendiaria* and *civitas tributaria*)²³. After the inclusion of Macedonia in the Roman Empire in 145 BC, Thessalonica became the headquarters of the Roman governor (*proconsul*) and a Roman garrison. Extensive power, both juridical and administrative, was given to the *politārchai* (elected magistrates)²⁴. It is possible that the development of the city was linked with members of the upper class of Thessalonica who were in favour of the Romans, since Quintus Caecilius Metellus had maintained strong relations with members of the local elite who supported him and led to his success²⁵. In 143/142 BC, Damon the Macedonian, son of Nicanor from Thessalonica with his own money erected a statue of bronze in Olympia honouring Q. Caecilius Metellus²⁶.

Macedonia was the first Roman province on Greek soil and formed a base for the conquest of the rest of Greece and for the Roman expansion into the Balkans²⁷. Thessalonica grew rapidly to be the largest city in Macedonia. Its development was enhanced by the launch of the via Egnatia (fig.1)²⁸. Built sometime between 146 and 120 BC by the proconsul Gnaeus Egnatius²⁹ (we do not know exactly when he

²¹ Diodorus Siculus, *Bibliotheca Historica*, XXXII.15.1-2. Andriscus (often called "pseudo-Philip", see Polybius, *Histories*, XXXVI.10) was the last king of Macedonia between 149 and 148 BC. Claiming that he is the son of Perseus, he attempted to retake Macedonia from the Romans. For further account on the events see Papazoglou 1982:192-3.

²² Diodorus, *Bibl.Hist.*, XXXII.15.7. Quintus Caecilius Metellus Macedonicus was the general who fought in the Fourth Macedonic War, securing in 146 BC the annexation of Macedonia as a Roman province, hence the *agnomen* Macedonicus. For further details on the events see Papazoglou 1982:193; Adam-Veleni 2003:134.

²³ Veliggiani-Terzi 1997:71.

²⁴ Adam-Veleni 2003:134-135; Schuler 1960:90.

²⁵ *IG X 2,1*, no.134 and Voutiras 1997:79.

²⁶ *IG X 2,1*, no.1031. The statue's inscription refers to the virtue of the honoured and his actions to Macedonians and the rest of Greeks.

²⁷ Spieser 1984:21-24.

²⁸ Strabo, *Geography*, VII.5.9 (C317), Polybius XXXIV.12.12a; Collart 1976:177-200; Gounaropoulou-Hatzopoulos 1985:12-14.

²⁹ Romiopoulou 1974:813-6 on the discovery of a milestone near Thessalonica (in the Hortiatia district) that mentions Gnaeus Egnatius who ordered the construction of Via Egnatia, though the exact date is

became a proconsul but we know that he replaced Q. Caecilius Metellus shortly after Gnaeus Egnatius was elected praetor just before 146 BC³⁰), this became the major imperial land route to the East, facilitating trade between Europe and Asia. Ports on the Adriatic Coast were now connected with the Bosphorus and travellers from Rome could head to Brundisium and then sail across to the Adriatic Sea to Apollonia or Dyrrhachium and from there head eastwards using via Egnatia towards Byzantium and Kypsela³¹. It covered a total distance of about 1,120 km (696 miles / 746 Roman miles), and was generally about six meters (19.6 ft) wide. The via Egnatia developed an already existing road system and was initially used by the army hence it did not go through any city. It passed just outside the western part of the fortification walls of Thessalonica³² and the city became a stopover for those travelling to and from the East. Thessalonica was now connecting by road two large parts of the Empire.

In 58-57 BC, the exiled Cicero resided in Thessalonica for seven months but without leaving us much information about his stay³³. He was more interested in the way Macedonia was governed by the regional officers, though he praises the city's geographical and strategic importance³⁴. In another context he mentions the *quaestorium*³⁵ of Thessalonica and he emphasises the efficiency of the local governors of Macedonia³⁶. In a speech on the subject of the consular provinces in 56 BC, however, he points out the poor condition of the Thessalonica city walls and the lack of defence in case of an attack³⁷. The city did not change much during the first two centuries of the Roman rule and the city limits probably remained the same³⁸.

uncertain. The inscription is written in both Greek and Latin: 'CC X//CN (AEUS) EGNATI(US) C.F(ILIUS) / PRO CO(N)S(UL) / ΓΝΑΙΟΣ ΕΓΝΑΤΙΟΣ ΓΑΙΟΥ / ΑΝΘΥΠΙΑΤΟΣ ΡΩΜΑΙΩΝ / ΣΞ'.

³⁰ Brennan 2000:225.

³¹ For more details on Via Egnatia see Sodini 2007:312.

³² Its north-east route followed today's route towards the city of Kavala. See Makaronas 1951:380-8.

³³ Loomis 1973:169-88.

³⁴ Adam-Veleni 2003:136.

³⁵ Cicero, *Pro Cnaeo Plancio, Oratio ad Iudices*, XLI 99-100: *Quaestorium* was the residence of the *quaestor*, local governor, in this case was Gnaeus Plancius, whom Cicero was defending on a charge of bringing a same sex lover into the country.

³⁶ *ibid.*

³⁷ Cicero, *De Provinciis Consularibus*, II.4.

³⁸ Vitti 1996:56.

During the civil war with Julius Caesar in 49 BC, Pompey briefly based his headquarters in Thessalonica³⁹. In 44 BC, following the assassination of Caesar by Brutus and Cassius the Thessalonians refused to offer help to the two assassins and after the victory of Mark Antony at nearby Philippi in 42, Thessalonica was rewarded. It was pronounced a *civitas libera* (free city), exempt from the taxes that the city used previously to pay to Rome. The monumental west gate of the city (later called “Golden Gate”) was constructed at this time⁴⁰ and a new dating system for official documents was introduced in 43-42 BC⁴¹. The system changed again after Actium and a new ‘universal’ calendar started from 2 September 31 BC⁴².

In the 1st century BC, many Italian families migrated to Thessalonica in order to profit from the growing economy and commerce. Pottery finds originating from Asia Minor, North Africa, Italy, Rhodes, Syria and Palestine show the high degree of trade that developed in this period⁴³. A lavish building dating from the 1st century BC, possibly the *praetorium* (governor’s residence) of Thessalonica, was excavated at Dioikitirion Square in the 1990s⁴⁴. During the first two centuries of Roman rule the built-up area of the city expanded towards the south, where houses were built on previously uninhabited land, organised in rectangular *insulae*⁴⁵.

Between the late 1st century BC and the mid-1st century AD, the city of Thessalonica prospered greatly. With Rome as the common and central governing body and the launch of a common currency nearly everywhere in the empire, trade and business underwent extensive development. Local traders from Thessalonica expanded their business to the East and West. From AD 15 (during the reign of Tiberius, AD 14-37) Macedonia began to be governed directly by the emperor, and it became an imperial province from AD 44 when Claudius brought it under the jurisdiction of the Senate

³⁹ Cassius Dio, *Historia Romana*, XLI.43.1-5. Also see Vitti 1996:56-7; Touratsoglou 1987:889-90; Theodorides 1954:26-7.

⁴⁰ The gate was knocked down in 1874 and its material was used for the port of Thessalonica (Duchesne-Bayet 1876:203-204). Plans made by the French architect Daumet survive (published by Heuzey in 1876).

⁴¹ Examples of this dating are inscriptions *IG X 2*, 1 nos. 83, 109 and 124 (discussed by Voutiras 1997:80).

⁴² Voutiras 1997:80.

⁴³ Adam-Veleni 2003:137-8.

⁴⁴ Tasia 1993:329-42; *id.* 1994:179-87; *id.* 1995:203-18; *id.* 1996:501-32; *id.* 1997:417-8; Adam-Veleni 2003:128, 137-8.

⁴⁵ Adam-Veleni 2000:146-7.

once again⁴⁶. For Strabo, writing in c. AD 20, Thessalonica was the richest and most populated city in Macedonia⁴⁷. He calls her “metropolis”. The expansion of the northern and the eastern borders of the Roman Empire in the first two centuries AD protected Macedonia and thus Thessalonica from barbarian attacks.

During this period of calm, the military importance of via Egnatia decreased. A milestone records repairs by Trajan in the early 2nd century⁴⁸ after long neglect.

The importance of the city within the Greek world is witnessed by its participation in the Panhellenic League, a federation of cities established in AD 131-2 by Hadrian⁴⁹. In 199-200 Titus Aelius Geminius Macedo from Thessalonica became *archon* of the Panhellenion in Athens, priest of the deified Hadrian and president of the eighteenth Panhellenic Games⁵⁰. Thessalonica honoured the emperor Antoninus Pius (138-161) by organising its own annual festival games⁵¹. In 165 a new cult and games⁵² (*munera gladiatoria*) were launched in honour of his prematurely dead son Aurelius Fulvus, which continued to take place until the 3rd century⁵³. Although according to Lucian (ca. 180) the city was “μεγίστη ἐν Μακεδονίᾳ” (the largest in Macedonia)⁵⁴, we still do not know much about the expansion of the city during this period⁵⁵.

In 170-171, a barbarian attack on Thessalonica and the new threats that were gradually emerging on the eastern borders of the empire resulted in a revival of the importance of via Egnatia. In 202, Septimius Severus, Caracalla and Julia Domna probably passed through Thessalonica with their troops during their military campaigns⁵⁶. In the mid-3rd century AD the raids of the Goths from the northern borders brought Macedonia and Thessalonica into the front line.

⁴⁶ Theocaridou 1980:30.

⁴⁷ Strabo, *Geography*, VII.7.4.

⁴⁸ Collart 1935:403; *id.* 1976:198:3; cf. *AE* 1936, 51.

⁴⁹ For the Panhellenion see Spawforth and Walker 1985 and Spawforth 1992:372-4.

⁵⁰ *IG* X 2,1, no.181.

⁵¹ *IG* X 2,1, no.137.

⁵² Allamani-Souri 2003:87.

⁵³ *IG* X 2,1, nos 153-70, analysed by Robert 1946(vol.ii):37-42.

⁵⁴ Lucian, *Asinus* VIII.46; Touratsoglou 1988:17; Allamani-Souri 2003:85.

⁵⁵ Vitti 1996:61.

⁵⁶ Touratsoglou 1988:18; Papazoglou 1961:171.

Thessalonica developed into a stronger and wealthier city under the Severan emperors. This was probably due to the fact that the increasing wars made Thessalonica a stopover between Italy and the Eastern frontiers, where the emperors were heading with their legions.

In the reign of Gordian III (238-244), Thessalonica was granted the privilege of ‘νεωκόρος’ (*neokōros* / temple warden) which meant that the city could now have the temple for provincial worship of the emperor, a privilege that the town of Beroea⁵⁷ previously used to have⁵⁸. During the 3rd century AD the number of spectacles and games increased. In 241 the city celebrated the Pythian games in honour of Apollo⁵⁹ and issued coins to commemorate the event⁶⁰.

The Goths besieged Thessalonica twice, in 254 and 268; the city’s salvation and success was attributed both times to the god Cabirus, who was the patron god of the city⁶¹. Valerian (253-260) rewarded the city with the titles of *metropolis* and *colonia* (Roman colony) for its heroic achievements against the Gothic attacks⁶². This title and this privilege meant further tax exemption (*immunitas a tribus soli et capitis*)⁶³.

The Roman population

During the 1st century BC and into the 2nd century AD, although the bulk of the population no doubt remained Greek, a large percentage bear Roman names, which may be due to the influx of Italians after the colonization of Macedonia⁶⁴. Most of the available epigraphic information naturally refers only to the upper classes.

It is important to understand the make-up of the city’s urban population across the Roman period in order to recognise their involvement in the formation of the local

⁵⁷ Beroea is located approximately 70km west of Thessalonica. It was part of the kingdom of Macedon and the second most important city after Pella. The via Egnatia did not pass directly near this city.

⁵⁸ Inscriptions referring to the privilege of *neokoros* include: *IG X 2*, nos 162-5, 177 and 231. For further discussion see Nigdelis at http://www.lpth.gr/gr/texts/Nigdelis_gr.pdf, p.6; Papazoglou 1982:207; Voutiras 1997:82.

⁵⁹ The games are mentioned in *IG X 2*, 1, nos. 37, 178, 214.

⁶⁰ Touratsoglou 1988:67.

⁶¹ According to a coin of Claudius II with the inscription ‘Deo CABIRO’. See Witt 1977:67-80 and Papazoglou 1982:205.

⁶² *IG X 2*, 1, nos 150, 162-5, 177-80, 199, 200, 207 and 231-3.

⁶³ Demitsa 1988:276-7.

⁶⁴ Samsaris 1989:34.

social circles. This will help in our discussion on the late Roman elite and on the architectural inspiration for their *domus*, which then evolved to a different architectural style with the emergence of the apsidal hall.

An inscription from the base of a statue attests to the existence of a large number of Italian businessmen (*negotiatores*) in the city of Thessalonica in the 1st century AD⁶⁵. Three more inscriptions⁶⁶ also dated to the 1st century confirm this. They formed a well-organised trade association or a community, the *Conventus Civium Romanorum*⁶⁷. Due to their work related commitments they used to travel on a frequent basis. The first appearance of the Italians in Thessalonica was likely to have happened during the 1st century BC but a major increase of immigrants took place during the 1st century AD⁶⁸. Limited funerary epigraphic evidence has shown that during this period organised trade associations of Italians also existed in other cities of the region such as Pella (west of Thessalonica), Edessa (NW of Thessalonica), Stagira-Akanthos (Chalcidiki), Idomeni (60km north of Thessalonica), Dion (south of Thessalonica), Philippi (NE of Thessalonica), Styberra (today's Prilep in FYROM), Heraclea Lyncestis (FYROM) and Stobi (FYROM)⁶⁹.

A study of surnames from the *Conventus Civium Romanorum* by Rizakis (1983), concentrates on those that appear in inscriptions down to the 3rd century. He lists 67 surnames mainly of Italian origin. They are classed into four categories: i) those with imperial *nomina* (*Iulii, Claudii, Flavii*); ii) those with *nomina* of Roman aristocratic families (*Caecilii, Iunii, Vetii, Marcii*); iii) those with rare Roman *nomina* (*Agilleii, Popilii, Vibii*); and iv) those with rare Roman *nomina* but with Greek *cognomina*. The origins of these families are difficult to trace. Rizakis suggests that many of the Thessalonica families probably originated from southern Italy, Campania and Rome but also from other areas of Greece such as Delos, where a large number of Italians had already been resided before its decline in the mid-1st century BC, and were now after new places to relocate⁷⁰. Other families also came from Asia Minor, Thrace or Southern Greece and some *nomina* (e.g. *Agilleii, Petronii and Tulii*) found in

⁶⁵ Velenis 1996(b):8-15.

⁶⁶ *IG X 2,1*, nos. 31, 32 and 33.

⁶⁷ Wilson 1966:17-18.

⁶⁸ Allamani-Souri 2003:92.

⁶⁹ Nigdelis, <http://www.imma.edu.gr/imma/history/03.html#toc006>.

⁷⁰ Rizakis 1983:517-8. Also see Nigdelis <http://www.imma.edu.gr/imma/history/03.html#toc008>.

Thessalonica were also traced in more than one location such as Beroea, Edessa, Dion and Heraclea Lyncestis, indicating a parallel activity of the same family⁷¹.

It is very possible that none of these Roman citizens belonged to the aristocracy of their home cities (*senatores* or *equites*)⁷²; they were “*homines tenues, obscuro loco nati*” (=men of small property, born in an obscure place) as Cicero puts it⁷³. Most of the surviving funerary and honorific inscriptions found in Thessalonica were written in Greek and they do not mention the social background of these Romans. These inscriptions do not provide any specific information regarding their activities although judging by similar social groups in neighbouring towns (e.g. Beroea), we can assume that they were involved with banking, trading and other similar professions. This helped them access the local social life and rise up the local social ladder by occupying high-class professions and mixing easily with local Greeks⁷⁴.

The existence of Jewish communities in Macedonia⁷⁵ during the 1st century AD is confirmed among others by Philo of Alexandria⁷⁶ and Flavius Josephus⁷⁷. The ancient Hebrew community in Thessalonica was a typical example of a Jewish community in a large Mediterranean city during the Hellenistic and the Roman periods. Its leader was the rabbi who was the ‘*Archisynagogōs*’ (Ruler of the Synagogue). The other rabbis were called ‘*didaskaloi*’ (teachers) or ‘*sophot*’ (sages)⁷⁸. This organised Hebrew community in Thessalonica is even described in the Acts of the Apostles⁷⁹.

⁷¹ Rizakis 1983:520-1.

⁷² Allamani-Souri 2003:93.

⁷³ Cicero, *C. Verrem Actionis Secundae*, II.5.167.

⁷⁴ Some of these individuals are known for their donations towards the construction or refurbishment of local sanctuaries of the Egyptian gods; Allamani-Souri (2003:93) mentions Avia Possila, who is the best known example from the 1st century BC. Her family is mentioned in inscriptions several times. One inscription states that one of her ancestors had been a *pōlitarch* in the 3rd century BC and another one was a priest and an *agonothētes* in a temple.

⁷⁵ Nehama 1935:40-51. The first Hebrew settlers, leaving the Jewish community in Alexandria resided in Greece, arriving either in 168 BC after the insurrection of the Maccabees, or in 140 or possibly 103 BC. There is no documentary evidence to support this theory and this remains a historical problem.

⁷⁶ *Legatio ad Caium*, XXXVI.281-2.

⁷⁷ *De bello Judaico*, I.2.2, II.16.4 and II.18.7.

⁷⁸ The members of the Jewish community, who were known as ‘*Romanōtes*’ had adopted the Greek language, although retaining many words of Hebrew or Aramaic origin, as well as the Hebrew script. Papazoglou 1982:207; Nar 1997:268.

⁷⁹ Acts of the Apostles: XVII, 1-2: ‘... όπου ἦν συναγωγή των Ιουδαίων. Κατά δέ το ειωθός τώ Παύλῳ, εἰσῆλθεν πρὸς αὐτοῖς ἀπὸ των γραφῶν...’ (‘... they came to Thessalonica, where there was a Jewish synagogue. And Paul entered, according to his habit, and for three Sabbaths he spoke with them regarding scriptures’).

We have few references to the *Conventus* after the late 2nd century, possibly because Roman citizenship was extended to all freeborn Greeks in 212, but also because Roman and Greek society had long been merging, intermarrying during the course of the centuries (but our knowledge on this is rather limited). The need to maintain any forms of foreign associations or groups did not exist⁸⁰.

It seems that local Greeks were keen to receive Roman citizenship, which helped them to progress and get involved with important Roman offices outside the borders of Thessalonica. Many Greeks took part in the Roman bureaucracy and aristocracy engines although they continued to speak their own language. This gave them the chance to be part of the wider circle of the Roman elite. The attribution of the Roman *trianomina* to all free citizens in 212 sped things up⁸¹. As Woolf has pointed out, locals became Romans while they still remained Greeks⁸². An analysis by Tiveriou-Stefanidou (henceforth Tiveriou) of 2nd and 3rd century sarcophagi from Thessalonica found that it is very difficult to distinguish the origins of the sarcophagi owners, certain stylistic details (such as the adoption of eastern-style decoration as opposed to the rare use of western elements) have close parallels in Asia Minor and especially from the city of Cyzicus. It is not coincidental that this city has provided the largest number of *nomina* parallels with Macedonia than any other⁸³. This might be an indication of an ongoing trade relationship between the two places, where people from Asia Minor relocated, worked, lived and died in Macedonia.

1.2 Tetrarchic Capital, AD 293-360 (end of House of Constantine)

After the political uncertainty and troubles, invasions, civil war and economic depression of the mid-3rd century, Diocletian was acclaimed emperor by the army in 284. In 285 he appointed as a fellow co-emperor Maximian, dividing imperial power between the two of them. He attempted to put an end to all major problems that had led to the general crisis of the 3rd century. One of his new measures was to divide the

⁸⁰ According to Hatzfeld (1919:289), all associations and organised groups in other towns, similar to the *Conventus* of Thessalonica, disappeared towards the end of the 2nd century apart from the *Conventus* of Gortyn in Crete.

⁸¹ Allamani-Souri 2003:96-7.

⁸² Woolf 1994:116-43.

⁸³ Tiveriou 2010:183-4.

vast provinces (*provinciae*) of the empire into smaller ones with a new administration system that brought all provinces within 12 administrative units (*dioceses*)⁸⁴. This probably happened in 293, when the *diocese* of Moesia was reshaped⁸⁵. Amongst others, this included the province of Macedonia⁸⁶. Around 327 Constantine divided the *Diocese* of Moesia into the *Diocese* of Macedonia and the *Diocese* of Dacia⁸⁷, which, as we will see later on, they formed the praetorian prefecture of Illyricum. It took its final shape after the death of Theodosius in 395⁸⁸, with Thessalonica as its capital in 441⁸⁹.

In 293 Diocletian appointed Galerius (Gaius Galerius Valerius Maximianus) and Constantius I as Caesars⁹⁰ (junior co-emperors) forming the Tetrarchy. Galerius was the son of a relatively poor family born on a small farm estate called Romulianum (Felix Romuliana) in the vicinity of Gamzigrad (situated in today's Srbija, Serbia)⁹¹. He joined the Roman army and was promoted extremely fast. When in 293 he was appointed a Caesar, he married Valeria, the daughter of Diocletian. Between 293 and 298 he was absent on campaign against the Persians. Following his victorious return in 299, Galerius decided to make Thessalonica his capital⁹². The mint evidence (see below) indicates that he stayed there between 299 and 303 and again between 308 and 311⁹³. In 305 when Diocletian abdicated, Galerius and Constantius I were elevated to the rank of Augusti appointing respectively as their Caesars Maximinus Daia (Gaius

⁸⁴ Theodoridis 1980:42-3.

⁸⁵ Moesia was initially organised by Augustus in 29 BC (its governor Caecina Severus is attested by Cassius Dio, *Historia Romana*, LX.29) and was then reshaped by Domitian in AD 87 into Moesia Superior and Moesia Inferior. Diocletian formed Dardania (in Moesia Superior) with Naissus as its capital, renamed Moesia Superior to Moesia Superior/Margensis (capital: Viminacium, in modern Serbia) and split Moesia Inferior into Moesia Secunda (modern Bulgaria) and Scythia Minor (today parts of it belong to Bulgaria and Romania). See Barnes 1982:209-25; Kuhoff 2001:369-70; Connolly 2010:237, n.28.

⁸⁶ Cosmopoulos 1992:50; Reece 2004:172. Macedonia was included within the *diocese* of Moesia along with the provinces of Dacia, Dacia Ripensis, Moesia Superior/Margensis, Dardania, Thessaly, Achaia, Praevalitana, Epirus Nova, Epirus Vetus and Crete.

⁸⁷ *C. Th.* XI.3.2; Jones 1954:21.

⁸⁸ Gkoutzioukostas 2012:13-45.

⁸⁹ When the empire was divided after the death of Constantine in 337, Illyricum underwent a series of changes and in 357, Sirmium becomes its capital. Libanius (*Orations*, XIV.15) mentions that the Praetorian Prefect of Illyricum between 357 and 360 was Anatolius of Berytus and he was based in Sirmium (see Bradbury 2000:172). In 378 the prefecture of Illyricum included the *diocese* of Macedonia, Dacia and Pannonia but further administrative changes happened again between 378 and 395. Literary evidence is not very clear on precise events. See Greenslade 1945:17; Snively 2010:547-9.

⁹⁰ Lactantius, *De Mortibus Persecutorum*, XIX.1 and Socrates, *Hist. Eccl.*, I.2.

⁹¹ Barnes, *New Empire*, 37.

⁹² Barnes 1982:61-2; Leadbetter 2013:233.

⁹³ Adam-Veleni 2003:163.

Valerius Galerius Maximinus Daia) and Severus (Flavius Valerius Severus). In 306 Galerius campaigned against the Sarmatians and in 307 invaded Italy following Severus' death⁹⁴. In 311, as he was planning to celebrate his twenty years of rule and retire to the palace that he had built at Romulianum, Galerius fell ill and died. He was buried at Romulianum.

Why Galerius chose Thessalonica as his capital is not recorded. One good reason could have been that it was already an established provincial capital, with long administrative experience behind it; another reason of equal importance will have been its geographical location, with its easy access to the Balkans and Asia Minor by sea and land⁹⁵. All other major Tetrarchic centres (Nicomedia, Mediolanum, Sirmium, Naissus, Serdica, Augusta Treverorum, Antioch and Aquileia) were situated in vital strategic locations such as borders and ports⁹⁶.

In AD 321, ten years after the death of Galerius, Constantine came to Thessalonica in order to prepare for war against Licinius⁹⁷. He ordered the strengthening of the city walls, launched a sea fleet and built (in 322-3) a new military harbour in the Southwest part of the city, at modern Ladadika⁹⁸. Following his victory over Licinius in 323, Constantine unified the Empire under his sole rule. Licinius was sent to Thessalonica in 324 and he probably stayed at the imperial palace until his execution in 326⁹⁹.

By 324 Constantine had decided to make Byzantium (Constantinople) the new capital of the Eastern empire¹⁰⁰, but Thessalonica remained the largest political, military and financial centre of the Balkans until the end of the century, and the second city of the Eastern Roman Empire thereafter¹⁰¹.

⁹⁴ Severus was appointed as Caesar of the Western Roman Empire in 305 and promoted to Augustus by Galerius in the summer of 306.

⁹⁵ Hattersley-Smith 1996:13.

⁹⁶ Millar 1992:40-4.

⁹⁷ Hattersley-Smith 1996:14.

⁹⁸ Zosimus, *Historia Nova*, II.22, Vakalopoulos 1983:41, Bakirtzis 1975:320 and Tafrali 1913:14-15. A previous military harbour in Thessalonica is attested by Livy's report (XLIV.10) that Perseus ordered the destruction of the *navalia* in Thessalonica in 148-147 BC.

⁹⁹ Anon.Val. 28-9; Zosimus, *Historia Nova*, II.28.1-2. Barnes 1982:82.

¹⁰⁰ Theodoridis 1980:86 and Hattersley-Smith 1996:15. Constantine also considered Chalcedon, Serdica, Illion and Thessalonica before choosing Byzantium as his capital.

¹⁰¹ Demitsa 1988:289.

Late Roman emperors regularly visited Thessalonica, probably using Galerius's palace as their base. Texts and commemorative coinage issued from the Thessalonica mint indicate many emperors who might have stayed in the city¹⁰². Julian the Apostate during his short reign (Caesar between 355 and 360, Augustus between 360 and 363) is said to have found supporters for his philhellenic attitude (Neo-Platonism and Hellenic paganism) in Thessalonica, and to have enlarged the small *odeïon* of the Roman agora into a larger venue with a capacity for 2,500 spectators¹⁰³.

The leading financial establishment of the Late Roman period was the *praefectura praetorio* instituted after the death of Constantine in 337, when the empire was split between his sons (Constantine II, Constantius II and Constans I). The *Notitia Dignitatum* attests four prefectures, those of the Italy-Africa, Gaul, East and Illyricum¹⁰⁴. For 20 years, from 357 to 379 (see above), the administrative centre of the prefecture of Illyricum¹⁰⁵ was Sirmium (fig.2). A long political battle between

¹⁰² Helena (in 318-9) *RIC* VII,505,50 and Robertson 1982:255; Constantine (in 323): *C.Th* IV.8.6; (in 324) *C.Th.* XIII.5.4; (in 327) *C.Th.* XI.3.2; for the period of 324 to 330 see *RIC* VII,519,158 and Robertson 1982:262; (in 336) *RIC* VII,527; Delmatius (in 335-7) *RIC* VII.529, 227 and Robertson 1982:272; Constantine II (between 337 and 340) *RIC* VIII, Thessalonica 55 and Robertson 1982:286; Constans (in 340, 347-350) *RIC* VIII, Thessalonica, 54, 101 and 109 and Robertson 1982:296-7; Constantius II (in 347-8 and 350/1-355) *RIC* VIII, Thessalonica, 70, 150, 172, 185, 189 and Robertson 1982:313-4; Vetranio (in 350) *RIC* VIII, Thessalonica, 126, 132 and Robertson 1982:329-30; Julian II (in 355-360) *RIC* VIII, Thessalonica, 204 and (in 361-3) *RIC* VIII, Thessalonica, 227 and Robertson 1982:350, 357; Valens (between 364 and 375) *RIC* IX, 176, 16(b), i and 18 (b), i, and 178, 26 (b), xvii, xxxiii and Robertson 1982:382-3; Gratian (between 367 and 383) *RIC* IX, 178, 26 (c), xxi and 180, 34 (a) and Robertson 1982:396; Valentinian (probably in 383) *RIC* IX, 180, 34 (i), 1 and Robertson 1982:402; Valentinian II (in 375-383) *RIC* IX, 179, 29 and 180, 34 (e) and Robertson 1982:405; Theodosius I (in 379-388) *RIC* IX, 180, 34 (g) and 187, 63 (b), 3 and Robertson 1982:416; Flaccilla (wife of Theodosius I, in 383-4) *RIC* IX, 184, 46, 2 and Robertson 1982:425; Arcadius (in 383-388) *RIC* IX, 183, 45 (a) and 185, 55 (e), 58 (d) and Robertson 1982:469-70; Theodosius II (in 423-425) Pearce 1931-3:66 and Robertson 1982:480; Leo I (in 457-474) Tolstoi 1913-4:122, 14 and Robertson 1982:488; see also Barnes 1982:75, 80.

¹⁰³ Thessalonians were thankful for Julian's support towards the Hellenic ideology (which according to the Christians had now become an equivalent to paganism) and honoured him with an altar. See Adam-Veleni 2003:170.

¹⁰⁴ *Notitia Dignitatum* Or. 2 and 3; Occ. 2 and 3; Morrison 2004:190-1. Each of the prefectures was responsible for the calculation and collection of the annual general levy (*indictio*) from its *dioceses* and provinces. This included the military ration and fodder allowances (*annonae* and *capitus*), which were collected in kind at a fixed rate of four or five *solidi* for the *annona* and four *solidi* for the *capitus*. The above payments must have been dealt with via the *trāpeza* of Thessalonica for Illyricum and the *trāpeza* of Constantinople for the prefecture of the East. These funds were the basic pay of the military but not the only one. Like the higher rank personnel, they also received the accessional donative (five *solidi* and one pound of silver) and the *quinquennial* donative (five *solidi*). Hendy 1985:645-7. The accessional donative survived until 578 or even later, 641.

¹⁰⁵ The Prefecture of Illyricum consisted of the *Dioceses* of Macedonia, Dacia and Pannonia. It was established by Constantius II in 357, it underwent various changes by Julian, Gratian and finally Theodosius who gave it its final form. Surhone-Timpledon-Marseken (2010). See also p.21, ft.95.

Sirmium and Thessalonica over the privilege of being the administrative centre of Illyricum had been taking place, since the creation of the praetorian prefecture of Illyricum. This may be seen through the attempts to obtain the control of the holy relics of St. Demetrius who was worshipped in both cities¹⁰⁶.

Under the Tetrarchy, military personnel gained more power and financial status. In the first three centuries AD, there were three different payment levels. Before the pay rises by Domitian (AD 84), a footsoldier received 250 *sestertii* and legionary cavalrymen 300 *sestertii*. The payment for auxiliary decurions and centurions was probably five times the soldier's salary. A legionary centurion received a salary fifteen times the legionary footsoldier's basic *stipendium*. Top rank centurions were paid thirty times the basic rate and the *primuspilus*'s salary was twice this amount¹⁰⁷. Diocletian's economic policy included reform of the coinage, which followed the Price Edict in 301. An inscription found at Aphrodisias provides vital information on the reform itself¹⁰⁸. The gold and silver coinage reform had started earlier; around 286 for gold struck at 60 to the pound and in 292 for silver struck at 96 to the pound. A reform involving the bronze coinage took place during 301¹⁰⁹, possibly doubling the value of the *argenteus* and the *nummus* coins¹¹⁰.

Mints in regular use were accompanied by treasuries (*thesauri*), which stocked metal to be used by the mints. This might have been a practice introduced by Diocletian¹¹¹. The *Notitia Dignitatum Occidentalis*¹¹² lists the *praepositi thesaurorum* at the disposition of the Western *comes sacrarum largitionum*. The *praepositi thesaurorum* at the disposition of the Eastern *comes* are not recorded¹¹³ but *thesauri* are known to have been located at Sirmium, Naissus and Thessalonica¹¹⁴. Sutherland suggested that

¹⁰⁶ Theodoridis 1980:76-81. In 305 martyr Demetrius, a Christian general from a senatorial family in Thessalonica, was killed during the Christian persecutions and he became the patron and protector of the city ever since. See Stavridou-Zafraha 1997:88 and Theodoridis 1980:62-3. For further discussion on the two cities see Mitchell 2007:359-60.

¹⁰⁷ Speidel 1992:105.

¹⁰⁸ Erim Reynolds Crawford 1971. The Price Edict officially confirmed the *denarius* (and not the *sestertius*) as the main unit of account, which it had already started from the reign of Gallienus.

¹⁰⁹ Ermatinger 1996:39. The *nummus* coin was now struck at 32 to the pound.

¹¹⁰ Ermatinger 1996:44.

¹¹¹ Hendy 1972:121.

¹¹² *N. Dig. Occ.* XI.21-37

¹¹³ *Or.* XIII.10.

¹¹⁴ Jones 1964:105, n.44.

the mint of Thessalonica started to operate in 298-299¹¹⁵ probably when Galerius chose Thessalonica as his capital¹¹⁶ while he was still in the Danube region¹¹⁷. It is also believed that the mint of Serdica (*Moesiae*), which operated between 303-304 and 308 was actually the mint of Thessalonica in exile¹¹⁸. This mint did not produce the SM (*Sacra Moneta*) mint mark, a sign that Galerius did not reside there¹¹⁹. Thessalonica struck SM coinage only after 308 and when Galerius was an Augustus¹²⁰.

In AD 325 mint closures in the West gave more importance to the mints and the fiscal administrative units of the East¹²¹. By 327 there were 12 surviving mints and fiscal units, amongst them the mint of Thessalonica (province of Macedonia). Constantinople did not follow any of the existing patterns but it became the main Eastern imperial administrative centre. The *Notitia Dignitatum Occidentalis*¹²² records that the same mint structure survived during the 5th century¹²³. The Eastern part of the system survived with less problems and interruptions up until the 7th century¹²⁴.

Under Diocletian, soldiers received their annual salary (*stipendium*) along with an annual bonus (*donatium*) and some payment in kind (*annona militaris*). This payment was made in *denarii* and it continued the same way until the years of Constantine¹²⁵. Jones calculated that a legionary *stipendium* in the Tetrarchic period was 600 *denarii*

¹¹⁵ Sutherland 1967:501.

¹¹⁶ Brennan 1984:510.

¹¹⁷ Leadbetter 2013:100, 145.

¹¹⁸ Hendy 1972b:77.

¹¹⁹ Sutherland 1967:501; Leadbetter 2013:101.

¹²⁰ Leadbetter 2013:163.

¹²¹ Such as the mints of London (325), Ticinum (326) and Sirmium (325/6). Hendy 1972:117-8 and Hendy 1985:383, 385.

¹²² *Occ.* XI.39-44.

¹²³ It also provides us (*Or.* XII.18) with a list of the *procuratores monetarum* at the disposition of the Western *comes sacrarum largitionum* without recording the procurators at the disposition of the Eastern *comes*.

¹²⁴ Hendy 1972:119.

¹²⁵ Diocletian had to provide payment to a large amount of workers, consisting of 500,000 soldiers, 600,000 imperial workers and 100,000 bureaucrats. Each of them received a different salary according to their rank and status. See Ermatinger 1996:9. Many scholars, such as A.H.M. Jones, Duncan Jones, W. Treadgold, M. Hendy, J. Ermatinger and R. Reece (1970) have studied the military salaries and based on various ancient sources have suggested a number of figures. Based on the examples of the Beatty papyri that were high-level correspondence between Thebaid and Panopolis in AD 298-300, Duncan Jones attempted to bring light to military salaries in this part of the empire, which still reflect the fiscal situation in the military during the tetrarchic period and onwards.

per annum¹²⁶. Eight donatives¹²⁷ were also given throughout the year for both the birthday and accession days of all Tetrarchs totalling 10,600 *denarii* per year¹²⁸. Treadgold estimated the total salary of an ordinary soldier (before 301) was 12,000 *denarii* a year and the payment for a commander of a cavalry regiment was 64,000 *denarii*¹²⁹. An even higher figure for a total salary in the year 300 has also been suggested, which reaches 18,250 *denarii*¹³⁰. The payments may sound high but inflation led to a steep devaluation of the coinage, so Diocletian eventually raised the salaries in 301 and tried to control the prices¹³¹.

Comparing two salaries of two men of the same rank (*praepositus*) from examples provided by the *Papyri Beatty Panopolis* 2 (II.197-203) and *Papyri Oxyrhynchus* 1047, we notice a substantial revaluation of the initial figure and the *stipendium*, in particular, doubled after 301¹³². There is not sufficient evidence to be certain as to how this was put into practice¹³³. Ermatinger states that a salary for a bureaucrat would have been in the region of 50,000 *denarii*¹³⁴.

Diocletian paid all salaries (both *stipendia* and *donatia*) in bronze coins. Constantine's¹³⁵ successors paid their accession *donatia* in gold and silver¹³⁶. Diocletian spent the larger proportion of the state budget on military salaries and other

¹²⁶ Jones 1964:623 (vol.ii).

¹²⁷ 1,250 each - total of 10,000 *denarii*.

¹²⁸ Jones 1964:3.i88. However, Duncan-Jones (1990:115-6) argued that the number of donatives could have been only 4 (for the Augustus and Caesar of the East). He suggested that based on four donatives per annum the salary for *alares* and legionaries would have been approximately 12,430 *denarii* (1,800 for *stipendium*, 10,000 for *donatium*, 600 for *annona* and 30 for wheat).

¹²⁹ Treadgold 1995:154.

¹³⁰ Ermatinger 1996:9. He also estimated that the total spend for 500,000 soldiers would have been in the region of 9,325,000,000 *denarii*. The above amount translates into 9,325,000 *aurei* or 932,500,000 bronze *nummi*.

¹³¹ Treadgold 1995:154-5.

¹³² For further details see Diocletian's Edict on Maximum Prices (*Edictum De Pretiis Rerum Venalium*).

¹³³ Hendy 1985:460-1. We cannot be sure whether the salaries were paid with double quantities of base metal coin or with the same quantities of coin pieces but with doubled face-value that led to a doubling of the *stipendium*.

¹³⁴ Ermatinger 1996:10. He does not provide any further explanation for this figure.

¹³⁵ According to the anonymous author of *De Rebus Bellicis* I-II, Constantine confiscated gold from pagan temples and used it for the army's quinquennial donative payments (in gold coins) starting from 326.

¹³⁶ Treadgold 1995:167.

relevant expenditure, reaching an astonishing 81% of the total budget¹³⁷. This is mainly because Diocletian's army was very large and payment was also arranged in kind. Diocletian's measures proved to have been successful for the first decade; however the entire system was eventually abandoned. His measures created fear and confusion among the masses as the military were the only members of society who benefited and prices were rising rapidly¹³⁸.

Fabrica

Under Diocletian the production of essential army equipment, such as swords, shields, arrows, bows, artillery, body armour, which individual fighting units had previously produced for themselves as required, were centralised in large mass-producing workshops, known as *fabricae*, located in major cities¹³⁹. Information about the *fabricae* comes mainly from the *Notitia Dignitatum*. A *fabrica* at Thessalonica is listed in the *Notitia Dignitatum Oriens* amongst 15 *fabricae* in the Eastern Empire, but unfortunately it is one of those for which no product is specified¹⁴⁰, or how large it was. We are not sure when the *fabrica* of Thessalonica ceased to operate. James suggests that all factories in the Eastern Balkans stopped working straight after the devastating attacks by the Huns in the early 5th century and the main *fabrica* activity was possibly concentrated in Constantinople thereafter¹⁴¹.

It is impossible to guess where the Thessalonica *fabrica* was situated or how large it was. Unfortunately, we have no written sources indicating its geographical location and, so far, the archaeological evidence has not provided any clues either. It may be

¹³⁷ Treadgold 1995:195-7. Treadgold used the coin of *nomismata* instead of *denarii*, which was being used at a later stage. *Nomismata* were struck 72 to the pound of gold. An approximate analysis is as follows:

Soldier payment: (311,000 x 12 <i>nom.</i> x 4/3)	4.976 million <i>nom.</i>
Arms and uniforms (311,000 x 5 <i>nom.</i>)	1.555 million <i>nom.</i>
Oarsmen payment (32,000 x 12 <i>nom.</i> x 5/4)	0.48 million <i>nom.</i>
Fodder and horses (26,000 x 5 <i>nom.</i>)	0.13 million <i>nom.</i>
Campaigns and other military expenses	0.5 million <i>nom.</i>
Pay of bureaucracy	1.0 million <i>nom.</i>
Other non-military expenses and surplus	0.8 million <i>nom.</i>
Total:	9.441million <i>nomismata</i>

The '4/3' and '5/4' fractions indicate multipliers for officers.

¹³⁸ Lactantius, *De Mortibus Persecutorum*, VII.6-7.

¹³⁹ Bishop/Coulston 1993:186

¹⁴⁰ *Oriens* XI.18-39. There were 20 in the West *Occidens* IX.16-39

¹⁴¹ James 1988:285-6.

possible that it could have been contained within the palace complex for security purposes but this is just a hypothesis.

The production of military clothing was also undertaken in quantity in factories, called *gynaecea* (for woollens) and *linyphia* (for linens), which Diocletian manned with convicts¹⁴².

The *fabricae* workers were different from any other type of worker; in fact, they belonged to a higher rank than those working in the *gynaecea* or in the mints. The *fabricenses* were employed by the state or were placed there as part of their military service. These workers were soldiers (*milites*) and their service was hereditary¹⁴³. This status made them equal to the government clerks and soldiers and they enjoyed the same privileges and legal exemptions and they were also receiving the *annona*¹⁴⁴. It is recorded that army factories were under the command of the *magister officiorum*¹⁴⁵, whereas the *comes sacrarum largitionum* or *comes rerum privatarum* controlled the *gynaecea*¹⁴⁶.

From the available lists of *fabricae* and their distribution in the empire two types can be distinguished: those producing items that were used by the majority of the fighting units and those producing items for more specialist units¹⁴⁷. Factories with large amounts of armour and weaponry were best located in capital cities where they could be protected within city walls yet easily accessible by central military management. Isolated workshops could easily fall to the wrong hands, especially during periods of revolts and instability¹⁴⁸. The factories also had to be located close to natural resources such as forests for wood and iron deposits¹⁴⁹. Other vital factors might have been the easy access to food and other services for the staff as well as a substantial land or sea transportation and communication system for uncomplicated and

¹⁴² Lactantius, *De Mortibus Persecutorum*, XXI; Sozomen, *Historia Ecclesiastica*, 18; *Not. Dign. Occ.* XI.53; *C.Th.* VI.2.5 and Jones 1974:356, 401.

¹⁴³ *Novellae Theodosiani* VI.1. The name *Novellae* signifies the constitutions subsequent to the code of Theodosius.

¹⁴⁴ James 1988:276 and *CIL* V.8742.

¹⁴⁵ Bowersock 1999:443.

¹⁴⁶ Wild 1976:51-7.

¹⁴⁷ There were also certain areas of the empire, where factories did not exist, such as Britain. This might have happened due to security reasons that Diocletian had to consider.

¹⁴⁸ James 1988:263.

¹⁴⁹ Samsaris 1987:152-62.

straightforward product transfers. Another essential factor might have been the availability of the area to accommodate the numerous members of the factory staff. Thessalonica could have fulfilled all these requirements.

In the tetrarchic period each *fabrica* was organised like a military unit¹⁵⁰ and was managed by the *praepositus fabricae*¹⁵¹ and the *primicerius*, who had other lower graded personnel around them. Judging the large size of the army, an estimate of the total number of *fabricenses* could reach 17,500 men across the empire¹⁵². They were also organised as a trade guild, the so-called *consortium fabricensium*¹⁵³. The ultimate leader of the *fabrica* was the *praefectus castrorum* who had his own *officium* responsible for all administrative issues. Amongst the other staff below the *praefectus* was the *optio fabricae*, the most senior after the post of *praefectus* and probably responsible for a large number of tasks¹⁵⁴.

An inscription on a sarcophagus from Thessalonica recently published by Souris¹⁵⁵ reads as follows:

‘[...c.6] ανος στρατ[ι]ώτης αναφερόμενος εν τη ιερά φάβρικι
(‘...anus soldier registered at the sacred fabrica)
καί Αύρ. Σύρα η σύμβιο[ι]ς αυτο[ύ] ηγοράσαμεν την σορόν ταύτην
(and Avr. Syra his companion in life we bought this sarcophagus)
εκ των κοινών καμά[των] ει δέ τις έτερος[] τολμήση ανοίξαι
(with our common means if somebody else dares to open it)
χωρίς τω[ν.....c. 28τα]μίου’
(without our.....c. 28.....treasury’)

It belongs to a white marble sarcophagus (we do not know where it was found) of a couple and it indicates that the husband served the state as a soldier working at the sacred *fabrica*. Souris argues that an imperial factory of military equipment was established in the city soon after the arrival of Galerius. He supports this suggestion

¹⁵⁰ Jones 1964:835,

¹⁵¹ *C.Th.* VII.20.10.

¹⁵² James 1988:276.

¹⁵³ *C.Th.* X.22.6.

¹⁵⁴ Bishop 1985:11.

¹⁵⁵ Souris 1995:66-78.

by using Lactantius' statement¹⁵⁶ that Diocletian opened a similar factory in his capital, Nicomedia. Only the last letters of the husband's name have survived (-anus or -ianus), which was possibly a Latin *cognomen*¹⁵⁷. The wife's name (Syra) could be Thracian¹⁵⁸, but it is also attested in a 2nd century tomb inscription from Thessalonica¹⁵⁹. The sarcophagus has been dated to the late 3rd / early 4th century on the basis of the shape and style of the inscription letters, which have parallels with similar sarcophagi inscriptions from Thessalonica¹⁶⁰. The inscription also mentions that the sarcophagus was subsidised by common savings ('..εκ των κοινών καμάτων'), something which was fairly common in Late Roman Thessalonica¹⁶¹. The inscription is followed by symbols indicating that the sarcophagus must not be re-used unless a large amount of money is provided as a penalty. This amount is declared in *denarii*, which were given up during the early 4th century due to inflation (see above) and analogous penalties are stated in precious metal weight such as gold or silver¹⁶². The suggested penalty amount for our inscription is 5,000,000 *denarii*, which seems plausible taking into consideration the extreme rise of inflation¹⁶³.

According to a law introduced in 375¹⁶⁴, the system changed and recruits were given 6 *solidi* to cover the costs for uniforms and other items, though production continued to be centralised and payments in kind were probably arranged for most items. Everything was substituted by cash during the 4th century onwards¹⁶⁵.

Society

The arrival of Galerius in Thessalonica following his triumph of 299 against the Persians and the elevation of the city to new political, military and economic importance probably brought considerable social changes too. Information about the

¹⁵⁶ *De Mort.Pers.* VII.

¹⁵⁷ On *cognomina* see Kajanto 1965:107-10.

¹⁵⁸ Souris 1995:70 and n.23.

¹⁵⁹ *IG* X.2, 1, no. 490.

¹⁶⁰ *IG* X 2,1, nos. 547, 556 and 842. Souris 1995:69.

¹⁶¹ Sarcophagi inscriptions *IG* X 2,1, nos. 564, 572, 842, 877 ('έκ των κοινών καμάτων'), 445, 478, 531, 562, 580, 583, 613, 628, 824, 903 and *SEG* 30 (1980), no. 642 ('έκ των κοινών κόπων') have similar statements. For further discussion on this see Christophilopoulos 1979:73; Treggiari 1991:178-9.

¹⁶² Robert 1946(vol.iii):106-107; Souris 1995:73; Rouechè 1989:192.

¹⁶³ Other parallels are *IG* X.2, 1, no. 556 and *IGR* I, no.819. Christophilopoulos 1979:39.

¹⁶⁴ *C.Th.* VII.13.7.2.

¹⁶⁵ Breeze 1993:274.

upper classes in Thessalonica during the Tetrarchic period and after is scant, but a range of literary sources refer to magistrates and military personnel. John Lydus, an administrator and writer from Lydia in the early 6th century produced an autobiography (*On the Magistracies of the Roman State*) in which he provides an account of administrative affairs from the time of Romulus up until his lifetime. John emphasised the special privileges (such as the uniforms, expensive clothing, ceremonial attendances and office insignia) that were received by officers associated with the imperial household in his day (the time of Justinian)¹⁶⁶.

Our evidence about the social status of the personnel who came to Thessalonica to work for the state factory (*fabricenses*) and their integration with the local community is extremely limited. However, we can assume that the financial status of a common factory worker with no rank must have been better than that of the lower classes¹⁶⁷ otherwise they would not have been able to afford a sarcophagus like the one described above. Additional evidence derives from the Theodosian Code, which attests that some of the *fabricenses* in Antioch in the early 5th century were fully integrated in the local community and owned houses¹⁶⁸.

The power of bureaucracy in the Late Roman period was closely related to imperial control. The emperor needed to ensure that bureaucrats were being looked after in order for him to have their continued support and strengthen his power. At the same time, the emperor tried to achieve a balance between a well-structured bureaucratic system and the imperial power¹⁶⁹. Laws issued by the emperors, which refer to specific ranks and office holders would apply to personnel of the same level in all major cities. For instance, a law issued in 357 by Constantius II mentions that high ranking personnel should respect the dignity and the prestige of the palace and their

¹⁶⁶ Maas (1992).

¹⁶⁷ Further discussion on the status of *fabricenses* see Foss 1979:279-83 and James 1988:280.

¹⁶⁸ *C.Th.* VII.8.8, (AD 400-5): 'The same Augustuses to Aemilianus, Master of Offices. Pursuant to Your recommendation, We order that the entire burden of compulsory quartering shall be removed from homes of armorers. I. We have sent sacred imperial letters about this matter also to the Illustrious Count and Master of Soldiers throughout the Orient, instructing him that he grant to the armorers of the City of Antioch the privilege of exemption from compulsory quartering, during the absence of the sacred imperial retinue, of course, so that the same exemption of homes shall be given to the workshops of armorers at Antioch and all other municipalities. Given on the eleventh day before the *kalends* of February at Constantinople in the year of the consulship of Stilicho and Aurelianus'. See also Coulston 1988:280.

¹⁶⁹ Kelly 2004:191-231.

office and not hire themselves as gladiators¹⁷⁰. Retiring bureaucrats were legally given by Constantine tax exemption and significant legal rights involving their homes¹⁷¹. According to this law, all those retiring bureaucrats related to the palace and who had served in the military campaigns should keep their military *peculia* (possessions obtained during their office) as their own special property.

1.3 The reign of Theodosius (379-395)

After the death of Julian in 363, the Roman Empire was again threatened by the Goths and their allies, and both Macedonia and Thrace experienced a large number of attacks¹⁷². Theodosius I (379-395) fought against the Goths just before 380. Following a victory in the Danube region, he went to Thessalonica, reorganised his troops and used the city as his base against barbaric tribes¹⁷³. Theodosius was taken ill there in June 379 and stayed for over a year, until November 380, probably at Galerius' palace¹⁷⁴. In 380 Theodosius was baptised a Christian in Thessalonica by bishop Acholius and declared 'Catholic Christianity' the only legitimate imperial religion¹⁷⁵. From 380 until 396 Thessalonica probably continued to be the administrative centre of Macedonia¹⁷⁶ and the base of the *vicarius*, as attested by a law issued by Theodosius I in 380¹⁷⁷.

During the invasions of Italy by Magnus Maximus in 387, the Western Roman emperor Valentinian II (375-392) and his mother were forced to flee to Thessalonica and seek help from Theodosius¹⁷⁸. Meanwhile Theodosius, in an attempt to reduce the risk of barbaric attacks, gradually allowed the absorption of Gothic military personnel (*foederati*) in Macedonia's army¹⁷⁹. Although we have no evidence on the exact

¹⁷⁰ *C.Th.* XV.12.2.

¹⁷¹ *C.Th.* VI.36.1.

¹⁷² Wise-Bauer 2010:58-9; Potter 2014:534.

¹⁷³ Stavridou-Zafraka 1995:89.

¹⁷⁴ Zosimus, *Historia Nova*, IV.39; Piganiol 1947:217, 232-3, 280, 283; Croke 1981:478.

¹⁷⁵ Socrates Scholasticus, *Historia Ecclesiastica*, V.6.3-6; Sozomen, *Historia Ecclesiastica*, VII.4.3; Holm 1989:16

¹⁷⁶ Our knowledge is limited about the province of Macedonia during this period due to vague information provided by the *Notitia Dignitatum*. For further discussion see Konstantakopoulou 1982: 61-73 and Snively 2010:548.

¹⁷⁷ *C.Th.*, IX.35.4.

¹⁷⁸ Zosimus, *Historia Nova*, IV.43.1-2; 46.1-2.

¹⁷⁹ Stavridou-Zafraka 1997:89.

numbers involved, we know that the garrison commander (*magister militum*) of the Gothic garrison in Thessalonica was a man named Butheric¹⁸⁰, one of Theodosius' favoured Germanic commanders¹⁸¹.

Thessalonians were not happy about the presence of the Gothic garrison in the city. In 390 during a spectacle at the hippodrome, crowds rioted in protest against Butheric's action to imprison a very popular charioteer charged for a sex crime and suspended from participating. Statues and monuments were destroyed, and local governors assassinated, amongst them Butheric¹⁸². Theodosius retaliated at a subsequent spectacle, where 7,000 Thessalonians were brutally killed by Gothic soldiers¹⁸³. Ambrose, the bishop of Milan disapproved this act and ordered Theodosius to apologise in public for the massacre¹⁸⁴. Theodosius remained in Thessalonica for another a few years but as he felt unwanted, decided to leave and resided in Constantinople¹⁸⁵. It has been suggested by some that this was the last time that the hippodrome of Thessalonica was used. After the massacre it was abandoned and some of its blocks were later used for the foundations of the western part of the fortification walls (see Ch.II)¹⁸⁶. Theodosius died in 395 leaving his empire divided between his two sons. Honorius followed Valentinian II as emperor in the West, based in Rome, and Arcadius was given the Eastern part, with Constantinople as its capital¹⁸⁷.

In 396, in response to the number of invasions by Heruli, Goths, Visigoths, Vandals and Tervingi which had taken place during Theodosius' reign, Arcadius agreed with *magister militum* Stilicho (previously appointed by Theodosius) to divide Illyricum into two parts, with Thessalonica as administrative centre of Eastern Illyricum while Sirmium continued as the capital of Western Illyricum. Alaric, King of the Visigoths between 395 and 410, was made *magister militum* of Illyricum, probably sometime

¹⁸⁰ *PLRE* Butherichus, p.166.

¹⁸¹ Frakes 2010:47-8.

¹⁸² Williams/Friell 1998:47; Potter 2010:552.

¹⁸³ Theodoret, *Ecclesiastical History*, V.17

¹⁸⁴ Augustine, *De Civitate Dei*, V.26; Paulinus Mediolanensis, *Vita Sancti Ambrogii Mediolanensis Episcopi*, 24-5; Rufinus, *Historia Ecclesiastica*, XI.18; Sozomen, *Hist. Eccl.*, VII.25; Theodoret, *Historia Ecclesiastica*, V.17; Frakes 2010:48-50; Liebeschuetz 2010:262-9, with translated letter of Ambrose to Theodosius.

¹⁸⁵ Adam-Veleni 2003:171.

¹⁸⁶ Lemerle 1979-1981; Chrysos 1990:93-105. For further details see Stavridou-Zafraka 1997:89 (n. 6 for bibliography).

¹⁸⁷ Vakalopoulos 1963:26.

between 395 and 397. It is not clear whether he became *magister militum* of both Eastern and Western Illyricum, not knowing exactly when Pannonia was returned (if at all) to the West. All available literary sources are also unable to provide a clear description of the facts¹⁸⁸.

Society

Thessalonica's prosperity continued during the early Christian period. The port built by Constantine the Great was also of great benefit to the local trade and commerce¹⁸⁹. Towards the end of the 4th century (according to an inscription found near the church of Panaghia Chalkeon¹⁹⁰), there was a Samaritan synagogue in Thessalonica, founded by sophist Siricius, from Neapolis in Judaea. According to topographical studies of Byzantine Thessalonica, there was a Jewish quarter known as 'palaiā Hebraīs' in the Omphalos district between at least the 5th and the 10th centuries¹⁹¹. A second Jewish neighbourhood was possibly situated in the same period at the southern end of the city, in the Hippodrome Quarter. It is not unlikely that there was a Jewish quarter in this neighbourhood, adjacent to the old Roman port (the 'Church Docks') which was later occupied by Muslim settlements¹⁹² and was probably linked with the palace area as we will discuss in Chapter III.

Legislation also reflects the official position of the state towards other social groups. Two laws issued at Constantinople in 395 state that freedmen, Jews and heretics should be barred from high ranking positions¹⁹³. We clearly see here an intention of social separation and the tendency to keep these positions exclusively available to specific members of society. These were probably some of the owners of the upper city houses as we will examine in Chapter V.

¹⁸⁸ For a discussion on this topic see Burns 1994:166-8.

¹⁸⁹ Adam-Veleni 2003:169-70.

¹⁹⁰ *IG X 2*, 1 n. 789; Simbe 1977:31; Theodoridis 1980:38 and for older bibliography on the matter see n.1.

¹⁹¹ Near today's Syngrou, Antigonidon and Philippou Streets. Theodoridis 1959:14.

¹⁹² Theodoridis 1959:14; Nar 1997:269-70.

¹⁹³ *C.Th.* IV.10.3 (on freedmen); XVI.5.25 and 29 (on heretics); XVI.8.16 and XVI.8.24 (on Jews).

1.4 Capital of the Prefecture of Illyricum AD 441-7th century¹⁹⁴

In 441 Sirmium was destroyed by the Huns and its administrative functions also moved to Thessalonica¹⁹⁵. Thessalonica as the new administrative centre was given a new appearance¹⁹⁶: new fortifications (see Ch.II), the palace was probably renovated (see Ch.III), a second governor's building could have also been built in the upper town (see Ch.V), and churches such as Acheiropoietos (see Ch.II) were constructed or renovated. The Christian basilica of St. Demetrius in Thessalonica, which was probably founded in 412-3 by Leontius, prefect of Illyricum (based in Sirmium)¹⁹⁷, was reshaped in the next two centuries (see Ch.II).

The early 400s is the period when the Palaeokastro villa was built (see Ch.IV). Situated in the outskirts of Thessalonica, the complex is a good example of rural architecture from this period, combining both lavish surroundings and space associated with agricultural activities. A close examination in Chapter IV will explore aspects of ownership from the early 5th century to the following centuries taking into consideration the emergence of Christianity and how this was incorporated into the character and identity of the establishment.

In 424, the *diocese* of Thessalonica (*Cod. Theod.* II, I, 33) was granted tax exemptions by central government¹⁹⁸. This was part of a wider policy aimed at enriching and bolstering the assets of the Church of Constantinople – making the local bishoprics wealthier, which will also have increased local prosperity. Although we do not have a clear account of how exactly the church and its bishoprics were organised during this period, Christian buildings start appearing within the city limits reflecting the strengthening of ecclesiastical power and the increasing importance of the clergy. Buildings with immediate ecclesiastical character in the rural surroundings of

¹⁹⁴ Due to unclear and insufficient evidence from sources such as the *Miracles of St. Demetrius* there has been an ongoing debate on the date that Thessalonica's role as the capital of Illyricum ended. In his extensive article, Gkoutzioukostas (2012/13) refers to all previous suggestions, which emphasise on the problematic change of the title of the 'prefect of Illyricum' to 'prefect of Thessalonica' as it appears in the seals of the 8th and 9th centuries. Based on testimonies in the *Miracles of St. Demetrius* he believes that the prefecture of Illyricum ends in the end of the 7th century (2012/13:78). For other previous discussions on the topic see Theodoridis 1980:103 and Demitsa 1988:278.

¹⁹⁵ Justiniani, *Novellae*, XI.1. For further details see Vickers 1974:337-50.

¹⁹⁶ Croke 1978:251-8; Lemerle 1981:198-203; Rautman 1990:296; Mitchell 2007:360.

¹⁹⁷ Vickers 1974:337; Skedros 1999:60-70.

¹⁹⁸ Traina 2009:45 and 152, n.12

Thessalonica will also emerge, such as the *episkopeion* at Louloudies Kitrous (see Chaps II, IV and V).

The 5th and the 6th centuries saw many attacks by the Persians from the East and barbaric tribes that went via the Danube to raid the Balkans into Southern Greece. The *History of the Wars* by Procopius and the work of Agathias of Myrina¹⁹⁹ are two good sources providing an account of events taking place during the reign of Justinian, particularly related with military campaigns against the Ostrogoths and Franks. It has been suggested that Justinian's campaigns in the West resulted in weakening the East, leading to the invasion of Italy by the Lombards three years after his death. The outbreak of the plague epidemic in Constantinople in 542 not only weakened the strength of the eastern empire but also brought the Persian danger even closer. The devastating earthquake of 557 also had a terrible impact on Justinian's defence forces and at the same time the rise of Islam became increasingly threatening²⁰⁰.

In 582 the Avars successfully besieged Sirmium and founded a country under the name of Pannonia. In the following years they became a serious threat (with the Slavs²⁰¹) to Thessalonica as a number of sieges took place. We do not have much literary evidence about this period. Our only source is the *Miracles of St. Demetrius*, a collection of speeches made by Church representatives describing the help of St. Demetrius during the sieges²⁰².

In the 7th and 8th centuries more sieges took place but at the same time they gradually started decreasing as the Avaro-Slav tribes started integrating with local populations²⁰³.

¹⁹⁹ Unfortunately the works of two other historians of the same period, Menander Protector and John the Lydian, are extremely fragmentary.

²⁰⁰ Evans 2005:62-6.

²⁰¹ Hendy 1985:79.

²⁰² Frendo 1997:205-24.

²⁰³ Stavridou-Zafraka 1997:91.

Chapter II

Archaeology in Thessalonica: Problems of Chronology and Methodology

2.1 Introduction

The archaeological evidence which forms the focus of this thesis presents many problems, first and foremost in its generally fragmentary nature, secondly in the paucity and deficiencies of the older excavation records, and thirdly in the fact that few of the sites are accessible for first-hand study. As outlined below, most were chance discoveries made in the 1960s in the course of rapid building development after the Second World War, excavated in haste and only summarily recorded at the time. The remains themselves were not usually destroyed, and some are still visible in the basements of the houses built over them, but the conditions of their preservation prevent or at least severely restrict the opportunities for re-investigation and no work of the kind has been undertaken for this study. Modern excavations which have been carried out and recorded more systematically, and placed on general public access, are those in parts of the 'Galerius Palace' ('**Palace**' in fig.5) and the villa at Palaeokastro, which are the subject of more detailed description and discussion in Chapters III and IV.

In the analysis of the primary evidence, therefore, beyond basic concerns about the reliability of the documentary record, the major issue is that of chronology. Accurate dating and phasing of the structural history of the buildings and their decoration are extremely difficult to achieve. In most cases, major monuments in the city (like the city walls and some parts of the palatial complex) have been dated principally on the basis of the historical record - by matching the physical evidence for different phases in their construction to repairs and re-buildings recorded in the written sources (see Ch.I). Materials and techniques of construction which distinguish those phases, most notably the types of bricks employed, have then been applied as criteria for dating structures elsewhere in the city. There are inherent weaknesses in this procedure, and its danger of circularity in argument, but the analysis of building materials and techniques, even if not of absolute chronological value can be an indication of the substance and status of a given building. Other potentially valuable criteria for both

dating and status are the traces of mosaic floors within the building, which have been the subject of several detailed stylistic analyses, most recently in 1998. This offers at least a relative chronology and sometimes the possibility of some closer dates based on parallels with more reliably dated sites elsewhere. The range and types of floors and wall decoration made of marble veneer can also provide some interesting clues to relative status and patterns of use, of possible chronological value.

2.2 The History of Excavations and the Documentary Record

Little attention was paid to the topography of ancient Thessalonica prior to the First World War, Hadji-Ioannou (1880) and Tafrali (1913) being amongst the few who briefly recorded the main monuments of the city. Following the Great Fire of 1917 (fig.4), however, the Greek Prime Minister E. Venizelos determined that the reconstruction was an opportunity for a new city plan. This was conceived by a French architect and archaeologist E. Hébrard, who collaborated with Greek architects Zachos and Kitsikis to implement it. The ‘Hébrard plan’ included the clearance of most ‘oriental’ elements from the city centre but kept some of its Byzantine features²⁰⁴. Hébrard also undertook the first major excavations in the city during the First World War, focusing on its eastern part and the monuments of Galerius²⁰⁵, which revealed that the eponymous Arch was part of a larger roofed *tetrapylon* that marked a crossroads on a route connecting the Rotunda with the main body of the complex towards the sea²⁰⁶. In 1935 further excavations were conducted by a group of German archaeologists, including H. von Schoenebeck and H. Johannes²⁰⁷ although their work was left incomplete due to the outbreak of the Second World War. In 1939 Schoenebeck produced the first comprehensive plan showing the street alignment of the Roman city²⁰⁸. That same year Ejnar Dyggve from Denmark started to excavate in several areas of the Galerius complex, which he took up again in the 1940s and 50s²⁰⁹ but he failed to provide a full report on his findings²¹⁰. In the 1950s and 1960s the

²⁰⁴ Yerolymou 1988.

²⁰⁵ Hébrard 1920:5-40.

²⁰⁶ Hébrard 1920:5-15. The first detailed study of the Arch and its reliefs had been published by the Danish scholar K.F.Kinch in 1890.

²⁰⁷ von Schoenebeck 1937:361-3; Makaronas 1940:466-9; Torp 2003:244-8.

²⁰⁸ Schoenebeck 1939:481.

²⁰⁹ Dyggve 1941b:63-71; *id.* 1958:353-65.

²¹⁰ Dyggve 1941a:228-9; *id.* 1941b:63-5; *id.* 1945 provides a general account. Cf. Torp 2003:241-4.

Greek Archaeological Service also undertook a series of excavations in the southwest part of the Galerius complex, focused around the Northern Peristyle and the Octagon ('Palace' in fig.5). Unfortunately, the records of these excavations are incomplete and still problematic²¹¹. Further study of the Octagon and its area was allowed in the process of knocking down older buildings for the construction of new ones in the vicinity of the complex in the 1960s²¹².

Major re-developments in the centre of the city during the 1950s-1980s were accompanied by a series of archaeological excavations. The entire area around Navarinou Square (where the core of the palace of Galerius is thought to have been situated), Egnatia Street up to the agora, and all blocks up to the upper city were demolished to be replaced with new residential buildings. The periodical reports in *Deltion* (Αρχαιολογικό Δελτίο) accompanied by some photographic material and plans attest to the huge volume of excavations conducted in this period and the findings of Roman baths as well as an assortment of residential, commercial and industrial buildings. Many of the *Deltion* reports state that excavation work had to be undertaken within a very limited amount of time (sometimes within 1 day) in order for the plot to be cleared and be prepared for a new building. Archaeologists and students excavated sites rapidly, recorded findings in a rush, often taking inaccurate measurements and photographs. Only the most important findings were transferred to the museum's storage rooms, but many marble fragments, mosaic panels, pottery, statues and other architectural remains in store have no documentation. The sites themselves were abandoned to the builders' mercy. Some few (amongst them some residences) were preserved *in situ* in building basements. Part of the Galerius complex was saved within the borders of Navarinou Square whilst others have vanished underneath the nearby building blocks. A part of the agora and the adjacent *odeion* have also been preserved on view. More systematic work on the Galerius complex was conducted during the preparation of the city as the Cultural Capital of Europe in 1997 and in the following two years²¹³.

²¹¹ For an account on problems see Atzaka 1998:72-7 and Duval 2003:279.

²¹² Karamberi *et al.* 2002:307.

²¹³ Athanasiou *et al.* 1994; Karamberi *et al.* 1996; Athanasiou *et al.* 1997(a); Athanasiou *et al.* 1997(b); Karamberi *et al.* 1997; Athanasiou *et al.* 1998(a); Athanasiou *et al.* 1998b; Karamberi *et al.* 1998; Athanasiou *et al.* 1999.

During the nine years from 2005-2014 construction commenced for a metro line which would run through the city centre. The Greek Ministry of Culture and the Department of Antiquities agreed an initial excavation agenda which was scheduled to cover a vast area of some 20,000m² and focused on six major zones all situated within the Roman city walls. The levels explored so far have consisted mainly of Byzantine burials, workshops, storage rooms, water pipes, and wells. At Aghia Sofia (between the agora and the Galerius complex), an area containing numerous Hellenistic and Roman residences, bath complexes as well as major Byzantine monuments, one new find has been part of a mosaic floor of excellent quality with geometric patterns (no images have yet been published). It has been suggested that the floor belongs to a 4th century residence²¹⁴. At the Syntrivani and Panepistimio (University) area, close to the Galerius complex in the southeast part of the city, a large church dating between the late 4th and 7th centuries has been uncovered²¹⁵, and also parts of a Late Roman residence with mosaic floors and an adjacent bath complex²¹⁶. However, most of these excavations have been put on hold as a result of the general financial freeze and as yet there are no detailed published reports.

Given the frequent lack of publication by the excavators the detailed study and interpretation of the remains found in excavations has proceeded slowly. Between 1967 and 1973 Michael Vickers made various studies of the Late Roman/early Byzantine city, publishing a new discussion of the city plan²¹⁷, together with a number of other articles on individual monuments²¹⁸. Since 1987 the annual conference *Archaeological Work in Macedonia and Thrace* (Αρχαιολογικό Έργο στη Μακεδονία και Θράκη) and its proceedings have provided regular reports on new fieldwork and analysis. A catalogue of all known excavations and findings in Thessalonica to date was published by Massimo Vitti in 1996, the fruits of his doctoral thesis at the Aristotle University in 1990. This included the Galerius palace, residences, city walls, the agora and bath complexes. He offered a digest of much of the information available from the *Deltion* reports and suggested datings for various sites. In 2006

²¹⁴ Marki 2009.

²¹⁵ Charisopoulou 2010.

²¹⁶ Information kindly provided by the director of the Archaeological Museum of Thessalonica, Dr. Adam-Veleni.

²¹⁷ Vickers 1970(a):240-51.

²¹⁸ Vickers 1969(a):249-55; *id.* 1969(b):313-8; *id.* 1972(a):25-32; *id.* 1972(b):220-33; *id.* 1973(a):111-20; *id.* 1973(b):285-94.

Paolo Bonini published his thesis, in which he used Vitti's data regarding the residences of Thessalonica for a more general study of Roman housing in Greece (we shall examine his findings in detail in Ch.V).

2.3 Datable Buildings

The best known and most studied remains of Roman Thessalonica nevertheless are those which have been standing since antiquity: the city walls and three structures believed to belong to the period of Galerius: the Arch, the Rotunda and the Octagon. Others which have featured prominently in the discussion of the Late Roman city are the churches of Acheiropoietos, St. Demetrius, the Hippodrome and the *odeïon*.

CITY WALLS (figs 5, 8, 9-15)

Parts of Thessalonica's city walls have stood since antiquity although much of the southeast and southwest sectors were demolished during the Ottoman period and later, in 1873, 1902 and 1911²¹⁹. Excavations after the Great Fire of 1917 and, especially, during the growth of the 1960-1980s, found destroyed sections at various points, and excavations have identified lengths of the southern wall (north of today's Mitropoleos St.) that was probably facing the sea²²⁰. The first plan was produced by Tafrali (1913), who suggested that the Roman circuit followed the initial Hellenistic plan. Vickers (1971b and 1972b), Gounaris (1982) and Spieser (1984), all agreed with Tafrali's opinion. Velenis in 1989 and 1998 made further observations regarding the route of certain parts of the northern and the southern wall. Other studies are those of Vitti (1996) and Theocharidou (2004), who documented brickstamps from the entire circuit and distinguished the inner and the outer walls, which we will discuss below. Rizos (2011) has attempted an investigation into the chronology of the late-antique phase of the walls and provided comparisons with other examples of 5th and 6th century military construction.

The general consensus is that the standing structure displays six phases:

²¹⁹ Duchense-Bayet 1876:203-204; Papageorgiou 1911:168.

²²⁰ Bakirtzis 1975:296-7; Spieser 1981:477; Vitti 1996:77-8, 122-3; Tiverios 1997:229-30.

Phase 1. Hellenistic. The city was walled at the time of its foundation²²¹ but the exact route is not known except on the northwest and is especially uncertain as to their southern limit²²². Nonetheless, they are thought to have enclosed an area of approximately 200 ha²²³, containing both the agora and a number of temples dedicated to Serapis, Isis, and other deities²²⁴. The southeast limit could have coincided with modern Arrianou, Appelou and Vironos Streets, just to the west of the area where the Galerius palace is generally located²²⁵.

Phases 2 and 3. Roman. A number of ancient written sources refer to the re-building of Thessalonica's walls in AD 253-4 at the time of the Gothic siege (see pp.9)²²⁶. By the 2nd century AD the built-up area of the city had spread far outside the Hellenistic walls, and the 3rd century rebuilding only followed (and incorporated) the remains of the older Hellenistic circuit on the west side. To the north and to the southeast it was expanded to enclose approximately 260-300 ha²²⁷. Excavations have shown that the construction took place in two stages (fig.6a). The first, presumed to date c.AD 250s, involved a wall with rectangular towers²²⁸; the second was a decade or so later during the reign of Claudius II when the Gothic danger was again approaching (the second Gothic attack took place in 268)²²⁹. This phase includes the construction of one more wall layer on the inside adding extra support to the previous one (figs 9-10)²³⁰. The thickness of the wall increased to c.1.40-1.60m²³¹. Both phases (2) and (3) were constructed in a very similar fashion, with a rubble concrete core, faced with the *opus mixtum* technique (brick and stone) or rubble stone and re-used material. Bricks employed for the structure have not been systematically measured (for some recorded

²²¹ Velenis 1989:14; Adam-Veleni 1989:228; Tiverios 1997:229.

²²² Velenis 1996(a):492; Vitti 1996:123.

²²³ Vitti 1996:78.

²²⁴ Vitti 1996:88-92. The worship of Egyptian deities is attested not only by the remains of the Serapeion but also by some sixty-nine inscriptions that were found in Thessalonica, Koester 2010:133-9.

²²⁵ A number of excavations revealed Hellenistic and Roman tombs and cemeteries on Melenikou and Filikis Etaireias St. and a Hellenistic metallurgical furnace on 91 Filippou St., all presumably located outside the walls and thus indicating their eastern limit: Vitti 1996:77, 105, n.142, 136; Velenis 1996(a):491-2.

²²⁶ Procopius, *De Bello Gothico*, III.40; Zosimus, *Historia Nova*, I.29.43; Zonaras, *Epitome Historiarum*, XII.23.26.

²²⁷ Vitti 1996:77, 105-6, 125. Velenis 1996(a):491-2.

²²⁸ Vitti 1996:125; Tiverios 1997:232; Tiveriou, http://www.lpth.gr/gr/texts/Tiveriou_gr.pdf (p.6).

²²⁹ Spieser 1974:518-9; Vitti 1996:125.

²³⁰ Spieser 1974:518-9 and Velenis 1989:52-62.

²³¹ Petsas 1967(b):396-9; *id.* 1968(b):332-3; Vavritsas 1971:377-82; Kouroutidou-Nikolaidou-Mauropoulou-Tsioumi 1981:310-1; Vitti 1996:160, 162, 164-6, 170.

sizes see below, 'BRICK SIZES'). Stamped bricks have been found at various points all around this circuit (fig.8)²³², a heterogeneous mix which includes many with single letters (I, C, X, Z), others with three (ENT) or four letters and symbols (ENT accompanied by crosses or single letters) in a single or double line. Their value for dating is limited, since many could be *spolia*, while their variety suggests that construction was not very systematic. A broad indication of a date for phase (3) comes from inscribed tombstones and other architectural fragments that were incorporated in the Eastern walls on Armenopoulou and Klaudianou Streets. These suggest a hasty operation and the inscriptions provide a *terminus post quem* of the early 3rd century (Severan period)²³³.

Phases 4 and 5. Late Roman. The main wall was thickened by adding an inner facing and rectangular bastions were added on the outside (fig.6b). Velenis ascribed this phase (4) between the reign of Galerius and Julian the Apostate (363)²³⁴. Another phase (5) involved the enhancement of the outer wall with triangular bastions (fig.6c) incorporating some already existing square towers, constructed of good quality *opus mixtum* increasing the total thickness at various points to 5.50-5.80m.²³⁵ (figs 9, 11). The external face of the eastern walls (fig.11) consists of schist rubble stone and mortar combined with 3, 4 or 5 layers of brick²³⁶. The layer of rubble between the courses of brick ranges between 1.50 and 1.80m in height²³⁷. The northwest walls (figs 9, 10, 12-14) are built entirely with bricks and rubble while one or two rows of arches filled with rubble supported their foundations as well as the walls on higher levels. A brick reported by Kleinbauer²³⁸ (to the northeast of the tower of Hormisdas, see below) measured 40 x 30cm. and 5cm. thick, and the mortar joint 4.5cm. Decorative brick crosses appear between the arches, symbolic of a Christian city and also probably apotropaic in character, protecting against evil, external threats and attacks. Similar crosses are observed elsewhere such as the Golden Gate of

²³² Theocharidou 2004

²³³ Vitti 1996:125, 128, 165 (*IG X 2.1*, n.319), 166 (2 inscribed altar fragments have been dated to the end of the 2nd - beginnings of 3rd century) and 169 [a rectangular inscribed block (*IG X 2.1*, n. 568) has been dated to the end of the 2nd- beginnings of the 3rd century]. For an account of all findings see Papageorgiou 1911:172-3; Vavritsas 1971:377-82; Spieser 1974:518-9; Vickers 1969(a):250; Bakirzis 1977:267-9; Vokotopoulou 1982b:280-1; Trakosopoulou-Salakidou 1989:1556-69; Vitti 1996:164-72;

²³⁴ Velenis 1998:57.

²³⁵ Rizos 2011:451-3.

²³⁶ Tafrali 1913:pl.IV,1.

²³⁷ Tafrali 1913:73-7.

²³⁸ Kleinbauer (1972:96) used evidence previously provided by Tafrali 1913 (fig.76).

Constantinople²³⁹ (dated c.388-391)²⁴⁰, the Aurelian Wall in Rome (Honorian brickwork)²⁴¹, the towers of Dyrrachium²⁴² (dating to either the reign of Anastasius or Justinian)²⁴³ and at church walls of the 5th and 6th centuries such as Aghia Sofia in Constantinople²⁴⁴, (for a similar brick cross, placed between two palm branches, in the Octagon see Ch.III).

Stamped bricks have been collected from all points around the circuit and constitute (at least in comparison with those from the main wall) a very homogeneous group²⁴⁵. Most bear the letters A ENT (for a description see below, pp.54-6 and figs 7-8). The letters were expanded by Sotiriou as ENTIKTIONOS (=indiction). Vickers accepted Sotiriou's (1918 and 1952) reading and he proposed that the Alpha is referring to the first year of an indiction taking place in the late 400s (see also below pp.54). The recent study by Rizos proposes (in conjunction with Bardill's 2009 study on the stamps of Constantinople) that the Thessalonica brickstamps are probably monograms (similar to late 5th century ones) and are not referring to an indiction. Rizos also speculated that the A ENT ligature could be interpreted as ΛENT, which could easily stand for an abbreviated name of a Praetorian Prefect (for example Leontios PPO *Illyrici* c.435/441) or even an emperor (Leo I or II)²⁴⁶.

In shape and style the stamps are similar to examples found in Constantinople, which Bardill assigns broadly to the 5th century²⁴⁷. An additional clue to dating is provided by a 9m. long inscription (fig.15) which is incorporated in brick into the facing of one of the eastern wall towers and names a certain Hormisdas, who 'completed with his hands pure this great city with impregnable walls'²⁴⁸. The Hormisdas in question is believed by many²⁴⁹ to be a proconsul who is referred to by Ammianus Marcellinus

²³⁹ Tetriatnikov 1995:689-99; Crow 2001:96.

²⁴⁰ Bardill 1999:671.

²⁴¹ Cozza 1987:32-9.

²⁴² Rey 1925:39.

²⁴³ Zheku 1972:38 and Sodini 2008:315.

²⁴⁴ Mark and Cakman 1992; Tetriatnikov 1995:689, 699, figs 1-2, where the brick crosses belong to the original construction of the early 6th century.

²⁴⁵ Theocharidou 2004:226-7.

²⁴⁶ Rizos 2011:456.

²⁴⁷ Bardill 2009:99.

²⁴⁸ *IG* X 2.1, no. 43: 'τεί[χ]εσιν αρ[ρή]κτοις Ορμίσδας εξετέλεσσε τήνδε πόλιν μεγάλην χείρας έχων καθαράς'.

²⁴⁹ Tafrali 1913:32-40, 369; Kleinbaeur 1972:89-94; Vickers 1973(b):292; Croke 1978:251-8; Kountouras 1983:39-40; Vitti 1996:126-7.

(failing to note which province, presumably Asia) under Procopius in 365, probably still a proconsul under Theodosius I (379-395)²⁵⁰, and also a man mentioned by Zosimus as a commander of Egyptian troops in Macedonia, c.380²⁵¹. Vickers challenged the identification of the two men, on the grounds that proconsuls during the 4th century mainly had civilian responsibilities whereas Zosimus' Hormisdas was in Macedonia in a military capacity, and proposed that a better candidate is a praetorian prefect named Hormisdas²⁵² who was Praefectus Praetorio of Illyricum (PPO *Illyrici*) in 448 (Feb.16)²⁵³, and possibly Praefectus Praetorio of the East (PPO *Orientis*) found in a law dated in late 449 or early 450²⁵⁴. The prefecture of Illyricum was moved from Sirmium to Thessalonica in 441-442²⁵⁵ (also see Ch.I, pp.27) and was followed by further Hunic invasions in Macedonia in 447 and Gothic attacks in the 470s²⁵⁶. Vickers argued that the period between September 447 and August 448 was the first year of an indiction, which could correspond to one reading of the A ENT stamps, (as noted above)²⁵⁷. It has been objected that the presence of the second Hormisdas in Thessalonica is not explicitly attested in the written sources²⁵⁸, but the scale of the project would suit the occasion of the institution of the new prefecture, and its prefect, and thus favours a date around AD 450. Rizos points out that as the Persian name Hormisdas is not rare between the 4th and 6th centuries, the person in

²⁵⁰ Ammianus Marcellinus, *Historia Romana*, XXVI.8.12. Similar testaments are in the works of Eunapius, *Fragmenta Historicorum Graecorum*, IV.25, no. 27, 27, no.35. Kleinbaeur 1972:92.

²⁵¹ Zosimus, *Historia Nova*, III.19 [‘..after having remained ten months in Byzantium, he (Procopius) appointed Hormisdas and Victor to the command of his armies, and proceeded to Antioch’], 3.20 [‘..He (Procopius) then proceeded towards Persia, giving the command of the infantry to Victor, and that of the cavalry to Hormisdas and Arintheus jointly. I have before related of this Hormisdas, that he was the son of a Persian monarch, but was persecuted by his brother, and had escaped to the emperor Constantine, from whom he had received the highest honours and preferments in reward for his approved friendship and fidelity’], 4.8 [‘..On the advance of the emperor and Procopius towards each other, the two armies met near Thyatira. Procopius at first appeared to have the advantage, by which he would have gained the supreme authority, Hormisdas in the engagement having overpowered the enemy. But Gomarius, another of the commanders of Procopius, imparting his intention to all the soldiers of Procopius who were attached to the emperor, in the midst of the battle cried out Augustus, and gave a signal for them to imitate his example..’] and 4.30 [‘They (Egyptians) were commanded by Hormisdas, the son of the Hormisdas, who had attended the emperor Julian in the Persian war. When the Egyptians arrived in Macedon, and were united with the legions there, no order was observed in the camp, nor was any distinction made between a Roman and a Barbarian, but all were promiscuously mingled together, nor was even a muster-roll kept with the names of the soldiers..’].

²⁵² *Codex Justinianus*, I.1.3. Also, Koethe 1933:197; Vickers 1973(b):292.

²⁵³ *CJ* I.1.3; Vickers 1969(b):313-8; *id.* 1971(b):229; Martindale 1980:1249. Seeck (1919:474) had previously suggested that he was no longer in charge by April 449.

²⁵⁴ *CJ* XL.22.1; Vickers 1971(b):229.

²⁵⁵ Kleinbaeur 1972:93.

²⁵⁶ Vickers 1971(b):230; Sodini 2007:313. Thessalonica was attacked by the Goths in 473 and 479.

²⁵⁷ Grumel 1958:243; Sotiriou 1952:235; Vickers 1973(b):292.

²⁵⁸ Gounaris 1971:318f, 321f.

Thessalonica's case might well be any other unrecorded individual involved with the construction of the city walls²⁵⁹.

Further evidence in support of a 5th century date comes from the marble blocks used in the construction of the foot of the wall in the western sector (fig.14, location close to Lete Gate in fig.5)²⁶⁰ and occasionally at higher levels in the eastern sector²⁶¹. The blocks, all with a distinctive flange on one edge, are typical of seating in a theatre or other open-air public venue, and given their straight lengths and their quantity, it has been suggested they came from the Hippodrome²⁶² which was located on the eastern side of the city, just inside the wall. If so, the massacre which is said to have caused its abandonment did not take place until AD 390, more than a decade after the first Hormisdas is attested in the area²⁶³.

Rizos revisits an inscription made of bricks in the same fashion as the Hormisdas inscription that was located at the main entrance of the city (the Golden Gate, fig.5) and was still visible before parts of the western walls were knocked down in 1911. According to Rizos, this is the only securely dated inscription from the entire circuit. It read 'Παύλου του Βιβιανού' [(work) of Pavlos, son of Vivianos] who was identified with the consul of 512²⁶⁴. Although the nature of this inscription remains problematic as it does not exist any more, Rizos suggests (based on information gathered by G. Papageorgiou who was the only archaeologist who witnessed it *in situ*) that the date of the Pavlos inscription is later than the one mentioning Hormisdas, making the early 6th century a good *terminus ante quem* for our Late Roman phase²⁶⁵.

Rizos studied the actual architecture of the walls and the change of the defence design as it was developed in its later phases (4) and (5) and he focuses on the appearance of

²⁵⁹ Rizos 2011:455(n.10) and 456.

²⁶⁰ Petsas 1968(b):330-332; *id.* 1969:295; *id.* 1970:352-4; Vitti 1996:127-8.

²⁶¹ Gounaris 1971:313-4.

²⁶² Vickers 1969(a):250; Vitti 1996:127.

²⁶³ Gounaris (1971:311-23), in favour of the first Hormisdas, argued that the fact that the marble seating had not been used at the foot of the eastern walls, while transporting large parts of it all the way to the west side of the city, could mean that the western walls had been built later, after the hippodrome was abandoned, but that the eastern side had been begun earlier, while the hippodrome was still functioning. Vickers (1971b:232-3) reasoned instead that the eastern walls already had the existing east side of the hippodrome at their foot, so there was no cause to use the marble seating there, thus the western and eastern walls were of the same date.

²⁶⁴ Jones 1980:854; Spieser 1999:570 and Rizos 2011:457.

²⁶⁵ Rizos 2011:457.

triangular towers and the zigzag (saw-like) formation of the Thessalonica circuit. Describing the walls of Aquileia²⁶⁶ (dated between 451 and 568) and those at Amorium²⁶⁷ [similar additions here were attributed to Zeno (475-491) or Anastasius (491-519)] as the closest parallels to Thessalonica, he also points out that the use of triangular (and pentagonal) towers becomes extremely popular in the East (Asia Minor, Balkans, Thrace, Byzantine occupied Italy, North Africa and the Levant) between the late 5th and 7th centuries. The available epigraphic and archaeological evidence leads to a clear chronological indication, which shows that these structures were common during the reigns of Anastasius or Justinian²⁶⁸. Based on the above, Rizos proposes that the Late Roman phase of the Thessalonica fortification system demonstrates the early stages of a new architectural defence pattern that was launched probably in conjunction with the Hunnic attacks and can be ascribed to the mid or late 5th century²⁶⁹.

Phase 6. 6th-7th century repairs. In 630, according to the third chapter of the second book of the *Miracles of St. Demetrius*, an earthquake brought down the church and various other buildings, and large parts of the city wall collapsed²⁷⁰. No physical evidence for this event has survived. A mosaic inscription at St. Demetrius church dated to c.630 mentions barbarian attacks at this time²⁷¹ (see also Ch.I., pp.28). We have no records with precise details on repairs in the medieval or Ottoman eras.

ARCH OF GALERIUS (figs 16-17)²⁷²

Located at a crossroads on the eastward extension of the main E-W street of the Hellenistic city, the central arch has a height of 12.28m., the other two have a height of 6.5m. They were originally part of an octapylon²⁷³, whose centre was covered by a dome and the arms by cross-vaults. The surviving piers are built with reused materials, veneered with greyish white marble (probably from Aliko, on nearby

²⁶⁶ Bertacchi 2003:19-26; Buora and Roberto 2010:329; Rizos 2011:459.

²⁶⁷ Lightfoot 1998:60-2; Rizos 2011:461.

²⁶⁸ Rizos 2011:458-61 (with further references). For a list of locations with the use of triangular/pentagonal towers see *id.* 464.

²⁶⁹ Rizos 2011:468.

²⁷⁰ See Lemerle 1953:349-61; Bakirtzis 1977:267-9; Vitti 1996:103.

²⁷¹ Spieser 1973:155f. and Sodini 2007:322.

²⁷² The main studies are Kinch 1890; v. Schoenebeck 1937; Makaronas 1969; Pond Rothmann 1970; *id.* 1975; *id.* 1977; Laubscher 1975; Meyer 1980; Mayer 2002 and Tiveriou 2010:165-81.

²⁷³ Rothmann 1977:429; Leadbetter 2013:233.

Thasos²⁷⁴), on which are carved figurative reliefs in three horizontal bands, apparently scenes from Galerius' campaign in the East and his Parthian victory of AD 298²⁷⁵. The superstructure is of brick-faced concrete construction²⁷⁶. Bricks recorded by Kinch²⁷⁷ measured 38 x 25cm. with a thickness of 3.3cm. The size compares closely with the Rotunda samples (41/45 x 30 x 4cms) although they are still quite smaller (see below, pp.52).

Although unquestionably to be associated with Galerius, the date of the arch is debated. It has been assigned to the period of the 1st Tetrarchy, when Galerius had not yet moved to Thessalonica and the city erected the arch to commemorate the victory of its emperor. During the Tetrarchic period efforts were made to replace Greek with the official Latin language. The inscriptions contained within the reliefs of the Arch are all written in Greek thus pointing to an early phase of the Tetrarchy²⁷⁸.

ROTUNDA²⁷⁹ (fig.18)

This lies on axis with the Arch to the south and it is generally supposed for that reason that the two are closely connected²⁸⁰. The internal diameter of the drum measures c.24.5m. and the dome is 30m. high²⁸¹. The building was accessible from the South (no.1), probably via a colonnaded porch²⁸². Two spiral staircases (nos 2-3) on each side led to the roof. On the ground floor the round wall was interrupted by seven barrel-vaulted niches (nos 4-10) (7 x 5m.). Each niche was framed with a tribelon with two columns and entablatures²⁸³. On either side of the entrance as well as

²⁷⁴ *Marble: Art Historical and Scientific Perspectives on Ancient Sculpture* (Getty Museum), 1990:75 and 95(n.18).

²⁷⁵ Descriptions of the reliefs have been made by Kinch 1890:10-14; Laubscher 1975:103-6; Pond Rothmann 1977:449-54, Meyer 1980:376-9.

²⁷⁶ Grammenos 1995:494f.

²⁷⁷ Kleinbauer 1972:96, citing Kinch 1890:4.

²⁷⁸ Kinch 1890:8; Alföldi 1934:99; Laubscher 1975:14; Kolb 1987:159; Meyer 1980:443.

²⁷⁹ The first study on the Rotunda was by Hébrard 1920 and Gregoire 1939, who made general observations on the topography of the structure; For further observations and suggestions on the topography, identity and dating of the building see: Dyggve 1941b; Theodoridou 1954; Pazaras 1974; Velenis 1974; *id.* 1979; Spieser 1984:127; Ward-Perkins 1989:451-3; Theodoridou 1992/3; Mentzos 1995/6; Vitti 1996:227-8; Čurčić 2000 and Mentzos 2001/2.

²⁸⁰ Vitti 1996:227-8.

²⁸¹ Doudoumis/Forozidou 2004:2-3.

²⁸² Velenis 1974:302-7.

²⁸³ Velenis 1974:300-5.

between the seven niches opened eight smaller niches (possibly *aediculae*). They, too, were framed with two columns that supported small arches²⁸⁴.

All parts of the building have been heavily restored, and clearly underwent multiple periods of re-use and modifications, making it very difficult to distinguish the original structure. The walls of the drum were constructed with the typical *opus mixtum* of alternating courses of rubble stone and bricks measuring 41-45 x 30 x 3.5-5 cm., with a mortar joint of approx. 3.5cm²⁸⁵, whereas the dome and the arches are built solely of brick, sized around 39 x 26 x 2-2.5cm.²⁸⁶ Dyggve suggested that the building was left unfinished when Galerius died and completed at a later stage²⁸⁷, but such differences, however, could have structural reasons, rather than represent different building phases. Torp, a few years later, observed that the masonry and brickstamps of the dome are identical with the (now extant) ambulatory with an apsed structure added to the eastern end of the building probably during its conversion into a church. He concluded that it was of a single build, completed probably when the entire building changed its function²⁸⁸. Kleinbauer also added that since the Rotunda bricks and their stamps are so similar with samples found at the city walls and the church of Acheiropoietos, the conversion of the Rotunda might well coincide with the building phases of these other structures²⁸⁹.

Subsequent studies generally agree that the building has two main phases, an original phase and a later one, when it was converted into a church. Fragmentary brickstamps from the Rotunda, recorded on various occasions in the past, divide into two categories: unframed stamps with lettering and those bearing crosses²⁹⁰. Most brickstamps of the first category are the A ENT stamp (with slight variations) found in the outer city wall which Vickers believes to be of the 5th century²⁹¹. The bricks

²⁸⁴ Vitti 1996:227.

²⁸⁵ Kleinbauer (1972:96) citing evidence previously provided by Hébrard 1920:23, figs 9, 12, pl.5. Also, details on same dimensions/sizes: Vickers 1973(b):286; Vitti 1993b:1697; Vitti 1996:228.

²⁸⁶ Kleinbauer (1972:96-7) used evidence previously provided by Hébrard 1920:24, Vitti 1996:228.

²⁸⁷ Dyggve 1945:65, 621; Kleinbauer 1972:86.

²⁸⁸ Torp 1955:491; Kleinbauer 1972:86-7.

²⁸⁹ Kleinbauer 1972:87.

²⁹⁰ Hébrard 1920:23, 32; Kleinbauer 1972:88.

²⁹¹ Vickers 1973(b):289; Also, Kleinbauer (1970:36-44) dates St. Demetrius to 450-475 on the basis of the style of the earliest mosaics, which he believes to have similarities with those of the Rotunda; Panagiotides (1972:91-4) based on the style of the capitals proposed a date of just before 441; Vickers 1973(b):289-93.

with crosses are not closely dateable but are hardly likely to be Galerian, and most probably date to the 5th or even 6th century²⁹². Many bricks from the Rotunda were found bearing simple markings made with a finger²⁹³, but this is not of any particular chronological value. Spieser and Pazaras date the conversion to a church, on the basis of the iconography and style of the mosaics that covered all the walls (still visible today)²⁹⁴, to the 5th and 6th centuries²⁹⁵.

The original purpose of the Rotunda is still uncertain. It was long supposed to be the mausoleum of Galerius, on the basis of comparisons with the great circular mausolea of Rome (Villa of the Gordians, Villa of Maxentius, those of Constantia at S. Agnese, and Helena at Tor Pignattara)²⁹⁶. But the identification has lost strength after the discovery that Galerius was actually buried at Felix Romuliana (see below, Ch.IV, pp.122), while the findings there and at Vrelo-Šarkamen²⁹⁷ in Serbia (another fortified Tetrarchic villa, 42km northwest of Romuliana) show mausolea constructed in a variety of designs. The mausoleum in Vrelo-Šarkamen is square, 10.65 x 10.65m., whereas mausoleum 1 (North) in Romuliana is octagonal in plan standing on a square podium 9.55 x 9.55m.²⁹⁸ and the very fragmentary mausoleum 2 (South) shows a circular foundation (diameter of 5.65m.) contained within a dodecahedron podium with a side length of 2.85m.²⁹⁹. Unfortunately, Vrelo-Šarkamen, which can be dated to the early 4th century, is extremely fragmentary. Several scholars are now arguing that the Rotunda in Thessalonica could be a temple (Pantheon)³⁰⁰ or an imperial audience hall³⁰¹, but all such speculation is complicated by the uncertainties over the date.

²⁹² See below pp.56-7 and also Bardill's stylistic analysis of Group 1 and 2 brickstamps, Bardill 2004:99-102.

²⁹³ Hébrard 1920:23, figs.9, 12; Makaronas 1950:307, fig.6; Kleinbauer 1972:98.

²⁹⁴ Vitti 1996:228.

²⁹⁵ Spieser 1984:127-31, 164; Pazaras 1985:34-46; Vitti 1996:228.

²⁹⁶ Gregoire 1939:323-4; Dyggve 1958:361-2.

²⁹⁷ For an account on the excavations see: Srejić, Tomović and Vasić 1996: 235-6; Tomović and Vasić 1997:10-13; Popović and Tomović 1998:287-88. The complex was associated with Maximinus Daia (308-313) and the gold jewelry found at the mausoleum was attributed to the Empress-Mother, the sister of Galerius.

²⁹⁸ Srejić-Vasić 1994:72-8.

²⁹⁹ Srejić-Vasić 1994:89-101.

³⁰⁰ Bouras 1984:36; Pazaras 1985:15.

³⁰¹ von Schoenebeck 1937:316-71.

HIPPODROME ('Hippodrome' in fig.5)

Although nothing is visible today, the hippodrome was situated inside the eastern walls, south of via Egnatia. The first excavations were conducted in 1935 by von Schoenebeck and Johannes and in 1939 by Dyggve, who found traces of the arches that supported the seating in the western part of the building³⁰². More systematic studies were made by Vickers in 1972, Moutsopoulos in 1977 and Spieser in 1984 and Velenis 1998 following observations made during the building of modern apartment blocks in the area³⁰³. Its width was around 72m., and its internal length was approximately 400m., possibly as much as 500m.³⁰⁴.

The building has not been dated exactly but all scholars agree that its construction began during the Tetrarchy. Humphrey proposed that Galerius ordered its construction when he was still a Caesar (between 299 and 303) or when he was appointed Augustus in 305³⁰⁵, and Vitti³⁰⁶ suggested it was part of a general construction programme of circuses for chariot-racing under the second Tetrarchy, including those at Augusta Treverorum (where Constantius Chlorus resided, 306), at the villa of Maxentius in Rome (307) and that in Sirmium (where Licinius resided, 308). A later date is suggested by a circular white marble base, unfortunately without provenance, inscribed: '*inter cetera etiam euripum statuīs adornatum Domitius Catafronius v(i)r p(erfectissimus), pro(curator) s(acrae) m(onetae) T(hessalonicensis) fecit*'³⁰⁷ [= 'among other things a *euripus* (presumably of a circus) decorated with statues paid for by Domitius Catafronius, vir perfectissimus and procurator of the *sacra moneta* of Thessalonica']. The man became the prefect of Egypt in 356³⁰⁸ but his intervention apparently concerned the decoration of an existing building or even a part of it, and thus provides only a *terminus ante quem* for its construction.

It has been suggested that the Hippodrome probably ceased to function after the massacre in the 390s (for a further discussion see Chapter III).

³⁰² Dyggve 1941:41-67 and *id.* 1958:355.

³⁰³ Vickers 1972(a); Moutsopoulos 1977:218-24; Spieser 1984:104-10; Humphrey 1986: 625-31; Vitti 1996:111-6, 216-8; Velenis 1998:93-6.

³⁰⁴ Vickers 1972(a):28-9 (c.450m), Humphrey 1986:628 (400m.); Vitti 1996:218 (470m.); Marki *et al.* 1997:46 (500m.).

³⁰⁵ Humphrey 1986:634.

³⁰⁶ Vitti 1996:113.

³⁰⁷ *IG* X, 2.1, n. 41. The base measures 0.88 m in diameter and 0.21 m high.

³⁰⁸ Cagiano de Azevedo 1979:22, n.25; Feissel and Spieser 1979:309; Humphrey 1986:629-30.

ACHEIROPOIETOS (figs 19-20)

The church of Acheiropoietos, founded in c.450-70³⁰⁹ is situated not very far from the agora. A propylon on its south side provided immediate access to via Reggia (today's Egnatia St.). It has a basilical plan (51.90 x 30.80m.) with a nave 14.20m.wide and two side aisles (width 6.20 and 6.30m.). The original structure only survives to a minimal level as major restoration work had already commenced from as early as the 7th century dated by the stylistic characteristics of the wall paintings but can be seen to have employed the *opus mixtum* technique of three bands of brick and local schist (fig.20)³¹⁰. The brick size averages 40 x 30-31 x 5cm. with a mortar thickness of 4.5-5cm. Brickstamps found in the original stretches of the land walls and the eastern part of the building are very similar with the ones found in St. Demetrius and the Rotunda³¹¹. Vickers catalogued 27 brickstamps from Acheiropoietos, most of them bearing the ligature ENT and accompanied by capital letters, crosses and other symbols³¹².

The marble employed for the colonnades and the floor is the Proconnesian white grey-veined marble, while the marble used for the tribelon's two columns is green Thessalian. The Theodosian capitals (fig.21) of the ground floor colonnades in Acheiropoietos (which are also stylistically similar with the Theodosian capitals of St. Demetrius³¹³) are thought to follow the artistic tradition of Constantinople and they have been ascribed to the same dating of the Stoudios basilica (453-454)³¹⁴ based on stylistic similarities, or slightly later in 463³¹⁵. Their main characteristics are the double row of acanthus leaves which are combined with the scrolls of the Ionic order; the smaller leaves embellish the base of the capital.

The tribelon mosaics of Acheiropoietos have a very close parallel with an aisle mosaic at St. Demetrius (ascribed to the church's first phase by Kleinbauer) that bears the inscription 'as a prayer for one whose name God knows'. Moreover the mosaics³¹⁶ in

³⁰⁹ Papazotos 1982:113.

³¹⁰ Kourkoutidou-Nikolaidou 1989:15-22.

³¹¹ Kleinbauer 1970:38.

³¹² Vickers 1973(b):287(fig.1).

³¹³ Sotiriou 1952:163; Kleinbauer 1970:39.

³¹⁴ Kourkoutidou-Nikolaidou 1989:23-5.

³¹⁵ Kramer 1968:48, 59; Kleinbauer 1970:38

³¹⁶ These are decorated with intersecting circles forming four petals and grapevines issuing from craters.

the soffits of the arcades of the north inner aisle of St. Demetrius have close stylistic similarities with mosaics from the Acheiropoietos and the Rotunda³¹⁷.

‘BATHS’ OF ST. DEMETRIUS

Although a large volume of scholarship has been devoted to the cult of the 4th century martyr St. Demetrius³¹⁸, the architecture of his church is relatively little known. Bakirtzis (1992) is concerned mainly with the standing building and its phasing; more general accounts are provided by Mentzos (1994) and Vitti (1996). Excavations (to a certain degree) were made under the floor in 1918 and again in 1947-8 by G. Sotiriou, who published his results in 1952. He argued that the basilica was built on the site of a bath complex, possibly associated with a stadium placed alongside the agora³¹⁹. The stadium has not been found and all proposals as to its location³²⁰ are based on ecclesiastical texts that mainly refer to St. Demetrius’s martyrdom there in 306³²¹. According to the Life of St. Theodora³²² and an inscription that comes from her church on 34 Ermou St. (approx. 1km from Thessalonica’s city centre)³²³ the stadium was functioning at least until the 9th century. Sotiriou suggested that parts of the bath had been re-used for the crypt whereas the western section of the bath was demolished, its materials incorporated within the foundations and the walls of the church³²⁴. The dating of the standing church as well as the remains beneath it, however, is hugely problematic and it has been observed that even the walls of Sotiriou’s putative bath have different phases³²⁵.

³¹⁷ Kleinbauer 1970:41-2.

³¹⁸ Such as Vickers 1974 and Woods 2000.

³¹⁹ Vitti 1996:97-9.

³²⁰ Tafrali 1913:123-125; Ksingopoulos 1949:23-28; Sotiriou 1952:34-7; Bakirtzis 1977:264-6; Vitti 1996:96-7. Pelekanidis (1972:122-33) suggested that the stadium should be identified with the odeion, cf. Anon, *Greek Passion: Acta Sanctorum PG* 116: ‘..Maximus Galerius / at the city’s theatre also known as stadium..’, arguing (127) that the *odeion* would have been capable of hosting spectacles with animals. However, the building shows no signs for the protection of the audience and the idea has been challenged by other scholars, such as Bakirtzis 1977:264-6 and Spieser 1984:93, 96. Vickers (1971c:339-48) based on numerous ecclesiastical texts suggested that the stadium was located south of St. Demetrius, it was probably first built from the Hellenistic period onwards and it was modified during the years of Galerius to host gladiatorial spectacles.

³²¹ Sotiriou 1952:1-26.

³²² Vickers 1971(c):347.

³²³ Sotiriou 1952:37.

³²⁴ Sotiriou 1952:35-49.

³²⁵ Sotiriou 1952:100; Mentzos 1994:36; Vitti 1996:241-3.

Sotiriou identified as part of his 4th century bath³²⁶, traces of an apse (of unknown dimensions) that he found in the crypt, thinking it was probably a *caldarium*, but did not provide details of its construction technique. Mentzos disputed that the apse belonged to a bath, since Sotiriou reports no trace of waterproof concrete, nor signs of a hypocaust, and argued instead that it belonged to the first basilica on the site, built by Leontius³²⁷. A prefect of Illyricum named Leontius is cited in the *Passion* of St. Demetrius³²⁸ as the founder of the basilica, and can be associated with the prefect of 412/413³²⁹. According to Mentzos, the entire bath was demolished by Leontius to build the new basilica, which also had a crypt that contains the *ciborium*. Both Spieser and Mentzos suggested that the majority of the church building that we see today (or whatever is left after the repairs) dates from the early 6th century, possibly after an earthquake that took place in 518³³⁰.

The average size of bricks recorded by Tafrali was 40 x 30-31 x 4.5-5 cm. with a mortar thickness of 4.5-6cm.³³¹ Vickers study of the stamped bricks (1976b) did not note their dimensions. Vitti (1993) assigns brick samples from the remains (which he describes as baths) below St. Demetrius but mentions different sizes from the lower walls (48 x 30 x 5cm.)³³² and the upper walls (38 x 30 x 3.5cm.) and neither states the exact parts that were examined nor proposes a date for them³³³. Presumably he refers to the same bricks mentioned by Sotiriou (1952) and Vickers (1973b).

Brickstamps noted by Vickers included one with a small cross (coded DEM9, fig.7), which is closely related to another from the city walls (coded WALL9, fig.7), and five with the monogram of A ENT, which can be dated to the late 4th century or mid-5th century depending on the dating of the Hormisdas inscription. Vickers notes in support of the later date that the mosaics in the north inner aisle of the church are

³²⁶ Sotiriou 1949:136; *id.* 1952:59.

³²⁷ Mentzos 1994:42-3; *id.* 2000:179-202.

³²⁸ Anastasius the Librarian, *Passion*, col.717.

³²⁹ For a detailed discussion of the identity of Leontius see Vickers 1974:337-50. A now lost dedicatory inscription mentioning a certain Leo, could have been either the emperor Leo I (457-474) or pope Leo the Great (440-461), Velenis 2003:38-44.

³³⁰ Spieser 1984:210-2; Mentzos 2000:180.

³³¹ Kleinbauer 1970:38 based on samples previously provided by Tafrali 1913:fig.153.

³³² Vitti (1993:1696, 1706) originally states this brick size as 48 x 40 x 5cm. which is probably a typographical mistake as he assigns this sample to his second type (despite the significant dimensional differences between the two).

³³³ Vitti 1993:1696-7.

dated by Kleinbauer to 450-475 on the basis of the stylistic similarities between its mosaics and those of the Rotunda and Acheiropoietos³³⁴ (see above), and by Panagiotides³³⁵ to 441 on the basis of the style of the capitals, which is very similar to those from Acheiropoietos and also correspond with the same dating of the particular phase of Acheiropoietos³³⁶. This dating also corresponds with that ascribed by Bardill (c.450) on the basis of the capital similarities between Acheiropoietos and St. Stoudios in Constantinople³³⁷.

However, some of the stamps from St. Demetrius are of a different style, among them are cruciform monograms of Epiphaniou and, possibly, Theoph(anou), and bar monograms of Phok(a)³³⁸. Should these stamps be taken as evidence that the church was built after c.518, the 5th century bricks bearing the monogram ENT that were found in the church by Sotiriou³³⁹ were then clearly reused material sourced from older buildings³⁴⁰.

BUILDINGS OF THE AGORA ('Agora' in fig.5)

During the Severan dynasty the city expands towards the south and southwest, with the addition of the Roman agora³⁴¹ and numerous buildings (mainly residences and bath structures) north of the Rotunda (see Ch.III) vicinity³⁴². The total size of the agora can be estimated at approximately 100 x 200m.³⁴³, which archaeologists divide into two large sections, Upper and Lower³⁴⁴. The majority of the buildings and other findings here date to the 2nd and 3rd centuries AD³⁴⁵.

³³⁴ Kleinbauer 1970:36-44; Kalokiris 1970:10-11. A mosaic found after the fire of 1917 depicts the figure of St. Demetrius and an angel and it has been dated to the 5th century.

³³⁵ Panagiotides 1972:91-4; Vickers 1973(b):293.

³³⁶ Kalokiris 1970:8.

³³⁷ Bardill 2004:60-1, 109; *id.* 2008a:198.

³³⁸ Sotiriou 1918:19-21, fig.26; Sotiriou G. and Sotiriou M. 1952:235-6, pl. 94d.

³³⁹ Sotiriou 1918:fig.25; Sotiriou G. and Sotiriou M. 1952:fig.43a, pl. 94b.

³⁴⁰ Bardill 2008(a):199.

³⁴¹ The building programme of the Roman agora probably started sometime between the Antonine (138-193) and Severan (193-235) dynasties. See Bakirtzis 1977:258; Spieser 1984:84; Vitti 1996:99.

³⁴² Vitti 1996:62; Adam-Veleni 2003:124.

³⁴³ Adam-Veleni 2003:147.

³⁴⁴ Vitti 1996:93-5.

³⁴⁵ These were: the *Cryptoporticus* located on the South side of the agora, (Petsas 1968a:158-9; Alexandri 1973-74(c):693; Romiopolou 1976:241); the Eastern Stoa (Bakirtzis 1970:24-26; Bakirtzis 1984:13; Tiveriou 1990:78-97, 101-3; Velenis and Adam-Veleni 1997:20; Atzaka 1998:113-4); Stoa of the Idols (Las Incantadas) (Baldassare 1974:26-8, 35); a possible library at Olympou St. (on the north side of the agora) (Pelekidis 1924/25:121; Despinis 1977:95-8; Kambouri 1985:92).

THE *ODEION*³⁴⁶ ('Agora' in fig.5)

Located beside the Eastern Stoa of the Agora, and originally constructed in around AD 200³⁴⁷ with a seating capacity of c.400³⁴⁸, the *odeion* was later re-built (fig.22) and adjustments made to the adjacent Eastern Stoa³⁴⁹ in an *opus mixtum* (fig.23)³⁵⁰, while the mosaic patterns in the Stoa compare with examples in the palace, which are dated on stylistic grounds around 350-375³⁵¹. Around this time, possibly during the reign of Julian (AD 361-4), operations began to enlarge the *odeion* into a theatre with a capacity of around 2,500³⁵² but it seems that the foundations for this were never completed³⁵³.

Many other Thessalonican monuments continued to exist in the 5th and 6th centuries, though by that time most building activities were limited to the alteration and repair of older structures³⁵⁴. The only new monumental buildings from 6th century onwards are Christian churches (such as St. Demetrius, Aghia Sofia, Profitis Elias and Acheiropoietos), whose original phases rarely survive, having undergone numerous rebuildings, modifications and alterations in plan and structure in later centuries.

³⁴⁶ Vitti 1996:99-102, 187-9.

³⁴⁷ Dating suggested by the excavators Adam-Veleni *et al.* (1996:502) on the basis of lamp fragments incorporated in the foundations of the seating of the *odeion*. Adam-Veleni (2003:148) and Sodini (2007:325) suggest that the 3rd century *odeion* probably replaced an earlier *bouleutērion* built in the 1st century. The 2nd century building had a capacity of 200, and was then expanded to 400 in the last quarter of the 3rd century. Adam-Veleni 2003:146-9 and Tiveriou, http://www.lpth.gr/gr/texts/Tiveriou_gr.pdf

³⁴⁸ Stavrakas 1995:21 and Tiveriou, *Η Θεσσαλονίκη από τον Κάσσανδρο ως τον Γαλέριο*, www.lpth.gr, p.5.

³⁴⁹ Bakirtzis 1984:12-13.

³⁵⁰ Papadopoulou 1964:330-1.

³⁵¹ Atzaka (1998:114-21) suggests that these mosaics that were probably added in the 4th century. Their tesserae are sized 2-4cm. and the main patterns are: shield of squares (which becomes very popular in the East Mediterranean during the 4th century), rosettes with peltas and double Solomon knots, squares with diamonds, interlocking circles and squares, chequerboard and bands with leaves.

³⁵² Stavrakas 1995:21.

³⁵³ Adam-Veleni 2003:149.

³⁵⁴ Good examples are: the Octagon which was altered into a church (Makaronas 1950:313-4; Vitti 1996:212-3) and residences cat.no.1 (Kourkoutidou-Nikolaïdou-Marki 1982:291; Vitti 1996:239; Atzaka 1998:298), cat.no.4 (Atzaka 1998:319), cat. no.5 (Makropoulou 1989a:262-4; Atzaka 1998:256), cat.no.6 (Karydas 1995:251-2; Atzaka 1998:214), cat.no.8 (Atzaka 1998:128-30, 241), cat.no.9 (Karamanoli-Siganidou 1971:390-3) and cat.no.10 (Kourkoutidou-Nikolaïdou 1990:323, Atzaka 1998:150-1, 259).

2.4 Criteria for Dating

As the foregoing survey has demonstrated, precise dates for any of the buildings of Late Roman Thessalonica are few and far between. Occasionally, coins found in the mortar bedding of mosaic floors³⁵⁵ and in one case an inscription in the mosaic itself³⁵⁶ have provided a firm *terminus post quem* for a floor but generally such specific evidence is lacking. Stratigraphic soundings beneath the foundations, which could have produced pottery and other finds indicative of a date for the construction, have rarely been made, and even when they were, the material was not collected systematically and has not been studied. The main criteria used to date buildings, whether standing or found in excavations, have been the materials and techniques employed for the construction of the walls, and the style and technique of any associated mosaic floors. The simple presence of an apsidal hall has been considered diagnostic of a date in the 4th century³⁵⁷. Here we shall assess the character and reliability of each of these criteria in turn.

WALL CONSTRUCTION

Most of the buildings which concern us (both public and private) were constructed of concrete and fired brick or a combination of brick and rubble stone in a technique known as *opus mixtum*³⁵⁸. Both techniques were commonly used throughout the Roman empire during the first four centuries AD. *Opus mixtum* was more economical on brick, which was used only for quoins, doorways, windows and arches, the bulk of the wall is laid in courses of small blocks of local stone, sometimes neatly shaped, sometimes only rubble, alternating with courses of brick. The number of courses of each type of material varies from one example to another, and there are also small variations in the types of brick, and the types of stone employed. Some closely dateable examples are provided by the city walls, where numerous phases can be distinguished (see above, 'City Walls').

³⁵⁵ A number of coins under the floor of the residence cat.no.5 helped the dating of this building (Makropoulou 1989a:262-4). Excavations under the floor cat.no.6 also unearthed coins that helped its dating (see Karydas 1995:251-2 and Atzaka 1998:214). See also Appendix.

³⁵⁶ A *tabula ansata* inscription found *in situ* at the residence of 9 Lapithon St. (cat.no.10) was used by archaeologists as principal chronological evidence for the complex (see Kourkoutidou-Nikolaïdou 1990:323; Eleftheriadou 1990:332 and Atzaka 1998:259).

³⁵⁷ Karydas 1995 and Atzaka 1998.

³⁵⁸ For further details on the *opus mixtum* technique see: Ward-Perkins 1989:277-8, 453.

Bardill points out that the reuse of material (marble, stone and brick) was a common practice in Late Roman and Byzantine architecture not only due to its face value but also because it was conveniently located at nearby ruins or deposits³⁵⁹.

The mortars used in construction are mainly lime-based with pozzolanic compounds. We do not know the exact provenance of the pozzolana that was employed in Thessalonica but it is likely it was transported locally from the area of Cassandra in Chalcidiki (fig.24), or from other areas such as Cyzicus (Mysia in Anatolia), Oropos and Avlida in Attica (South of Athens) or even from the Nile in Egypt³⁶⁰ or Italy³⁶¹ and a variety of different aggregates, from pebbles, gravel, limestone, to brick fragments (*cocciopesto*) in others. In the ‘Galerius palace’ a powder made of crushed clay bricks or tiles (‘κεραμάλευρο’) was employed for the Octagon and the Basilica. Mortars used in the finishing of walls were similar, consisting of limestone, sand, brick fragments and tile powder. Examples were analysed from the two phases of the Rotunda and Acheiropoietos church; in the latter’s wall plaster marble powder was also present 5-10%³⁶². The wall plaster in the ‘Galerius palace’, usually applied in two layers, has powerfully waterproof properties. It normally consists of limestone, pozzolana, aggregates, brick fragments and clay tile powder. It has a high porosity level between 25-40% and a tensile strength of 1.5-3.5MPa³⁶³. The use of tile powder in Thessalonica apparently increased during the 5th-6th centuries according to chemical analyses conducted. Pozzolanic mortars re-appeared during the 7th-9th centuries³⁶⁴.

BRICK SIZES

Massimo Vitti in 1993 analysed the brickwork in the region of Macedonia, seeking to distinguish it from that in contemporary Rome and elsewhere. In Rome bricks were normally two Roman feet square (*bipedales* 60 x 60 x 3 cm thick) or one-and-half feet

³⁵⁹ Bardill 2008(b):346. He also highlights the symbolic use of material from older (pagan) monuments for new buildings as a victory of Christianity.

³⁶⁰ Pliny, (*Natural History*, XXXV.47) provides us with an account of locations that pozzolana (*pulvis appellatus*) was found.

³⁶¹ Vitruvius, *De Architectura*, II.6.1.

³⁶² Prof. D. Mountrakis provided me with all relevant details on the type of cement/mortars employed and Dr. Vassiliki Pachta (Architect and Conservator from the Polytechnic School of Aristotle University) provided further details on the mortars and allowed me to access her doctoral thesis (*Μελέτη εξέλιξης τεχνολογίας κονιαμάτων*, Thessalonica 2011).

³⁶³ Pachta 2011:44, 126.

³⁶⁴ Pachta 2011:126.

square (*sesquipedalis* 45 x 45 x 3) or smaller (*bessalis* 20 x 20 x 2.5) and used whole only to form quoins, arches, the lining of vaults, floors and roofing of hypocausts. For the facing of concrete walls they were cut into smaller triangular shapes, which were set on the outer face of the wall, with the longest side outwards, the point set into the rubble core, which was composed of small stone or brick-rubble aggregate. In Macedonia the bricks were normally thicker, smaller and rectangular in shape, and normally used whole, with whole bricks or broken pieces continuing through the core of the wall³⁶⁵. The bricks were often laid in alternating positions, one with the longer side outwards, the next with the shorter side (figs 25-26), like ‘headers’ and ‘stretchers’ in ashlar masonry, perhaps intended to give more strength to the structure.

Allowing for some slight variations, Vitti divided the bricks in Thessalonica into three main types: **Type (1) 40 x 30 x 4.5 cm**³⁶⁶ as found in the City Walls³⁶⁷ and the remains underneath St. Demetrius church (42 x 30 x 3.5cm)³⁶⁸. He also included in his examples the Octagon (see Ch.III) but these range from 40 to 42 cm. in length and 28 to 29 in width, and are 4.5 to 5cm. thick³⁶⁹. **Type (2) measures 48 x 33 x 4cm** and is more variable in size and colour, found mainly in the buildings associated with the palace (see Ch.III), namely the Basilica (48 x 33 x 3cm)³⁷⁰ and the anteroom of the polygonal building on Gounari Street (48 x 33 x 4cm)³⁷¹ (**‘Pol.’** in fig.5). A similar size (49 x 32 x 4cm) is found in the second phase of the library on Olymbou Street³⁷², which dates after AD 217, whereas the bricks from the main phase of the building (AD 138-217) are 42 x 33 x 6cm. Vitti’s **Type (3) is 44 x 30 x 4cm.** as found in the Northern Peristyle (45 x 30 x 4cm.) of the palace³⁷³ (pp.85), the NE apse of the polygonal building on Gounari Street (44 x 30 x 3.5cm.)³⁷⁴ and the Nymphaeum (43 x

³⁶⁵ Vitti 1993b:1695.

³⁶⁶ Vitti 1993b:1696-7

³⁶⁷ Vitti 1993b:1697, 1708: from the Southeast circuit (close to the ‘Galerius complex’ – Melenikou St.) reddish clay.

³⁶⁸ Vitti 1993b:1697, 1706, reddish-orange clay. For the problems of dating the remains below St. Demetrius church, see above, p.53-4.

³⁶⁹ Examples taken from different parts of the building (vestibule, Eastern niche and Southern wall) showed that they all have reddish clay colour and approximate dimensions of 40/42 x 28/29 x 4.5/5cm. See Vitti 1993b:1697, 1703-4. Vitti’s study predated the study by Athanasiou *et al* (2004), which identified two phases in the building, and since Vitti does not specify the exact levels his samples came from, we cannot be sure of which phase they belong to.

³⁷⁰ Vitti 1993b:1696, 1707, reddish clay

³⁷¹ Vitti 1993b:1696, 1705, orange clay

³⁷² Kambouri 1985:88-90 and Vitti 1993b:1696.

³⁷³ Vitti 1993b:1705.

³⁷⁴ Vitti 1993b:1705, reddish clay.

30 x 4.5cm)³⁷⁵. He includes bricks from the Rotunda (41/45 x 30 x 4cm)³⁷⁶, as type (3), but questionably so, since the smaller ones are hardly indistinguishable from his type (1). It is perhaps better to put the latter in a separate category (4), 41/45 x 30 x 4cm., and include the larger samples from the Octagon reported by Makaronas 45 x 31 x 3.5-5cm (see Ch.III, pp.79)³⁷⁷.

Vitti observed that his type (3) corresponds to standard Roman feet measurements: 1 *sesquipedalis* by 1 *pes*³⁷⁸ and he thought it possible that type (3) bricks may have appeared in Thessalonica only during the Tetrarchic period, when the arrival of Galerius in the city led to the production of brick for the new imperial buildings on an industrial scale³⁷⁹. However, as he noted, similarly-sized bricks have been recorded in the Porta Palatina in Turin (Augustan period) and in the amphitheatre of Rimini (Neronian-Domitianic period)³⁸⁰ and also accord with the dimensions for eastern Greek ('Lydian') bricks mentioned by Vitruvius³⁸¹. No analyses have been carried to determine the provenance of the clays and so we cannot be sure whether the brick was a local produce or imported from another location. Bricks in Tetrarchic buildings elsewhere, such as the hippodrome at Milan, belong to his type (2)³⁸². In reality, none of the slight differences in the sizes of bricks at Thessalonica can be entrusted with any chronological value.

Bricks used in the Villa at Palaeokastro (Ch.IV), which is thought to date to the early 5th century, were rectangular but significantly smaller: 32 x 22 x 3.5 cm. No examples of this size have been recorded in use in Thessalonica and it could reflect estate production. Bricks used in the circuit walls of Louloudies (fig.27), another fortified

³⁷⁵ Vitti 1993b:1696, 1707, reddish clay.

³⁷⁶ Hébrard 1920:22; Vitti 1993b:1697.

³⁷⁷ Makaronas (1950:307-9), discovered in the masonry of the Octagon at the palace bricks of the same size (in average 45 x 31 x 3.5-5cm., Vitti's type 3) and bearing the same simple markings; he therefore dated the Rotunda and the Octagon in the same Galerian phase.

³⁷⁸ 1 Roman *pes* (foot) is equal to 29.6 cm. See also Giuliani 1976:116-7 and Wilson-Jones 2000:41, 72, 234, n.53.

³⁷⁹ Vitti 1993b:1701-2. Steinby 1989:88-9. In Rome, brickyards were mainly owned by the emperor by the end of the 2nd century AD and were run by Imperial slaves and freedmen. Whether this was conscious 'control' over production or simply chance is not clear.

³⁸⁰ Vitti 1993b:1698.

³⁸¹ Vitruvius, *De Architectura*, V.10.2 and V.12.4.

³⁸² The brick stamp samples come from older studies by Omont 1894:196-214; Tafrali 1913:76-7, 151-4; Sotiriou 1918:figs. 24-5; Sotiriou 1952:116, 235; Hébrard 1920:31-2 and Mango 1950:19-27.

rural site some 80 km to the NW of Thessalonica, measure 32 x 27 x 4 cm.³⁸³. On the basis of bricks of similar type (though none is complete) which bear monogram marks, found in buildings within the settlement, Poulter argues for a 6th century date³⁸⁴.

BRICKSTAMPS

Bricks can sometimes bear stamps that help archaeologists date a site but in Thessalonica the marks consist mainly of a simple handmade 'S' or 'X'³⁸⁵. Since such marks appear on all three of Vitti's types of brick, they are at most an indication of local production. The two phases of construction in the Rotunda reveal this development in marking the material³⁸⁶. However, some of Thessalonica's buildings have yielded a small number of lettered brickstamps, variously published by Tafrali in 1913, Diehl in 1918, Sotiriou in 1918 (and later in 1952), Hébrard in 1920, Makaronas in 1950, Dyggve in 1958 and further studied by Vickers in 1969(b) and categorised by the latter in 1973(b), who also included eleven examples previously recorded by George in 1914-1918³⁸⁷ and two examples published by Gounaris in 1971³⁸⁸.

In his 1973(b) paper, Vickers tabulated 6 types and their provenances (fig.7, Table 1). The great majority belong to only two types I and II and their subdivisions: 22 examples from Acheiropoietos, 16 from the Rotunda, 9 from St. Demetrius (first phase), 6 from the city walls, 2 from Aghia Sofia church³⁸⁹ and just 1 from the church of Profitis Elias in the upper city³⁹⁰. All these samples bear the same monogram

³⁸³ Poulter 1998:500

³⁸⁴ Poulter 1998:500-2

³⁸⁵ Makaronas 1950:306; Vitti 1993b:1700.

³⁸⁶ Bardill 2004:27-8.

³⁸⁷ These are 11 brick stamp rubbings found in Acheiropoietos that have been reproduced from sketches by George and published by Myres 1936:90-1. Also, Cormack 1969:19-20; Vickers 1973(b):286.

³⁸⁸ Gounaris 1971:321, fig.5. However, the first sample comes from an unidentified building on Philippou and Venizelou St. and the second from the floor of a cistern north of St. Demetrius church. According to Gounaris, the second sample belongs to a building of a later date and it cannot be valid dating evidence.

³⁸⁹ We must mention here that the brickstamps from Aghia Sofia were found in the environs of the building and according to Gounaris (1971:312, 320) they probably belong to older buildings which existed before Aghia Sofia and possibly dated to the reign of Constantine.

³⁹⁰ Rautman (1990:296) informs us that the sample from Profitis Elias was found by Texier (1864:150-1) loose in the area of the church, which was thought to be the location of a 5th century palace (Vickers 1971:369-71). See also below, Ch.V

(=ENT)³⁹¹ and could be contemporary with one another³⁹². Vickers assigned them to the 5th century on the basis of their association in the City Wall with the Hormisdas inscription, which he would date *c.*AD 450 (see above, pp.36-7). The relatively large number of ENT bricks recorded from the Acheiropoietos, which can be dated around AD 450 on slightly more solid grounds (see above) reinforces the possibility. However, we do not know how early such stamps were introduced or how late they continued to be used in Thessalonica, and the bricks themselves could have been re-used in the buildings in which they were found (most in fact were loose finds). Therefore dating all buildings that have yielded ENT stamps to the 450s, as Vickers was tempted to do, is dangerous³⁹³.

A more recent and detailed study by Theocharidou in 2004 included samples found in 13 different locations of the wall circuit during research conducted between 1985 and 2000 (fig.8, with summary of her findings in the accompanying table). It becomes clear that bricks bearing the ENT marks were observed only in the primary construction phase of the outer wall. In contrast, the inner wall (which is claimed to be earlier than the outer, see above pp.35-6) contained bricks with single letters (B, E, S), or combination of letters that may be abbreviations of names or workshops. Depending on the length of time during which the ENT ligature was in use, the outer wall might be ascribed to the early, mid or late 5th century³⁹⁴. The homogeneity of the stamps in the outer wall might indicate not only a simultaneous construction but also a more systematic material sourcing and production practice as part of a well organised project, significantly different from that of the main walls³⁹⁵.

Jonathan Bardill's study of the 5th and 6th century brickstamps at Constantinople (2004) provides some valuable comparative evidence for Thessalonica. Despite the large amount of some 760 samples from the Constantinopolitan sites, Bardill

³⁹¹ Vickers (1973b:291), based on previous suggestions, tried to explain this monogram (=ENT, abbreviation of ENTIKTIONOS, a word with close parallels from papyri, an inscription from Alexandria and from a tile in Silivri), which possibly referred to an indiction and the letter A at the front possibly pointed to the first year of an indiction. Bardill (2008a:198) is not entirely convinced whether this ENT is an indiction date.

³⁹² Kleinbauer 1972:98.

³⁹³ Dr Bardill's advice on the chronology of brickstamps at Thessalonica and Constantinople was very helpful, especially in the process of analysing the available information from all sites. Also Bardill 2008(a):198.

³⁹⁴ Bardill 2004: 99; Theocharidou 2004:228.

³⁹⁵ Theocharidou 2004:227.

continuously points out how difficult it is to categorise brickstamps that come from undated monuments even if we have similarities with samples sourced from well dated sites. The attempt to date monuments using brickstamps as the only evidence, especially when these were found loose in rubble, is very risky, since the stamped bricks could all be recycled material. Bardill's samples are divided into two groups: 1) those from definitely 5th century sites³⁹⁶ and 2) those from well dated 6th century buildings³⁹⁷. The **5th century stamps (Group 1)**³⁹⁸ are mainly rectangular in shape with a single line of text, with no serifs, which almost always starts with the indiction abbreviation IN (for ENTIKTIONOΣ) followed by one or two letters for the indiction phase/date and followed by one or two abbreviated names (usually with the first two, three or four letters of the name). Sometimes the names are accompanied by a title or by a single accessory letter. In only one example the stamp starts and terminates with a cross. The bricks average 36.1-38.7cm. in length with a thickness of 4.1-5.2cm.³⁹⁹.

Sixth-century stamps (Group 2) at Constantinople⁴⁰⁰ are variously shaped (rectangular with a single line of text, rectangular with more than one text lines, circular, cruciform), carved in a more elaborate way than Group 1, often with serifs. Normally the stamps in this group do not include an indiction date, but when they do, they contain the abbreviation IN or INΔ (as an indication of indiction like Group 1 or sometimes EN, INΔI, HNΔ and HN instead), usually with a cross in front of the inscription (and sometimes in the middle or the end of it), an S-shaped or a C-shaped abbreviation sign (which were probably used as dividers for parts of the inscription) and longer name abbreviations (or sometimes full names). Unidentified monograms

³⁹⁶ These well dated sites are the Palace of Antiochus (c.429-433), St. John Stoudios (c.448-452) and the Cistern of Aspar (c.456-457). Samples from undated monuments that have been ascribed to this category are from the cistern of Siraselviler Caddesi (suggested date c.420/21-423/4 or 435/6-438/9), the cisterns in Gülhane (suggested date c.423/4-426/7 or 438/9-441-2), the remains near Mercan Caddesi (proposed date c.427/8-430/1 or 442/3-445/6 or 457/8-460/1), the drains of Mese (date c.424/5-428/9 or 439/40-443/4 or 454/5-458/9), Balaban Ağa Mescidi (date c.427/8-434/5 or 442/3-449/50 or 457/8-464/5) and Tokludedede Mescidi (date c. 428/9-431/2 or 443/4-446/7 or 458/9-461/2). Bardill 2004:90, 107-11.

³⁹⁷ These well dated sites are St. Polyeuktos (c.510-522), Aghia Sofia (532-537) and the Baths of Zeuxippos (after 532). Brickstamps from undated monuments that are ascribed to this category are from the remains of on Cemal Nadir Sokağı, those on İsmetiye Caddesi, and Tokludedede Mescidi. Bardill 2004:90, 111-7.

³⁹⁸ Bardill 2004:99.

³⁹⁹ Bardill 2004:105 (table 19).

⁴⁰⁰ Theocharidou 2004:221-35.

appear as well as Christograms in addition to the main script. The average size of the bricks is 35.1-38.7cm. in length, with a thickness of 3.6-4.8cm.⁴⁰¹.

From this analysis Bardill deduces that his Group 1 brickstamps were probably used between 415 and 459, mainly on the basis of the indiction feature that they all carry (and in combination with their provenance from dated buildings) as opposed to Group 2 (where the indiction feature is usually missing); he consequently assigns the latest samples of Group 1 to 459 and the earliest samples of Group 2 to 508⁴⁰².

Bardill also discusses some rarer types, including some with a simple X fingermark, which were found in the piers of the Constantinople hippodrome, of a small size (26 x 26 x 5cm.) and have been dated to the Constantinian period by the coinage found in the associated floors⁴⁰³.

Taking into consideration Bardill's, Vitti's (1993b) and Vicker's (1973b) studies we can attempt a brief comparison between the samples from Thessalonica and those from Constantinople:

- a. Thessalonica's brickstamps have a rectangular shape similar to those from Constantinople Group 1 (5th century) but apart from the single lettered examples (see below, 'e'), the Thessalonican stamps gathered by Vickers have text, which in most cases is carved with serifs (unlike the 5th century Constantinopolitan Group 1) and contain a cross (at the start, middle or end or any combination of the three, again unlike Group 1).
- b. Our Thessalonica samples bear the same indiction marking ENT whereas in Constantinople the indiction marking is IN.
- c. This Thessalonica indiction marking is combined with letters indicating the phase of indiction similarly to Constantinople's Group 1.
- d. Some Thessalonican samples do not contain any additional abbreviations but on certain occasions we do have the presence of single capital letters. These letters are placed above or below the main script line and are not part of the

⁴⁰¹ During the reign of Justin II (565-578) bricks decrease in size (35.5 x 33.5 x 4.1cm.) and become even smaller in the reign of Maurice (582-602) with a length of just 31.4-35cm. See Bardill 2004:106.

⁴⁰² Bardill 2004:100-1.

⁴⁰³ Bardill 2004:118.

- central legend thus reminding more the samples from Constantinople's Group 2. The particular Thessalonica examples are observed in certain stamps mainly from Acheiropoietos (6 samples, ACH6-9 and 14-15, fig.7) and from the Rotunda (2 samples, ROT1 and 3, fig.7), where monograms such as Γ, K, Θ, might indicate a year of indiction or the maker's/workshop's initial.
- e. The appearance of the cross in almost every single stamp brings in that respect the Thessalonica samples closer to Group 2. We must also mention here the existence of a number of stamps bearing only a cross and without an inscription [1 sample from St. Demetrius (DEM9, fig.7) 1 from the Rotunda (ROT17, fig.7), and 3 from the city walls (WALL9 and 16-17, fig.7)] and those examples having unidentified monograms Α, Θ, Ω, Λ, Π (sometimes combined with star-shaped objects) – all from the city walls (WALL12-14 and 19-22, fig.7). Vickers ascribes the stamps with the cross to the 5th century phase of the applicable buildings but he does not talk about the samples of the unidentified single monograms, which to me seems possible that they could be of a later date (possibly 6th century) as they are totally different from the other Thessalonica samples and they do not mention an indiction (similarly to a large number of samples from Constantinople's Group 2). We must point out here that none of the Constantinople samples features just one isolated single capital letter (without adjoining text) like in Thessalonica. Although we are not advised by Vickers whether these samples are fragments of stamps or not, we can assume that they belong to full bricks, and in that case it appears to be a different type of brick that has not been found so far in Constantinople. The star-shaped objects mentioned above also differ from the stars occasionally used in Constantinopolitan bricks of Group 2 and even the two samples of crosses from Thessalonica (DEM9 and WALL9) do not correlate stylistically with any examples containing crosses from Constantinople.
- f. In Constantinople, the thicknesses of bricks rather than their sizes can indicate a date. There is, for instance, a very clear change from the early 6th century to the late 6th century (dropping from 3.69 to 3.34 cm.)⁴⁰⁴. It is not possible to make similar observations for the Thessalonica bricks mainly due to the smaller sample and their problematic provenance.

⁴⁰⁴ Bardill 2004:105-6.

- g. Constantinopolitan bricks (length of Group 1: 36.1-38.7cm. / length of Group 2: 35.1-38.7cm.) are significantly smaller than those from Thessalonica and they do not correspond with any of Vitti's size types. The brick samples from the suburban villa at Palaeokastro (32 x 22 x 3.5 cm.) seem to be closer in size with Group 2 but still a bit smaller.

The above comparisons demonstrate that the Thessalonica samples probably come from numerous unidentified phases of building construction and it is rather difficult to categorise them into typological variations of dating value. The presence of numerous characteristics from both Groups 1 and 2 combined with other unique features might indicate an independent brick production practice in Thessalonica possibly by local workshops, which were able to incorporate various styles in brick stamping sometimes different and other times more similar to the ones from the new capital. Therefore the task to assign them within any of the two Constantinopolitan groups and ascribe them with certainty to a precise chronological context is tough, especially when the dating of the relevant buildings is so problematic and other evidence is missing. The small number of samples from Thessalonica and the history of their discovery and publication (some of them found scattered in rubble debris, reproduced from sketches, and so on) makes them a weak argument towards the secure dating of any building. This becomes even clearer when we read Bardill's enhanced study based on hundreds of samples; even then the dating of certain monuments can still be problematic. However, at least the possible indiction dating suggests some 'official' function for those stamps.

Similar bricks to those from Thessalonica come from Louloudies (fig.27), located c.10km from the modern Katerini and c.80km from Thessalonica. Although the fortification of the site (*quadriburgium*), measuring 80 x 90m., is dated to the 6th century⁴⁰⁵ what is believed to be an *episkopeion* lies within it, consisting of the bishop's headquarters with the main building (45 x 24.50m.), a basilica (35.50 x

⁴⁰⁵ Marki 1996:240-7. The site was destroyed by an earthquake in mid-6th century, which probably forced the local bishop to move to another site nearby. The area was used as a cemetery and storage space. Two further earthquakes destroyed the older remains of the *episkopeion* and the entire area was used and functioned exclusively as workshops with a final abandonment in the 7th century.

19m.)⁴⁰⁶ and other functional space. The main bishop's building apparently took over an earlier residence (dated possibly to as early as the late 3rd century) with a peristyle courtyard, an apsidal hall (18.50 x 9.30m.) with an apse (diameter of 7.20m.)⁴⁰⁷ raised on a step (0.20m.) and three adjacent rooms⁴⁰⁸. The site has yielded a small number of mould-made but fragmentary brickstamps found laid on the floor of the *episkopeion*, replacing the original marble slabs of the earlier building (which according to the excavator was the building's first phase⁴⁰⁹); these stamped bricks are believed to belong to the second construction phase (6th century) of the building⁴¹⁰. Poulter has categorised all samples in 6 different types⁴¹¹, amongst of which at least two (1 and 3, containing complex monograms reading Epiphan̄iou and Apollōniou, and possibly a bar monogram of Phokās) have very close parallels with those found in the 6th or 7th century material from St. Demetrius in Thessalonica⁴¹² but do not have any close resemblances with the rest of our samples from Thessalonica. Despite their fragmentary nature, Poulter points out that their monograms were created in negative mould, a technique very common in Macedonia and Thessalonica during the early Byzantine era as opposed to the rest of Greece, Asia Minor and Constantinople where stamps were formed in the Roman tradition⁴¹³.

⁴⁰⁶ Marki 1993:226-8. The basilica, whose building material was taken away and re-used in the course of the centuries, had similar Theodosian capitals with St. Demetrius in Thessalonica. It has been dated to the first quarter of the 6th century on the basis of its architectural design plan and its sculptural characteristics (such as three buttresses for the apse, a cruciform brick *enkaīnion*, an ambo with two sets of steps, a nave decorated with marble slabs and aisles with irregular marble tesserae, and Theodosian capitals) but it was severely destroyed by an earthquake by the end of the same century and it was soon re-constructed.

⁴⁰⁷ Marki 1993:225. The apse floor was decorated with a mosaic divided into two panels surrounded by a band of triangles. The first (north) panel is filled with imbrication and the second (south) panel has the depiction of two deer flanking a kantharos with vine leaves.

⁴⁰⁸ Marki 1993:226. Their surviving floors were covered with mosaics with geometrical patterns such as interlocking diamonds creating octagons, interlocking circles containing squares and interlocking octagons containing cross shaped objects. Marki dated (with the help of Atzaka) these mosaics to the second half of the 5th century on the basis of their patterns. No further excavation was conducted below these floors.

⁴⁰⁹ Marki 1996:225-6. Further excavations under the floor of the main hall revealed a mosaic floor with interlocking octagons. The excavator dated this mosaic to the 3rd century and suggested that it belonged to an earlier building without further explanation on the identity of this building or the suggested dating.

⁴¹⁰ Marki 1993:225.

⁴¹¹ Poulter 1998:495-8: 1).ΕΠΙΦΑΝΙΟΥ (Epiphan̄iou). 2).ΑΠΟΛΛΩΝΙΟΥ (Apollōniou). 3).Stamps containing a circle with an inner line connecting letters Ω and Φ [probably reading ΦΩΚΑΣ (Phokās)]. 4). Stamps with a vertical line passing through a circle containing letter Φ accompanied by a K and possibly a Y. 5). Stamps containing letters K (in circle) and A with lines forming possibly letter Φ. Stamps containing simple crosses or letter X.

⁴¹² Poulter 1998:499; Bardill 2004:199-200.

⁴¹³ Poulter 1998:498.

The Louloudies bricks vary in thickness between 2.8 and 4.5cm. and only one preserved a complete edge measuring 20.5cm., which is probably the length and slightly smaller than the unstamped bricks (exact size not mentioned) found at the eastern curtain wall⁴¹⁴. Despite the later dating of these samples, their size is significantly smaller than any other examples that we have examined so far and it can reflect a reduction in size similarly with that of the Constantinopolitan samples of the 6th century onwards.

BRICKWORK MODULES

Vitti explored the possibility (on analogy with methods used for analysing brickwork in Rome⁴¹⁵) that variations in the ratio between the thickness of the bricks and the amount of mortar with which they were laid could indicate different construction phases and may have a chronological value. He measured the height of 4-5 courses of brick and 4-5 courses of mortar in 10 examples and was able to divide the results in three categories:

Module 1: 46-48cm.

Palace Northern Peristyle and adjacent rooms (4 courses of brick, 48cm.)⁴¹⁶, the Octagon (South corner of the Eastern niche, 46.5cm.)⁴¹⁷ and the baths under St. Demetrius church (48cm.)⁴¹⁸.

Module 2: 40-42.5cm.

Baths under St. Demetrius (41cm.)⁴¹⁹, the rectangular room of the polygonal structure on Gounari St. (40cm.), the Octagon vestibule (40cm.)⁴²⁰ and the nymphaeum to the east (42.5cm.)⁴²¹.

Module 3: 36-38 cm.

⁴¹⁴ Poulter 1998:494.

⁴¹⁵ see Lugli 1957:585-621.

⁴¹⁶ Vitti 1993b:1704-5.

⁴¹⁷ Vitti 1993b:1703-4.

⁴¹⁸ Vitti 1993b:1706.

⁴¹⁹ Vitti 1993b:1706.

⁴²⁰ Vitti 1993b:1701.

⁴²¹ Vitti 1993b:1701.

East wall of the main room at the polygonal building on Gounari St. (38cm.), apse of the Basilica at the palace (37cm.), SE city walls (Melenikou St.) (36-37cm.)⁴²².

Vitti does not attribute any chronological value to these variations, preferring to leave the question open, pending the acquisition of further data. He only repeats the dating of the building as proposed by the excavators, for example 305-311 for the samples from the Basilica, Octagon, nymphaeum and the polygonal building of Gounari St. Conclusively, Vitti's module system cannot be considered as a reliable method to identify clear chronological phases in any of our examined buildings.

STONE

The rubble stone employed in the *opus mixtum* is generally green schist⁴²³. This forms part of the local bedrock, which contains various volcanic and metamorphic rocks ranging from other types of schists, to amphibolites, marbles and gneiss, but green schist predominates in the areas to the NE and E of Thessalonica (fig.24)⁴²⁴. Unfortunately, we do not know where the local quarries were during the Roman period; possibly in the hills immediately outside Thessalonica, such as Mt Chortiatis and Chalcidiki. Schist also occurs in the bedrock within the city, in areas such as 40 Ekklesies, Evangelistria and Theatro Melina where very old quarries are situated and might have also been in use during Roman times⁴²⁵. The blocks are generally hand-sized and irregularly shaped, dressed only on the outside. This is due to the fact that the stone naturally fractures this way.

Stone blocks forming thresholds, door and window frames, arches, colonnades and paving are generally of white or greyish limestone or marble. A source of limestone in the immediate proximity of Thessalonica is Mt Kamila; others are situated in the area of the Vikos gorge (250km from Thessalonica) and are parts of northwest Greece (fig.24)⁴²⁶. It is very possible that white marble was imported from numerous regions of the empire in re-used state but several good sources were close to hand. One major

⁴²² Vitti 1993b:1706-8.

⁴²³ Mountrakis 1985:27.

⁴²⁴ Higgins 1996:106-10.

⁴²⁵ Information on the local schist has been provided by Prof. Mountrakis.

⁴²⁶ Information on sources for marble and limestone has been provided by Prof. Mountrakis.

source was the island of Thasos⁴²⁷, c.220 kms NE of Thessalonica, which has alternances of calcitic and dolomitic marbles (white colour) intercalated by gneisses and schists. Three principal quarries there supplied white and greyish white marble to a wide market from the mid-1st century AD and were apparently brought under imperial control in the 5th century AD, if not before⁴²⁸. Analyses have proven that the panels of the Arch of Galerius are made of Thasian marble. Similar marble to the Thasian comes from the location of Barbara in Chalchidiki, and from Kavala and Drama (around 120 km. northeast of Thessalonica). Black marble can be found in the region of Kozani (around 100km. to the southwest) and green marble (*verde antico*) near Larissa (around 150km. southeast). Other Greek islands (Chios, Lesbos, Paros, Naxos, Skyros, Tinos), areas of mainland Greece (Attica) and Asia Minor were also possible sources of marble imports (see below ‘Marble Paving and Veneer’).

DECORATION OF FLOORS AND WALLS

Given the difficulties of dating buildings on the basis of materials and techniques of construction, archaeologists have turned for help to elements of interior decoration. Floor mosaics especially have played the major role in dating many buildings, since the walls may have been completely robbed out or reduced to floor level in the search for building materials for re-use, whereas a floor of mosaic tesserae, of minimal material value, would often be left untouched⁴²⁹.

MOSAICS

Tessellated mosaic floors are often found in baths, basilicas and churches as well as private houses. The style of the mosaics, their size, motifs, iconography and, in some cases, the special characteristics of the *tesserae* (such as material, size, colour) are all potentially diagnostic of date. In 1998 Panayota Atzaka-Assimakopoulou (henceforth Atzaka), building on earlier studies by Kolarik⁴³⁰ and Spiro⁴³¹, produced a corpus of

⁴²⁷ Sodini 2002:131.

⁴²⁸ Donato 2003:201-2.

⁴²⁹ Pachta 2011:122. An analysis of a mortar sample taken from the bedding of the Octagon floor produced the following results: the plaster consists mainly of limestone and pozzolana aggregates and tile powder (grain diameter of 0.5cm.), with a chemical analysis of CaO: 36.1, SiO₂+Al₂O₃+Fe₂O₃: 30.3, insoluble components: 58.9%, porosity of 33.75%, tensile strength of 1.97Mpa. Dr Pachta has advised that these characteristics are an indication for a very strong mortar suitable for good stability and protection of the building from (at least) medium sized earthquakes.

⁴³⁰ Kolarik 1984:445-79 and *id.* 1994:171-83.

⁴³¹ Spiro 1978.

mosaics from Macedonia and Thrace, setting them in the wider context of the Balkans and mainland Greece. Her catalogue contained around 190 examples from Thessalonica, ranging in date from the mid-2nd century to the late 6th century AD. Atzaka centered her study on the mosaics of the 'Galerius complex', analysing their characteristics such as their patterns, colour scheme and type of space, and then categorised the rest as pre-Galerian, Galerian and post-Galerian. Her chronology was based primarily on the dating provided in the excavators' reports and Vitti's analysis but she often proposes a more precise dating from the comparative study of examples within the corpus of mosaics themselves.

Atzaka identified at Thessalonica some 27 different varieties of vegetal designs, 10 examples of animal figures and 6 human (very fragmentary), 3 kinds of architectural motifs, but the great majority consist of geometrical patterns (around 170). In order to fit with the Galerian chronology, Atzaka reasoned that the workshops in Thessalonica were leaders in the field. However, a more careful investigation of the available sample shows a great majority of comparanda of later date. The cataloguing of the most frequent mosaic patterns in Table 1 (see pp.164) demonstrates a series of popular patterns employed in Thessalonica. Being predominantly geometric, their typology encompasses motifs such as intersecting circles forming quatrefoils, chequerboard, ivy scroll with heart shaped leaves, Solomon knots and intersecting octagons, all broadly datable by association with dateable examples outside Thessalonica. The cross examination of available examples will lead to more precise chronological parameters (see Ch.V).

Despite the wide similarities among the mosaics of the 'Galerius complex', Atzaka divided them into two iconographical groups: 1) mosaics with two types of key-shaped meander (North Corridor of the Northern Peristyle, the apse and vestibule of the Basilica, polygonal structure on Gounari St.), and 2) mosaics with squares attached to diamonds, swastika-type of meander in perspective and compositions with octagons (West Corridor of Southern Peristyle, East, South and West Corridors of the Northern Peristyle and other fragmentary floor mosaics on 16 Gounari St.)⁴³². Atzaka acknowledges that the chronology of the palace mosaics is problematic, and suggests

⁴³² Atzaka 1998:101-2.

that although they may all be considered to belong at the beginning of the 4th century it is very possible that some parts might be later, completed during the stay of Licinius and Constantine. Although we do not have much evidence, it is very possible that various modifications might have taken place throughout the lifetime of the building⁴³³ (see Ch.III).

Coarse mosaic. Atzaka's study also defined and analysed the use of the technique known as 'coarse mosaic', which consists mainly of broken fragments of marble veneer, re-used either unshaped or roughly shaped into large square *tesserae* (4-5 cm²) combined occasionally with complete elements of *opus sectile* such as rectangles and diamonds set in patterns⁴³⁴. Although isolated examples can be found in earlier periods⁴³⁵, the same technique (called 'mosaico a grande tessere irregolari' in Italian terminology) has been identified by F. Guidobaldi and A. Guiglia Guidobaldi (1983) in dateable buildings in Rome from the mid-4th to later 5th century AD⁴³⁶. Atzaka identified a 4th - 5th century phase at many sites in Thessalonica and Northern Greece where older and more ornate mosaic floors were replaced by these coarse mosaics⁴³⁷ (see also Ch.V). The presence of coarse mosaics in Thessalonica is so frequent that the Guidobaldis suggested that Thessalonica could have been a major production centre⁴³⁸. Indeed it is a particular feature of Late Antiquity in Northern Greece (Thessaly, Epirus and Macedonia) and the Balkans⁴³⁹. Good examples in an early Christian Basilica near Amphipolis (c.100km east of Thessalonica) dated to c.6th century compare closely with some of those in Thessalonica⁴⁴⁰. The technique is less common in Southern Greece (Rhodes, Crete, Sparta)⁴⁴¹.

In her latest article (published in 2008), Atzaka has revisited the mosaics of Thessalonica, providing further examples from new discoveries, mainly from the

⁴³³ Tiveriou 1995:54; Menzios 1995/96:350 and Atzaka 1998:103.

⁴³⁴ Atzaka 1998:161-78.

⁴³⁵ E.g. in the last two centuries BC on Delos (Bruneau 1969:331-2; Dunbabin 1979:268; Atzaka 1998:162), at a Hellenistic residence in Amphipolis made of pieces of limestone (Lazaridis 1983:36), in Southern Italy and Sicily (Dunbabin 1979:265-6; Salzmann 1982:73-4 and Dunbabin 1994:29-30), and during the 1st and 2nd centuries AD in the Peloponnese, Athens, Euboea, Aegean islands and, in a few cases, in Northern Greece (Kontoleon 1961:197; Atzaka 1998:163-5).

⁴³⁶ Guidobaldi/Guiglia Guidobaldi 1983:198-261, 349-459.

⁴³⁷ Atzaka 1998:158-65.

⁴³⁸ Guidobaldi/Guiglia Guidobaldi 1983:252-4, n.466; Atzaka 1998:168.

⁴³⁹ See Atzaka 1984:23-33 and Atzaka 1996:165-78.

⁴⁴⁰ Karivieri 2008:195-7

⁴⁴¹ Atzaka 1998:166

upper city, that bear close stylistic resemblances with the palace. We will examine these samples in detail in the next chapters.

MARBLE PAVING AND VENEER

Veneer made of marble and other hard stones cut into a range of different sizes and shapes (*opus sectile*) was the most prestigious form of decoration for floors and walls in all categories of building during the first three centuries AD, and became increasingly widespread in the Later Empire⁴⁴². Occasionally style and technique may provide clues to dating, but generally the same techniques and types of designs are found employed throughout the Mediterranean during this whole period, with few or no changes except in the particular range of marbles employed. And while some of the types of marbles can have a chronological value, since different quarries were opened up at different times, the value diminishes in the later Empire, since (unlike mosaic floors) marble veneer was regularly recycled. At major urban sites (like Thessalonica) veneer is rarely found in situ, having been stripped for re-use both during antiquity and subsequently: its presence is usually identifiable only by the imprints left in the mortar bedding. Sometimes the stumps of slabs which formed the lowest level of veneer on the walls still remain in the angle between the floor and the wall, since they were not worth the effort of extracting.

The marbles in the floor of the Octagon, which is thought to date from the 4th century onwards (see Ch.III), were analysed by Lazzarini in 2004, who divided them into three groups according to their geographical sources: 1. Greece and the islands of the Aegean: white marble from Thasos, grey marble from Lesbos, green breccia from Larissa in Thessaly, green porphyry from Sparta, variegated green marble from Euboea, yellow/red variegated marble from Skyros, pink-grey marble from Chios, and red limestone from cape Tenaros (Mani). 2. SW Asia Minor: black/red breccias from Teos (near Izmir) and red limestone from Iasos (near Milasa) and 3. Egypt: honey-coloured alabaster from Hatnub and other locations in the Nile valley, red porphyry and grey granite from the Eastern desert⁴⁴³. It may be doubted, however, that the marble will have been quarried afresh for this floor; more likely it will have been re-

⁴⁴² Guidobaldi 1985; Dunbabin 1999:261.

⁴⁴³ Lazzarini 2004:126.

cycled from earlier buildings and/or bought secondhand⁴⁴⁴. So the value of identifying the different types is limited – at best it allows comparison with other assemblages in Thessalonica or elsewhere – but in all cases the actual source of the stone may have been secondary.

In 2005, Vitti took the *opus sectile ēmblema* panels from the Octagon (sized 90 x 90cm., figs 44-5) and compared them with sixteen examples from other buildings in the city, whose possible dates range from the 4th to the 7th century AD⁴⁴⁵. There are three types of buildings where marble pavements are observed. The first type refers to ‘imperial’ buildings such as the Octagon and the polygonal building on Gounari St., the second applies to private residences and the third one to Christian buildings such as Aghia Sofia and the baptistery of St. Demetrius (dated to the 7th century)⁴⁴⁶. Vitti points out that the marbles employed for the *emblēmata* in St. Demetrius are the same as those from the Octagon, which led him to the suggestion that this marble could have been reused. He was also unable to detect any specific patterns in the employed designs.

WALL PAINTING AND STUCCO

Given that most buildings found in excavations are reduced to their floor level, it is hardly surprising that traces of wall paintings and moulded stuccoes are rare and fragmentary. Those that have been found [e.g. houses (1) and (10), see Appendix] were badly preserved and/or poorly recorded. They appear to be variations on architectural schemes, combining painted columns or pilasters and painted coloured stone and marble paneling, which are also widely attested elsewhere in the Greek East during the 2nd-6th centuries AD⁴⁴⁷. The walls of the corridor of residence cat.no.1, were decorated with a portico scheme, the spaces between the columns containing geometrical patterns⁴⁴⁸; the north wall of the main hall in residence cat.no.10 has colonnades framing panels or plaques, imitating veneer in *opus sectile* techniques

⁴⁴⁴ Corcoran – DeLaine 1994:267-8

⁴⁴⁵ Vitti 2005:695-711: the Octagon, the polygonal building on Gounari St (which he identifies as the palace *triclinium*), our residences cat.nos 1, 3 and 7 and other unidentified buildings such as those on 33 Platonos St., 17 Athinas St., Iasonidou-Arrianou St., 3 Agapis St., 59 Dragoumi St., 6 Prasakaki St., 3-5 Menelaou St., 63 Egnatia St., 10-12 Mitropolitou Gennadiou St., 1 Pringipos Nikolaou St.

⁴⁴⁶ Atzaka 1980:86-7, 95; Vitti 2005:698, 705.

⁴⁴⁷ See Strocka 1977 on slope houses of Ephesus. Mitsopoulou-Leon 1976; Lang-Auinger 1996; Lang-Auinger – Assamer 2003; Krinzing 2003; Rathmayr 2005

⁴⁴⁸ Siganidou 1971:385-7.

(similar to the Second Pompeian style)⁴⁴⁹. Unfortunately no photographs or drawings were taken and the excavators' descriptions do not extend to details of the forms of colonnades, the range of colours or the type of marbles they imitated. And although these two examples from Thessalonica are both dateable by the excavators to the early 5th century AD, not being able to have a comparison with examples from elsewhere it is impossible to reach a more secure dating for them.

SPOLIA

Although the presence of spolia has not really been discussed thoroughly in available studies, it appears from a closer look that they could indeed play a vital role in the investigation of chronological clues in the context of late Roman Thessalonica. In the case of the city walls for instance, the integration of inscribed tombstones with the addition of an inner support wall provided a very useful *terminus post quem*. This is also an indication that city walls were repaired urgently, using tombstones from the nearby cemeteries in order to complete the work⁴⁵⁰. The presence of a plethora of stamped bricks from all over the wall circuit as well as from other buildings could point to different construction phases or even the employment of particular workshops or change of workforce. The detection of possible hippodrome architectural elements in the western wall is also a great tool to explore the construction phases of certain sectors of the city's defence wall combined with recorded historical events. The use of marble also falls into the same category and requires an in-depth survey that will potentially reveal a chronological sequence of many buildings in Thessalonica, a process that will tie in well with socio-economical changes and significant events in the history of the city.

⁴⁴⁹ Vokotopoulou 1973:409-10; Eleftheriadou 1990:332-4. See also Appendix.

⁴⁵⁰ Touratsoglou 1988:19.

Chapter III

The ‘Palace of Galerius’

3.1 Introduction

This chapter centres on one of the main residential complexes of the late antique city. The palace is discussed first in the thesis because it represents one well studied example (although notably with many issues) of a late Roman city residence of the highest status. It helps show the architectural trends to be seen in other smaller houses, but of high status too, and which will be discussed as this essay progresses. The palace’s art will also provide models for the embellishment of urban houses and will assist in detecting parallels of interior decoration techniques and distinguish potential chronological phases.

Upon their discovery in the 1950s the buildings in and around Navarinou Square (figs 28-29) were immediately identified as Galerius' palace. They are certainly structures of high status and belong to the Late Roman period (AD 300-600), but they show multiple phases and what is actually Galerian, if anything, is very unclear. This chapter will investigate all available components that point to a clearer picture for the dating of the complex.

C. Galerius Valerius Maximianus, Caesar to Diocletian from 293, and Augustus of the East from 305, based himself in Thessalonica for four years in 299-303, then in Serdica between 303 and 308/9 after which he returned to Thessalonica from 308 until his death in 311 (see Ch.I, pp.13). Other high imperial officials (governors of the Province of Macedonia) had been based in the city before him and more followed after. Later emperors known (mainly from ecclesiastical sources) to have resided in Thessalonica for at least short periods of time are Licinius in 323⁴⁵¹ (see Ch.I, pp.14-15), Constantine in 323-6⁴⁵², possibly Julian in 360-3, Theodosius in 379/80, 391 and

⁴⁵¹ Zosimus (*Historia Nova*, II.28) mentions that Licinius was sent to Thessalonica where he was hanged but we cannot be certain whether he resided at a palace or somewhere else.

⁴⁵² The presence of Constantine in Thessalonica is attested by Zosimus (*H.N.*, II.21) and *Origo Constantini Imperatoris* (21) and the laws that he issued from there (*C.Th.* IV.8.6 = *C.J.* VIII.46.10,

394⁴⁵³, Valentinian II with his family in c.389/90⁴⁵⁴, Theodosius II in c.424/5⁴⁵⁵, Valentinian III and Eudoxia in December of 437⁴⁵⁶, (see Ch.I, pp.24), Constans II possibly in 662⁴⁵⁷ and Justinian II in 688/9⁴⁵⁸. None of the relevant written sources specify where Galerius or any of the other imperial visitors resided when in the city, but a ‘palace’ features in reports of the martyrdom of St. Demetrius in 306 and Galerius’ own death⁴⁵⁹, and such a facility can be presumed to have existed, on the model of all other tetrarchic capitals. This does not necessarily mean that there was ‘a palace of Galerius’ in the sense of one he had built for himself. Ammianus Marcellinus states clearly that the Caesars appointed by Diocletian were mobile and did not reside anywhere permanently⁴⁶⁰. On the other hand, the mass of routine administration associated with the position of the emperor required a fixed base, where records could be kept, with a body of professional staff to man it, a function best served by the palace at Thessalonica, like the palaces of Rome, Milan and Constantinople.

Some kind of official residence for the use of the Roman governor had probably been a fixture in Thessalonica ever since it became the capital of the province of Macedonia in 120 BC, and so when Galerius chose Thessalonica as his base it likely already possessed a palace of some size and complexity. To judge by examples

C.Th. XIII.5.4, *C.Th.* II.17.1). Also, Alföldi 1969:96; Barnes 1982:69 and 75; Hattersley-Smith 1996:14-15.

⁴⁵³ Zosimus, *H.N.*, IV.25, 27 and 48; Eunapius, *Fragmenta Historicorum Graecorum*, 55; *C.Th.* X.10.14; Croke 1981:479; Hattersley-Smith 1996:17.

⁴⁵⁴ Zosimus, *H.N.*, IV.43 and 48.

⁴⁵⁵ Socrates VII.24; Olympiodorus frag. 43, 1-2.

⁴⁵⁶ Marcellinus Comes, *Chronicon*, p.79 under 437; Socrates Scholasticus, *Historia Ecclesiastica*, VII.32 and 44; Philostorgius, *Historia Ecclesiastica*, XII.13

⁴⁵⁷ Theophanes, *Chronographia*, p.348, under A.M.6153; Setton 1950:541, n.157; Hattersley-Smith 1996:29.

⁴⁵⁸ Theophanes, *Chronographia*, p.354, under A.M.6180; Seeck 1919:366; Mentzos 1995-1996:350-1; Hattersley-Smith 1996:32-3.

⁴⁵⁹ *Miracles of St. Demetrius: Miracle* I.22 ‘..δια το μακράν αφεστηκέναι το πραιτώριον των υπάρχων..’ (= ‘..the distant praetorium of the rulers’) and 23 ‘.. αυτόπορος κάτεισιν εις το πραιτώριον αυτου’ [= ‘..he walked down towards the (ruler’s) praetorium’]. Lactantius, *De Mortibus Persecutorum*, XXXIII: ‘...Odor it non modo per palatium, sed totam civitatem pervadit’. (= ‘...The stench was so foul as to pervade not only the palace, but even the whole city’). These sources although they mention the palace, they provide no concrete evidence on its construction or age.

⁴⁶⁰ Ammianus Marcellinus 14.11.10: ‘Quibus subserebat non adeo vetusexemplum, quod Diocletiano et eius collegae, ut apparitores Caesares non resides sed ultro citroque discurrentes, obdemperebant, et in Syria Augusti vehiculum irascentis, per spatium mille passuum fere pedesantegressus est Galerius purpuratus’ (= ‘To this he added an example of not so very great antiquity, that Diocletian and his colleague were obeyed by their Caesars as by attendants, who did not remain in one place but hastened about hither and thither, and that in Syria Galerius, clad in purple, walked for nearly a mile before the chariot of his Augustus when the latter was angry with him’).

elsewhere (e.g. the so-called ‘palace of the Dux Ripae’ at Dura Europos, fig.97, and Diocletian’s palace at Split, fig.98)⁴⁶¹ we can suppose that by the 3rd century AD, if not before, such a residence was probably located on the waterfront, commanding a view to and from the sea.

3.2 Available Studies

The archaeological evidence certainly favours the location of a large palatial complex to the southeast of the city centre, beside the hippodrome (fig.28). It is thought to have been begun by Galerius at the same time as the erection of the Arch commemorating his triumph in 298 (see Ch.II). It is usually reconstructed (as in Ward-Perkins’ plan fig.28) with one entrance near the Arch, on the other side of the junction of the main E-W street (‘Via Egnatia’ on Ward-Perkins’ plan - known as the ‘Via Regia’ to local archaeologists), beside the hippodrome starting gates, and to have extended from there, alongside the hippodrome, almost all the way to the sea front (see pp.43), covering a total area of c.150,000 m². Only a small fraction of the relevant area has been exposed, principally in and around Navarinou Square, which lies about 300m. south of the Arch, and where some 16,000m² of buildings were excavated in the early 1960s, reports appearing in *Arch. Deltion* from 1963 onwards. The only available general plan, however, is that published by Knithakis in 1975, as part of his study of the Octagon, which is used here (fig.29).

The first scholars who attempted to study the extremely fragmentary areas of the palatial complex more methodically, habitually considered the area as part of the palace of Galerius probably because of the presence of the Arch, which had long been associated with him. In his study of the Octagon, Makaronas (1950), writing before the systematic excavations at Navarinou Square, considered the building to be Galerian with no further explanation. His suggestion (actually mistaken) that the palace area was built ‘afresh’, occupying a Hellenistic cemetery area is constantly repeated in numerous subsequent publications, Vitti’s study⁴⁶² being one of them. The ‘Galerian’ identity of the complex became even stronger following a study of the Small Arch of Galerius by Tiveriou (1995), who (seemed to have) convinced most of

⁴⁶¹ Rostovtzeff 1952:1-21 and Wilkes 1993.

⁴⁶² Vitti 1996:105-18.

her contemporary scholars about her proposed 308-311 dating for the Small Arch and consequently the dating of the Southern Peristyle and the rest of the complex (see below, pp.73-5). In fact, numerous articles dealing with the complex that followed this study rested their chronological attributions on Tiveriou's proposition. Mentzos in 1995 initially proposed a functional unity of the entire complex, extending from the Rotunda to the Southern Peristyle, and suggested a possible Galerian date based on the Small Arch and the dating proposed by Tiveriou⁴⁶³. More recently (2010) however he has proposed an earlier phase of the area occupying Northern Peristyle's North Corridor and the Basilica itself and a later chronology for the Octagon (see below).

3.3 The Complex

Some seven units can be distinguished within the visible palace remains (fig.29), all broadly on the same alignment and evidently interconnected with one another, but also noticeably disjointed. At the south-west corner is the 'Octagon' (fig.29, 'O') and its vestibule ('V'), which faced south (towards the sea), opening onto a large courtyard known as the 'Southern Peristyle' ('SP'), only the northward sector of which is known. Paired with the Octagon to the east, separated by a wide intervening corridor (rooms 26-27-28), was another set of buildings, only partly excavated but incorporating cisterns and a fountain room or 'Nymphaeum' ('N') on their northeast side, connected with traces of elaborately polygonal structures (rooms 22, 22a and 23). The latter, and perhaps the whole 'block', could be a set of baths. The corridor led north to connect with another equally wide corridor which ran around the 'Northern Peristyle' ('NP'). This faced north and was connected on the east with a large basilical hall ('Basilica'), also facing north, which was joined along its eastern flank to the hippodrome (see fig.28). To the west of the Northern Peristyle there are indications that a large aisled building (fig.29, 'WB') adjoined it, placed at right angles. A recent excavation on the plot of 20 Palaion Patron Germanou St. in the area of 'WB' (fig.49 and no.39 in fig.29) revealed a level surface composed of unevenly sized marble slabs (ranging from c.0.60 x 1.60-1.90m. to 0.90 x 2.70m.) with orientation NW-SE, probably part of a ceremonial street (see below). To the north of the Northern Peristyle, there are traces of two other rectilinear buildings: that on the

⁴⁶³ Mentzos 1995/6:340-1; Mentzos 2001/2:60.

west (fig.29, 'NB') looks as if it could be another peristyle, with a large circular building in the centre; that on the east ('A'), in line with the Basilica, is too fragmentary to tell but could be an atrium to the Basilica. Yet further to the north, still in line with the Basilica, a separate site at Gounari St, about 180m. south of the Galerius Arch, contains a small polygonal structure, preserved in isolation now, but evidently once part of a larger complex ('P' in fig.28).

The dating of all these buildings is open to question, for the reasons explained in Chapter II, although the general consensus still favours the idea that the majority were completed under Galerius or in the years immediately after his death⁴⁶⁴. Conservation work on the Northern Peristyle since 1995 has shown that its site was occupied previously by houses and workshops of the 2nd century AD⁴⁶⁵ and excavations in 1998 and 2001 to a depth of 1.80m. below the ground level in the South Corridor (fig.29, no.15) of the Northern Peristyle found traces of mosaic floors and frescoes from high-status buildings that previously occupied the area but were destroyed by fire in the mid-3rd century AD⁴⁶⁶. Some remains of the previous buildings, reduced to just above floor level, were incorporated into the wall foundations of the South corridor, where a band of fresco is preserved within a mortar layer⁴⁶⁷.

It is difficult to tell what the original extent and overall layout of the palace may have been, since there is no common axis amongst the available components. The impression is that we are not actually dealing with a unified project, but with the juxtaposition of separately functioning units, which may or may not have been built and decorated at the same time. We shall here first examine the structural history of each individual unit in more detail, the specific evidence for its date, and its relationship to its neighbours. In each case we shall consider very carefully the question of function, looking at the architectural parallels for the particular building type that have been found elsewhere and what these can contribute to identifying uses

⁴⁶⁴ see Vitti 1996:105-6; Atzaka 1998:181-208; Bonini 2006:551-2.

⁴⁶⁵ Christodoulidou 1990-5; Karamberi *et al.* 1995; Karamberi *et al.* 1996; Karamberi *et al.* 1997a; Karamberi *et al.* 1997b; Karamberi *et al.* 1998; Karamberi *et al.* 2000; Karamberi *et al.* 2002; Karamberi 2003; Athanasiou *et al.* 2004:244; Tiveriou 2006:184. Vitti's statement (1996:105-6) that the complex was built on a previously unused site was therefore mistaken.

⁴⁶⁶ Karamberi-Christodoulidou 1998:104-8 (the excavators state that coins from the end of the 2nd to the early 3rd centuries were found underneath the South corridor); 2002:310-5; Athanasiou *et al.* 2004:244.

⁴⁶⁷ Athanasiou *et al.* 2004a:244-5.

of space at Thessalonica. This wider discussion can draw on much recent research on the layout and functions of space in other Tetrarchic palaces and in Galerius' country villa at Gamzigrad.

The order in which the various parts are described takes as its starting point the likelihood that the palace and its residential quarters were laid out primarily to face the sea, as at Split, so this account will start on the south and work its way northwards. The site slopes upwards in that direction.

SP: SOUTHERN PERISTYLE & SMALL ARCH OF GALERIUS (fig.29, no.28)⁴⁶⁸

The full length of the north side and a short stretch of the east side of a large peristyle to the south of the Octagon were excavated by Makaronas in 1957, following the discovery of the **Small Arch of Galerius** (fig.32) while building a modern block on 5 Isavron St. The excavation, which lasted only a few days, was not published at the time and the site was subsequently built over. In 1975 Knithakis produced a report (on the Octagon and some few details on the Small Arch), having studied the records of the excavation and the area where the marble arch had been found, fallen on the ground. He was able to associate it (diameter: 1.71m.) with a semicircular niche (diameter 1.65m. and 1.40m. deep) in the eastern wall which was standing to a height of 1m at the NE corner (fig.30)⁴⁶⁹. The floor of the niche was covered with marble slabs and a marble threshold block still *in situ* in front had holes which would match the distance between the two piers of the arch⁴⁷⁰. The adjacent floor in the eastern stoa (c.5.70m. wide⁴⁷¹), was composed of geometric mosaics (fig.31), with an ivy scroll border (fig.30) running along the side of the stylobate of a colonnade. A note in the archives of the local Ephorate (file no.:541/31.8.1957) mentions the discovery of four columns in the same plot, which were transferred to the old Archaeological Museum of Thessalonica. They were never inventoried, but in 1995 Tiveriou tracked them down there, fractured (probably during their transfer). Made of a limestone conglomerate (light red in colour, possibly breccia corallina quarried in Bithynia,

⁴⁶⁸ see Tiveriou 1995:20-1; Karamberi *et al.* 1990/5; Tiveriou 1996; *id.* 1999; Tiveriou 2000; *id.* 2001; Atzaka 1998:79-80, 93-104, 106-11; Mayer 2002:43-7.

⁴⁶⁹ A more careful study on the dimensions was produced by Tiveriou 1995:17; *id.* 2010:166.

⁴⁷⁰ Knithakis 1975:90.

⁴⁷¹ Tiveriou (1995:17) deduced this size from the plan of Knithakis (1975).

today's Vezirhan in NW Anatolia⁴⁷²), not otherwise recorded at Thessalonica, they have an upper diameter of 0.67-0.68m., which correlates well with the width of the stylobate (0.90m.) and a height of c.5.50m.⁴⁷³.

From Knithakis' plan of 1975 (fig.29) it is possible to deduce that the north stoa measured about 47m. long and c.7m. wide. Its floor was situated at a level 0.75 m. below that of the Octagon, or about 9.75m. above sea level⁴⁷⁴, the difference in level between the two buildings presumably being accommodated by steps incorporated into the doorway which connected them. The stoa was paved with mosaic, of which only a very small section could be distinguished in the excavation photographs, possibly forming a checkerboard pattern⁴⁷⁵. A western stoa is attested by extremely fragmentary mosaics depicting diamonds (containing circles) and squares (containing Solomon knots and smaller squares in perspective) found by cuttings made at two points on 1 Isavron St and 4 Vyronos St in 1981 and 1982⁴⁷⁶ (nos 37 and 38, fig.116).

Since no part of the intersection of the vestibule of the Octagon with the Southern Peristyle is visible today it is impossible to ascertain whether their construction was bonded at any point; we have only Knithakis' plan to go by, and that is not very clear. There seems to be some sort of interruption between the walls departing from the external SW wall of the vestibule and the NW wall of SP (no.35), unless Knithakis' plan simply intended to indicate these parts as being not well preserved.

Dating and function: A date for the construction of the Southern Peristyle has traditionally relied on the dating of the Small Arch on the one hand and the mosaic floors on the other. In a detailed study of the iconography and style of the arch in 1995 Tiveriou proposed a date of around 308⁴⁷⁷, based on the medallion heads (*imagines clipeatae*) at top left and right, which are supported by two male Persians -

⁴⁷² Lazzarini 2010:141.

⁴⁷³ Tiveriou 1995:16-17, 20-1.

⁴⁷⁴ My onsite altitude calculations (GPS) recorded c.10m. above sea level for the vestibule and c.10.50m. for the main Octagon area.

⁴⁷⁵ Atzaka (1998:187) explains all difficulties.

⁴⁷⁶ Romiopoulou 1981:299, pl.200a; Vokotopoulou 1982:279, pl.181b.

⁴⁷⁷ Tiveriou also produced a study in 2010 summarising previous conclusions, not adding anything new to previous suggestions on the Southern Peristyle and the small arch.

comparing very closely with those on the large Arch of Galerius⁴⁷⁸ - and believed to represent the Tyche of Thessalonica (Fors Fortuna) and Galerius respectively. Tiveriou accepted an earlier suggestion by Calza⁴⁷⁹ that Tyche's head had been reworked from a previous image, most likely that of Galerius' wife Valeria, who was elevated to the rank of Augusta and *mater castrorum* in 308, when the mint was transferred to Thessalonica and the imperial council of Carnuntum confirmed that Galerius would remain the Augustus of the East⁴⁸⁰. Valeria appears on the coinage from 308 to 311⁴⁸¹, but in 314, three years after the death of Galerius, on the orders of Licinius⁴⁸² she was executed, which could have been the occasion for her image to be suppressed, re-carved as that of Tyche. Despite Calza's and Tiveriou's identification of the two portraits, we cannot be entirely certain that the other portrait is indeed Galerius due to the lack of sufficient epigraphic evidence and the close stylistic similarities that occur in tetrarchic portraiture. And although the Valeria *damnatio memoriae* scenario seems to fit well with the suggested dating frame, the absence of clear literary evidence confirming this⁴⁸³ may just be a case of a reworked portrait of a goddess or another personified entity next to any male official or donor.

The function of the niche which the arch framed is not clear. Architecturally it was centred on the long axis of the North Stoa, so either formed the focal point of the vista from that direction, or was a vantage point from which to look down the length of the stoa. Tiveriou proposes it housed some unidentified seated statue⁴⁸⁴ though there is no trace of a base. Possibly, it served as an alcove where humans could sit. In fact, the arch may represent a later embellishment to the niche, perhaps converting it into some form of (family) shrine. The slab on which the arch was mounted, and the raising of the floor of the niche to match, looks, from the photographs (figs 30-31), as if it could be secondary, and thus the niche (and the building) could be somewhat earlier. It should be noted that the location not only lies at the intersection of the eastern and Northern Corridors of the courtyard but also close beside a c.5.20m wide doorway

⁴⁷⁸ Tiveriou (1995:34) compares them with the Persian figures depicted on the large Arch of Galerius. Also, see Laubscher 1975:17, 27, 58, fig.44.

⁴⁷⁹ Calza 1972:151; Tiveriou 1995:56-7.

⁴⁸⁰ Tiveriou 2010:167.

⁴⁸¹ Kolb 1987:142; Tiveriou 1995:53.

⁴⁸² Lactantius, *De Mortibus Persecutorum*, L.3-LI.1; Tiveriou 1995:56.

⁴⁸³ Although Lactantius (*De Mortibus Persecutorum*, LI) talks about the events related to Valeria's death, he does not clearly state a condemnation of Valeria's memory.

⁴⁸⁴ Tiveriou 1995:26.

with a marble threshold, subsequently blocked (see fig.30). Beyond the door a passage of apparently equal width, led north towards doorway no.3 (see fig.95).

Dates indicated by the mosaic pavement in the Eastern Corridor: The report mentions only a few patterns but Atzaka's 1998 study identified braiding, interlocking circles and an ivy scroll border, similar to that in the basilica apse (see below and figs 30-31)⁴⁸⁵, in residence (5) (dated to the late 5th century⁴⁸⁶) and at an unidentified building on 47-49 Sokratous St. (dated to the early 5th century⁴⁸⁷). Colours included white, black, yellow, red, brown (with brick - see also pp.146) and green (with stone)⁴⁸⁸. Most datings are obtained based on other datable mosaic parallels. The pattern of braiding and interlocking circles containing geometric objects (fig.31) has parallels in Thessalonica (but none among the mosaics that decorate any of the other rooms in the Navarinou Square complex); one found at a (fragmentary) possible residence (unpublished excavation) on 33 Platonos St. (upper town) dated to the first half of the 5th century⁴⁸⁹, at a Christian basilica church between 27 Moreas and Mouson St. and 41-43 Moreas St. (upper town) dated to the end of the 5th century⁴⁹⁰ and at an unidentified structure in the north area of the Evangelistria cemetery (eastern Thessalonica, see Appendix map) dated to the first half of the 6th century⁴⁹¹. A close parallel outside Thessalonica can be found in the South Stoa of the atrium of Basilica B' at Nicopolis in Epirus that dates to the end of the 5th century⁴⁹². The dating of all the above parallels is fairly consistent in indicating a date in the 5th century for, at least, the mosaic floor in the Eastern Corridor of the Southern Peristyle. Consequently, since the installation of the 'Small Arch of Galerius' appears to have taken place after the floor was laid, it too could be a later addition.

Mosaics in [what could be] the possible Western Corridor of the Southern Peristyle. Extremely fragmentary mosaic pieces were found and detached during two cuttings made on Vyronos and Isavron Streets and 5 Isavron St.⁴⁹³ (nos 37 and 38 in

⁴⁸⁵ Atzaka 1998:79.

⁴⁸⁶ Atzaka 1998:79.

⁴⁸⁷ Kolarik 1982:409; Atzaka 1998:248,n.193.

⁴⁸⁸ Atzaka 1998:186.

⁴⁸⁹ Makropoulou 1989a:262-264; Atzaka 1998:256.

⁴⁹⁰ Atzaka 1998:260.

⁴⁹¹ Pelekanidou 1993:374-6; Atzaka 1998:263-4.

⁴⁹² Spiro 1978:550-4.

⁴⁹³ Romiopoulou 1981:299; Vokotopoulou 1982:279; Atzaka 1998:188-9.

fig.29). The main motif here is the square that contains either four rectangles in perspective (very similar to the ones in the South Corridor of the Northern Peristyle) or Solomon knots. The squares form diamonds that contain circles of different colours⁴⁹⁴. The shared characteristics with the East, South and West Corridors of the Northern Peristyle suggest a date in the late 4th -early 5th centuries (see below).

In sum, the original date of construction of the Southern Peristyle is unknown; it could be contemporary with the mosaics – which, as we have seen, seem to indicate the 5th century AD, or it could be considerably older, with the mosaic floors being a later renovation. The ‘Small Arch of Galerius’ could well be Galerian in date, but, given the evidence of its re-carving, and the apparently secondary nature of its installation in the peristyle, perhaps it too may relate only to the 5th century.

It is difficult to say what the function of the Southern Peristyle was, since we do not know what, if anything, was located in the open court and no evidence for the surfacing of the open court survives. Its proximity to the sea and the presence of the Small Arch shrine could mean that it formed part of the emperor’s residential quarters.

O: OCTAGON (figs 33-47)

During the Ottoman period, the area was the Turkish centre of the city that included a school and baths, and the Octagon owes its relatively good state of preservation to the fact that its remains were incorporated into a mosque (called Akçe Mescid)⁴⁹⁵.

The building (fig.29, ‘O’ and fig.33) was first explored in 1950 and has been the subject of many studies since⁴⁹⁶. It consists of an octagonal hall with semicircular niches on seven sides and a rectangular recess containing the entrance on the eighth. Its internal diameter is c.24.95m. (measured between opposing corners of niches) and c.29.5m. (between back walls of opposing niches). All niches had a diameter of 5.20m. apart from the niche opposite the entrance (no.1), whose diameter is now

⁴⁹⁴ Atzaka 1998:80.

⁴⁹⁵ Demetriadis 1983:303, 311.

⁴⁹⁶ Makaronas 1950:303-21; Vickers 1973(a):111-20; Knithakis 1975:91-119; Bouras 1984:33-43; Spieser 1984:113-23; Athanasiou *et al.* 1994:169-77; Vitti 1993:77, 106; Vitti 1996:210-3; Tiveriou 1995:97-103; Karamberi *et al.* 1990/95:116-28; Karamberi *et al.* 1996:533-44; Karamberi *et al.* 2001:205-13.

7.05m. (but shows signs of being an alteration and may originally have been the same size as the others). The walls are standing in places to heights of c.6m. (figs 40-41). Their original height, capped by a brick dome, is estimated at around 27.40m⁴⁹⁷. Spiral staircases were built into the core of the walls on either side of the entrance (fig.42). That on the right probably led to an annular corridor around the base of the dome, as in Santa Costanza in Rome (fig.43), which dates from the mid-4th century⁴⁹⁸. The entrance (fig.39) was originally 4.90m wide and was preceded by a large porch or vestibule (fig.29, 'V'), measuring 34 x 14.60m. with apsidal ends c.13.70m. in diameter. The left-hand spiral staircase was apparently directed towards the vestibule roof. Only half of the Vestibule is visible today (fig.38), the southern half being located underneath a modern building block. It connected, via a columnar doorway or propylon⁴⁹⁹ c.19.20 m. wide, with the North Stoa of the Southern Peristyle.

A detailed re-investigation by Athanasiou (*et al.*) in 2004, confirmed that the Octagon rests on a circular foundation with an external diameter of 32.50m. and a width (outside to inside) of 5.60m. reaching to a depth of at least 1.75m (the excavations did not reach the bottom)⁵⁰⁰. The foundation of the northern wall of the vestibule as well as the northern part of its western niche are built over an earlier foundation (constructed of rubble and 2.90m.wide) which seem to gradually lessen towards the west giving the impression that the structure was left incomplete⁵⁰¹.

At least three major construction phases were identified by Athanasiou *et al.* in the superstructure:

In Phase 1 the walls of the main building and the vestibule only reached a height of 1.20m. above ground (fig.34), with two zones of bricks (each of 3 courses of around 20cm.), and two bands of rubble stone (green schist) each 0.40m. high (fig.37). The

⁴⁹⁷ Teneketzis 1997:2.

⁴⁹⁸ Although there has been a great dispute on the function and the exact chronology of the building (on this topic see Stanley 1993:103-12; *id.* 1994:257-61; Mackie 1997:383-406; Rasch 2000:155-6; Stanley 2004:119-140) the actual structure has only one spiral staircase with immediate access from the circular central space. Rasch-Arbeiter 2007:49-50 and plates 185b, 201 211 and 213.

⁴⁹⁹ Papazoglou 1998:221.

⁵⁰⁰ Athanasiou *et al.* 2004:242.

⁵⁰¹ Athanasiou *et al.* 2004:242 and notes 22-3.

step up of 0.17 m. in the largest niche (no.1 in fig.33) belongs to the first phase but the niche itself acquired its larger scale⁵⁰² as part of the second phase.

In Phase 2 the basic plan of both Vestibule and Octagon remained the same (with the exception of the possible enlargement of the axial niche just noted), but the building technique changed slightly. Starting from the third brick zone upwards, the next four brick bands are 4 courses thick, instead of 3, varying from 27 to 30cm. in height, and the intervening rubble stone layers are also generally taller (figs 34-35), 58, 77, 80, and 73cm. respectively. In the uppermost surviving band of brick (zone VII) the number of courses increases to five, measuring 36cm. high, possibly to give added strength to the upper structure. This is probably when the motif of the equilateral cross (fig.36) in the brickwork of the north niche wall was inserted. The difference in technique could signify a change in the workforce.

Phase 3: This phase mainly involves alterations to the earlier structure employing the same *opus mixtum* technique. The Southern entrance was narrowed; a window was opened in the middle of niche 4 and a threshold was added in the eastern section of the building (see below). The construction of a tomb (the first of two) in the larger niche, destroying its previous floor, has been dated to the second half of the 5th century on the basis of its wall decoration⁵⁰³. The two square rooms or ‘chapels’ attached to the north side of the building (7 x 5m., fig.29, nos 32-33)⁵⁰⁴ were constructed by *opus mixtum* technique with brick size of 37.5/39 x 27/33 x 3/3.8cm., different from the type used in the main Octagon⁵⁰⁵ or any other of our monuments, as the brick dimensions are a lot smaller than Vitti’s three types (see. Ch.II). It is possible that doors through the walls of niches 2 (fig.35) and 7 to either side of the larger axial niche were made during this phase. No brickstamps were found in association with these later operations.

Phase 4: In a still later phase, a small colonnaded porch was built on the west side of the northeast chapel. Athanasiou *et al.* were unable to offer a date for the structure⁵⁰⁶.

⁵⁰² Athanasiou *et al.* 2004:247. The traces of the initial niche were found *in situ* (under the floor).

⁵⁰³ Athanasiou *et al.* 2004:250; Marki 2006.

⁵⁰⁴ Vitti 1996:211.

⁵⁰⁵ Athanasiou *et al.* 2004:250.

⁵⁰⁶ Athanasiou *et al.* 2004:251, 253.

Dating and function: The evidence for alterations and additions to the Octagon's initial shape and the construction phases described above have been variously dated and explained. In one view the hiatus in construction between the first and second phases responds to Galerius' death in 311; the first phase began in 308⁵⁰⁷ (when Galerius comes to Thessalonica from Serdica), the date being based on the observations on the bonding of the walling of the Octagon, the propylon and the North Corridor of Southern Peristyle in conjunction with the dating (308-311) of the Small Arch of Galerius (see above)⁵⁰⁸. The second phase is assigned a later date, which could be straight after the Mediolanum Decree of 313, when the construction of the upper structure carries on (at the same time with the vestibule and the Southern Peristyle) and the building became a Christian church⁵⁰⁹ perhaps coinciding with the insertion of the cross motif in the north niche (see above). Makaronas observed that the bricks found in the building (though none are *in situ*) bear the same stamps (simple X markings) as those used for the first phase of the Rotunda⁵¹⁰, but he was not aware of the two phases subsequently identified by Athanasiou *et al.* and it is not clear which phase his samples represent. The bricks are sized 45 x 30/31 x 3.5/5cm.⁵¹¹ This size compares most closely with those from the Northern Peristyle, the polygonal building on Gounari St. (room C, see below) and the nymphaeum (Vitti's type 3, see Ch.II)⁵¹². The latest research into the brickstamps, although casting doubts on the precise chronology argued by Vickers, has confirmed their 5th century dating (see Ch.II).

Athanasiou *et al.* consider that the surviving traces of interior decoration in the Octagon all belong to the second phase⁵¹³. On the walls, traces of revetment in the variegated green marble of Thessaly (*verde antico*) were found still adhering and other fragments fallen on the floor together with the copper nails that had held them in

⁵⁰⁷ Tiveriou 1995; Athanasiou *et al.* 2004:252.

⁵⁰⁸ Karamberi *et al.* 1996:538-9; Mayer 2002:45; Athanasiou *et al.* 2004:252

⁵⁰⁹ Athanasiou *et al.* 2004:252.

⁵¹⁰ Makaronas 1950:307-9. Vitti (1996:212) falsely mentions that the Octagon brickstamps are similar with those found at the polygonal building on Gounari St., this is probably some sort of misunderstanding as the samples from the polygonal structure are totally different (see below).

⁵¹¹ Makaronas 1950:309, fig.6; Vickers 1973(a):111.

⁵¹² Vitti 1993:1703-5; *id.* 1996:212.

⁵¹³ Athanasiou *et al.* 2004(a):253; Athanasiou *et al.* 2004(b):260-1.

place⁵¹⁴. The imprints in surviving patches of backing plaster suggest a decorative scheme consisting of pilasters framing larger panels. There is nothing immediately diagnostic of date; the basic scheme was common in wall veneer of all periods. The surviving floor (figs 44-46), already attributed to the second phase by Vitti⁵¹⁵, consists of white and black square and rectangular coloured marble slabs placed diagonally in panels. The pattern is very similar to the *opus sectile* of the apse of the polygonal building on Gounari St⁵¹⁶, but the overall layout bears no comparison. Four smaller panels [0.90 x 0.87m.⁵¹⁷, three of them detached and stored at the local museum (the location of the fourth is unknown⁵¹⁸)] were placed on axis with the main entrance (fig.45). The quarry-sources of the marbles have been identified by Lazzarini, but the information is of limited value, since they were probably in secondary use, recycled from other buildings (see Ch.II, pp.65-6). The smaller panels could have been lifted and transferred whole.

Recently, Mentzos has proposed that the floor dates from around the 6th or 7th centuries and this is based on parallels from Rome such as the pavements of the presbytery of Santa Maria Antiqua (dated to the 6th-7th centuries), the one in Santa Maria in Cosmedin (8th century) and that of Basilica Aemilia (laid sometime after 410 but before the 9th century)⁵¹⁹.

A brief report of an excavation beneath the Octagon floor in 1965 mentioned that traces of a polychrome mosaic were found at a depth of 0.30m.⁵²⁰ and this has been repeated in other subsequent publications⁵²¹, either as evidence that the present floor is not original, or that the building was founded on the site of a pre-existing rectangular room⁵²². However, excavations in 1995 and 1996 failed to confirm the report, instead finding only a large number of unfinished marble tesserae and mortar (no further

⁵¹⁴ Knithakis 1975:106. and Bouras 1984:34.

⁵¹⁵ Vitti 1996:211.

⁵¹⁶ I would like to thank Prof. Tiveriou for this suggestion.

⁵¹⁷ Grammenos-Knithakis 1994:235-6.

⁵¹⁸ Now at the Archaeological Museum of Thessalonica, Petsas 1969:151, Knithakis 1975:104. and Bouras 1984:34.

⁵¹⁹ Mentzos 2010:346,ff.41.

⁵²⁰ Karamanoli-Siganidou 1965:409.

⁵²¹ Vitti 1996:211.

⁵²² Knithakis 1975:100, 103

details of their size or colour)⁵²³. This could suggest that the area was used as a builders' yard, perhaps even by the mosaic workshops working on the decoration of other parts of the palace, before the construction of the Octagon began⁵²⁴. Alternatively, Mentzos suggested in 2010 that these mosaic fragments belonged to the demolition debris of an earlier structure on the site (see below)⁵²⁵.

The possible chronological value of a group of figured Corinthian pilaster capitals found loose on the floor of the Octagon in the 1965 excavation⁵²⁶ is uncertain, except that they are decidedly non-Christian in subject matter. Four are nearly intact (height of c.60-63cm. and upper width of c.80-82cm.) and two fragmentary, bearing images of Zeus, Dioscuros, Cabeiros and Hygeia⁵²⁷ (fig.47). They were studied by Tiveriou in 1997, who compared them to a fragment from the large Arch of Galerius⁵²⁸ and the relief of Epona⁵²⁹, detecting many parallels in the depictions of the facial characteristics, hair, clothes, decorative patterns. She proposed that they were all created by local workshops influenced by stylistic traditions from Rome during "the period of the construction of the palace of Galerius"⁵³⁰. Athanasiou and her team, however, think the capitals cannot belong to the Octagon's decoration (a) because they are too wide [50.4 (Dioscuros), 55 (Zeus), 55 (Hygeia) and 54.3cm. (Cabeiros) respectively⁵³¹] to fit the pilasters in the niches (37-42cm. wide, judging by the imprints they have left) and (b) could not have capped larger pilasters framing the niches either, because they are not corner-capitals⁵³².

Taking a closer look at the eastern apsidal end of the vestibule it seems that its wall bonds with the west wall of the N-S corridor. However, the break of this wall at point no.36 (fig.29) (which is not visible today nor is mentioned in the reports it is possible that it was just a doorway) might suggest that this particular section of the west wall of

⁵²³ Karamberi *et al.* 1990/5:124-5

⁵²⁴ Karaberi-Christodoulidou 1996:536-8.

⁵²⁵ Mentzos 2011:346.

⁵²⁶ Karamanoli-Siganidou 1965:409.

⁵²⁷ Bakalakis 1973:683; Tiveriou 1997:nos 142-7; Papazoglou 1998:221.

⁵²⁸ Archaeological Museum of Thessalonica, Laubscher 1975:94, pl.68,3; Tiveriou 1995:93.

⁵²⁹ Bakalakis 1973:683; Laubscher 1975:149,pl.69,6-7; Tiveriou 1995:94.

⁵³⁰ Tiveriou 1995:95-6.

⁵³¹ The catalogue of architectural fragments stored at the Museum of Thessalonica by Grammenos-Knithakis (1994:207-9) gives some basic information on size of these capitals.

⁵³² Athanasiou *et al* 2004:260 n.13. Tiveriou 2006:185 also seems to be inclining towards this suggestion by agreeing that there is space for discussion although there have been no further suggestions on the origins of the capitals.

the N-S corridor was at a later phase replaced to accommodate the vestibule's east end (or the apse was just built attached to it). If this is the case, it may indicate that the Octagon and its vestibule were a later insertion into the area of MP (see below and fig.95).

A date for the destruction of the Octagon is equally disputed. Makaronas⁵³³, writing prior to the exposure of the material remains, believed without stating on what grounds that the building was destroyed by an earthquake during the first quarter of the 5th century. Bakirtzis⁵³⁴ suggested an earthquake a century later, between 620 and 630 (as recorded in the second book of the *Miracles of St. Demetrius*⁵³⁵) when the vestibule seems to have been converted into a cistern (judging by the waterproof mortar on its walls)⁵³⁶. We cannot be certain that this conversion took place at this date due to the significant lack of documentary support. According to Mentzos' most recent interpretation of the building sequence, he connects the conversion into a cistern with the demolition of the northwest chapel and the re-shaping of the northeast chapel took place to function as an entrance to the Octagon with the addition of a gamma-shaped space connecting it to the Northern Peristyle⁵³⁷. That is, the building was no longer accessible from the Southern Peristyle; it was now an annex of the Northern Peristyle. Mentzos reasons that in this form the Octagon survived until much later still, with some ecclesiastical use, given the presence of a barrel-vaulted tomb installed in the northern niche. A bronze coin⁵³⁸ of Alexius I Comnenus (AD 1081-1118) was found in the tomb⁵³⁹.

It would help if there was any agreement on the Octagon's function at any one time. This has been debated ever since it was first discovered and is still an ongoing puzzle. The equilateral cross in the brickwork on the outer wall of the larger niche initially led Makaronas to the conclusion that the building was a church or a baptistery of the early

⁵³³ Makaronas 1950:304; *id.*1977:266.

⁵³⁴ Bakirtzis 1975:326; *id.* 1977:266, 268; *id.* 1984:18. He suggests that the debris of the devastated buildings were used for the construction of a new sea front wall and the re-building of the Constantinian harbour.

⁵³⁵ *Miracula* II.3.216-29; Panov 2012:111-2.

⁵³⁶ Athanasiou *et al.* 2004:253.

⁵³⁷ Mentzos 2010:351.

⁵³⁸ Wroth 1908:551, plate LXV 19; Karamberi 1997a:211.

⁵³⁹ Mentzos 2010:351-2.

Christian period⁵⁴⁰. Moutsopoulos and Bouras identified the building as a mausoleum, either of Galerius or Theodosius I respectively⁵⁴¹. Other suggestions have been a throne room⁵⁴², a *triclinium*⁵⁴³ or a Pantheon⁵⁴⁴. Tiveriou used the pilaster capitals as an argument in favour of a temple of the imperial cult (possibly in association with Sol Invictus), probably commissioned by Licinius⁵⁴⁵. Mentzos' latest theory suggests that the 'chapels' added to the Octagon were not necessarily of a later date and might have been service rooms for the Octagon, which he thinks was a grand banqueting hall⁵⁴⁶. The scenario is possible, given that no other dining hall has been brought to light in the palatial complex so far, though the significance of the omission is difficult to judge, since we do not know what lies in the unexcavated areas to either side of the Southern Peristyle, which could be the more private quarters of the palace.

Plan type: There is some typological resemblance between the design of the Octagon and that of the Lateran Baptistery in Rome (fig.48), although the latter is slightly smaller, with a height of c.20m. and width of 20m⁵⁴⁷. In 2008 laser scanning distinguished the Baptistery construction phases more clearly. Its first phase is now fairly confidently dated to the late Constantinian period (mid-4th century) with a major reconstruction in the 5th century probably starting with Pope Sixtus III (432–440) and completed by Hilarus (461–466)⁵⁴⁸. The 5th century phase involved the reconstruction of the upper structure and the addition of chapels. In 1929 excavations had revealed that the building was set on a circular foundation, suggesting that the Baptistery was originally circular too, but further excavations in 1993-6 showed that the circular foundation dates to the same phase as the octagonal structure⁵⁴⁹, as would seem to be the case at Thessalonica⁵⁵⁰. The vestibule of Lateran Baptistery, which resembles the Thessalonica one, has an apse at either end and a monumental columnar entrance with a tribelon.

⁵⁴⁰ Makaronas 1950:313-4.

⁵⁴¹ Moutsopoulos 1977:250; Bouras 1983:33-4.

⁵⁴² Vitti 1996:212.

⁵⁴³ Spieser 1984:118-123; Karamberi 2000:91.

⁵⁴⁴ Vitti 1996:212-3.

⁵⁴⁵ Tiveriou 1995:54. I would like to thank Prof. Tiveriou for sharing with me her views on the identification of the Octagon as a temple of Sol Invictus.

⁵⁴⁶ Mentzos 2010:348-50.

⁵⁴⁷ Giovenale 1929; Brandt 1997-1998; Brandt & Guidobaldi 2008; Menander *et al* 2010.

⁵⁴⁸ *Liber Pontificalis* XLVI.7 and XLVIII.2 and Davies 1989:40-1; Menander *et al* 2010:11.

⁵⁴⁹ Brandt 1997-1998:7-65.

⁵⁵⁰ Brandt and Guidobaldi 2008:226-7.

Another building in Rome whose design is related to the Octagon is the mausoleum of Santa Costanza on via Nomentana (fig.43), already noted as a parallel for the spiral staircase. The building dates from the mid-4th century, like the first phase of the Lateran baptistery, and it too, had a vestibule of similar type. Its main hall, although circular rather than octagonal in plan, contains niches on the orthogonal and diagonal axes.

A significant difference between both these buildings at Rome and the Octagon at Thessalonica is that the Octagon's floor, in its present state, shows no evidence of an internal colonnade.

On the evidence currently available we cannot be sure that the first and second phases in the Thessalonica Octagon were widely separated in time - it is possible that the first was 4th century (Constantinian) and the second 5th century, but they might both be 5th century and practically contemporary with one another, the change in building technique not necessarily having any chronological significance. Better documented stratigraphical excavations beneath the floor level inside or outside the building could help to answer the question in the future, but for the time being the only clues we have to work with are the brickstamps, floor and wall decoration, all of which tend to favour the 5th century date.

NP: NORTHERN PERISTYLE⁵⁵¹ (fig.29, NP)

This area, covering around 2,000m², was excavated in 1964. At its centre is a relatively small central courtyard, not quite square, its four sides measuring 23, 22.50, 22 and 21m⁵⁵². A marble stylobate⁵⁵³ survives largely *in situ* (figs 50-53) but the colonnades it supported have been lost. Behind the colonnades, at a distance of c.4m. opens a series of small rooms, five on the northwest (nos 2-6 and fig.54) of approximately equal size (c.5/5.2 x 3.5/3.7m.), four on the southeast (nos 9-12) slightly larger (5.5/5.8 x 4.8/5.5m.). Three of varied sizes along the SW were

⁵⁵¹ Vitti 1996:213-5; Athanasiou *et al.* 1997(a):401-15; Athanasiou *et al.* 1997b:36-43; Athanasiou *et al.* 1998(b):127-40.

⁵⁵² Papadopoulou 1964:332; Vitti 1996:213-5; Athanasiou *et al.* 1997(a):401-15; Athanasiou *et al.* 1997(b):36-43; Athanasiou *et al.* 1998(b):127-40.

⁵⁵³ Papadopoulou 1964:332.

originally two larger rooms of equal size (nos 7-8 and fig.55), later altered to create rooms 8a and 8b. Doors allowed the rooms on the south wing to connect internally (in fact all rooms from 6 to 10 are interconnected). Two of the doors opening to the peristyle (nos 2-3) had high marble threshold blocks (fig.56). There were no rooms on the northeast side of the peristyle, but it was closed off by a solid wall at a later stage of uncertain date⁵⁵⁴. Originally the inner block was completely closed to the outside on its west, east and south sides; the doors in room 3 and south side of 8b were made later. None of the floors survive in any of the rooms around the court.

On all four sides the central peristyle block was surrounded by spacious corridors (nos 14, 15, 16, 17), all of a similar width (8.30-8.40m.), but different lengths, matching the asymmetry of the structure at their core. The East Corridor (14) measures 39.5m, the South (15) 49.50m., the West (16) 29m. and the North (17) 65m.⁵⁵⁵. All were paved with polychrome geometric mosaics (see below).

The Southern Corridor (15) was accessible on its south side, via a c.5.20m. wide doorway approached by three marble steps (fig.57) from rooms 26-27. These were previously parts of a corridor of similar width, which apparently connected with the 5.20m wide door into the northeast corner of the Southern Peristyle (fig.30). Although room 26 has not been fully excavated, traces of the marble revetment on the walls and large amounts of mosaic floor tesserae found in the area⁵⁵⁶ suggests that this passage was an important axis not only linking the Southern and Northern Peristyles⁵⁵⁷, but also the lateral blocks occupied by the Octagon and Baths. Rooms 26 and 27 communicated with the 'chapel' area northeast to the Octagon via doors with marble thresholds⁵⁵⁸. The foundation that survives in front of the marble stairs and the traces of pilasters on the west and east walls of room 26 might indicate the existence of a propylon (possibly dated to phase 2), which, at a later (uncertain) date, was withdrawn and the walls of room 26 were decorated with marble veneer covering the pilaster traces⁵⁵⁹. In the middle of the floor of corridor (15), in front of rooms 24 and 27 a small water tank was discovered (0.62 x 0.94m.) with its walls covered with

⁵⁵⁴ Vitti 1996:213.

⁵⁵⁵ Atzaka 1998:189.

⁵⁵⁶ Atzaka 1998:194-6.

⁵⁵⁷ Athanasiou *et al.* 2004:240.

⁵⁵⁸ Athanasiou *et al.* 2004:244.

⁵⁵⁹ Athanasiou *et al.* 2004:248.

waterproof mortar⁵⁶⁰. We have no other comparanda for this feature; it could be part of a drainage system for which little evidence has so far been uncovered, or the setting for a fountain.

From (15) in one direction the Eastern Corridor (14) abuts the solid rectangular structure (18), which supported the western flank of the Basilica but may once have had a door at its far south end, leading into a room beside the apse of the Basilica or even directly to its main hall (no.14a in fig.29). At its north end Corridor (14) connected, by way of one or more steps (now missing) with the Northern Corridor (17). On the other side of the central court, the Western Corridor (16) similarly led from the south corridor to the north, with a step at their junction but apparently also connected with another very large building which lies beyond the limit of the excavations to the west. The western wall of the Western Corridor (16) is preserved to a height of approximately 1.5m., which has been heavily restored, but it has a marble framed door (fig.29, no.30) towards its north end (fig.58) with high white marble threshold block *c.*2.5m. (long) x 0.60m. (wide) x 0.40m. (high) and one small step (0.10m.) leading down to corridor (16). The moulding of the door frame, which survives to a height of *c.*1m. on the north side of the doorway, is only on the west side of the wall, an indication that movement was expected mainly from that direction. What lay behind the wall is uncertain, but the plan seems to indicate a long, triple-aisled building (fig.29, 'WB').

The Northern Corridor (17) is laid at a level 0.50 m. higher than those on the other three sides. At its western end there was apparently a wide door, later blocked, and at the east the corridor extends to meet the west wall of the Basilica, where there is a door, in its present position narrow (*c.*1.20m.) and offset to the north, but it seems possible that it represents a later modification, and the door was once much wider. The floor level in the Northern Corridor lies on the same level as that in the Basilica (*c.*13m., fig.95), giving good reason to believe that they were associated.

On the north side of Corridor (17) not quite opposite the door to the central block, is a door (no.29 and fig.59) with a white marble threshold block *c.*2m. x 0.80m. x 0.20m.,

⁵⁶⁰ Papadopoulou 1964:332.

smaller and less monumental than the door in the western wall. This northern door apparently led into to another peristyle, with some form of circular structure in its middle ('NB'). Corridor (17) also extends further east with another narrower door (in close proximity with the previous door) at its east end (no.31 and fig.60) leading the way directly to the Basilica. It seems to have had a marble threshold and of a length of around 0.70m.

Dating: The walls are all built in an *opus mixtum* technique (figs 54-56), in which 4-5 courses of brick alternate with zones of rubble stone (local green schist), bonded with strong white mortar consisting mainly of lime⁵⁶¹. The brick size is Vitti's type III (45 x 30 x 4cm.)⁵⁶². Materials and technique compare closely with Phases 2 and 3 of the city walls (see pp.34-5). Noticeably, in many parts, the walls show signs of severe damage, probably an earthquake, of the mid-5th century (based on coinage), which required major rebuilding. The rebuilding can probably be associated with the laying of new floors in the south, east and west corridors, of marble and coarse mosaic, dateable by coins in their bedding to the third quarter of the 5th century AD (see below).

Two different Ionic capitals now stored in one of the rooms (fig.61), were found in the excavations of the peristyle (exact findspots not recorded). The catalogue of the capitals stored at the museum of Thessalonica (most of them of unknown provenance) offers no parallels⁵⁶³. However, one type shares basic characteristics with the Ionic capitals in Thasian marble studied by Herrmann and Sodini (1977) and Herrmann (1988), especially the latter's type IIa (fig.62), where the channel decoration starts from the echinus, whose production Hermann believes probably started in the 4th century. He dates (on style) similar capitals in Rome's Largo Argentina and in Ostia between 330 and 380⁵⁶⁴. The second capital example does not really fit into any of the suggested types, the closest being type III based on the tightly wound volute with 4 complete turns⁵⁶⁵. Hermann assigns type III capitals between 335 and 420⁵⁶⁶.

⁵⁶¹ Athanasiou *et al.* 1997(b):402-8.

⁵⁶² Samples were taken from the 'northern room' without further details on exact location, Vitti 1993b:1705.

⁵⁶³ Grammenos-Knithakis 1994:114-2.

⁵⁶⁴ Herrmann 1988:92.

⁵⁶⁵ Herrmann-Sodini 1977:497; Herrmann 1988:82-3.

⁵⁶⁶ Herrmann 1988:92.

All the corridors were originally paved with elaborately geometric mosaics laid in white, black and red tesserae, which were studied in detail by Atzaka⁵⁶⁷. An excavation under the mosaic floor of the **Northern Corridor** (17) (figs 29 and 63) found a coin of Diocletian in its bedding⁵⁶⁸, providing a *terminus post quem* of 284-305)⁵⁶⁹. Atzaka's study agrees with a date in the first quarter of the 4th century⁵⁷⁰. At the east end (figs 64-5) where the corridor extends to the Basilica the panels are smaller, indicating a change of function to the entrance of a different space, whereas two large panels can be found in the centre and at the west end, but a common border surrounds the whole length of the floor in a colourful chequerboard pattern. The main panels are decorated with large octagons with cross-shaped elements and guilloche in between them. The octagons contain numerous geometrical compositions (meander, swastikas, diamonds etc.). The large scale of the octagons (they cover the whole width of the corridor) has no parallel in Greece during the 4th-5th centuries⁵⁷¹ but can be found in other Eastern provinces in the late 4th century, such as the bath complex D at Antioch⁵⁷² and the mosaic of the first phase of the Basilica of Solon in Cyprus⁵⁷³ though these examples do not contain any swastika motifs. The key-shaped meander used in the Northern Corridor is a popular motif throughout the imperial period, but the particular combination of it with octagons, chequerboard, interlocking octagons, diamonds that form star-shaped objects, rectangles and triangles (fig.66a-b) is found in the first phase of the basilica of Archbishop Peter at Phthiotic Thebes, near Volos⁵⁷⁴, which can be dated to the first half of the 4th century based on excavated pottery and other finds⁵⁷⁵. The combination is also found in the mosaics in Galerius' palace at Romuliana⁵⁷⁶. The array of patterns is richer in the Northern Corridor mosaics than the others⁵⁷⁷, perhaps because it was a main route to the Basilica.

⁵⁶⁷ Atzaka 1998:189-90.

⁵⁶⁸ Karamberi-Christodoulidou 1995:222.

⁵⁶⁹ Karamberi-Christodoulidou 1995:222. No more specific date for the coin is offered in the reports.

⁵⁷⁰ Atzaka 1998:81-5, 93-104, 106-11, 189-93.

⁵⁷¹ Atzaka 1998:84-5.

⁵⁷² Levi 1947:427-8.

⁵⁷³ Tran Tam Tinh 1985:17.

⁵⁷⁴ Atzaka 1998:111-112. The site is located some 150 kms distant with no recorded connections with Thessalonica during this period.

⁵⁷⁵ Lazaridis 1987:325; Ntina 1990a :150-2; *id.* 1990b:91-3; *id.* 1994:359.

⁵⁷⁶ Atzaka 1998:83, 108-9. Unfortunately, no images from the Romuliana mosaics are published.

⁵⁷⁷ composition of diamonds and squares containing Solomon knots and circles, and ivy scroll (different from that in the Basilica and Southern Peristyle) which at times has triangles, colourful chequerboard, and two large panels. The eastern panel consists of octagons, swastikas and hexagons surrounded by braiding and the western panel has a key-shaped swastika meander with braiding and egg-shaped

Alternatively, the coin in the bedding might mean they pre-date those on the other three sides.

In the Eastern Corridor (14) the main composition also has an elaborate geometrical design⁵⁷⁸ (figs 67-9). These include squares and diamonds that form star-shaped objects as well as large octagons that contain circles (fig.67). The circles contain other geometrical decoration as well. Two similar examples have been discovered in Patra⁵⁷⁹, one in Amfissa⁵⁸⁰, in the Basilica del Monastero in Aquileia (end of 4th century)⁵⁸¹ and in Constantinople (dated to the first half of the 5th century)⁵⁸². One further example comes from Aphrodisias (dated to the second half of the 4th century)⁵⁸³ and another one from Homs in Syria (end of 4th century)⁵⁸⁴. The pattern of the octagons with the diamonds forming star-shaped objects becomes extremely popular from the second half of the 4th century. It has also been found in residence (10) (see below, Ch.V and Table 1).

The mosaics in the **Southern and Western Corridors** (15) and (16) are fragmentary, revealed underneath a later floor of white marble slabs (figs 70-1)⁵⁸⁵ and coarse mosaics which was laid after earthquake damage in the second half of the 5th century. In the thin bedding of the coarse mosaics in both corridors coins from the reign of Marcian (450-457) and Leo I (457-474) were found⁵⁸⁶, providing at least a good date for them, and a *terminus ante quem* for the underlying floors. The underlying floor of Southern Corridor (15) (figs 72-4), beneath a coarse mosaic where rectangular panel contains a large diamond with square and circles⁵⁸⁷, has a combination of geometrical

objects, peltas, diamonds and clover. The surrounding band of the above design is a chequerboard of white, black, yellow and red colour. See Atzaka 1998:191-2.

⁵⁷⁸ This has eight-piece diamond shapes/motifs that are linked with octagons (filled with circle decorated with geometric patterns and running dog or circle with egg-shaped objects) creating squares (filled with Solomon knots) and diamonds. The bands surrounding the main composition (which varies in width) have a design of triangles (west side only) and interlocking octagons with squares. See Atzaka 1998:189-90.

⁵⁷⁹ Atzaka 1987:no.24

⁵⁸⁰ Papastavrou 1983:187-8.

⁵⁸¹ Forlati-Tamaro 1986:235.

⁵⁸² Harrison-Lawson 1967:216-8.

⁵⁸³ Campbell 1991:28-9.

⁵⁸⁴ Donceel-Voute 1988:135-6.

⁵⁸⁵ Papadopoulou 1964:332; Karamanoli-Siganidou 1965:407; Atzaka 1998:103.

⁵⁸⁶ Karamberi *et al.* 1996:539; Mentzos 1995-1996:350; Atzaka 1998:288

⁵⁸⁷ Atzaka 1998:288

designs⁵⁸⁸. The interlocking dodecahedrons in (15) (figs 72-4) are already known from the mosaics of Pompeii and the pattern was quite popular in the western provinces of the empire (Italy, France, Spain, Germany and N. Africa) in previous centuries⁵⁸⁹. However, the same pattern was not that widely used in the East, until the 4th century. Examples are found in Kostinbrod in Sofia (dated to 4th century), in the Basilica of Archbishop Peter of Phthiotic Thebes (first half of the 4th century), in the triconch of the Metropolis in Gortina Crete (4th century)⁵⁹⁰ and in the Basilica of Tria Dontia in Samos (4th century)⁵⁹¹. The pattern occurs more often in marble *opus sectile* floors, for example in Thessalonica (later phase floor from an unidentified building on 110 Olymbiados St. dated to the second half of the 4th century, very close to and possibly linked with cat.no.1⁵⁹²), in Beroea (possible date late 4th century⁵⁹³), Athens (late 4th century⁵⁹⁴), Rhodes and in Samos (5th century⁵⁹⁵)⁵⁹⁶. In sum, the above parallels suggest a use of the particular pattern mainly in the late 4th century.

An attempt at a more perspectival effect can be seen in the mosaics of the **Western Corridor**⁵⁹⁷ (16) (which underlay the later floor of marble slabs and the 5th century coarse mosaic⁵⁹⁸). The main pattern here is the meander in perspective (fig.75) combining swastikas and simple squares. The particular type of meander combined with the swastika can only be found in mosaics of the late Roman period and not any earlier. Although the pattern of the Western Corridor is only the meander, its third dimension element makes it the most impressive of them all, as well as the most rare. Atzaka observes that this is the first time when meander in perspective is used as a border of a central depiction but to entirely cover a large area as a carpet⁵⁹⁹. She cites a

⁵⁸⁸ The main composition contains a pattern of interlocking dodecahedrons (with a centre decorated with a running dog motif) consisting of squares (containing Solomon knots and square in perspective) and triangles (containing a smaller triangle). The surrounding bands have triangles, octagons (north and south sides only) and hexagons that contain squares, diamonds and cross shaped objects. See Atzaka 1998:190 and below.

⁵⁸⁹ Parlasca 1959:15-7, Blazquez 1981:50 and Donderer 1986:67-8.

⁵⁹⁰ Pelekanidis 1974:no.85.

⁵⁹¹ Giannouli 1995.

⁵⁹² Atzaka 1998:222-3.

⁵⁹³ Lazaridis 1973/74(a):736; Deriziotis 1974:177-9.

⁵⁹⁴ Alexandri 1973/74(a):95.

⁵⁹⁵ Giannouli 1995.

⁵⁹⁶ Atzaka 1998:82, 190.

⁵⁹⁷ Atzaka 1998:190.

⁵⁹⁸ Two panels in black and white at the central and west parts of the corridor, which formed rectangles containing a large diamond with a circle, see Atzaka 1998:288.

⁵⁹⁹ Atzaka 1998:81-4.

good parallel in Olympia (late 4th century)⁶⁰⁰. The same motif has been recorded in chance finds elsewhere in the neighbourhood of the palace area at Thessalonica, such as during construction of some modern building blocks on Gounari St⁶⁰¹ as well as in a fragmentary residence on 21 Aioulou St. (dated to the first quarter of the 5th century), unidentified building on 95 Egnatia St. (dated to the second half of the 4th century) and the second phase of the main hall mosaic of cat.no.(4) (dated to the first half of the 5th century)⁶⁰². It is also attested in the Basilica of St. Anastasius of Salona in Dalmatia, dated to the early 5th century⁶⁰³. The balance of evidence is therefore in favour of dating the Western Corridor mosaics to the end of the 4th century/early 5th century, rather than the period of Galerius.

Atzaka attempted to date the Thessalonica examples to the Galerian period nonetheless by arguing that they represent the beginning of the series – i.e. setting the trend which the others are following - but this is a dubious and unproven argument. She pointed out that the mosaics of Romuliana (dated between 309/11 and 316), have many characteristics in common with the Thessalonica examples⁶⁰⁴: complicated geometrical compositions with a preference for various types of meander, black and white as well as coloured chequerboard, octagons in various formations, diamonds with squares, rectangles and the shield of triangles (which has been found at the southern entrance of the Romuliana palace)⁶⁰⁵. However, the mosaics of Romuliana also include figurative mosaics (from a mythological repertoire), which are noticeably absent from the Thessalonica corpus (see Ch.IV, pp.123). In fact, the dates indicated by Atzaka's stylistic analysis of the NP mosaics are all distinctly later than the early 4th century, sitting more comfortably in the mid-late 4th and into the early 5th centuries.

Function: The purpose of the inner court and its richly decorated outer corridors is not clear; indeed the functions of the two were not necessarily connected with one another. The corridors appear designed to permit passage around the central block and provide access to all the adjacent buildings, in effect isolating the central block from

⁶⁰⁰ Kankeleit 1994:224-5; Atzaka 1998:83.

⁶⁰¹ Atzaka 1998:83, 198-200.

⁶⁰² Atzaka 1998:224-5, 231-3, 249-51.

⁶⁰³ Dyggve-Egger 1939:60, 68, 72.

⁶⁰⁴ Čanak-Medić 1978:229-30; Kolarik 1994:179 and Atzaka 1998:104, 108-9.

⁶⁰⁵ Atzaka 1998:108.

its neighbours. Its relative security has encouraged the idea that the building represents the emperor's 'private quarters'⁶⁰⁶ but the cell-like character of the rooms with their narrow doors seems ill-suited to such exalted domestic functions. A more utilitarian role might be to see these as a barracks for the emperor's guard, or a set of administrative offices requiring special security, or perhaps even a set of workshops for some high-value activity/commodity, such as the imperial mint. The corridors, by contrast, were not just passages, but spacious enough to have served as places of assembly.

BUILDING (18) AND BASILICA (fig.29, 'B')

Attached to the outside of the eastern wall of corridor 14, four joined rooms constitute a massively solid rectangular structure (22 x 3.30m.) faced solely with brick, its inner walls covered with two layers of waterproof mortar containing high volumes of broken tile. The structure had straight staircases on the Northeast (fig.76) and the Southwest (fig.77) sides, both extremely steep (13 steps each 0.23m. high) and narrow (0.50m.), which indicate the utilitarian function of the structure⁶⁰⁷. It was probably a cistern that collected the rainwater from the roofs of the Basilica and the Eastern Corridor while also serving to buttress the side walls of the Basilica. According to Knithakis' plan, a section that could provide vital information on the relationship of this structure to the outer wall of NP is that labelled 14a in fig.29 but, unfortunately, the join has been leveled to the ground and the surrounding walls are badly reconstructed, thus obscuring the relationship of building (18) to the rest of NP and with the Basilica and the Nymphaeum. No further information is provided in the excavation reports as to where the water was going to be used or if there was any connection southwards, such as to the Nymphaeum or the baths.

The east wall of building 18 formed one side of a very large basilical hall (19), excavated in 1969⁶⁰⁸. The hall measured c.67.8m. in overall length (including the apse) and c.29m. wide, with its eastern wall built against (and possibly bonded with) the hippodrome to the east (see Ch.II)⁶⁰⁹. The construction is in *opus mixtum*, of

⁶⁰⁶ Vitti 1996:213.

⁶⁰⁷ Athanasiou *et al.* 1997:412-4.

⁶⁰⁸ Petsas 1969:296; *id.* 1970(a):347; *id.* 1970(b):226; Vavritsas 1971:368; Moutsopoulos 1977; Vitti 1996:116; Athanasiou *et al.* 1998b.

⁶⁰⁹ Athanasiou *et al.* 1998:124.

alternating brick and schist stone (figs 78-80). While its east wall is buried underneath modern buildings, its west wall survives up to the level of the first four brick layers (c.0.50m.). Only the southwest side of the apse wall survives to a higher level (approximately 5-6m. being the highest point) where we can see the alternating schist rubble with four bands of brick (size of brick: c.48 x 33 x 3cm., height of mortar: c.4cm., very close to Vitti's type II brick size⁶¹⁰, see also Ch.II). There are no reports of any brickstamps. The western section of the apse appears to be bonded well with the eastern walls of the Nymphaeum (see below) suggesting a unified construction.

The floor of the apse at the southwest end (fig.81), slightly horseshoe-shaped, 19.5m. in diameter, was laid with mosaic (in tesserae of white, black, red, yellow, blue and brown), very well preserved at the time of excavation, together with the imprints of stripped *opus sectile*⁶¹¹. An outer frame of ivy-leaf (almost identical to the one that decorated the outer border of the east corridor of Southern Peristyle, fig.30), followed by a quadruple meander pattern, enclose a band of chequerboard at the apex, and a diagonal chequerboard containing smaller squares. The transition from the apse to the main hall was marked by a band of *opus sectile*, all fragmentary and also removed, but the imprints indicate a slightly larger scale version of the mosaic pattern beside it. The motifs have been dated by Atzaka to the first quarter of the 4th century on the basis of the use of *opus sectile* along with the presence of chequerboard pattern, which is also found in the North Corridor of Northern Peristyle and in the polygonal building on Gounari St.⁶¹², but these parts of the complex are not dated independently. The comparanda for the Southern Peristyle mosaics seem to favour a 5th century date (noted above, pp.76), while the dates of some possible comparanda from other sites in Thessalonica are no less problematic: an unidentified structure on 70-72 Aghias Sofias St. (given a vague dating of 4th century but with no further explanation⁶¹³), the unidentified building on 47-49 Sokratous St. (dated to the early 5th century⁶¹⁴) and the

⁶¹⁰ Samples were taken from the west corner of the apse, Vitti 1993(b):1707.

⁶¹¹ Petsas 1969:296; *id.*1970:347; Moutsopoulos 1977; Athanasiou *et al* 1998(a):113-9; Atzaka 1998:199-200.

⁶¹² Atzaka 1998:200.

⁶¹³ Romiopoulou 1977:195; Atzaka 1998:213.

⁶¹⁴ Kolarik (1982:409) dates this mosaic based on parallel patterns from Stobi. Atzaka (1998:157-8 and 248) suggests that the mosaic belongs to the first phase of the building dated to the second half of the 4th century.

church in Panorama area NE of Thessalonica (dated to *ca.* second half of the 5th century⁶¹⁵).

The meander design is also found in Corridor (16) of the Northern Peristyle and the polygonal building on Gounari St, and at Romuliana (safely dated between 309-311 and 316⁶¹⁶) but the similarity in this last case is only generic⁶¹⁷.

In the hall of the Basilica the surviving floor is made of large slabs of white and greyish marble (figs 82-3) of uncertain date. Mentzos has observed that a more careful study of the excavator's report of the Basilica⁶¹⁸ permits not two but three floor phases to be identified. The third phase involves the addition of these greyish marble slabs. The same phase might have also included the marble paving of the corridors around the Northern Peristyle (see pp.90) and parts of the bath (nos 20-25)⁶¹⁹, (see below, 'Nymphaeum').

Interestingly, the floor level in the Basilica is *c.*0.50m. higher than that of the Northern Peristyle⁶²⁰, which might simply reflect sloping ground (which the structure 18 could have served primarily to stabilise). Alternatively, it might signify an underlying hypocaust. The western part of the Basilica floor is raised on a step of 0.25m.high (and 3.95m. wide) which is defined by marble revetment of rectangular slabs *c.*1.5m. long. The Basilica's long axis lies (broadly) in line with that of the Galerius Arch and the Rotunda, and its main entrance was presumably from that direction. In addition to the side entrance at the end of the higher-level Northern Corridor (17) of the Northern Peristyle, another narrower entrance to the Basilica might have been provided from corridor (14) (fig.29, no.14a) to the Basilica apse, although nothing is attested in the excavation reports and the particular area is levelled to the ground thus prohibiting any certainty. In a similar fashion a second similar passage might have been situated on the east side of the apse towards the hippodrome.

⁶¹⁵ Tsigaridas 1973:500-1; Atzaka 1998:266.

⁶¹⁶ Čanak-Medić 1978:228-30; Kolarik 1994:176-9; Atzaka 1998:108

⁶¹⁷ Atzaka 1998:86, 93-104, 106-11, 199-200.

⁶¹⁸ Mentzos 2010:354.

⁶¹⁹ Mentzos 2010:353.

⁶²⁰ Papadopoulou 1964:332.

Dating and function: In its plan-type and dimensions (size of rectangular hall: c.58 x 29m.), the building has a very close counterpart in that at the palace of Trier (fig.84)⁶²¹, which is securely dated to the reign of Constantine (306-337) who initially chose Trier as his capital⁶²². Such exceptionally large apsidal halls are a feature of tetrarchic capitals, not just Trier but also Rome (Basilica of Maxentius/Constantine in Forum Romanum) and probably in Nicomedia⁶²³. The emperor could hold court in them, receive salutations and sit in judgment in the morning, and then host public banquets later in the day, after bathing. A smaller version was incorporated in the Sicilian villa of Piazza Armerina⁶²⁴. They could be general reception spaces, as were their smaller equivalents in other urban houses.

Mentzos' 2010 theory of palace core

In 2010 an article by Mentzos rejected the results of the 2004 Octagon investigation by Athanasiou (*et al.*) on the basis that there is no clear evidence for the different phases they saw in the building's structure and there is also no historical reason to explain such changes⁶²⁵. He proposes an alternative theory according to which the Octagon was built on top of an older circular foundation (with an outer diameter of 32.5m) very similar to one located on the other side of the Northern Peristyle⁶²⁶ (76m. to the north of the Octagon) which had a diameter of c.29.50m.⁶²⁷ ('NB' in fig.29). He suggests that both circular platforms supported round palace temples (dated to the Tetrarchic-Galerian period), which were located on either side of a colonnaded ceremonial street that led via a gate towards the Basilica⁶²⁸. Although Mentzos cites the archaeological reports from an excavation on the plot of 20 Palaion Patron Germanou St. (fig.49)⁶²⁹, the latter have no mention of the discovery of any gate, but just the stretch of a marble paving, probably a street, which we noted earlier (no.39 in

⁶²¹ Ward-Perkins 1994:442-5. The similarity has been noted by many: e.g. Athanasiou 1998:114, fig.2; Mayer 2002:46; Mentzos 2010:352.

⁶²² Krautheimer 1981:89-90; Ward-Perkins 1981:442.

⁶²³ Athanasiou 1998:114, fig.2; Mayer 2002:46; Mentzos 2010:352.

⁶²⁴ Krautheimer 1981:42.

⁶²⁵ Mentzos 2010:339-40.

⁶²⁶ Built with *opus caementicium*, Petsas 1966:332; Vitti 1996:215-6.

⁶²⁷ Mentzos mistakenly mentions that the external diameter of the Octagon (32.50m.) is equivalent to 100 Roman feet, possibly referring to the diameter of the circular platform North of the peristyle (c.29.50m.).

⁶²⁸ Mentzos 2010:340-3.

⁶²⁹ Karamberi-Christodoulidou 2002:307-8, 315-6. A general account of the excavation in the area of 20 P.P.Germanou St. summarising all previous findings was presented at the Annual *AEMΘ* Conference in Thessalonica in March 2012.

fig.29 and fig.95). Moreover the north circular platform ('NB') seems to have been abandoned at the height of its foundations and never built on⁶³⁰. It might be possible that indeed the two circular structures were initially meant to be round temples but the fact that the north structure was abandoned at its foundation level and the south was used for the Octagon indicates a change or interruption of plan.

Mentzos has proposed that the Northern Peristyle was originally an open peristyle courtyard similar to the Great Palace court of Constantinople⁶³¹. It was only at a later stage that the Thessalonica courtyard was enhanced with rooms and a smaller-sized peristyle and it had its previous mosaic floors covered with marble paving. Using the evidence of the coins issued by Marcian and Leo I that were found in corridors (15) and (16) (see above), Mentzos suggests that the marble pavements (which were similar to the ones added to the floors of the Basilica and the Baths) could date to the 6th century or even later. He based his proposal on the fact that, following the monetary reform by Anastasius in 498, these coins may well have been in use at least until the 6th century⁶³². Finally, Mentzos points out that the early buildings of the palace might have developed and evolved around a pre-existing and earlier building, perhaps a residence dated to the 2nd and 3rd centuries similar to the one whose traces were brought to light underneath the South corridor (15) (see above, pp.72)⁶³³.

We cannot be sure of the existence of the ceremonial route to the Basilica as described by Mentzos, however it seems very possible that corridor (17) was indeed closely associated with the Basilica and perhaps functioned as some sort of a processional or ceremonial route. It also seems likely that rooms 2-12 were later additions to what was earlier an open peristyle court (figs 95-6) when the need for more administrative space arose, perhaps when Thessalonica became the capital of Illyricum in 441 (see Ch.I). Mentzos's suggestion that the later palace occupied the area of a previous complex on the same site seems to me a possible scenario. The earlier existence of a luxurious building (near the sea) which might have also served as a governor's office could have been the right location for the development of a new administrative centre and its expansion.

⁶³⁰ Vitti 1996:117; Karamberi 1997:210; Mentzos 2010:342.

⁶³¹ Mentzos 2010:354.

⁶³² Mentzos 2010:354.

⁶³³ Mentzos 2010:355.

‘NYMPHAEUM’ AND BATHS (fig.29, ‘N’)

Of bonded construction with the western shoulder of the Basilica is a long rectangular hall (no.21 and fig.85), measuring c.18.50 x 7.50m. and commonly identified as a fountain room or nymphaeum⁶³⁴. An alcove at the eastern end contains a semi-circular basin, lined with white marble (figs 86-7). The walls stand to a height of c.6m., and are constructed of *opus mixtum* with 4 zones of brick alternating with schist. The brick size falls into Vitti’s type III (43 x 30 x 4.5cm., pp.51)⁶³⁵. Behind the northern wall, in the space between it and the south corridor of the North Peristyle is a water tank, 4.30 x 1.20m (no.20).

A door (c.1m wide) at the west end of the nymphaeum leads to a smaller square hall (no.25), which in its turn has a door connecting it with the space no.26. The wall dividing 26 and 27 is a later insertion, probably at the time that a door was made through the west wall of no.27 to give access to the northeast chapel of the Octagon. They were previously one space, which appears to have been a wide corridor running south to the Southern Peristyle.

The floors of 24 and 25 (fig.88) were paved with white marble like that in the basin of the nymphaeum (the marble was later replaced by brick tiles – when a door was made between 24 and 25). A terracotta pipe was found on the east side of these rooms, presumably leading from the tank 20 to rooms unexcavated further south.

Three doors in the south wall of the nymphaeum connected with an adjacent suite of three rooms, only the north sides of which have been excavated: two octagonal rooms (nos 22-23), with a rectangular room to their west (22a).

Dating and function: Nothing in particular is datable in this section of the complex. The walls are constructed of concrete faced with solid brickwork. The better preserved no.22 had semi-circular niches in its walls (fig.89) and marble revetment on their walls as seen from their imprints⁶³⁶. The use of brick and the elaborate shapes could indicate

⁶³⁴ Vitti 1993:88; Tiveriou 1996:12; Vitti 1996:110-111, 213-214; Atzaka 1998:197(n.38); Athanasiou *et al.* 1999:191-206; Athanasiou *et al.* 2001:104-14.

⁶³⁵ Samples were taken from the north wall although no precise location is mentioned - Vitti 1993b:1696, 1707.

⁶³⁶ Vitti 1996:215.

a set of baths⁶³⁷ extending underneath the modern buildings to the south⁶³⁸, although this area has had numerous alterations through time and no traces of heated rooms have been recorded.

POLYGONAL BUILDING ON GOUNARI ST. (fig.90)

On the same axis as the Basilica, but with 180m to the north (fig.28), this curious polygonal building, excavated in 1969⁶³⁹ measures only 24 x 13m. and consists of two opposed semicircular halls (figs 91-92, B and C in fig.90), one slightly larger than the other, approached via a rectangular room A on axis to the southwest. The northeast hall (C) measures 9m. in diameter, that to the southwest (B) measures 10.20m., and also expands into two semicircular niches B1 and B2 (diam. 2.8m). The floor of each section is a step up; section B is higher than entrance hall A, the floors in the two smaller apses B1-2 are a step up and C is also on a higher level. Hall C is effectively the apex of the building and the buttresses on the outside of its walls suggest that it was roofed with a semi-dome. The anteroom A has an equally wide door on its southwest side, and so there could have been at least one more room of similar size in that direction, perhaps a suite.

The walls of the two semicircles are both constructed with *opus mixtum* of 4-5 courses of brick alternating with schist stone, but the walls of the two niches are solely brick faced (figs 91-2). It seems from the available plan that all are bonded together, however, suggesting a single build. A brick-lined channel exits to the north from a level beneath the apse floor (to an unknown length or direction), but there is no further indication of a hypocaust (fig.93)⁶⁴⁰.

The floor in the northeast semicircle (C), raised on a step, is laid with a very elaborate and colourful grid-iron marble mosaic in the manner of *opus sectile*⁶⁴¹. Room B has a larger version of the same colourful design, as do both of its smaller apsidal recesses, whereas the entrance hall has a simpler chequerboard in *opus sectile*.

⁶³⁷ Ward-Perkins 1981:450.

⁶³⁸ Petsas 1966:331; Vitti 1996:215; Athanasiou *et al.* 1999:202-3; *id.* 2004:244.

⁶³⁹ Petsas 1969:296; Vavritsas 1971:371-3; Moutsopoulos 1977:224-8; Karydas 1996:583-4; Vitti 1996:218-20; Atzaka 1998:205-7.

⁶⁴⁰ information provided by the representative of the local ephorate during my site visit.

⁶⁴¹ Moutsopoulos 1977:227; Vitti 1996:218.

Dating and function: The building has been dated to the first quarter of the 4th century on the understanding that it belongs to the Galerian palace, but, taking into consideration its immediate proximity and topography in correlation with the main complex, it is possible that it was built at a later stage perhaps coinciding with the addition of the small rooms in the Northern Peristyle, as part of an administrative development of this sector. According to Vitti we have two different types of brick sizes (see also Ch.II, pp.51). Room A has his type II bricks (48 x 33 x 4cm)⁶⁴² similar to those in the Basilica, whereas room C has type III bricks (44 x 30 x 3.5cm.)⁶⁴³ similar to the samples from Northern Peristyle (of unknown exact location). This has suggested two phases in the construction of the building although it may simply signify a change of contractor and/or workforce. A report from further excavations in 1971 mentions that during the removal of the debris of a wall in room A (no specific location given) a selection of rectangular brickstamps (no sizes or quantities given) was found including ‘Maltese-type crosses’, small plain crosses, Christograms, monograms (X, Ψ, ΔO, K) and tree shaped symbols; they were all unframed, printed in one line and with no serifs⁶⁴⁴. The tree-shaped symbols could be related to those flanking the equilateral cross in the brickwork on the Octagon (fig.36). Although Vickers did not include these samples in his brickstamp study, examples with crosses have parallels with those found at the city walls, St. Demetrius and the Rotunda (see Ch.II, and WALL 16-17, DEM9 and ROT17 in fig.7) dated to the 5th or 6th century. Samples of Christograms were found in Constantinople and dated to the 6th century (see Ch.II) whereas we have no parallel examples from Thessalonica with the X, Ψ, ΔO and K monograms. Other plain monograms from Thessalonica (with different letters) are dated to the 5th and 6th century (see Ch.II).

In 1977 the excavator Moutsopoulos⁶⁴⁵ proposed that the building was a temple dedicated to Cabeiroi on the basis that it is very close to the hippodrome where the worship of the Cabeiroi is associated with horse racing (though he acknowledged that there was no other supporting evidence and he could cite no comparanda). Vitti, who described and discussed the building in some detail in 1996⁶⁴⁶, proposed dating it to

⁶⁴² Samples were taken from the west corner of room A, Vitti 1993b:1705.

⁶⁴³ Samples were taken from east wall of room C, Vitti 1993b:1705.

⁶⁴⁴ Vavritsas 1971:371.

⁶⁴⁵ Moutsopoulos 1977:226-8.

⁶⁴⁶ Vitti 1996:218.

the early 4th century and seems to have accepted the identification of the building as a temple but appeared hesitant on its relation with Cabeiroi. At the same time both Mentzos and Karydas⁶⁴⁷ proposed that the two apses were not contemporary with one another, one being added later to the other, though they did not explain which is which (or where they see a break in construction to support their idea of two phases), nor did they offer a date in either case, but suggested that it could have been a dining area (*triclinium*) or an audience hall. The relatively small scale (I estimate that a *stibadium* in the main apse could accommodate only 10-12 guests) would rule out a palace *triclinium* or audience hall, unless we envisage a more ‘private’ role for special ‘delegates’ only. It is difficult to find exact parallels for this shape of space elsewhere, but the basic arrangement resembles the ‘*daieta*’ in the Flavian palace on the Palatine in Rome (Domus Augustana) where a relatively private semi-circular space is protected by ante-room(s)⁶⁴⁸ (A in fig.94).

Providing that it was part of the palatial complex to the south, given the similarities in building materials, technique and interior decoration, its position on axis with the Basilica but facing it from the opposite direction could be explained by an intermediary atrium or a peristyle. The similarity of the *opus sectile* floor decoration to that in the Octagon may suggest a common workshop. The unusual brickstamps, indicating a dating of 5th or even 6th centuries, may also represent an independent workshop (since no similar brickstamps are found anywhere else) or an addition/reconstruction of a particular section at a much later date. It is always possible that it might constitute part of another high status property, but separate.

RECONSTRUCTION OF THE PALACE’S FOURTH CENTURY LAYOUT (fig.95)

Any attempt to reconstruct the complex as a whole, or even parts of it, is extremely challenging since the site has undergone numerous construction phases and, as we have seen, the dating evidence is hugely problematic. The absence of a central axial arrangement makes things even more difficult. From the above analysis, for each building we can ‘re-create’ a series of interconnected courtyard spaces, extending at least two deep, alongside the hippodrome. The years of Galerius’ presence in Thessalonica between 299 and 303 and from 308 to 311 could well be the period of

⁶⁴⁷ Mentzos 1995/1996:350; Karydas 1996:583-4.

⁶⁴⁸ Wataghin-Cantino 1966:26.

time when the construction of his palace and administrative buildings began, however we cannot be certain of this and it will remain an open question until more solid information comes to light. Fig.95 is a re-worked plan that excludes definitely later additions and ill-dated parts.

Before the construction of the Octagon, it is very likely that another -middle- peristyle 'MP' occupied the area. Its rectangular shape is a perfect fit for an earlier peristyle that probably had some sort of mosaic decoration, whose debris was discovered underneath the Octagon floor⁶⁴⁹.

The traditional assumption that the palace was orientated primarily inland towards the Arch of Galerius and the city could be mistaken. Thessalonica is a port and, on analogy with the late 3rd century palace of the so-called Dux Ripae at Dura Europos (fig.97), the palace of Diocletian built at Split in the 280s (figs 98-9, see below), or his palace at Antioch (fig.101, see below), the primary orientation of its governor's palace was more likely to have been towards the sea, with the emperors' principal residential quarters ('PQ1') located on the water front, overlooking the harbour from which they will have been directly accessible.

Unfortunately we do not know exactly where Thessalonica's sea front lay in the late Roman period though the modern topography suggests that it was located about 250m. south of Isavron Street. A 12th century source mentions a port area known as 'Εκκλησιαστική Σκάλα' (=Ecclesiastical Port)⁶⁵⁰ whose location is believed to be situated southeast of the palatial complex ('EP' in fig.95), in today's White Tower area⁶⁵¹, some 350m. southeast of the Octagon ('MP' in fig.95). Although we do not have much information about this area and its history, it might suggest a continuation of use of part of the 4th century harbour area. Consequently, the depth and width of a sea front wing are entirely hypothetical but the Southern Peristyle could have formed part of it, with another courtyard located to the east, filling the space beside the hippodrome. In fig.95 only the width of the peristyle is reasonably secure, the rest of the proportions are hypothetical. According to my calculations, should the proposed

⁶⁴⁹ Knithakis 1975:100, 108; Tiveriou 1995:21, 97.

⁶⁵⁰ *PG* 163, 1329 '...οι μὲν εἰς τὸν πρὸς δύοσιν τῆς ἐκκλησιαστικῆς σκάλας πύργον..' (= '...others went to the ecclesiastical port's west tower').

⁶⁵¹ Struck 1905:545; Tafrali 1919:19; Bakirtzis 1975:320-1; Vitti 1996:133.

plan in fig.95 be accurate in any way, the length of SP and PQ1 combined would be approximately 85m. and the proposed sea front wing would reach today's L. Margariti St., still some 170m. far away from today's coast line and the area of the 'Ecclesiastical Port'. However, if we assume that there was another peristyle placed between SP and PQ1 equal to the combined size of the two, or if SP was twice its 'current' size, then PQ1 would have been situated right at the sea front (also see below). Of course, all the above calculations are purely guesswork; we can only hope that some systematic excavations will be possible in the future in the relevant sectors.

An extension of the Southern Peristyle's Eastern Stoa ran to the north and east of the 'Octagon area' to connect with Northern Peristyle's South Corridor through a wide doorway (no.3 in fig.95), whose marble stairs are still visible (fig.57). On the east side of this corridor lay the bath complex and the Nymphaeum area (fig.85, 'baths' and 'N' in fig.95) entered via the doorway (4).

The Northern Peristyle in its initial phase might have consisted of just one corridor, the north. The chronology of the Northern Corridor mosaics (coin of Diocletian found, see above) suggests that the Northern Corridor was first in place and that the eastern, west and south corridors were introduced later (as further coinage of the mid-late 5th century indicates). It is also possible that the North Corridor initially served a totally different function. To this suggestion point certain features: a) it is on a higher level (around 0.50m.), b) it is significantly longer than the other three corridors, c) it has a different style of mosaic decoration (see above), and d) there are no steps leading to the lower corridors, which may indicate an independent utility. Due to the heavy reconstruction, it is not very clear today if the junctions of corridors (14) and (16) with the North Corridor (17) were marked by some sort of wall, step, or anything else. It also extends further west, beyond a very wide door (fig.29, no.30) alongside another building ('WB') and perhaps continued to meet a street which linked to the city centre (fig.95, no.39).

The door at the other end of the North Corridor led directly into the Basilica (fig.60 and no.7 in fig.95). This door is the only one visible, but there could be another one at the opposite wall (no.9) possibly offering access to/from the hippodrome. The Basilica would surely have had another entrance on its long axis, which is here restored as

columnar (8), modelled on its close parallel, the basilica at Trier, and preceded by an atrium court ('A'). This was perhaps to link the Basilica with the polygonal building to its north, or maybe there was a colonnaded street beyond the court leading to the junction with the *via Regia*. The Basilica was conveniently located adjacent to the baths, and was perhaps also linked to the hippodrome, which flanks its east side, though whether there was access between the two is uncertain. There could have been a door in line with (7) and/or another at the apse end (fig.95, no.10 and also see above fig.29, no.14a).

From the North Corridor of the Northern Peristyle, a wide doorway on its north side (6) led into the southeast corner of another large court containing a circular structure (NB), possibly never completed. The reconstruction completes the fragmentary circular plan and restores its court on the basis of the remains of the walls found on its east and south sides.

FIFTH CENTURY ADDITIONS AND ALTERATIONS TO THE COMPLEX (fig.96)

It is very likely that Northern Peristyle's inner court surrounded by the small rooms visible today (fig.29, nos.2-12) was a later modification. Its three corridors (14-16) were probably created in place of the previous colonnaded stoas. This is perhaps when door (10) was closed off, probably coinciding with the rebuilding work of the Western Corridor following an earthquake disaster in the second half of the 5th century (see below). Southern Peristyle's north side (situated on a lower level, of 0.75m., see above) was later rebuilt to incorporate the Octagon's vestibule and its columnar doorway (no.1) leading to the main Octagon area (no.2), which occupied the area of MP.

From all the above it is evident that no part of the palace is unquestionably Galerian in date. It is probable that the elevation of Thessalonica to a tetrarchic capital was accompanied by the construction or reconstruction of a palace of analogous luxury. However, the bulk of the excavated remains at Navarinou Square appear to have been built and/or decorated in the mid or late 4th century, with extensive repairs and some additions in the later 5th century, such as the Octagon and the central block in the Northern Peristyle. It is very possible therefore that these later changes could have coincided with or followed swiftly upon the transfer of the prefecture of

Illyricum to Thessalonica in 441-2. Since there is no available solid evidence on the existence of any private quarters, all the known components can potentially be characterised as public reception and administrative spaces. It is impossible to tell where the residential quarters were situated, but, in a port-city, it could be expected that they overlooked the sea (see my suggested extension of the complex towards the south, fig.96), as in the case at Antioch and Constantinople. Whether the palace extended alongside the hippodrome as far as the arch of Galerius, as often supposed, must also remain hypothetical. The position of the polygonal building, whether or not it formed part of the palace, rather argues against the possibility. On the other hand, there are signs that the palace could have extended considerably to the west, in a third block (represented by 'WB' in figs 29, 95-6 and the marble paving reported by Mentzos). In all certainty, the Navarinou Square complex was definitely of much larger scale than today's surviving parts and probably the product of an ongoing building practice that served the needs of a central administrative system, which was soon to also engulf the ecclesiastical element. The rapid growth and establishment of Christianity might have had a deep impact on the buildings' status and use. The case of Milan (Mediolanum), capital of Maximian, might be a good indication of how existing monumental buildings were converted to new ecclesiastic purposes. There, certain buildings are believed to have used previous structures such as the church of San Vittore al Corpo, which is thought to have incorporated a tetrarchic mausoleum and basilica⁶⁵² and the cathedral of San Lorenzo, which is suggested to have occupied an area originally included within the tetrarchic palace⁶⁵³.

3.4 Comparison with other Tetrarchic and Later Imperial Palaces

Below we explore the most significant elements in architectural plan and important features from other tetrarchic palaces and attempt to make comparisons between them and the palace of Thessalonica. Bearing in mind my reconstructed plans (figs 95-6) we will address key similarities and differences and discuss aspects of development, function and purpose of space.

⁶⁵² Roberti 1967:95-110.

⁶⁵³ Lusuardi Siena 1990:99.

Palace of Diocletian at Split (figs 98-9)

Diocletian's palace at Split (medieval Spalato) in modern Croatia was a residence built by the emperor between 285 and 305 for his retirement⁶⁵⁴. The palace is situated on the sea front and its total area covers approximately 3.8 hectares (c.9.5 acres), 38,445m². The complex is fortified with strong walls from the outside (in the design of a *castrum*⁶⁵⁵) divided internally into four equal parts by two intersecting streets. The palatial apartments occupied the two quadrants closer to the sea, preserved in the basements of the later medieval city. The southern part of the complex consists of a mausoleum (which is an octagon with a diameter of 13.35m.⁶⁵⁶), peristyles, a vestibule, temples and the luxurious apartments, which were accompanied by an audience hall (three-aisled basilica, see below), octagonal dining room (identified as a *triclinium*), and an impressive colonnaded gallery (with three *loggias*) overlooking the sea on the south side⁶⁵⁷.

Certain elements of the palace are comparable with parallel Tetrarchic sites from other locations such as Thessalonica. In particular:

1. The geographical location of the Split complex is closely related to the one in Thessalonica. The Split palace has a frontage of c.170m, extending inland, within strong fortifications, for a distance of c.205m. Although we are not certain of the precise dimensions of neither the frontage nor the full length of the N-S axis of the Thessalonica palace, my current reconstructed plan suggests a N-S axis length of c.250m. (including the area between NB and PQ1 as shown in fig.95) and a frontage of just c.55m. (based on my own calculations as per fig.95). This may suggest that the Thessalonica palace PQ1 sector (figs 95-6) could have occupied a larger area towards the east ('PQ2', figs 95-6). Strangely enough, if we were to consider a longer Southern Peristyle (extending towards the sea) or an additional peristyle (as explained above) and then add another 115 meters (totaling Split's 170m. frontage) towards the east

⁶⁵⁴ Leadbetter 1994:54-9; Kienast 1996:263.

⁶⁵⁵ Marasović *et al.* 1972:3 and Fellmann 1979. Numerous scholars tried to interpret Diocletian's residence and attached a 'palatial' as well as a military character (*castrum* and *principia*) to it (Wilkes 1993:28). Duval (1965:74) combined all features of a late Roman tetrarchic residence in his analysis and taking into consideration that the complex was built by an emperor in the countryside (and not in a city) he avoids the term 'palace' and uses the term 'château'.

⁶⁵⁶ Wilkes 1993:48.

⁶⁵⁷ Wilkes 1993:28.

from the currently proposed palace sea front, this would lead us to the exact location of where the so-called 'Ecclesiastical Port' ('EP') is believed to have been situated.

2. The building on the southeast corner of the complex in Split whose central chamber was an octagonal hall⁶⁵⁸ has been identified as a possible *triclinium* and the imperial dining room and it has been closely correlated to the Octagon of Thessalonica (diagonal of 24.95m.) despite the big difference in scale (diagonal of c.13m.).

3. The mosaic floors that have been excavated in Split bear geometric compositions including interlocking circles, diamonds, squares, octagons and so on⁶⁵⁹. Some of these geometric patterns are very similar to the ones in Thessalonica (such as the interlocking octagons which appear heavily at the North Corridor of the Northern Peristyle) although the latter appear to be of superior quality⁶⁶⁰. The mosaics in Split hardly use more than three or four colours and it seems clear that the mosaicists employed in Split were not as talented as the ones worked for the palace of Thessalonica⁶⁶¹.

Sirmium

The Palace of Sirmium (modern Sremska Mitrovica, Vojvodina province, Serbia) which was used either by Licinius (308-314) or Constantine (316-321) as a provincial capital⁶⁶² was found in 1956 but is not entirely excavated⁶⁶³. Although it is known to include a hippodrome and a reception hall with an apse, no general plan is available⁶⁶⁴. The hippodrome, dated to the era of Licinius (on the numismatic evidence found during excavations⁶⁶⁵), was built in close proximity with the hypothetical palace, attached to the city walls as at Thessalonica⁶⁶⁶. Further investigations and studies have concluded that what was previously thought to be the

⁶⁵⁸ Torp 1974:153-64, Nicholson 1984:258: n.22, Marasović *et al.* 1989:28 and Wilkes 1993:61, 114:n.141.

⁶⁵⁹ For a detailed account on the mosaics see Wilkes 1993:108, f.79.

⁶⁶⁰ Papadopoulou 1964:332 and fig.376.

⁶⁶¹ Kolarik 1994:172; Atzaka 1998:107.

⁶⁶² Ochsenschlager and Popović 1973:90.

⁶⁶³ For reports/comments on the complex see: Milošević, Milutinović 1958:5-57; Ochsenschlager, Popović 1973; Brukner, Petrović 1976; Brukner 1983, 1982, 1981; Srejović 1993:89-97.

⁶⁶⁴ Ochsenschlager and Popović 1973.

⁶⁶⁵ Popović and Ochsenschlager 1976:172 on the numismatic evidence from the reign of Constantine (307/313) and Licinius (312/313); Heucke 1994:333-40.

⁶⁶⁶ Popović-Ochsenschlager 1976:156-81; Vitti 1996:115

palace is most likely to have functioned as *horrea* and the exact location of the palace is still not known (but was probably situated in the modern city centre, where several findings came to light such as baths, *horrea*, aqueduct and an urban villa)⁶⁶⁷.

Constantinople

The Great Palace in Constantinople has not been excavated fully and our knowledge regarding its architectural layout is also incomplete⁶⁶⁸. It overlooked the Marmara Sea⁶⁶⁹. Literary sources have helped numerous scholars reconstruct a hypothetical picture of the complex⁶⁷⁰ (fig.100) and it has been suggested that the palace followed the tetrarchic tradition in construction using the *opus mixtum* technique⁶⁷¹. By the 6th century the complex included the following: fortification walls⁶⁷², a city gate ('Golden Gate'), a major colonnaded avenue ('Mese'), a *quadrifrons* arch ('Milion'), a smaller colonnaded avenue ('Reggia') led to the palace gate ('Chalke'), a large square ('Augusteum'), the baths of Zeuxippos, a hippodrome, and the palace proper⁶⁷³. We also know that an octagonal built by Constantine I was part of the palace⁶⁷⁴. Even from these fragmentary details we know that the existence of certain buildings, such as the hippodrome and the octagon, was evident in both Constantinople and Thessalonica.

Antioch

Regrettably, the palace of Diocletian in Antioch is known only from a detailed description by Libanius written in AD 360 (for a reconstruction of the plan based on the ancient text, see fig.101):

'The new city stands on the island, which the division of the river formed.... [204] The form of this new city is round. It lies on the level part of the plain, the whole of it an exact plan, and an unbroken wall surrounds it like a crown. From four arches, which are joined to each other in the form of a rectangle,

⁶⁶⁷ Duval 1979:56-62,74-9; Srejšović 1993:100-15; Parović-Pesikan 1972:15-44· *id.* 1973:1-29; Popović 1986:98-9; Rusevljan 1987:112; Srejšović 1993:103-8.

⁶⁶⁸ Dagron (1984).

⁶⁶⁹ Mango 2001:17-28.

⁶⁷⁰ Ebersolt 1910; Mamboury and Wiegand 1934; Guiland 1969:542-55; Müller-Wiener 1977:229-37; Mango 1993:121-8; Freely and Çakmak 2004:36-60.

⁶⁷¹ Dagron 1974:77-115; Mango 1985 and Ćurčić 1993:71.

⁶⁷² Initially built by Constantine I and then replaced with larger ones by Theodosius II in 412-13. See Meyer Plath and Schneider 1943 and Müller-Wiener 1977:286-95, 312-19.

⁶⁷³ Mango M. 2001:30-47.

⁶⁷⁴ Lavin 1962:16.

four pairs of Stoas proceed as from an *omphalos*, stretched out toward each quarter of the heaven.... [205] Three of these pairs, running as far as the wall, are joined to its circuit, while the fourth is shorter, but is the more beautiful just in proportion as it is shorter, since it runs toward the palace ... and serves as the approach to it. [206] This palace occupies so much of the island that it constitutes a fourth part of the whole. It reaches to the middle of the island, which we have called an *omphalos*, and extends to the outer branch of the river, so that where the wall has columns instead of battlements, there is a view worthy of the emperor, with the river flowing below and the suburbs feasting the eye on all sides.' ...' [232] ... the district in front of the palace shares the grandeur within, even though it is itself inferior to what is within.' (Libanius, *Oration XI*⁶⁷⁵).

The fortified palace was built on an island situated in the river Orontes. The imperial apartments placed at the end of one of the two intersecting streets had a peristyle and a colonnaded gallery overlooking the water similar to that at Split (the layout of the palace in Antioch appeared to be similar to Diocletian's palace at Split - see above). The main points of comparison which can be drawn from this are probably the four-way arch and intersecting colonnaded streets (stoas) and the care to provide the palace with a view (in Antioch's case of the river and the suburban villas on the opposite bank). As at Thessalonica, the palace at Antioch was built within the city limits and its design placed the complex overlooking the water (although we do not know whether the palace in Thessalonica had a colonnaded gallery, its southern wing can be presumed to have overlooked the sea). The palace of Constantinople was not laid out on a regular rectangular plan, like the palace at Split and possibly that of Antioch. Yet, as at Split, is it very likely that both Antioch's and Thessalonica's section of the palace abutting the sea walls featured an open gallery overlooking the sea⁶⁷⁶.

Discussion

From this brief survey of tetrarchic sites, we can deduce that although there may be some similarities between Split and Thessalonica the two sites are not very close architecturally. Diocletian's Palace at Split is basically a Late Roman maritime villa, in the same way that Galerius' palace in Romuliana (see Ch.IV) is a Late Roman country villa. Neither is strictly speaking comparable in size and function to the palaces where the Tetrarchs ruled and administered a part of the empire, but they are the best elite palatial residences of the period that survive, and we can look to

⁶⁷⁵ See also Downey 1959:652-86 and Downey 1953:106-16.

⁶⁷⁶ Mamboury and Wiegand 1934:1-25 and Ćurčić 1993:71.

them for evidence of the sort of architectural vocabulary and thinking that Galerius' architects would have used. In both Split and Thessalonica we do recognise the presence of two important building types such as the basilica and the octagon as individual entities but their placement within their general plan differs significantly. Also the arrangement of other important structures within the two palaces is not similar at all. Of course, the different character of the two palaces (private vs. public) might justify this dissimilarity in design.

It is rather difficult to define typological or iconographic formulas in palatial design. At the same time, Tetrarchic palaces do appear to share some common features such as the local topography (since they all appear to have taken into serious consideration the presence of the sea or a major river, the location of nearby hills or mountains, the pre-existence of city walls), the arrangement in different sectors, the presence of basilical halls, baths, temples, *mausolea* and hippodrome; sometimes more than others but they certainly do not appear in certain patterns or sequences and this becomes pretty clear every time we study the available plans. In many cases, numerous symbolic elements appear to have been employed in standardised sequences (such as *mausolea*, temples, arch), relating palaces to - and at the same time setting them apart from - their urban settings. Such associations could and did exist, regardless of the scale or other particular elements such as the axuality or symmetry of their layout.

It now becomes evident that despite the strict military character promoted by the Tetrarchy, numerous exceptions and alterations might and could have taken place in order to fit and match an emperor's vision for the implementation of a palatial complex, in a personal or public domain. It makes perfect sense for an emperor to want to give his signature to his own palace attaching his personal symbolic statement to its character and re-arrange the structural components of his palace. In a similar way this has an impact on other more specific features of a palace such as the mosaic decoration, which sometimes might reflect the personal taste of the emperor or, in the case of Thessalonica, the taste of succeeding rulers and governors who probably used the palace subsequently. Mosaic compositions and certain patterns might of course be part of a general trend but it is not impossible to come across stylistic variations or the appearance of figurative panels (as opposed to the dominant geometric motifs), which

could have been the outcome of a personal choice or even the employment of different and more favourite workshops from various regions of the empire.

A parallel interpretation may well be produced when we study the design of private residences of Thessalonica in the next chapters. We will observe similarities and dissimilarities in plan, layouts and mosaic iconography, all in close relation with the palace of Thessalonica and its impact on domestic architecture.

Chapter IV: The Villa at Palaeokastro

4.1 Introduction

This chapter discusses the villa of Palaeokastro, a village south of Oraeokastro, 11km to the northeast of Thessalonica, located on the lower hill side, some 100m. above the Oraeokastro plain.

Although this thesis is mainly about town houses, the Palaeokastro complex is the best preserved example from the entire immediate Thessalonica region, admittedly not very far from its urban counterparts. Exploring its available architectural and decoration components will provide a comprehensive picture of its plan type, which shares many similarities with the Thessalonican samples. Having investigated the architectural features of the Palaeokastro example first, we shall then move onto the fragmentary samples from within the city and will be able to proceed easier with comparisons and parallelisms when and where possible.

The ancient villa lies on the outskirts of the modern village, transected by Zakynthou Street from east to west. It was excavated in two campaigns, in 1998/9 and 2002 (fig.102)⁶⁷⁷. The excavations to the south of Zakynthou Street were backfilled and are now built over; those on the north side were left on public view under a protective cover, but that has deteriorated and access is prohibited except at a distance. The account offered here is therefore based mainly on the reports published by the excavators, with some observations made from the available photographic material that I personally took during my visit at the site in January 2011 and images (some unpublished) kindly provided by the excavator, Efterpi Marki.

The two excavations uncovered some 900m² of buildings forming a substantial residential block facing south (whose plan is partially reconstructed - see fig.103), laid

⁶⁷⁷ Parts of the apsidal hall of the residence excavated by archaeologist Efterpi Marki in 1998 and 1999. Preliminary reports were published by D. Kommatas in *AEMΘ* 1999 and in the annual excavations booklet of the 9th Ephorate in 2003. A more detailed report by Marki and S. Akrivopoulou appeared in *AEMΘ* 2005, discussing the architecture, mosaics and dating. A shorter summary report was published by Marki in 2010.

out around a courtyard (1) with an apsidal hall (3) on axis to the north, and a small bath-building (12) offset to the southeast, tightly enclosed by a solid outer wall (1.60-1.80m. thick) with a square tower at the southeast corner (15) (fig.104). Traces of a threshold on the south side suggest the outer entrance was not located on axis but offset to the southwest (14).

The original construction, including the outer wall, can be dated to the late 4th - early 5th century AD on the basis of its building technique - an *opus mixtum* of stone alternating with 3-4 courses of bricks (32 x 22 x 3.5cm)⁶⁷⁸. The stone consists of river pebbles [instead of schist] and the bricks are rather smaller, but otherwise the technique compares closely with the *opus mixtum* used in Thessalonica (see Ch.II). In the 6th century the external walls of the apse of the apsidal hall were thickened. In the 7th century a cistern was added in the southwest corner of the storage room (11), and substantial building additions took over the southern part of the courtyard. The windows along the Northern Corridor were blocked and, judging by the large pots that were found *in situ*, the apsidal hall was converted into a storage space. The building was probably destroyed by a fire in the 7th century⁶⁷⁹ and was partially re-used until the 9-10th centuries⁶⁸⁰.

4.2 The Residential Nucleus (fig.103)

The layout of the residential nucleus, although we are missing much of the western side, was probably symmetrical about its N-S axis. The courtyard (no.1) measures 12.50m. wide by at least 14.50m. long. If a masonry well head (diameter 1.10m.) marks its centre, it will have continued for a further 2m. to the south (beneath Zakynthou Street). The surviving surface in the courtyard is of tough waterproof concrete (*opus signinum*), but that appears to belong to a later phase and the excavators suggest that it was originally paved with marble slabs shown by the imprints in the original bedding, found under the later concrete⁶⁸¹.

⁶⁷⁸ Kommatas 2001:134.

⁶⁷⁹ Burnt coinage dated between 6th and 7th centuries was found at the eastern part of the courtyard – see Marki-Akrivopoulou 2005:293.

⁶⁸⁰ Marki-Akrivopoulou 2005:292.

⁶⁸¹ Marki-Akrivopoulou 2005:283.

On the eastern side the court was bordered by a narrow, corridor-like room (no.9, and fig.105), 13.40m. long x 2.50m. wide, accessible from the court by two doorways (1.20m. wide) and giving access in its turn, through wider doors (1.50 m), to two rooms laid out to the east (10-11). Room 9 also had a door 1.20 m. wide at the north end, connecting it to the north wing (2), but no door at the south end. Its floor was laid in mosaic, with a unifying outer frame of red and white triangles entwined with ivy around the margins, within which it was divided into two sections, with a different geometric pattern in each. The northern pattern is composed of octagons with four squares attached to their sides and diamonds in between them. The southern panel is decorated with an overall grid of hexagons and diamonds (fig.106) similar to the NP East corridor of the Thessalonica palace (see Ch.III and figs 67-9). Their division corresponds to the two rooms 10-11. These were of equal size, roughly square (6.50m. x 6.50m.), which the excavators propose were once covered by stone vaults⁶⁸², but the walls do not look strong enough for that. Their original floors are lost⁶⁸³. There was presumably a matching suite on the western side which lies under Stanisi Street.

The north side of the court has a central doorway (figs 107, 118), its threshold 2m. wide, leading to a corridor (no.2) which has an excavated length of 15.30m. and a width of 3.20m. ending in an apse of slightly horse-shoe shape at the east end⁶⁸⁴. There was probably a similar apse at the west end (unexcavated). Its walls (figs 107-109) constructed of rubble to a height of around 1m. and thereafter of brick, capped with a brick-vault, survive to a height of 2m., squared off on the outside (fig.110) and containing three small niches on the inside (later blocked in). The floor of the apse is laid in mosaic in which double braiding frames a design radiating a shield of triangles (figs 109, 111-112), described as a 'pinecone' in Greek terminology, in white and deep red stone tesserae. A similar design (but as part of a panel, not in an apse) is found in a fragmentary building excavated at 16 Gounari St. in Thessalonica⁶⁸⁵, which is believed to belong to the palace complex (fig.113)⁶⁸⁶ and in a mosaic on 101

⁶⁸² Marki 2010:36.

⁶⁸³ After their vaults collapsed in the 6th century they were converted to some agricultural use. A tank was installed in the SW corner in the 7th century, see Marki-Akrivopoulou 2005:290.

⁶⁸⁴ The excavation report states that the cord of the eastern apse measures 3.55m, probably a mistake, since the corridor is only 3.20m. wide.

⁶⁸⁵ This building, now underneath the modern buildings was first published by Atzaka (1998:198), on the basis of some photographic material found in the local ephorate's archives. Its approximate location is placed northeast of the Northern Peristyle and very close to the northwest side of the hippodrome.

⁶⁸⁶ Atzaka 1998:figs.39a-c.

Olympiados St. (fig.114). This also compares closely with one in the southern entrance of Gamzigrad (see below), dated by Atzaka to the first quarter of the 4th century⁶⁸⁷. The design could have mirrored the semi-dome which covered the apsidal space, perhaps with an oculus set directly over the central medallion of the floor.

Directly in front of the apse (figs 111-112, 115), in a rectangular panel, framed in triple braiding, is a bust of a bearded male figure, with a three-line inscription on its right side naming Echedoros (Εχέδωρος)⁶⁸⁸ as the river of central Macedonia Gallikos (Γαλλικός). This was a source of gold at the time⁶⁸⁹ and passes some 2 kms east of the residence. This is the only known depiction of this personified river in Greek iconography⁶⁹⁰. The bust is orientated towards the south, facing the door from room 9 - presumably an indication of the main approach⁶⁹¹. The 'coffered' border (boxes in perspective) could have been mirrored in the ceiling above⁶⁹². The rest of the floor of the Northern Corridor has an outer border of coloured chequerboard, divided internally into sections by triple braiding. The next rectangular panel to the west, in front of the entrance to the hall contains an extremely fragmentary mythological scene from which only part of a humanlike head (with a pointed ear and long hair), holding in his left hand a fold of a himation, has survived. The excavator suggests that this was probably a depiction of Poseidon or a nymph⁶⁹³, but it could also be a Triton judging by the surrounding marine iconography. The surviving sections to east and west contain geometrical motifs including squares, diamonds and chequerboard, possibly reflecting divisions in the ceiling supported on beams at the same intervals. Similar mosaic designs have been found at the SP West Corridor of the palace complex at Thessalonica (fig.116). Atzaka also includes in her corpus a mosaic with parallel patterns now in the Thessalonica Museum storerooms, without specific provenance and undated (fig.117)⁶⁹⁴. The last panel to the west in front of the other

⁶⁸⁷ Atzaka 1998:102, 108, 198-9.

⁶⁸⁸ *LIMC*, suppl. 2009(2):193 s.v. [Echēdorus]; Kirsten 1985:219-35.

⁶⁸⁹ Marki-Akrivopoulou 2005:285, the river is known for its gold from the ancient Greek myth of Midas.

⁶⁹⁰ I would like to thank Dr. Marki for this information.

⁶⁹¹ Dunbabin (1999:316) points out that there is no uniformity of practice regarding the orientation of figured mosaics thus we cannot always be entirely sure what were the intentions of the mosaicists and the patron.

⁶⁹² A similar suggestion is made by Dunbabin (1999:314-315) in a discussion on mosaic perspective that could be possibly connected with the ceiling.

⁶⁹³ Marki 2010:29.

⁶⁹⁴ Atzaka 1998:figs.LX and LXIa-c.

apsidal end does not survive but possibly depicted another river, the Axios river, which is situated west of the residence, the two images then corresponding to a geographical reality⁶⁹⁵. The villa-owner may have owned land in the area of both rivers or perhaps his estate extended between the two.

Windows (approx. 1m. wide and around 1m. off the ground), with solid marble sills (0.40m. thick) are placed symmetrically to either side of the door from the court (figs 118-119). They will have shed light on the mosaics of the Northern Corridor and into the rooms which opened off it to the north. The principal room was the apsidal hall (3) whose entrance was marked by a tribelon, a triple archway, whose columns were raised on marble pedestals (0.89m. high, 0.52m. wide and deep) set on marble plinths 0.40m. high (figs 107 and 118). The column shafts, c.0.28-0.30m. in diameter, are lost. It is not clear from the reports whether the two Ionic capitals found in the excavations came from this area or not⁶⁹⁶.

The main hall (3) measures 7.0m. wide by 8.20m. long, with a semicircular apse at its north end (fig.103, no.4) 5.20m. in diameter. The walls are constructed in *opus mixtum* combining river pebbles, probably taken from a small river situated 500m. from the residence⁶⁹⁷, and four courses of bricks⁶⁹⁸ (figs 120-123) measuring 27-29 x 3.5cm. The apse has a double outer wall 2m. thick, surviving in places to a height of c.2m., and further supported by two external rectangular buttresses, which suggest that it was once covered with a brick semi-dome. The floor in the main hall (figs 121-124) centres on an *encōlpion* (medallion) with a diameter of 2m. in the form of a many-petalled rosette, framed in a band of triangles of black, red, white and green tesserae. The floor in the main hall is filled with vegetal ornamentation including at each corner (figs 124-126) a kantharos vessel⁶⁹⁹ and a vine growing out of an acanthus plant, bearing bunches of grapes. The vine expands towards the centre of the panel and creates circles; each of them containing a bird. At least 33 kinds of birds⁷⁰⁰

⁶⁹⁵ Atzaka 2010:29.

⁶⁹⁶ Marki-Akrivopoulou 2005:292; Marki 2010:36.

⁶⁹⁷ Kommatas 2001:133-4.

⁶⁹⁸ Marki-Akrivopoulou 2005:287.

⁶⁹⁹ The depiction of a kantharos (at each corner of the main hall decoration) was also found at the fragmentary residence on Aioulou Street in Thessalonica (not in catalogue) dated to the reign of Honorius (395-423) by a coin found underneath the mosaic floor. See Marki 1998:146. See also Ch.V and Table I.

⁷⁰⁰ Birds can also be seen at the mosaic of the main hall of residence cat.no.10 (see Appendix).

have been recognised, including an eagle and a cockerel⁷⁰¹ (figs 124-126). Mosaics with similar bird depictions have been found in the townhouses and some Christian churches of Thessalonica and elsewhere, all dated to the 5th and 6th centuries (see Ch.V and Table I). Around the margins of the room two bands of double braiding frame a 'running-dog' or wave motif (figs 124, 126) in blue, white and red. The main hall may also have been vaulted, with an oculus or lantern skylight corresponding to the *encōlpion*.

The apse floor is laid 0.15m. higher than that of the main hall, with the edge of the step marked by two rows of white marble slabs (fig.127), behind which a mosaic floor was laid in a complex geometric pattern of 16-sided circles interlocking to create star shaped motifs (a very similar mosaic pattern has been found at a possible residence on 90 Kassandrou St. in Thessalonica and dated to the end of the 4th century⁷⁰²; fig.129, see also Ch.V), surrounded by a band of 'running-dog' pattern, a white stripe and a band of braiding (figs 124, 128). The tesserae used are mainly white, black, red, light red and blue coloured and they have an average length of 0.5cm⁷⁰³. Marble slabs also ran round the foot of the apse wall (52-82cm. long and 4 cm. high)⁷⁰⁴. The rest of the wall of the apse and those of the main hall, were painted in fresco, which shows three phases or three layers of plaster, the final one of which (and perhaps the previous ones too) was an architectural scheme in white, black, red and light red. To the southeast of the apse (fig.127) is a fragmentary panel surrounded by a red and a black stripe, apparently the pilaster of a triumphal arch framing the entrance to the apse. Traces of the bases of other columns are found on the east wall of the hall, and between the two doorways a large circle contained within a red frame, presumably in imitation of marble veneer.

On either side of the main hall are pairs of two smaller rooms (fig.103, nos 5-6 on the east, 7-8 on west), all of approximately equal size (3.60 x 4.50 and 3.40 x 4.30m). Room 6 had a door 2.2-2.4m. wide opening from the hall. Room 5 was originally constructed with a similar door, which was later blocked up (fig.130). Room 6 communicated with room 5 internally through a relatively narrow, arched doorway,

⁷⁰¹ Marki-Akrivopoulou 2005:289.

⁷⁰² Makropoulou-Tzitzibasi 1993:356; Atzaka 1998:235-6 and pl.119.

⁷⁰³ Marki 2010:30.

⁷⁰⁴ In a similar fashion to the apse of residence, cat.no.5 (see Appendix).

1.30m. wide, and with the Northern Corridor (2) through a door 1.20m. The walls of the eastern suite have a surviving height of 3m. The floor of the north-east room 5 was laid 0.20m. higher than the floor of the main hall, on the same level as the apse (4) and in its later phase instead of a doorway the west wall contained a niche. The rooms on the west side of the hall lie partly under Stanisi Street, but they were apparently mirror images of the two on the east. It looks as if only two rooms had direct communication with the main hall, rooms 6 and 8, whereas rooms 5 and 7, at least in a secondary phase, to which their mosaic floors belong, had a niche in each of them without a door opening to the main hall.

The floors of the eastern rooms (5-6) combined an all-over geometrical pattern laid around a small figured panel. In room 5 (figs 131-132) the mosaic panel depicts the naked figure of Leda with the Swan surrounded by light blue coloured tesserae and a border of ivy scroll. It is facing the door to room 6. The mosaic of room 6 is lost apart from two small sections of a surrounding border consisting of red and white triangles⁷⁰⁵. In room 8 an octagon containing a naked dancing female figure or maenad is set in a geometric scheme of octagons and diamonds (fig.133). The picture faces south towards the peristyle corridor. Glass tesserae in light green colour were used to depict the cloak of the figure (behind her shoulder) along with the jewels that she wears. This figure is very similar to a maenad figure found at a building in Thessalonica on 8 Palama Street but dated to the 3rd century⁷⁰⁶.

The depiction of human figures is rare in the Thessalonica mosaics⁷⁰⁷, where geometric motifs predominate and the exclusively pagan mythological subject matter of those at Palaeokastro is all more striking, in view of the date. By the early 5th century Christianity was firmly established as the official religion at the centre of power, but many non-Christians continued to be employed in the imperial bureaucracy, for their literacy and other administrative skills, and traditional classical culture was still being taught in the schools and universities of the Greek East⁷⁰⁸. Whether the owners of the Palaeokastro villa were actually pagans or Christians is difficult to determine. None of the loose finds (lamps, pottery, glassware, etc.) are

⁷⁰⁵ Marki-Akrivopoulou 2005:290.

⁷⁰⁶ Atzaka 1998:69-70; Labrothanasi 2001:27-34, fig.3.

⁷⁰⁷ Atzaka 1998:figs.287, LVI and Marki-Akrivopoulou 2005:289.

⁷⁰⁸ Traina 2009:ch.4 -5, especially 46-8.

indicative but it is very possible that the owners of the site in later years were probably baptised as Christians. The decoration of the main hall is relatively neutral, or at any rate bilingual, in that its vine-scrolls, birds and wine-craters appear in the mosaics of Christian churches and tombs⁷⁰⁹.

Taking into consideration the way mosaics are laid in the rooms 5 and 8, we see that the rooms with the mythological figures have a more private character, not laid with consideration to access from the main hall, but rather to suit their other entrances. It is also noteworthy that both sets of rooms are accessible directly from the Northern Corridor and might therefore have been able to serve as independent apartments, keeping the other doors of rooms 6 and 8 shut. One would have been able to access rooms 5-6 and 7-8 directly from the Northern Corridor without walking via the main hall. Probably the function of the smaller apses of each end of the corridor was also closely associated with these two sectors. The mosaic panels placed just in front of the entrances to these rooms function like door mats.

The layout of this wing of the residence and its mosaics allowed its spaces to be combined (or not as the case may be) in different ways (the arrows placed on the plan fig.103 indicate the available doorways):

1. The apsidal hall (3-4), the North Corridor (2) and its apses, with the side rooms (5) and (7)
2. Main hall only, closing the doors to rooms 5-8
3. Rooms 5-6 as a separate unit
4. Rooms 7-8 as a separate unit

The range of alternatives also extended to the manner in which the wing could be accessed from the courtyard, either on axis through the central door to room 2 or via

⁷⁰⁹ Marki (2010:38) has argued on the basis of a column base bearing a cross (found in the southern area of the peristyle) and a double marble parapet bearing the Christian initials XP found on the floor of a small cistern (2.60 x 2 x 1.45m.) added in the same area, that the site was Church property from at least the 6th century onwards. The later name of the site as '*despotikō*' (=owned by a bishop) broadly used by the locals refers to an ecclesiastical character that probably derived from the ownership of the complex by a bishop, which was a quite common practice during the 6th century and survived in the oral toponymic heritage.

the side corridor (9), each half of which in its turn formed an anteroom to a room beyond.

At the south end of the east wing, some 6m. distant from the peristyle, part of a small bath house was excavated, contained within the outer wall (fig.103, no.12). Two rooms with hypocaust and *praefurnia* were found (fig.134); one forming a small *caldarium* and the other a larger rectangular room (preserved dimensions 4.50 x 3.50m.), which was possibly used as a storage room for coals⁷¹⁰. In plan the installation is a miniature version of the main apsidal hall.

4.3 Ownership and Function

Marki has suggested that the early 5th century residence of Palaeokastro belonged to a wealthy and cultivated owner of the same calibre and status as those of the more elaborate residences in Thessalonica in the same period⁷¹¹. This is evident in the symmetrical layout and the sophisticated use of mosaics, including some with complex human iconography. Even the subsidiary mosaic panels are conceived of as carpets carefully placed in front of windows and doorways, linking spaces and rooms. For example, the two different mosaic panels/carpets that decorate the Eastern Corridor serve this particular function; they link room no.10 (fig.103) and the courtyard and room no.11 and the courtyard respectively. The distinct mosaic carpets give a unique character to each room. Although the mosaic panels of the Northern Corridor do not survive to the same degree we can observe this similar practice with different carpets in front of each window and in the apse at each end, and another one in front of the main doorway.

Comparing the assemblage with mosaics in Thessalonica, there are no examples where different mosaic panels are laid in front of doorways. Residence (8) (Appendix, fig.8a) shares a very similar plan with the Palaeokastro residence but its stoas are covered with a continuous mosaic floor, which takes no account of doorways or adjacent rooms. This serves to emphasise the individual and personal nature of the choice of motifs and layout at Palaeokastro, though the general range of geometric

⁷¹⁰ Marki-Akrivopoulou 2005:290 and Marki 2010:26-7.

⁷¹¹ Marki 2000:147.

patterns suggests that the workshop(s) employed could also have worked in Thessalonica (this question will be explored in the next chapter).

The fortified character of the residence in Palaeokastro may also point us to the same direction of a rich owner, who wanted to protect his property from external threats. The decoration of the apse, the adjacent suites, the apsidal hall and the corridors indicate the important status of the residence, where the owner would frequently receive and entertain guests.

4.4 Comparison with other Late Roman Country Villas

The Palaeokastro villa is in many respects a miniature version of the layout of the villa at Piazza Armerina (fig.135), a site which covers an area of *c.*24,000m² to Palaeokastro's estimated *c.*900m². The 4th century site of Piazza Armerina is now thought to have replaced an earlier villa (functioned between the 1st and 3rd centuries)⁷¹², perhaps like Louloudies Kitrous (see below). And although until recently it was believed to have been just a luxury house without an agricultural sector, recent excavations have brought to light two large three-aisled rectangular storerooms that have been associated with agricultural activities⁷¹³. Maybe Palaeokastro had a smaller *villa rustica* or separate storage buildings in a similar fashion, however nothing has been found so far.

Taking a closer look at its plan we observe the following similarities:

1. Both residences do not have their entrances located on axis with the main courtyard but offset.
2. A transverse corridor is designed to link the courtyard and the apsidal hall. It terminates in an apse at each end. In both cases these corridors are carpeted with elaborate mosaics. In Piazza Armerina's case we have the representation of the East and the West in the form of two female figures representing Mauretania and India respectively⁷¹⁴. This feature is extremely interesting as we see at both sites

⁷¹² Pensabene and Gallochio 2011:30.

⁷¹³ Pensabene and Gallochio 2011:35.

⁷¹⁴ Wilson 1983:24; Pensabene and Gallochio 2011:31.

the placement of personified entities related to geographical elements (East-West) at the same areas of the house (transverse corridor leading to main apsidal hall), clearly following a common decorative or even an ideological formula.

3. Similarly to Palaeokastro, it is possible that the two apses of the transverse corridor at Piazza Armerina are closely related to the rooms directly linked with them creating separate smaller areas that function autonomously from the main hall. We see from the plan that the areas of both apses are linked with the spaces above them via thresholds.
4. The two pairs of rooms flanking the main hall at Palaeokastro are at Piazza Armerina replaced by two separate apartments that have smaller apsidal halls. This might look like a significant difference in plan but the architectural design has been adapted to fit the functional purposes and needs of a grander complex such as that of Piazza Armerina.
5. The baths are situated at the lower end of the courtyard and in close proximity to the entrance.

Palaeokastro is also in many respects a miniature version of the palatial retirement country villa⁷¹⁵ of Galerius at Gamzigrad, ancient Felix Romuliana⁷¹⁶ in modern Serbia (fig.136). Gamzigrad's area⁷¹⁷ of c.40,000m² is a much larger site than Palaeokastro. It is surrounded by a massive defensive wall and comprises many more buildings⁷¹⁸, which divide into two main sectors⁷¹⁹, but follow the same principles in design. The core of the complex focuses on areas (3) and (4); (3) is a combination of courtyards including a large apsidal hall (18.50 x 11.20m., apse diameter: c.9m.) and a bathhouse,

⁷¹⁵ Mano-Zisi 1956; Čanak-Medić 1978:97-119; Srejšović 1993:118-39; Ćurčić 1993:69-70; Čanak-Medić 1995:52-63; Vasić 1995:315-23 and Mulvin 2002:81-3.

⁷¹⁶ Located south of the Danube river, near the city of Zaječar, in the eastern part of modern Serbia, ancient Dacia Ripensis, the identification of the complex as the palace of Galerius was problematic until 1984 when a monumental pediment with an inscription 'FELIX ROMULIANA' within a wreath was discovered on the site (for an account of all earlier identifications and suggestions see Srejšović 1978:48, who suggests that the Gamzigrad complex is a palace mausoleum and a complex directly associated with the tetrarchic architecture and Diocletian's palace at Split. See also Kolarik 1994:176).

⁷¹⁷ The complex consists of an initial fortification system (fig.136, no.1), of square towers, dating from c.300, which enclosed an area of c.240 x 200m., very similar in construction and scale to the one in Split (Wilkes 1993:79). This was augmented in c.306 with a second circuit 10.95m. out from the first (fig.136, no.2), with circular towers, covering a total area of 15 acres or 60,702m² (Wilkes 1993:79).

⁷¹⁸ Leadbetter 2013:236-7.

⁷¹⁹ The northern half of the site contained two complexes with apsidal halls (fig.136, nos 3-4), a temple-or-mausoleum and baths linked to the main entrance (on the East) by a long porticoed building. The southern half contained another set of baths (5), a large temple (6) next to a building of uncertain function (7), *horrea* (8) and another building of uncertain purpose in the SW corner (9).

whereas (4), appearing to be very close in plan with our Palaeokastro residence⁷²⁰, comprises of a central courtyard flanked by rooms and opening to an apsidal hall (14 x 11m., apse diameter: c.8.80m.) with adjacent suites on one side (and probably from the other side too as the plan does not seem to indicate that this area has been excavated). An apsidal formation on its SW part could even indicate a transverse corridor similar to the one at Palaeokastro. The axial arrangement of sector (4) is of similar character to that of Palaeokastro, however its entrance is not offset but on axis. This is probably because the surrounding space is much larger and other architectural components such as the baths, are situated elsewhere.

As at Palaeokastro and Piazza Armerina, Gamzigrad's figurative mosaics are combined with geometric patterns and probably reflect the personal taste of its patron. The large room south of the main hall of sector (3) was carpeted with elaborate mosaic panels surrounded by geometric patterns. The main hall itself in the same sector was decorated with an impressive mosaic depicting figures of hunters and panthers surrounded by bands with geometric compositions. The apsidal hall of sector (4) also had geometric designs with a central panel dominated by the figure of a reclining Dionysus⁷²¹. The floors of the smaller rooms situated SE are all covered too with geometric mosaics⁷²².

Another very close example to Palaeokastro comes from Louloudies Kitrous, 80km SW of Thessalonica, a fortified episcopal complex with the bishop's palace in its centre (figs 27, 137)⁷²³. Excavations have shown that this residence was built over an earlier residence dated to the 4th century and maintained some of the older architectural features⁷²⁴. Marki thinks that the fortification system was constructed in 479 coinciding with the settlement of Theodoric's Goths in the area of Pydna⁷²⁵. Although this seems a possible scenario, the lack of any substantial archaeological data might make possible an earlier dating of the fortress, potentially related to the

⁷²⁰ Both apsidal halls in sectors (3) and (4) have a diameter of very similar size (c.8.80-9m).

⁷²¹ It has been suggested that the figured mosaics could have been the work of craftsmen from North Africa with no further explanation, see Wilkes 1993:77.

⁷²² The dating of these mosaics (309-311) is fairly secure, from coins found underneath them. Srejić 1993:133. For further details on the mosaics see Srejić 1985b:54-57 and Kolarik 1994:176-82.

⁷²³ The site was a staging post on the Thessalonica-Larissa road - see Marki 1993:223.

⁷²⁴ Marki 1993:224-5 and 1994:151-2.

⁷²⁵ Marki 1995:195-6.

older 4th century residence. Geophysical and field survey conducted *c.*150m. south of the episcopal area by A.G. Poulter in 1995, identified the existence of another (much larger) fortified site (*c.*3-4 ha in size) containing buildings of unknown identity and date. Poulter suggested that the two sites might have co-existed (based on similar monogram brick stamp markings found in both sites) but a 6th-7th century dating for the larger site could also be possible⁷²⁶.

Taking a closer look at the plan of the episcopal complex at Louloudies Kitrous we immediately see a very similar spatial arrangement of the complex core consisting of an apsidal hall (18.50 x 9.30m., apse diameter: *c.*7.20m.) with a suite of three rooms on either side. The hall probably opened onto a courtyard which is not visible in today's plan (as the area was later occupied by a church basilica). The presence of a second smaller apsidal hall to the west of the main hall is reminiscent of the second hall sector in Gamzigrad but in a much smaller scale. The available plan of Louloudies does not make clear where the entrances to these halls were situated. It is likely that the larger hall's entrance could have been on the same axis directly from the south (the excavator mentions that the bishop's palace had a passageway leading to the rectangular chamber before the hall through a five arched opening, the rectangular chamber opened to the hall via a tribelon⁷²⁷ similarly to Palaeokastro). Access to the smaller hall could have either been via the main hall or by a separate entrance via the adjacent north or south rooms. The excavation report states that the mosaic floor of the three rooms before the main hall was decorated with colourful geometric patterns such as intersecting octagons and diamonds, intersecting circles and squares. Part of the fragmentary floor of the main hall was decorated with a mosaic of intersecting octagons. The apse floor was divided into two sections, one with imbrication and the other containing two deer facing a vessel. Although we do not have a detailed picture of the mosaics for this site, it is quite clear that both geometric and figurative designs were employed in similar way with Palaeokastro. The larger (than Palaeokastro) size of the reception hall may reflect the importance of the older rural residence hence it was later remodeled to become a bishop's palace and an administrative centre. It is not clear from the excavation reports whether the fortifications pre-dated the bishop's palace but it is likely that they were part of the

⁷²⁶ Poulter 1995:188, 190-1.

⁷²⁷ Marki 1993:224, 226.

initial villa as at Palaeokastro and were then widened and strengthened to accommodate additional buildings in line with the new proprietor's requirements.

The pattern of an apsidal hall flanked by a pair of symmetrical lateral suites is observed in two other very close rural parallels with Palaeokastro. These are located in Moesia Inferior (figs 138-139), both situated c.6km to the southwest of Montana in Bulgaria, some 320km distant. Both sites were occupied from the 2nd to 5th centuries AD, with a major phase of construction or redecoration at Montana 1 in the mid-late 4th century AD⁷²⁸. Montana 1⁷²⁹ has its entrance situated offset to the southwest next to a small bath house. A courtyard (c.11.25 x 18.75m.) is set on axis with the apsidal hall (c.8.40 x 8.40m. and apse cord: c.7.5m.), which is flanked by two pairs of suites on each side. Montana 2⁷³⁰ has also its entrance offset to the southwest; a bath is located on the SE side. The residence does not appear to have a central courtyard but it does have a transverse corridor (c.15.9 x 3.75m.) with an apse at each end similar to the one in Palaeokastro. This leads to the apsidal hall (c.6.6 x 8.44m.) with a buttressed apse (cord: c.8.6m.) on the exterior, which again has two rooms on either side. It seems, too, that the second of the southwest rooms is linked with the transverse corridor via a door as at Palaeokastro. Both residences at Montana and that of Palaeokastro share similar layouts and some common elements in design, they are close in size although the latter has the smallest apse of all. We must also note that the dimensions of the transverse corridors of both Palaeokastro and Montana 2 are extremely close.

Also comparable is the villa in Abritus⁷³¹ of Moesia Secunda (figs 140-141), in the area of modern Razgrad in northeast Bulgaria, some 400km from Palaeokastro. The building is situated in the eastern sector of a fortified area of a military character

⁷²⁸ Coins [1 x Constantine I (306-337), 1 x Constantine II (337-340) and 1 x Julian Apostate (360-363)] were found under the mosaic floors in the main residence of Montana I (no specific location is recorded), see Henning 1994:489. Five coins from the era of Probus (276-282) and Valens (364-378) along with a hoard of some 600+ coins from the era of Constantine I (306-337) up to Julian Apostate (360-363) was found in the *horreum* of Montana 2. See Henning 1994:490.

⁷²⁹ Mulvin 2002:95-6. For further details also see Hoddinott 1975:115-6, Aleksandrov 1983:38-79, Poulter 1983:87 and Henning 1994:489-90.

⁷³⁰ Mulvin 2002:96. For further details also see Aleksandrov 1979:9-62, Poulter 1983:87 and Henning 1994:490.

⁷³¹ For a detailed account on the fortification system of Abritus see Ivanov 1980:237-41.

dating from the late 3rd - early 4th century⁷³². The building covers an area of around 3,300m²⁷³³ but it appears possible that it is later than the actual fortifications by at least a century and it was built over older buildings⁷³⁴. It is not clear whether the estate was part of the military function of the site or existed as an independent entity at a later stage. Excavation findings point to an agricultural and trade function⁷³⁵. The entrance of the residence is through a stoa and is located slightly offset to the southwest next to a bath house and leading to a large rectangular peristyle (c.12 x 25 m.) and an apsidal hall. The courtyard is surrounded by a peristyle colonnade opening to three rooms on the east side and one large space on the west side. The apsidal hall (c.15.87 x 9.60m.) has an apse (diameter: c.6.25m.) and a pair of suites on either side⁷³⁶. The only information about the decoration of the hall mentioned by the excavator are colourful frescoes depicting animals and plants on the walls, no mosaics are mentioned⁷³⁷. Access to the first pair of suites is via doors directly from the hall, whereas all rooms of both pairs (on the south side) communicate with the Northern Corridor with a separate door (in a similar manner as the suites linked with the transverse corridor at Palaeokastro). Apart from the similar architectural design (including the fortified character) we also observe parallel dimensions to that of Palaeokastro such as the width of the peristyle, the apse diameter and the similar width of the main hall.

The common architectural features that we observe when comparing the above examples with Palaeokastro might possibly indicate a common design pattern for rural sites among architects operating in the general region of Moesia Inferior, Moesia Secunda and Macedonia. It also seems possible that a certain formula in design might have been followed: there is an entrance most commonly offset to the central axis (and close to a bath building) leading to a central courtyard and the main hall; this is flanked by suites and has a raised apse most commonly orientated to the south. Although these sites are not identical it is clear that a common design pattern has been

⁷³² The fortifications date to the era of Diocletian by coins found there (Ivanov 1985:13) and restored by Justinian I (Procopius, *De Aedificiis*, IV.6).

⁷³³ Sodini 1997:453. For further details also see Hoddinott 1975:156-61 and Poulter 1983:147.

⁷³⁴ Coins from the reign of Arcadius (395) were found around the courtyard. Ivanov 1985:24, 27.

⁷³⁵ Ivanov 1985:27.

⁷³⁶ Ivanov 1985:27 and Mulvin 2002:52.

⁷³⁷ Ivanov 1985:27.

followed, which fits each individual case depending on the patron's needs, taste and functionality of particular space.

Apart from the obvious topographical and geographical dissimilarities between rural and urban settlements, certain other variances may also be detected within the social domain. These are mainly associated to the functional classifications of each category; urban townhouses have owners based in the city and are most likely linked with city activities involving politics, administration and general trade. Rural settlements may be considered as the result of de-urbanisation following an immense growth of city population. Individuals may have detected and exploited the city's need for additional food supplies (such as corn and grain) and therefore decided to draw on income from agriculture. It is likely that families did focus their business activities on agriculture and farming outside the city limits (although in relatively immediate proximity) but did not necessarily abandon their townhouses. As a result, it might be quite possible that social prestige in the city could have also been linked with wealth based on the productivity of the land.

The presence of generous storage space, utility rooms and working quarters in rural estates indicates this tendency for agricultural expansion. Although the existence of active commercial and transport routes is ill documented, further study in the future could shed light on the communication of these villas with the nearest urban centres. Information on organised trade based on archaeological data from amphoras and glassware could definitely be of extra help. Further analyses of geological data, carbon, plant and animal materials might provide details on activity such as the production and commercialisation of wine, cattle management or even provide clues on density and increase of rural production. These data could assist in gaining a more solid picture on habitat expansion or change (increase and decrease) of settlement and population. Surveys such as that of R. Volpe and A. Arnoldus Huyzenveld (2005) based on data from certain countryside villas in the SE suburbs of Rome could inspire similar surveys in the Palaeokastro area encompassing rural development and organised agricultural activities. This would help us identify and better understand in a wider context the status and function of settlements such as Palaeokastro and their relationship with cities in close proximity such as Thessalonica.

The fortified character of the estates is an indication of the imminent dangers of the Avar and Slavic attacks. The fortification practice shows that despite the ongoing threats, these establishments continued to function and probably played a vital role in supplying their nearest urban centres. The *Miracles of St. Demetrius* (Miracle 5) underline the importance of these agricultural estates by stating that barbarians destroyed houses, land, vines, crops and oil and enslaved inhabitants in order to be able to siege Thessalonica and cause famine. The fortification element may possibly suggest the intention to protect substantial quantities of food supplies, especially if the villa functioned as a depot under the control of a central administration system. As Lynda Mulvin points out, a similar phenomenon is also observed in other 4th-5th century sites in the Balkan region, such as that of Keszthely-Fenékpuszt (Pannonia Superior, Hungary), Alsóheténypuszt (Pannonia Superior, Hungary) Ságvár-Tricciana (Pannonia Inferior, Hungary), Galerius' palace in Gamzigrad and the palace of Diocletian in Split. All these sites have a number of storage facilities and are all fortified⁷³⁸.

Excavations in our examined rural sites revealed living quarters with reception halls and chambers with elaborate decoration, peristyle courtyards and baths. This is not what had probably happened with suburban parallels in various provinces of the West (Britain, Spain, Italy), where the occurrence of villa conversions and subdivision seemed to have intensely taken place during the 5th and the 6th centuries as the result of rural elite transformation⁷³⁹ (see also Ch.V).

The possible association of rural sites with administrative functions (as noted above) may also provide a link between the presence of certain architectural features associated with hospitality and the character of the estate itself. A rural site combining both agrarian and administrative purposes would be expected to have analogous spaces serving these needs. As a result, rural populations still remained in close social communication with their urban counterparts and, in fact, for those residing there it might have been a great opportunity to enjoy the extra space that was available in the countryside and a better quality of life, especially during periods of time when the threat of Slavic attack was, even temporarily, decreasing.

⁷³⁸ Mulvin 2005:5.

⁷³⁹ Lewit 2003:260-7.

Examining the scenario of private ownership, the status of a family would also be measured by their property⁷⁴⁰; the process of showing off and displaying their country house⁷⁴¹ to their social circles (based both in the city and outside) would involve the growing need to entertain and accommodate visitors. As a result, country villas would be expected to be of grander size, more elaborate and with other noticeable features such as larger bathhouses and courts. Consequently, rural life could be considered in a way as a continuation of urban lifestyle with urban typological parallels. Having storage space as well as a fortified perimeter wall may highlight the vital need to maintain self-sufficiency during hectic periods of time.

Despite the innumerable studies on isolated rural sites (especially involving villas in Italy, Greek examples are only but a few), it is still hard to fully understand the overall function of the social structure⁷⁴². From various studies⁷⁴³, it becomes pretty evident that the social configuration of an area is closely linked with the immediate landscape and it is the result of an inter-relation and interaction amongst estates all situated in the immediate geographical locus⁷⁴⁴. These would be anticipated to sustain a close connection with the nearest urban centre thus creating a fully operational and comprehensive network system.

The growing power of the Church from the 5th century onward may be reflected in the modification of character in certain sites as limited excavation data have so far revealed. The possible transformation of the site in Louloudies into an episcopal complex and the later ecclesiastical character of our Palaeokastro residence (see above) are clear indications of change. This process is likely to have had an impact on social changes in rural settlements and local communities⁷⁴⁵.

⁷⁴⁰ Unfortunately, details on land property prices or land investment are non-existent.

⁷⁴¹ Sodini 2003:35.

⁷⁴² Smith 1997:3.

⁷⁴³ *Roman Villas around the Urbs. Interaction with Landscape and Environment, Proceedings of a conference held at the Swedish Institute in Rome* (2004).

⁷⁴⁴ Klynne 2005:1.

⁷⁴⁵ Bowes and Gutteridge 2005:412-3.

Chapter V

The Late Roman townhouses of Thessalonica

5.1 Introduction

The history of excavation and the shortcomings in the published record which have been described in Chapter II apply especially to the town houses. The study by Massimo Vitti in 1996 (see Ch.III) collected much of the available data, mainly repeating the *Deltion* reports of the 1960s and 1970s, in a catalogue of sites, but in no particular order. He connected the appearance of the Late Roman residences with the presence of Galerius in the city, although no further conclusions were reached regarding their typology or social context. An article by Narkissos Karydas in the same year (1996), also based mainly on the *Deltion* reports, was a more systematic attempt to discuss a selection of the ten more substantial examples. He identified as their distinguishing architectural feature the apsidal hall (with its accompanying chambers) and suggested four groups according to their apse dimensions. He also noted that the majority shared a common orientation, to the South, and that they could all belong broadly to a similar period. He suggested that the house owners were probably personnel associated with the arrival of Galerius without expanding his thoughts on this proposal. In 1998, Atzaka included the evidence from town houses in her major study of the mosaics of Thessalonica, and although she favoured a Galerian dating for many patterns and buildings, she also identified a significant body of coarse mosaics⁷⁴⁶ which represent later phases in the 5th-6th centuries (see Ch.II).

In 2006 another catalogue of residential sites in Thessalonica was published by Paolo Bonini, as part of a larger study of housing in the Roman Greek East from the 1st to the 6th centuries AD in which he gathered together data for some 276 urban and suburban examples from 59 locations. He lamented the problematic nature of the archaeological record at all sites, the lack of information on building techniques due to the fragmentary nature of the remains and presented his catalogue essentially as a tool for future research⁷⁴⁷. As such his sample suffers from various imbalances in

⁷⁴⁶ Atzaka 1998:173-6.

⁷⁴⁷ Bonini 2006:202.

terms of geographical coverage and chronological range (e.g. only 5 examples from Delos but 47 from Achaia, and only 11 of his houses are dated to the 6th century, from which 10 are from Achaia)⁷⁴⁸. In the case of Thessalonica he essentially follows Karydas (1996), with no further discussion of topographical distribution or ownership. Bonini's main aim was to investigate whether the Roman conquest brought changes to domestic architecture in the Greek East and he concluded that the Greek urban elite did adopt some western Roman practices, notably elements of axiality in layout and some other common architectural features (he briefly mentions the presence of secondary utility rooms, apsidal halls, courtyards) and the role of water within the house. Bonini saw an amalgamation of Hellenistic and Roman characteristics, with a gradual increase in the scale of luxurious housing during the 4th and 5th centuries, followed by a decline in the 6th century, when the deconstruction and subdivision of domestic space signified the loss of house and household identities.

In 2010, just before his death, Karydas published a supplement to his earlier article, including the Palaeokastro villa (Ch.IV, fig.102) and the polygonal building on Gounari Street (Ch.III, fig.90) with the addition of a few more but extremely fragmentary samples of debated identity and function. This time, in a brief discussion of chronology, Karydas acknowledged that many houses reveal later construction phases during the 5th and the 6th centuries. He divided the townhouses into four categories according to the size of their apse (as he had previously done in 1996) and observed that 66.75% of his sample is orientated towards the South, due to the local geography (views towards the sea). No further discussion is provided on their parallels, and he repeated his previous conclusions about the high status of their owners with no added details.

The aims and objectives of this chapter are to review the types of Late Roman elite housing attested at Thessalonica, their relative chronology and the evidence (admittedly very limited but not insignificant) for a hierarchy of size and design, and to set them within their local, regional and extra-regional context. Since little or nothing of any structure survives above ground level (see Ch.II), the analysis focuses mainly on plan-type and floor decoration. The principal diagnostic element is the

⁷⁴⁸ See review by Lisa Nevett in *JRS* 99 (2009): 284-5.

presence of an apsidal hall, which is a feature characteristic of Late Roman housing throughout the Mediterranean, though it is also capable of somewhat different configurations from one region to another⁷⁴⁹. The Thessalonican sample will be first analysed on its own terms (architectural design, size, topography) to see what local type(s) can be identified, if any, and later will be compared with houses elsewhere in the Balkans, central Greece, Asia and Cyprus, a selection of which is tabled in Table 2 (see pp.170). Particular designs in floor embellishment will be examined (Table 1, pp.164) and an attempt to pick chronological significances from them will be made. Our main focus will be on tessellated and coarse mosaics. A chronological relationship between the two will be investigated, leading to a better understanding of social changes in Thessalonica with the military and Christianity as the two key players.

5.2 *Plan Type* (fig.142)

Some 30 potentially domestic buildings have been excavated in Thessalonica, but the great majority is fragmentary in terms of materials, only broadly datable to the Roman imperial period, from which it is virtually impossible to draw any conclusions as to the nature of their size and layout. As other studies have done before, here we shall focus only on the more complete examples of those with an apsidal hall, catalogued here as an Appendix (nos **1-10**) and illustrated as a group in fig.142. Most of them are located in the upper town, as defined by the extended fortification of the 5th century AD (see Ch.II), outside the Hellenistic and early Roman city and its gridded street plan. The street system in the upper city was on a different orientation. We know nothing for certain about the size of plots, how many houses normally occupied a single city block, but the evidence certainly suggests more than one house, as in the cases of **(4)** and **(9)**. No complete house plan is known and we can only estimate an approximate size for the most complete examples: the size of the excavated area of **(8)** is around 1,290m², the size of the excavated area of **(1)** is around 800m² although it has been suggested⁷⁵⁰ that the approximate total size could reach 1,500m², while **(5)** measures around 480m². Vitruvius (VI.5.2) had recommended over three centuries

⁷⁴⁹ Sodini 1995; Uytterhoeven 2007:69.

⁷⁵⁰ Karydas 1996:572.

earlier that the size of the house should reflect the rank of the householder and the number of clients they were likely to receive.

Apsidal hall: Architecturally, this is related to the older atrium houses of the western tradition, where the atrium consists of a square or rectangular hall, suites of smaller rooms (*cubicula*) down the sides and a square room on axis at the end (*tablinum*). The peristyle was located behind the atrium in town houses, in front in the country (Vitruvius VI.5.3). Then gradually the peristyle moves to the centre of the house, the atrium disappears, but an axial *tablinum* remains, developing into the apsidal hall with an apse on axis at one end.

In our Thessalonica samples, the level of the apse floor is raised some 18-20cm. above that of the rest of the hall, the step up in some cases demarcated in marble. Both the apse and the hall were paved with mosaic, or a combination of mosaic and marble. Four sub-groups can be defined by the relative size of the apse, the largest measuring 8.70-8.75m. (1-2), the next 7.50m. (3-5), then 6.60m. (6-8), and the smallest 5.75-6.00m. (9-10) (fig.142). In his 1996 article, Karydas proposed the same categorisation, which I find coherent and I have also followed to list my samples in descending order of their apse size in my Appendix. An alternative grouping of the available samples will be proposed later (see below, 'Dating the Houses').

At least three examples (1, 5, 8) have rooms opening off to both sides of the hall and with traces of a courtyard in front, in a layout very similar to the villa at Palaeokastro (see Ch.IV), though the urban versions are all larger in scale. All the others may have shared the same layout, but none is sufficiently well preserved to be sure. As at Palaeokastro, in no case is the outer entrance of the house preserved, so it is not possible to determine whether the axial symmetry extended beyond the apsidal hall and its suites. Furthermore, it can be difficult to tell where the doorways to side rooms were placed, since the walls have been reduced to floor level or below.

Taking a closer look at our samples, house (8) is the most complete example, in so far as it includes a part of an associated peristyle courtyard to which the apsidal hall was connected by a tribelon in the manner of the Palaeokastro villa. The two are very closely related in several respects, although there are some differences: the apse of (8)

(6.60m. wide) is larger and its hall is proportionately wider and more elongated than Palaeokastro, the stoa/corridor to which it opens does not have apsidal terminals, and (according to the only available plan) the room next to the hall did not connect to the stoa. House (1) also compares closely with Palaeokastro in the axial disposition of the hall between two lateral suites of rooms - three smaller rooms on the east, two larger on the west⁷⁵¹ - communicating with a transverse corridor in front, though the latter does not appear to have been the stoa of a peristyle courtyard, rather it had one or two narrow rooms placed at right angles on the south side, not quite on axis with the hall. House (5), though only a fragment by comparison, preserves enough to show that the hall was apsidal and that the suite of rooms on the east side, at least, probably did not communicate with the hall, but communicated with each other, as at Palaeokastro. However, we cannot be absolutely certain on this as there are discrepancies between the two available published plans for (5). In figs 5a and 5b of the Appendix, we notice that in fig.5a (1996) the surviving room on the west side clearly has a door opening to the hall whereas fig.5b (1998) indicates no doorways for the same room⁷⁵². Of the rest of our examples, (4) consists only of an apsidal hall of uncertain length, with possible lateral suites on both sides, that on the west perhaps with a door to the hall. It is impossible to tell from the published plans whether the isolated hall of (7) had doors in either of its side walls. The other four examples (2, 3, 6, 9) consist of little more than the apse or part of an apse.

The raised floor level in the apse is attested in eight out of the ten houses (1, 3-7, 9-10), generally with a step 18-20cm. high, and as noted above, marked by a line of marble slabs as in the case of (3), (5) and (10). The extra elevation would emphasise the significance of the apse and its occupants, giving them also a higher viewpoint down the hall⁷⁵³. It may also have helped draw attention to the elegant floor decoration of the apse, where applicable. Not all apses had elaborate decoration as we will see below.

⁷⁵¹ The third in line on the west side (room Θ, see Appendix) was not connected, and it apparently formed part of another suite entered from the other direction.

⁷⁵² Bonini in his reconstructed plan (2006:511) seems to indicate a doorway only between the eastern room and the hall. He is using Karydas' plan so since the original excavation report does not mention anything, we cannot be entirely sure about the location/existence of any doorways.

⁷⁵³ Polci 2003:88.

While the plan-type was perhaps broadly similar in all cases, the fact that the size of the apse differs, according to a limited range of different sizes, suggests that they were built to a fairly strict code, in much the same way as Vitruvius had suggested (see above). In only two cases (**1** and **8**) is it possible to calculate the exact size not only of the apse but the dimensions and area of the hall to which it belonged: *c.*136m² and *c.*80m² respectively. The hall of (**5**), was slightly longer than a square (to judge by the geometry of the floor mosaic) about 69m². No (**7**) was at least 81m².

The houses with the two largest apsidal halls (apse 8.70m.) (**1-2**) are situated in close proximity to each other (see location map in Appendix) on the east side of the city, fairly close to the imperial palace. Two in the next size down (apse 7.50m) are located in the same area (**3-4**) but a third (**5**) lies on the extreme north-east margin of the city. The smaller sizes (apse 6.60m.) are all in the northern part of the upper city (**6-8**) as was the smallest (apse 5.75m.) no (**10**), but the next smallest (**9**) lies at least two streets (*decumani*) lower, neighbouring (**4**) and being very close to (**3**).

Despite the individual variations, the underlying design process used to lay out the apsidal hall and its lateral suites may have been essentially the same. A larger rectangular block was subdivided into three parts, the central part -wider than the two others- being used for the apsidal hall, the two lateral parts further sub-divided to form two or three smaller rooms. The apse could be included within the rectangle, or added as a projection, either freestanding (**1, 2, 5, 6, 7, 8**) or contained within a rectangular outer wall (**3, 4, 9**) (fig.143a-b). At least two of the latter (**3** and **6**) date from the 4th century, whereas three of the former (**1, 5, 8**) are definitely of later date, but it is equally possible, given the uncertainty in the dating of the other examples in both categories, that the two types were employed concurrently.

5.3 Flooring Type

In the following section we will take a closer look at the flooring types (see Ch.II) observed in our samples. This will help us to better understand not only the preferred practices in floor decoration, and hierarchy of space but will also provide clues of chronological value. In many cases it becomes evident that tessellated mosaics are

succeeded by coarse mosaics during the late 4th, and 5th centuries. The omnipresence of geometric designs (and the absence of figurative subjects) in all flooring types is a curious feature of the Thessalonican sample and could perhaps be the mark of the local elite.

In fig.144 the basic flooring types in houses **1-10** are colour-coded. The yellow colour refers to high quality tessellated mosaics. Tesserae were used here in order to compose simple or more complicated motifs and depictions. The brown colour shows coarse mosaics made of pieces of tiles and unevenly cut marble pieces; these had simple patterns. The blue colour represents marble paving in regularly sized slabs. Palaeokastro is included in fig.144 for reference only; its mosaics are discussed in detail in Ch.IV.

Tessellated Mosaics: Only the apse of **(5)** (Appendix, figs 5c-d) has given a tessellated mosaic whereas excavations have brought to light geometric mosaics (or traces in the case of **1**) in the hall floors of **(1)**, **(4)**, **(5)**, **(8)**, **(10)**. Mosaics in secondary space were found in **(5)**, **(6)** and **(8)**.

There is no evidence at Thessalonica in the 4th or 5th century of figurative panels like those at Palaeokastro (see Ch.IV). The only exception could be the figured mosaics found in the area of **(4)**, nevertheless of debatable chronology⁷⁵⁴.

The most frequent geometric mosaic patterns found in the catalogued residences in Thessalonica are tabulated in Table 1 together with examples from other sites in the city, the palatial complex, Palaeokastro and other buildings from outside Thessalonica for comparative chronological purposes. The mosaic patterns described in this thesis follow the typology defined by Atzaka (1998). The mosaics are listed in grounds of frequency and chronological order (as dated by their excavators). Unfortunately, no mosaics survived in most of our samples in Table 2.

From Table 1 we deduce that there is a plethora of similar geometric and certain non-geometric (vessels and birds) motifs between the catalogued townhouses of

⁷⁵⁴ The excavator and Atzaka date them to the 3rd century, whereas Hellenkemper Salies (1986:279, n.213) assigns them to the early 4th.

Thessalonica and other locations. The iconography of some of the decoration elements probably reflects the function of space. For example, the depiction of vessels may be in relation to drinking, that of birds to food, ivy scroll to wine; all were traditionally associated with hospitality and later probably with Christian practices.

Amongst the mosaics from the Thessalonica sites, we detect a number of patterns that appear to be of use on a frequent basis. These can be divided into two groups: the motifs that are employed to fill in smaller panels and those for carpeting larger areas. For example, the pattern of octagons attached to squares and diamonds (palace NP East and South corridors, building on 94 Egnatias and Mitropolitou Gennadiou St. and **8**) is broadly used to cover large spaces. The intersecting octagons (as seen at the palace NP East Corridor, houses **5** and **8**, and buildings on 10 Arrianou, 5 Grigoriou Palama Streets) and the intersecting circles forming quatrefoils (as seen at houses **4**, **5**, **8**, **10** and in many other Thessalonica buildings) also seem to be very popular. Patterns which are widely used for band decoration or as smaller section fillers are the ivy scroll, guilloche, key shaped meander and chequerboard, all found in the palace and many buildings across Thessalonica. Some secondary decorative patterns found in numerous buildings including the palace and our residences are the Solomon knots, circles and braiding that decorate larger items or smaller sections in more or less important areas of a building. Two geometric designs widely used across Thessalonica and elsewhere, though not yet found in the palace, are the imbrication motif and the circles forming quatrefoils.

Although most of our mosaics use geometrical and floral decoration, the bird figure seems to be quite widespread in Thessalonica (**10**, building of 86 Filippou St., Christian buildings in the city like the church in Panorama, see Table 1) as well as in Palaeokastro and other Christian buildings in Greece.

Coarse Mosaics: All of our examples (apart from no.2) have produced coarse mosaics. They were found in the apse, hall floors and secondary rooms. This technique uses small pieces of brick and tile and marble veneer of irregular shapes. There is no particular preference in colours; we normally have light and dark colours. Six of our examples (**1**, **3**, **6**, **7**, **9** and **10**, see Appendix), have their apses covered with coarse mosaics with simple designs. We do not know if this was a popular

decorative solution for the apse but it might well serve certain practicalities such as the covering of the apse floor with a carpet and furniture, therefore no need was in place for elaborate mosaic decoration⁷⁵⁵. Apart from (4) and (9), where certain small areas of their main halls were found to be covered with a plain coarse mosaic (constructed with non-particular shaped tiles and forming no designs), none of our other examples has a significant appearance of coarse mosaics decorating their hall floors. Secondary spaces of just (1), (5), (6) and (8) have generated coarse mosaics.

Thessalonica has produced a large amount of coarse mosaics uncovered in residences, public buildings and churches dating to the late 4th and the 6th centuries. From Atzaka's list of buildings with coarse mosaics we observe that the most common pattern is the rectangle containing a diamond (1, palace NP West and South Corridors, residence on 90 Kassandrou St., buildings on 68 Kassandrou St., 6-10 Glaukou St., 17 Euripidi St., Iasonidou and Arrianou St., 8 McKenzie King St., 23 Koufitsa, Kyprion Agoniston square, 6 Prasakaki and Koukoufli St., Kleisto Kolimvitirio, church in Panorama). It has been suggested that the frequency of the appearance of the coarse mosaic might indicate that the city was their production centre and this might be the reason they were so widely spread in the region of Macedonia and the Balkans⁷⁵⁶.

Marble is the third type of material that was used in various parts of the residences, but all that generally remains are the imprints of the slabs, most of the actual marble having been robbed in later centuries. Traces of marble have been found in the apses of (3) and (5), in the hall floors of (1) and (7) and secondary areas of (2) and (6).

From all the above we can see that although geometric decoration dominates in the embellishment of tessellated mosaics, each house has its own hierarchy of decoration and we do not have a specific programme. It appears that there is a freedom in the placement of all available patterns, without workshops having to follow a strict programme that dictates what type of decoration should appear in each room. In most cases, coarse mosaics replace older and probably worn out tessellated floors. In terms of dating, this seems to be happening from the 4th century (see also below). The practice of laying the coarse mosaic directly above the former tessellated

⁷⁵⁵ Ellis 2007:3.

⁷⁵⁶ Guidobaldi 1983:252-4, n.466; Atzaka 1998:168.

one without previously removing it is a very interesting feature. We are not sure if this is related to an ideological statement (leaving behind an era of paganism and lust and entering a new modest way of life) or simply serving practical stability purposes. It could also be an economical solution as removing the older floor and replacing it with a base afresh may consequently evolve higher costs.

5.4 *Comparanda*

A survey of contemporary housing found elsewhere in the Balkans and the Greek East reveals many examples of similar type (see Table 2). Despite the general similarities, however, the comparison also suggests that the configuration in the case of Thessalonica was slightly different, and was perhaps a development of the late 4th and 5th centuries.

Louloudies Kitrous (located c.80km SW of Thessalonica, see also chaps II and IV), was a staging post on the Thessalonica-Larissa road, which became a bishopric in the 5th century⁷⁵⁷. Excavations have shown that the episcopal palace at the centre of the site was built over an earlier residence dated to the 4th century, preserving many elements of the original design (fig.137)⁷⁵⁸.

Examples from the Balkans, as documented in Mulvin's study of 2002, include six with apsidal halls, which are all dated from the 4th to the 6th century (sometimes with earlier phases) (figs 138, 140-1, 145-8). Five houses excavated in Athens, one located beside the Agora (fig.149), two on the lower slopes of the Areopagus (figs 150-1), two on the south side of the Acropolis (figs 152-3), have been dated by the excavators to the second half of the 4th century and the early 5th century. Two at Aphrodisias-in-Caria (figs 154-6)⁷⁵⁹ dated from the late 4th century onwards, one mid-6th century

⁷⁵⁷ Marki 1993:230; *id.* 1996:239.

⁷⁵⁸ See Marki 1994:151-2 and 1993:224-5.

⁷⁵⁹ A third is the Atrium House (Smith 1989:128-55) which is only partially excavated. Smith (1989:130) identified the complex as a possible philosophical school similar to the Athenian examples. See also Sodini 2003:37-8.

structure at Apollonia in Cyrenaica (fig.157)⁷⁶⁰ and the early 5th century ‘L’Huilerie’ near Salamis on the east coast of Cyprus at the mouth of river Pedieos (figs 158-9)⁷⁶¹.

The same type of apsidal hall-suite is a component of many residences in town and country elsewhere in the Balkans and the Greek East, either laid out on axis with a peristyle court or attached to one side or one corner of such a court.

What the search for axuality in some cases and its avoidance in others actually signifies is still not clear. Although the significance of symmetry is attested in Vitruvius (VI.2-5), the importance of the symmetrical placement of these suites on either side of the hall is not discussed. It could indicate that secondary spaces were also practically vital for the functioning of the hall serving as food preparation areas or additional reception space for larger gatherings hence some of these were also elaborately decorated. A ‘secondary’ axial organisation of these spaces may also be detected here, though the plans of excavated sites in Thessalonica do not all indicate clearly the precise location of doorways. However, in the Palaeokastro plan we can definitely see the exact location of doorways and the fact that the door of each chamber faces the door of its opposite equivalent cannot be coincidental. This planning behaviour created a harmony in the axial design, and might have given a bigger impression of an open and wide space to the visitors. Bearing in mind that the vertical axis on the plan of these residences is the most important, and presuming that the fragmentary rooms had the same size as the preserved ones (as at Abritus, fig.141 and Montana 1 fig.138), it is noticeable that the length of the horizontal axis that starts from the west wall (left on plan) of the chambers and ends at the east wall (right on plan) of the opposite chamber is very close in length to the vertical axis that starts from the apse and ends at the courtyard. For someone who was positioned in the middle of the apsidal hall (and being able to perceive both horizontal and vertical axes) the reading of space must have been even wider. We pointed out above that

⁷⁶⁰ The reforms of Diocletian in 296 changed all of the administrative structure. Cyrenaica was split into two provinces: Libya superior comprised Pentapolis and Libya Inferior Marmarica, each under a governor of the modest rank of *praeses*. Both belonged to the same *diocese* (originally as part of Oriens) as Egypt itself (from the start three provinces, later more), within the praetorian prefecture of Oriens (also comprising Oriens proper -mainly Syria- and, both in Asia Minor, Asiana and Pontiana).

⁷⁶¹ Several earthquakes led to the destruction of Salamis at the beginning of the 4th century (332 and 334). The town was rebuilt under the name of Constantia by Constantius II (337-361 AD) and became an Episcopal seat (Karageorghis 1999:16).

guests who were located in the apse must have had a ‘panoramic’ view of the axial system ‘apsidal hall – courtyard’.

Our 16 examples from outside Thessalonica (all dated between the mid-4th and 5th century, Table 2) have slightly different versions of the basic plan type already seen at Palaeokastro (Ch.IV, figs 102-3). This consists of an apsidal hall with a suite of smaller rooms on either side, opening off a courtyard. The spatial planning of these areas has a clear axial arrangement but this does not necessarily relate to the same axis as the courtyard or the location of the building’s main entrance. In four instances, namely the Theodosian Palace in Stobi (fig.147), House B in Athens (fig.150), the Bishop’s Palace in Aphrodisias (fig.155) and ‘L’Huilerie’ in Cyprus (fig.159), the apsidal hall is offset in relation to the courtyard, not on axis. In the case of the Bishop’s Palace in Aphrodisias (fig.155) the axis of the courtyard was occupied by a triconch hall, which may have served a more important function (see below), though it and the apsidal hall are on parallel axes with each other⁷⁶².

Eleven out of the 16 have a set of rooms on either side of the hall⁷⁶³ and the average diameter of their hall apse is c.6.60m., equivalent to the third category of apses in Thessalonica, which on present showing is the most common size (see above). Although not all excavators mention the feature of the raised apse floor, this does appear in some of our listed examples in Table 2 and has an average height of 20cm. The orientation of the apse of each site depends on best available parameters such as the local geography and topography. For example, the Bishop’s Palace in Aphrodisias (figs 154-5), situated next to the theatre and the agora, has its reception halls facing west, benefiting from the local vistas, and the Palace of the Dux in Apollonia (fig.157) is situated only a few metres from the seafront, facing its northeast view.

A feature so far absent from all the houses in Thessalonica but found at other sites such as Stobi, Aphrodisias, Apollonia (Illyria, modern Albania), Piazza Armerina and Cyrenaica (Libya) is the triconch hall. Ellis’s study of the triconch in places such as Ephesus, Djemila and Ravenna identifies it as a grander architectural style first

⁷⁶² For the role of triconch in urban and rural establishments see Sodini (1995) and (1997).

⁷⁶³ Two of them have function rooms on only one side (House of Peristerias in Stobi and Bishop’s Palace in Aphrodisias), House A (Athens) has no rooms, House B (Athens) has one room on one side and two on the other, and Louloudies has three rooms on either side.

adopted by local elites in the 4th century⁷⁶⁴ to accommodate larger gatherings⁷⁶⁵. Whether in Thessalonica this absence is a matter of chance or a reality is difficult to say. An explanation might be found in the social context and a potential military perspective of the particular establishments, which will be discussed later in this chapter.

5.5 Dating the Houses

Dating the Thessalonica examples has proved very challenging. Most excavation reports are vague on chronology and have a tendency to relate every late Roman finding in the city with the presence of Galerius and consequently with his palace. In Chapter III we saw how certain areas of the palace complex point to a later date, possibly 5th century, or even later. The Galerian date assigned to many of the town houses may be similarly revised.

The general impression from our surviving examples is that we are dealing with two groups (fig.160) of different chronology: **Group 1** includes the structures of (2), (3), (6), (7) and (9). These may be assigned to the 4th century based on excavation data⁷⁶⁶ and shared architectural features. **Group 2** comprises (1), (4), (5), (8) and (10); all dated to the 5th century and beyond, on the excavation evidence⁷⁶⁷, plan design and also common mosaic pattern similarities. Although their geographical location cannot be diagnostic of date, we notice that four of our five townhouses in Group 2 (1, 5, 8, 10) are situated in the upper district of Thessalonica, an element that could certainly be linked with the development of this district in a particular period of time. Based on parallel information extracted from *Codex Theodosianus* (according to VII.10.2 the prefect could not share the imperial palace) and from Ammianus Marcellinus (in XXI.10.1 and XXVI.5.4 is mentioned that since 365 there were separate palaces for

⁷⁶⁴ Ellis 1988:572-3.

⁷⁶⁵ Dunbabin 1991:129-30; Ellis 1991:119; Polci 2003:82.

⁷⁶⁶ For example, four coins dated to the second quarter of the 4th century were discovered between the second and the third mosaic layers of (6); see Appendix.

⁷⁶⁷ Eight late 4th century coins were found at the foundations of (5), and a revived second Pompeian style fresco dated to the 5th and 6th centuries survived in the walls of (10). See Appendix.

the emperor and the prefect in Sirmium) it has been suggested by Vickers⁷⁶⁸ and later by Croke⁷⁶⁹ that after 441 there was a second official building in Thessalonica, for the use of the prefect. Its location has been linked with the vicinity of Profitis Elias church in the upper city (very close to **5**, **7**, **8** and **10**). Although Croke mentions that samples of 5th century brick stamps (similar to others found all around the city) were traced in the area⁷⁷⁰, without substantial physical and literary evidence it is impossible to be sure whether this second official building ever existed. These brickstamps could have been taken and re-used from any area of the city at any period of time. However, if the claim of Vickers and Croke has some sort of validity, we could consequently interpret this area as a new district developed in the immediate vicinity of the 5th century prefect's palace.

Stylistically, the residences of both groups share the same or very similar architectural features, with the most common being the apse attached to a reception hall. There is also no chronological distinction in the placement of the apse (freestanding or inscribed, see above) or its orientation. The only exception could be townhouse (**10**) (apse facing West), which is dated to the late 5th century or later. The size of the apse is sadly not diagnostic of chronology either as both groups contain examples of large and smaller apses.

A very interesting feature that is worth pointing out here is the dimensions of the larger apses. Five out of ten samples have apses ranging between 7.50m. and 8.75m., a rather large size compared to other townhouses from elsewhere (Table 2). It generally seems that a popular size for a townhouse apse is around 6 to 7m. (an exception is the Mediana site with an apse of c.12m., which is probably the residence of a *dux*, see below pp.154), like 50% for our Thessalonica samples. The greater apse sizes of **1-5** is closer to that of the polygonal building on Gounari St. (9m., Ch.III) as well as the two apses of the Gamzigrad complex (9 and 8.80m. respectively, Ch.IV). Such similarities between buildings of imperial character and private townhouses

⁷⁶⁸ Vickers 1971(a):370; *id.* 1972(a):30, n.38; *id.* 1973(a):120; *id.* 1973(b):293. Vickers based his theory assuming that the palace was no longer in use in the 5th century; the attested use of the palace by later emperors (Ch.III) contradicts his theory.

⁷⁶⁹ Croke 1981:481.

⁷⁷⁰ Croke 1981:477.

could reflect the status of their owners, who could have been associated with the central governing system.

Although excavation reports rarely comment on building techniques and materials (apart from **5**, **7**, **9** and **10**, where *opus mixtum* with three courses of brick are briefly documented), a closer look at the available photographic material helps us propose that *opus mixtum* is indeed the most common building technique for our residences, as for the palace and the city walls (see Ch.II, Wall Construction, pp.49-50). Unfortunately, we have no information on brick sizes for comparative study against Vitti's types, or brickstamps, which might have been of considerable help.

Despite the fragmentary nature of the recorded townhouses, their mosaic decoration provides some fairly precise chronological clues. The existence of parallel and better dated examples from Thessalonica (mainly Christian buildings), the Balkans and the rest of Greece are a great tool for comparative study.

Table 1 lists the most frequent mosaic patterns, and although precise dates cannot be achieved purely based on stylistic similarities, several observations can be made. Popular patterns frequently appearing in Thessalonica and in other dateable examples from elsewhere may help in establishing a clearer dating picture for our groups. Due to the broad chronology of these motifs (between the 4th and 6th centuries), they cannot be listed in a more precise chronological order. These designs found in both Thessalonica and outside are:

1. The **imbrication** pattern (figs 5m and 10b in Appendix) is characteristic of a 5th century date, to judge by buildings in Thessalonica of close chronology (6 Malea, 47-49 Sokratous, 6-10 Glaukou Streets, Eastern section of East Corridor of the agora and Christian basilica in Panorama) and securely dated examples elsewhere (Louloudies, Christian basilicas in Epidaurus and Neou Stadiou in Rhodes, unidentified complex west of Large Basilica in Heraclea Lyncestis). This design is found in **(4)**, **(5)** and **(10)**.
2. The **Solomon knot** (figs 4f-h, 8b, 10b in Appendix) can be assigned between the late 4th and 5th century onwards on the evidence of other examples in the city (Palace Northern Peristyle East and South Corridors, 24 Palaion Patron Germanou, 138 Olympou and 21 Aioulou Streets), Palaeokastro and the

Christian basilica of Epidaurus (dated to the early 5th century). The motif occurs in (1), (4), (8) and (10) and the Solomon knots in squares combined with diamonds forming star shaped objects found in (10) is very similar to the carpet decoration of the palace Northern Peristyle East Corridor (see Ch.III and fig.69), which could be suggestive of a contemporary date.

3. The **intersecting circles forming quatrefoils** (figs 4h, 5e, 5h, 8b and 10b in Appendix) is not closely dateable, being found on many sites between the late 4th and 6th century. Thessalonica samples include those of 90 Kassandrou, 24 Palaion Patron Germanou, 30 Syggrou, 101 Olympiados, 16 Filippou & Zaliki, 138 Olympou, 47-49 Sokratous Streets, the building on NE corner of Kyprion Agoniston Square, the agora, the Christian basilica on Moreas-27 Mouson, 41-43 Moreas St. and a Christian church in Panorama. Dated (to the 5th century) sites from outside Thessalonica include the cemetery basilica of Dion, a Metroon in Athens, Christian basilicas A of Argos Orestikou in Epidaurus and Dafnousion in Phthiotis, a baptistery in Phthiotic Hypatia, an episcopal basilica in Stobi, a synagogue in Plovdiv, a building outside the city walls of Heraclea Lyncestis and the complex west of Large Basilica in the same town. The same design has been found in the main halls of (4), (5), (8) and (10).
4. The **guilloche** (figs 5c-d, 6f, 8b, 10b in Appendix) motif is assigned by other examples in Thessalonica to the 4th and 5th centuries. These are the palace's Northern Peristyle North Corridor, 24 Palaion Patron Germanou, 90 Kassandrou, Olympou, 94 Egnatias & Mitropolitou Gennadiou, 47-49 Sokratous, 21 Aioulou Streets and Palaeokastro. Other examples from elsewhere are the two Christian basilicas in Amphipolis, dating to the mid-5th century. Guilloche appears in high frequency in (4), (5), (8), (10) and the 5th century phase of (6).
5. The **octagon containing birds** joined by swastika meander⁷⁷¹ in the main hall of (10) (fig.10b in Appendix) is closely comparable to the south mosaic panel of the nearby building at the north side of the Evangelistria cemetery (fig.161a, probably an entrance hallway leading to a *martyrion*), dated to the

⁷⁷¹ The design of octagons joined by swastika meander (but filled with geometric decoration and not birds) is seen at the mosaic of the South hallway at the Galerius palace in Gamzigrad: Kolarik 1994:pl.XCIV.2.

early 6th century⁷⁷². Even the tesserae used are extremely similar: both mosaics comprise white, black, light red and yellow stone tesserae, with brick used for the depiction of red/brown colour and glass for light green (only for the eyes and the body of the birds). Glass tesserae for red, bright blue and green colours were in use for mosaics from mid-5th century onwards⁷⁷³. We also saw the use of glass tesserae used for the cloak of the female figure in Palaeokastro in Ch.IV (see pp.118). The north mosaic panel of the same building north of the Evangelistria cemetery has large intersecting circles containing smaller circular formations (fig.161b, north panel) very close in comparison with those of Christian basilica B' in Nikopolis (dated to the end of the 5th century)⁷⁷⁴ and the ones at the palace Southern Peristyle Eastern Corridor (see Ch.III, fig.31). The fragmentary information gathered from various administrative documents written in 1975 in relation to the palace Southern Peristyle East Corridor (excavation was never published) identifies not just the same colour scheme but also the use of brick for brown colour⁷⁷⁵ (pp.76). This very important piece of information may be suggesting that at least the mosaic of the Southern Peristyle East Corridor could have been laid at a much later date than previously thought (see Ch.III). A third very similar mosaic (dated to the second half of the 5th century) comes from the church of Panorama in Thessalonica where birds (and other objects) are depicted in an analogous colour scheme (fig.162) as per our examples above. This group of mosaics may indicate one or more related workshops active some time towards the end of the 5th and early 6th century.

Although this comparative exercise may be purely based on the analysis of patterns amongst buildings without standing on grounds of solid chronological value, it does provide a somewhat clearer idea of a possible chronological frame for the sites in question. It also becomes pretty evident that townhouses of Group 2 share many mosaic design similarities, which lead to a mutual dating of 5th century for all with the possibility that some have older roots too denoting a notable replanning phase in the city. Studying closely the patterns listed above, we find that these are mainly reported

⁷⁷² Pelekanidou 1993:381 and Atzaka 1998:264.

⁷⁷³ Dunbabin 1999:280.

⁷⁷⁴ Spiro 1978:475-8, figs 550-4; Atzaka 1998: 79, 155.

⁷⁷⁵ Atzaka 1998:186-7.

for the houses of Group 2, and taking into consideration the dating of other safely dated parallels we can be more confident in ascribing this group to the 5th century and onwards.

The appearance of certain designs and colours in the main areas of the apsidal halls may be suggestive of not only a possible trend in mosaic laying that uses certain patterns but also the existence of one or more workshops that operated in the city. The mutual stylistic characteristics indicate that these workshops (if more than one) did not operate independently from each other but they share similar techniques and iconography. The use of specific patterns that are also found outside Thessalonica is suggestive of an on-going fashion of wider scale, which is very possible to have some chronological value. The imbrication, chequerboard, key shaped meander, intersecting octagons and Solomon knot designs seem to appear on a frequent basis in numerous buildings of Thessalonica, the Balkans and Greece, all dating from the late 4th through the 5th century. It has been suggested⁷⁷⁶ that the pattern of octagons with diamonds and circles on their sides (see Appendix, cat.no.8 and figs 8b-d) is quite common and very convenient for the decoration of long corridors. It has been identified many times in the mosaics in Greece during the 4th and the 6th centuries but mostly during the 4th and the beginnings of the 5th centuries. It is also popular in the mosaics of the Balkans and the East in the same period⁷⁷⁷. Variations of mosaics often reflect regional preferences or chronological development, even the way they are combined with one another can point to a local style and individual workshop⁷⁷⁸. The fact that certain other patterns (boxes in perspective, diamonds inscribing circles and guilloche) are rarely traced in other 4th-6th century buildings may point to a distinctiveness in style coordinated by the Thessalonican workshops.

The use of coarse mosaic may also be valued as a criterion for dating. Its combination with marble in the imperial palace belongs to a later (5th century) phase than the earlier mosaic floors as we saw in Ch.III (pp.88). In a similar way their appearance in townhouses may be a valid indication for a later chronology. Excavations have recorded traces of coarse mosaics in nearly all our residences. As we saw in Ch.II

⁷⁷⁶ Salies 1974:12-13, 147-52; Farioli 1975:61-6; Lavagne 1977:74; Atzaka 1991:55-6.

⁷⁷⁷ Kolarik 1987:297, figs 1, 6, 7; Atzaka 1991:55-6; Kessiakova 1994:169, fig.XC,2; Atzaka 1998:128.

⁷⁷⁸ Dunbabin 1999:291.

(pp.64), the technique of coarse mosaic was introduced sometime towards the end of the 4th century⁷⁷⁹. Apses and secondary utility space are the most popular areas for this type of decoration. As we saw earlier, coarse mosaics were found in secondary areas in three of our Group 2 townhouses (**1**, **5** and **8**), which might show a preference in their employment throughout at least the house's secondary space and apse by the 5th century. Although in most cases coarse mosaics are plain in style, sometimes patterns are also engaged. For example, the intersecting circles forming quatrefoils motif appears to continue to the coarse mosaic technique [**1** (room Δ, fig.1a), 68 Kassandrou Street (undated⁷⁸⁰), in the public building at Kiprion Agoniston Square (possible date: 5th century⁷⁸¹) and unidentified buildings on 3 Agapis St. and 18 Menelaou St., both dated to the early 6th century⁷⁸²].

5.6 Ownership

The social significance of houses is heavily manifest in the physical presence of the buildings themselves. As J.P. Sodini declares “The rich are visible”⁷⁸³ and this encapsulates the whole process of exploring the ownership of our townhouses. In the case of Thessalonica, the recovery of objects from the urban houses is extremely poor, and so we must turn to alternative sources to help us assemble a clearer picture for the status of these individuals. Finer details of mosaic embellishment and individual design features, possible topographical associations, differences in religious persuasion, taken in conjunction with the ancient texts can assist in defining relative degrees of wealth and social prestige.

Although no epigraphic evidence survives that could help us extract information on the identity or a more precise idea on the status of house owners, clues can be gathered by the best preserved piece of information, the mosaics. Although we have observed common geometric compositions with similar colour schemes in both Palaeokastro and the imperial palace, the tesserae used at the latter are much larger

⁷⁷⁹ Atzaka 1998:174-5.

⁷⁸⁰ Atzaka 1998:300.

⁷⁸¹ Kanonidis 1993:344; Atzaka 1998:311, fig.252c.

⁷⁸² Atzaka 1998:272, figs 198, 199b, 259b.

⁷⁸³ Sodini 2003:27.

(around 1cm.) than those in Palaeokastro (around 0.5 cm.⁷⁸⁴). Most of the tesserae of the palace Northern Peristyle mosaics are made of marble⁷⁸⁵ whereas the ones at Palaeokastro (in most cases) are made of local stone and, in some cases glass⁷⁸⁶. This also appears to be the case in our residential samples with a few exceptions such as (5) (where marble tesserae are widely used⁷⁸⁷) and (10). Coincidentally enough, these are two of the most luxurious urban establishments found in Thessalonica (belonging to our 5th century Group 2) and the use of marble tesserae probably reflects the high status of their residents.

As we saw, the majority of our examples, in both the imperial palace and the houses, involve mosaics with a rich range of geometric designs as opposed to figurative compositions. It appears that the geometric motifs were strongly preferred for the decoration of, not only, secondary space but also of lavish reception halls. Although certain patterns can also be found outside Thessalonica (thus we cannot talk about a strictly local mosaic vocabulary), it seems that these were utilised for both public and private spaces in almost the same quantity. This may suggest not only a closer relation of an owner with his work place but also with the social behaviour of particular individuals. Being able to afford the same level of decoration is a status statement that a wealthy individual would not hesitate to make. This phenomenon of imitating is, according to social psychologist James Mark Baldwin, “the method of social organisation”⁷⁸⁸, where certain individuals progress socially by imitating, consciously or even subconsciously, an esteemed person’s (in our case the emperor’s) established social behaviour. For example, a palace official being very familiar with the decoration aesthetics of the most prestigious establishment (the palace) would potentially like to re-create it (to some extent) in his own house and show it off to his guests. These guests would most likely be of same or of similar status. They would admire, envy and probably have the tendency to reproduce and recycle elements of it. The local elite might have been so stylistically obsessed with the mosaic designs used to decorate the palace that they imitated the same or similar decorative language to

⁷⁸⁴ Kommatas 2001:131.

⁷⁸⁵ Atzaka 1998:189, n.18.

⁷⁸⁶ Marki 2010:30.

⁷⁸⁷ Makropoulou 1992:259 and also see Appendix.

⁷⁸⁸ This theory was firstly introduced by Baldwin (1906:527-8) and has since been developed further by Pierre Janet (1859-1947) and Jacques Lacan (1901-1981), who talked about self-imitation and mirroring respectively.

show their admiration or even respect towards the emperor. Ultimately, this social behaviourism generates the need of imitation, therefore the need of a workshop able to undertake this task would gradually become stronger.

As already proposed in Chapter III (pp.110), the exclusion of figurative depictions from the palace may reflect an official and corporate character chosen by the commissioner. In a similar manner, most of our indexed residences follow the same 'rules'. But what would the reason be for the exclusion of figurative images in a private town house? Why do we find them in country villas, both the imperial villa at Gamzigrad and the non-imperial villa at Palaeokastro? Someone would expect the presence of a more personal character and taste similar to the Palaeokastro. There are a number of possible explanations.

The majority of the mosaics bear geometric patterns. Some sixteen hundred individual designs have been recorded between the 1st century BC and the 6th century AD in the Greek and Roman world, ranging from simple to very complicated. The figured repertoire (birds, animals, fish, mythological scenes) is less common and their appearance seems to be associated with the patron's taste and background⁷⁸⁹. Figurative compositions, mainly borrowed from mythology, are employed to symbolise an activity or the owner's cultural background. Such iconography would play a vital role during banquets providing topics for conversation, simultaneously displaying the patron's education and upbringing⁷⁹⁰. In the case of Palaeokastro a personified depiction of nearby river Echedoros has been correlated with the profession of the villa owner who was probably a land owner and his wealth came from the immediate river area (Ch.IV). Causes for preferring geometric patterns might be a different taste or even the difference in priorities in urban vs. rural settings. Although we have no proof that the owners of Thessalonica's town houses also owned country estates, such was the tradition throughout the Roman Mediterranean, the difference in decoration might reflect the more relaxed and 'private' character of a country villa as opposed to a busier urban house directly linked with the more public activities of its patron. According to Dunbabin, in the late Empire the tradition of mythological themes seems to be declining as mosaicists are no longer familiar with

⁷⁸⁹ Dunbabin 1999:291, 298-9.

⁷⁹⁰ Ellis 2000:128-9.

the narratives or the representation of applicable scenes⁷⁹¹. Also, the process of developing and implementing a mythological/figured iconography entails time and an education, something that the Thessalonica military officials might have been lacking. Military personnel were probably not highly educated individuals so a geometric vocabulary would have been the most convenient solution.

The establishment of Christianity in the mid-4th century and the co-existence of Christians and non-Christians for some time afterwards might have created an insecure and unstable social situation⁷⁹². This could have also been reflected in domestic decoration and the employment of geometric designs provided a neutral solution. Residence (10) is a good example in that it uses birds in a panel contained in octagons in exactly the same manner as they appear in a prominent Christian building such as that at the north part of the Evangelistria cemetery.

No (10) is a rare example of a *tabula ansata* referring to the owner and his family (Eusebios and Markia with their two children Elladitis and Klementini, see Ch.I and Appendix). Of course, due to the fragmentary nature of all excavated sites we cannot definitely say that this was an absolute rarity, but as the present study of the Thessalonica monuments stands, this is the only townhouse with an indication of personal character and identity⁷⁹³; not only for its inscription but also for its mosaic decoration as explained above. These two elements pronounce the contrast between (10) and the rest of our examples, which appear somewhat characterless and very much alike with each other. The majority of these townhouses have their apses orientated towards the south or southwest, not just towards the midday sun but also towards the sea. No (10) is the only house with its apse facing the west in a similar fashion to a Christian church building⁷⁹⁴. Although neither the excavator nor the later studies have entertained this possibility, it nevertheless might be a strong indication

⁷⁹¹ Dunbabin 1999:299.

⁷⁹² The massacre of 390 indicates that a portion of the local population was still in favour of public spectacles, a type of events of non-Christian character.

⁷⁹³ Another similar inscription was found at a very fragmentary residence of uncertain date on 101 Olympiados St. See Appendix; also, Orlandos 1969:13-14 and Atzaka 1998:221.

⁷⁹⁴ In a Christian church, the apse faces the West so during a liturgy, a priest, presumably standing in front of the congregation, would face them (towards the West) and they would face him (towards the East). I assume that this was the case in the 4th-5th century AD judging by church basilicas dated to the early Christian period (Ossios David dated to the 5th century and Acheiropoietos, see Ch.II) and presumably reflect the same liturgical tradition.

that the owner of (10) could have been a Christian, who perhaps used his house for liturgical purposes and social gatherings for fellow Christians. Kim Bowes and Adam Gutteridge proposed a process whereby the epicentres of such a development might have been the ‘private estate churches’ created by high status private individuals⁷⁹⁵. The status of the owner of (10) is also confirmed by the employment of similar mosaic techniques (or even the same workshop) with the palace proper (Southern Peristyle East Corridor) and the church building (fig.161a) as we saw above concerning the use of brick for the illustration of brown colour, and the employment of a parallel pattern (squares and diamonds in star shaped formations with Solomon knots) to Northern Peristyle East Corridor (figs 67-9).

Unfortunately, we do not know whether the new quarter in the upper city⁷⁹⁶ was developed by the local aristocracy or by or for imperial personnel who had recently moved into the city, but there might be a possibility that the area was public land (belonging to the city) and was given or rented to them. Possible alterations or re-development of the street grid have been lost after centuries of urban occupation, the Great Fire of 1917 (fig.4) and all atrocious building activity in the 1960s. The only available plan (see Ch.II fig.5, which is mostly based on speculation) showing part of the street grid, ends at the imaginary *decumanus* north of the church of St. Demetrius.

A reasonable explanation for the appearance of a number of residences in the upper city area could be that they were purpose built for the key personnel moved to Thessalonica in 441 (complying with our Group 2), when the city becomes the capital of Illyricum (see Ch.I) and the influx of administrative population would have been pretty dense. The fact that these residences share a number of common architectural and decoration characteristics can suggest that some of them were constructed based on the same pattern and probably by the same architects, in a relatively short period of time, who were probably commissioned by the central government machine in order to be used by specific individuals. Of course, all this is speculation, and the argument needs to be constructed on some sort of evidence.

⁷⁹⁵ Bowes-Gutteridge 2005:413.

⁷⁹⁶ This area is considered as new and outside the grid plan of Thessalonica by Karydas 1996:581; Vitti 1996:153 and Adam-Veleni 2003:169.

A number of late literary texts could shed some light. In his *De Mortibus Persecutorum* (XXVI.5), Lactantius (c.240-c.320) mentions that the soldiers of Maximian Herculus (reg. 286-305), when they were re-located to Rome were offered luxurious accommodation there so that not only they enjoyed working in Rome but were also prompted to develop an interest in preserving the residence that they lived in⁷⁹⁷. This text is a clear indication that military personnel incentives at least in the early 4th century included accommodation offers, especially when relocation was involved. A second example is found in the *Codex Theodosianus* which was brought into force in 439 but included constitutions issued between 313 and 437⁷⁹⁸. In XVI.12⁷⁹⁹ a law addressed to the western praetorian prefects and governors reminds them of their duty to live in their official residences and not to look for ‘pleasant retreats’ elsewhere. Any private person who entertained a governor in his own estate would have it confiscated while governors themselves must ensure that they keep their official residences well-furnished and in good repair. This again indicates the continued existence of state-owned housing given to personnel for occupation during their service. The efforts of Constantine to promote his new capital Constantinople, built on the site of the old Byzantium in 324, included the arrival of new inhabitants, who were offered a number of incentives to prompt them live in the new city. Anonymus Valesianus⁸⁰⁰ and Socrates Scholasticus⁸⁰¹ inform us that one of these privileges was the offering of state-built mansions to Roman senators who decided to move to Constantinople. These texts imply an on-going policy where military and administrative personnel were prompted to occupy houses in new towns of service. In modern times, the relocation of officers and other military personnel is normally combined with free accommodation, which is purposely built in order to house both personnel and their families. Thessalonica’s upper city residential development could possibly echo this very practice described in the literary sources. Sodini considered

⁷⁹⁷ The text reads as follows: ‘.. in qua [Romam] milites illi summis deliciis saepissime excepti non modo salvam esse illam urbem, sed ibi vivere optarent’ [=‘..There (in Rome) the soldiers of Maximian had been oftentimes received with every sort of luxurious accommodation, so that they were not only interested to preserve the city, but they also longed to fix their residence in it’].

⁷⁹⁸ *Codex Theodosianus* in *The Oxford Dictionary of Byzantium*, 1991:475.

⁷⁹⁹ ‘..in his locis sedem constituat, in quibus oportet omnibus praesto esse rectorem, non deverticula deliciosa sectetur’. See also Matthews 1975:29.

⁸⁰⁰ Anonymus Valesianus, *Excerpta Valesiana*, VI.30. See also MacMullen 1976:96-7 for an account of literary sources referring to the newly founded city.

⁸⁰¹ Socrates Scholasticus *Historia Ecclesiastica*, III.260 ‘He also erected magnificent dwelling houses southward through the regions. Since he was aware that the former population was insufficient for so great a city, he peopled it with men of rank and their households, whom he summoned hither from the elder Rome and from other countries’. See also MacMullen 1976:97.

the possibility of high ranking military personnel occupying lavish houses in other regions such as Caesarea Maritima (where two buildings are identified as palaces built in early Roman years, one by Herod and the other for the *procurator provinciae* of the Roman colony, but which continued to exist until at least the 5th century, used by local military governors), Mediana (residence no.4 listed in Table 2, Sodini associates this complex possibly with the house of a *dux* in Constantinian times), Qasr ibn Wardan in Syria (dating to 561-572), Palmyra (also in Syria) and Justiniana Prima (Caricin Grad in Serbia), all dated to the 5th and 6th centuries⁸⁰².

On the basis that every Roman house combined both domestic and business life thus making it impossible to distinguish the two, Ellis's statement that for local aristocrats "their house was their palace"⁸⁰³ reflects a practice that could have also taken place in Thessalonica. From this evolved the episcopal complex (see below), which kept at its core the main architectural form of a Late Roman elite house, combining administrative and financial functions⁸⁰⁴.

The close distance of some of our catalogued townhouses (3, 4 and 9) to the palace may suggest a direct relation since some of these house owners might have been heavily involved with it as high ranking administrative and military personnel. The existence of a cluster of townhouses further up the hill (and not so close to the palace) could also indicate the preference of a new location, far from the crowded city centre, free from previous building activity and with much better views. The upper city of Thessalonica appears to have soon become the new suburb of the rich, a newly formed community of individuals of same or similar social calibre. It could have even been related to the second palace proposed by Vickers and Croke (see above).

The survival of the Thessalonica townhouses was closely related to both social changes and natural phenomena (devastating earthquakes), which all had an impact on their spatial re-organisation and re-decoration. The re-decoration of space is linked with the re-flooring of function space with coarse mosaics. The designs of these, as well as their simpler technique, appear to be very popular in covering most areas of

⁸⁰² Sodini 2003:33.

⁸⁰³ Ellis 2000:72.

⁸⁰⁴ Sodini 2003:37.

the residential nucleus (such as corridors and secondary utility space) and this was probably a much cheaper and quicker option for mosaic laying and floor repairing. This reflects not only a change of financial status but also a more modest outlook of life, which may correspond with the Christian persuasion⁸⁰⁵ of the owners/occupiers. In many cases, the use of coarse mosaic seemed to be combined with other techniques involving marble like the *opus sectile* technique or the use of plain marble slabs for floor paving. Examples were found in various buildings in Thessalonica such as (1), palace Northern Peristyle South and West Corridors, residence (?) on 59 Ionos Dragoumi St.⁸⁰⁶, unidentified building on Iasonidou and 10 Arrianou St.⁸⁰⁷, residence (?) on 90 Kassandrou St.⁸⁰⁸ and the unidentified building on 6 Prasakaki and Koufoukli St.⁸⁰⁹. This expresses not only a change in interior design aesthetics but also a parallel social behaviour that still focuses on social gatherings but of different and modest character (probably gatherings of religious character, communal dining such as the 'love-feast', as opposed to lavish reception banquets).

The downgrading of space and the replacement of previously elaborate mosaics with plain coarse mosaics probably reflect the change of style, economic status or the practice of social display. This change of social expression does not necessarily mean that local aristocrats ceased to exist; they adapted to a new *status quo*, where Christianity dominated⁸¹⁰. Unfortunately, apart from their physical existence we do not have much recorded evidence for the development process of ecclesiastical buildings. Although *Codex Theodosianus* and *Corpus Iuris Civilis* are the main legal text sources for building regulations between the 4th and the 6th centuries, very little is mentioned about buildings of Christian character, which were probably benefited and supported by special permissions granted by local officials and aristocracy⁸¹¹. We noted in Ch.I (pp.27) that the *diocese* of Thessalonica received tax exemptions.

⁸⁰⁵ The coarse mosaic is widely used for church floors such as the cemetery basilica on 3 Septemvriou St. (Kourkoutidou-Nikolaïdou 1980:386, fig.224c; Atzaka 1998:332-3, fig.377b).

⁸⁰⁶ Siganiidou 1971:387, 390, pl.11, figs 385d, 386a; Atzaka 1998:291, figs 220a-b.

⁸⁰⁷ Atzaka 1998:295-6, fig.227.

⁸⁰⁸ Makropoulou-Tzitzibasi 1993:357-8, pl.1-2; Atzaka 1998:302, fig.238.

⁸⁰⁹ Marki 1990:337, 339, pl.1, 3, fig.152a; Marki 1997:58-59, pl.2a, fig.10; Atzaka 1998:315-6, figs 263a-c.

⁸¹⁰ Ellis 2000:111.

⁸¹¹ Baldini Lippolis 2007:197, 212.

Though we do not have a detailed account on the ecclesiastical buildings in Thessalonica during this period, we can obtain a rough idea about how the city looked like judging by literary texts referring to other regions, such as that of Hagioupolis (Cyrrhus) in northern Syria. Life of Theodoret of Cyrrhus (c.393 - c.457) (*Letter* 113) mentions 800 churches existing only in this small region⁸¹². We can now imagine how Thessalonica (being a very popular religious centre with St. Demetrius as its patron) could have been like in early Christian years. The brief account in Justinian's *Novella* 11⁸¹³ (dated 535) indicates that the metropolitan bishop of Macedonia was based in Thessalonica, which soon became the seat of the archbishop of Thessalonica.

An early example suggestive of the increasing power of clergy is attested in the case of Thessalonica following the Hippodrome massacre in 390, when Ambrose (bishop of Milan) ordered Theodosius to apologise in public (see Ch.I, pp.25)⁸¹⁴. The involvement of the clergy with local affairs and politics led to the emergence of the episcopal residence (*episkopeion*), a building where the bishop and his entourage would hold audience with the public, administer and use as private residence. Information from literary sources on the architecture of episcopal buildings indicates the existence of apsidal halls, baths, private chambers and office space. Ceylan mentions certain hagiological sources such as Palladius⁸¹⁵, who describes an early 5th century *episkopeion* in Ephesus and the *Life of St. Epiphanius* (written by Magnus Felix Ennodius in late 5th century) with information on space use such as *triclinia*, offices and bedrooms⁸¹⁶. Similar architectural elements were gathered by Ceylan with regards to the description of the 4th century Constantinople patriarchate⁸¹⁷.

The rise of Christianity and the unstoppable growing power of clergy (Constantine allowed bishops to judge civil cases)⁸¹⁸, would require the employment of personnel to manage and control finances and administrative affairs⁸¹⁹. It is likely that not just the bishop but also other high ranking ecclesiastical members would gather power in

⁸¹² Ceylan 2007:170.

⁸¹³ Theodoridis 1980:103-25 (discussion and further bibliography); Snively 2010:553.

⁸¹⁴ For further examples see Ceylan 2007:101-2.

⁸¹⁵ Palladius, *Dialogue on the Life of St. John Chrysostom*, 13.

⁸¹⁶ *Life of St. Epiphanius* 34, 37, 56.

⁸¹⁷ Ceylan 2007:172-3.

⁸¹⁸ *C.Th.* 1.27.2, see also Ceylan 2007:171.

⁸¹⁹ Jones 1964:911.

their hands which would result in maintaining private townhouses. Based on Brown's previous suggestion, Brown and Ceylan point out that some bishops came from aristocratic families and continued to have an equal level of power⁸²⁰. The same could apply to other high ranking clergy personnel, who coming from wealthy backgrounds themselves were already used to living in luxurious surroundings; they just adapted to the new order of things that required a less extravagant way of life. Their establishments likely followed the same style as the regional *episkopeion* but were perhaps more modest. This phenomenon pretty much replicates the earlier diptych of 'palace-townhouses', a system adaptable to a changing society and taking into consideration the new financial, political and religion parameters.

We cannot be certain how this social mobility in Thessalonica was critical to the physical change (if any) between the two groups of houses but the introduction of the coarse mosaic technique in their majority could demarcate the beginning of this transformation in all of them.

Of course not all our 5th century samples could have been owned by the clergy, and we can certainly not overlook the influx of personnel in 441. What might be possible, however, is that these individuals sooner or later became part of a central governing system incorporating the clergy, which unavoidably had an impact on their way of life, habits, and aesthetics for their own homes. In the long run they all merged into one wider social group that incorporated the clergy and state officials.

The unstable political scene from the 6th century onwards in conjunction with the emerging Slavic threat (pp.28) may also suggest a gradual abandonment of the Thessalonica residences by some and a possible relocation in suburbs and more secure areas as the city had become a permanent target⁸²¹.

On numerous occasions, excavations have shown the sub-division of interior space, with an assumed change of function of various rooms. According to Ellis⁸²², subdivision is a common late antique phenomenon, but it is difficult to assign it to a

⁸²⁰ Brown 2002:53; Ceylan 2007:172.

⁸²¹ Stavridou-Zafraka 1997:89-90 and *id.* http://www.lpth.gr/gr/texts/Zafraka_gr.pdf.

⁸²² Ellis 2000:110.

specific date. We do not have much evidence for townhouses being sub-divided in Thessalonica and probably the only factual indication we have for the time being are the later phases of (6), and the walls running through the halls of (4) and (10) (figs 4a and 10b in Appendix).

Subdivision led in a way to the end of the housing tradition as we know it up to this point and consequently the end of peristyle house by late 6th century⁸²³. At the same time, the further growth of Christianity with its strong influence in politics and administration would gradually lead to an increase in the number of monasteries, convents, charitable institutions and hospices, changing radically the picture of Late Roman Thessalonica forever.

⁸²³ Ellis 2000:111.

Chapter VI

Conclusion

Late Roman Thessalonica is a city of big debate. Having undergone, from the early Roman to recent years, an endless series of natural catastrophes and occupations followed by man-made disasters, the city suffers not only from the lack of securely dated monuments but also an extremely problematic historical record. The 1960s was a decade of much importance as the city centre went through a major face lift with the addition of hundreds of new building blocks. This could have been a great opportunity for local archaeologists to investigate the emerging monuments in greater detail, which would have helped them reach safer conclusions on architectural, historical, socio-economical and cultural parameters. Sadly, this never actually happened and structures did not receive proper attention or care and were not methodically recorded or studied. On the contrary, archaeologists were allocated minimal time to survey the discovered monuments and these were either destroyed or partially kept in the basements of the new buildings.

Mobile finds (such as ceramics, metal and glass) were simply discarded or archaeologists failed to record them. Not showing any respect to the Roman ruins, architects did not actually attempt to preserve them in any possible way. The few surviving structures were used as space for petrol tanks or general storage areas with no electricity and impossible to access. In better cases, more substantial findings such as columns, capitals or mosaic fragments were taken away to be stored at the local archaeological museum but were not recorded efficiently (on many occasions provenance was not documented at all and other times records referred to the wrong site) resulted to the loss of key information and led to endless confusions in subsequent studies.

Tackling all the aforementioned issues, this thesis came across another major obstacle; the problematic modern scholarship. Several attempts were made by numerous scholars to study the evidence to hand and reached conclusions on the topography, architecture and chronology of important monuments of dubious hypostasis. Not being able to conduct complete stratigraphy surveys, the recycling of

previous wrong conclusions by more scholars did not actually improve our knowledge base; instead, dealing mainly with pure guesswork and hypothetical suggestions, further misunderstandings and confusion were generated.

After studying the known historical background of the city and exploring the datable buildings where and when possible, this thesis took into consideration all achievable dating methods and criteria that could assist in progressing the analysis further in order to manage to explore the private architecture in Thessalonica. The first available example was the palatial complex, falsely attributed by many strictly to Galerius. After carefully investigating the excavation data, it was firstly made clear that we are dealing with a complex of a later (and not necessarily Galerian) date and, secondly, it gradually appeared that it stylistically shared many common characteristics with a number of residential complexes in the city, also previously thought to have been associated with Galerius. But before moving onto examining the ten best surviving residential samples from Thessalonica, the thesis visits the most complete and best preserved example of domestic architecture excavated in Palaeokastro, just a few kilometres from Thessalonica. The analysis of its plan type, architectural layout and mosaic embellishment demonstrated lucid similarities with the Thessalonican sample.

The ten domus selected from Thessalonica are admittedly very fragmentary (however the most complete amongst all others found in the area) and very difficult to study, simply based on physical evidence that is not available anyway. The patchy information on the ancient city plan (heavily altered after centuries' of occupations and destructions) does not allow to consider detailed topographical interrelationships with one another or with other public monuments or the rest of the city, whereas information on water supply and even the street grid plan are non-existent, especially in the upper town area.

Two groups of houses have been distinguished and identified:

Group 1 (4th century): (2), (3), (6), (7) and (9).

Group 2 (5th century and beyond): (1), (4), (5), (8) and (10).

While Group 2 houses could have had earlier phases too, their common architectural design resemblances (apsidal hall with adjacent suites, apse of similar size) and the patterns of the surviving tessellated mosaics (mainly focusing on technical and iconographic criteria) and their subsequent overlying coarse mosaics, are features indicative of a mutual 5th century dating.

Based on observations made when studying the modern city map and juxtaposing the location of all available monuments, we see that our residences are nearly all away from the palace complex zone at Navarinou Square (see Appendix map, pp.278). The majority of the later houses (Group 2) is situated within the 5th century walled upper town zone.

Although not much of the early Christian topography survives, we can still gather a general idea of the distance between these residences and St. Demetrius, ranging between *c.*100 and 420 metres. Evidently, St. Demetrius is located much closer to them than the palace in Navarinou Square. What is also very interesting is that the church of Profitis Elias (where, according to Vickers and Croke, the alleged 5th century prefect's palace could have been situated) is not only very close to St. Demetrius (less than 200m) but also nearby to almost all our houses and especially nos (5), (7), (8) and (10). We must also point out here that most of our houses are very close to the Evangelistria cemetery, where mosaic parallels from an early Christian building have been used in the dating process for some of our 2nd Group samples.

The immediate proximity of all these buildings cannot be coincidental. The location of a prominent building (such as St. Demetrius) of definitely known ecclesiastical character within the same district of high status residences may indicate a possible connection. Although the lack of epigraphic and historical evidence does not allow us by far to match residences with their owners, it is however feasible to hypothesise that these owners were probably associated with the clergy or the central governing system. The move of the capital of Illyricum to Thessalonica after the sack of Sirmium by Attila in 441 could have also played a pivotal role in the formation or replanning of this district. St. Demetrius was also worshipped in Sirmium and the

transfer of the prefect could have also coincided with the move of the Saint's cult and relics (or parts of them) from Sirmium to Thessalonica⁸²⁴.

The enormously fragmentary nature of the residences unfortunately does not allow us to investigate their longevity and how they evolved in the following centuries. Phenomena of subdivision or conversion known from other regions cannot clearly be distinguished here. In a few cases, mid or late Byzantine burials indicate their change of function into monasteries, convents or hospices but the subsequent Ottoman and later Greek interventions do not permit further observations. Further historical research supplemented by more detailed archaeological evidence could shed light to the character of this district and, hopefully, the identity of the upper town residences.

Thessalonica's history and archaeology still have many unanswered questions and the need for scientifically organised publications could not be bigger. Most of our examined houses have been lost forever while some lie hidden underneath colossal concrete building blocks. Parts of the palatial complex (including the Rotunda, Arch of Galerius, Octagon and Basilica) are still visible and can be viewed from street level. Access to the actual palace complex is very limited due to the economic crisis and the suspension of staff salaries. St. Demetrius and Aghia Sofia are functioning orthodox churches and likely can be visited at any time. The new metro line is a massive new opportunity for archaeologists and scientists to study the core of the city professionally and systematically as its route follows that of via Egnatia.

Limited financial resources pause and resume excavations creating an ongoing obstacle for considerable progress. However, the emerging tourism industry and, especially, the waves of religious tourists from the Balkans and Russia are reasons for revenue generation attracting European Union funding resources for restoration, conservation and touristic development of the city's most iconic monuments.

Suffering from bureaucratic and organisational deficiencies, Thessalonica seems to be going through another Dark Age period in her contemporary history. The city survived from attacks and devastating earthquakes innumerable times, a sign of a

⁸²⁴ Vickers 1974:345 and 349.

sturdy idiosyncrasy embracing an underlying hope for the continuation of its rich history and its willpower to blossom once again.

TABLE 1. COMPARISON OF PATTERNS FOUND IN GEOMETRIC MOSAICS AT THESSALONICA & DATEABLE EXAMPLES ELSEWHERE

Pattern Type	House Cat.no.	Thessalonica and vicinity	Elsewhere
boxes in perspective	1 (room II) 6 (adjacent space)	1.Palace Basilica (apse) 2.Palace SP West Corridor 3.Palace NP South Corridor 4.Unidentified building on 110 Olympiados St.(possible date: 2 nd half of 4 th c.) ⁸²⁵ 5.Fragmentary residence (?) on 30 Syggrou St. (possible dating by excavator: 4 th c.) ⁸²⁶ 6. Palaeokastro (North Corridor) early 5 th c.	None
diamonds containing circles	1 (room II) 8 (main hall & West Corridor)	1.Palace SP West Corridor 2.Palace NP North Corridor 3.Residence (?) on 24 Palaion Patron Germanou St (possible date: 2 nd half of the 4 th c.) ⁸²⁷ 4.Bath on 138 Olympou St. (possible date: 2 nd half of the 4 th c.) ⁸²⁸ 5.Unidentified building on 10 Arrianou St. (possible date: early 5 th c.) ⁸²⁹ 6. Palaeokastro (East Corridor)	None
intersecting circles forming quatrefoils with variations	4 (main hall) 5 (main hall) 8 (main hall) 10 (main hall)	1.Possible bath building South of Acheiropoietos (undated) ⁸³⁰ 2.Residence (?) on 90 Kassandrou St. (possible date: end of the 4 th c.) ⁸³¹ 3.Fragmentary residence (?) on 24 Palaion Patron Germanou St. (possible date: 2 nd half of the 4 th c.) ⁸³² 4.Fragmentary residence (?) on 30 Syggrou St. (possible date by excavator: 4 th c.) ⁸³³ 5.Eastern section of East Corridor of the agora (possible date: end of the 4 th c.) ⁸³⁴ 6.Unidentified building on 101 Olympiados St. (possible date: 2 nd half of the 4 th c.) ⁸³⁵ 7.Unidentified building on NE corner of Kyprian Agoniston Square (possible date: 2 nd half of 4 th c.) ⁸³⁶ 8.Unidentified building on 16 Filippou & Zaliki St. (possible date: early 5 th c.) ⁸³⁷ 9.Bath on 138 Olympou St. (possible date: 2 nd half of the 4 th c.) ⁸³⁸ 10.Unidentified building on 47-49 Sokratous St. (possible date: between late 4 th and early 5 th c.) ⁸³⁹ 11.Christian basilica on Moreas-27 Mouson, 41-43 Moreas St., upper town (possible date: end of 5 th c.) ⁸⁴⁰ 11.Christian church in Panorama (possible date: 2 nd half of the 5 th c.) ⁸⁴¹	1.Cemetery basilica of Dion (dated to 5 th c.) ⁸⁴² 2.Metroon, Athens (dated to ca.400) ⁸⁴³ 3.Christian basilica A in Argos Orestikou (possible date: 5 th c.) ⁸⁴⁴ 4.Christian basilica, Epidauros (dated to early 5 th c.) ⁸⁴⁵ 5.Christian basilica of Dafnousion in Phthiotis (possible date: early 5 th c.) ⁸⁴⁶ 6.Baptistery of Phthiotic Hypatia (possible date: early 5 th c.) ⁸⁴⁷ 7.Episcopal basilica in Stobi (possible date: 5 th c.) ⁸⁴⁸ 8.Unidentified Western building outside the city walls of Heraclea Lyncestis (FYROM) (possible date:

⁸²⁵ Siganidou 1971:385, pl.9, fig.382a; Atzaka 1998:223, fig.92b.

⁸²⁶ Karamanoli-Siganidou 1970:374, fig.315a; Atzaka 1998:fig.292a

⁸²⁷ Alexandri 1973/4(b):661; Atzaka 1998:229-30.

⁸²⁸ Atzaka 1998:242, fig.136a.

⁸²⁹ Atzaka 1998:226, fig.99a.

⁸³⁰ Atzaka 1998:340, fig.282b.

⁸³¹ Makropoulou-Tzitzibasi 1993:356, 360; Atzaka 1998:235-6, fig.118a-b.

⁸³² Alexandri 1973/74(b):661, pl.5-6, fig.479a; Atzaka 1998:230, figs 104-105b.

⁸³³ Atzaka 1998:fig.288a

⁸³⁴ Papadopoulou 1963:197, fig.238a-c; Papadopoulou 1964:329, 330, figs 373a,c and 374; Petsas 1967(b):384; Petsas 1968(b):328, 330; Atzaka 1998:215, 218, fig.75.

⁸³⁵ Orlandos 1969:13-14, fig.10; Atzaka 1998:220-1, fig.88b.

⁸³⁶ Kanonidis 1990:259-61, pl.1, fig.3; Kanonidis 1990:335, pl.1; Kanonidis 1996:565, pl.1, 7; Atzaka 1998:237, fig.121a-b.

⁸³⁷ Atzaka 1998:253, fig.164.

⁸³⁸ Siganidou 1971:387, pl.10, figs 382b, 383a-c, 384b; Atzaka 1998:242, fig.136a.

⁸³⁹ Kolarik 1982:409; Atzaka 1998:248, fig.151.

⁸⁴⁰ Eleftheriadou 1987:407-8, pl.10; Atzaka 1998:260, fig.181a.

⁸⁴¹ Tsigaridas 1973:500-1, pl.12, fig.462a; Atzaka 1998:266, fig.195a.

			5 th c.) ⁸⁴⁹ 9.Synagogue in Plovdiv (Philippoupolis, Bulgaria) (possible date: 5 th c.) ⁸⁵⁰ 10.Unidentified complex west of Large Basilica, Heraclea Lyncestis (FYROM) (possible date: 6 th c.) ⁸⁵¹
chequer-board	1 (Room II) 3 (adjacent room) 5 (apse & East room) 8 (main hall & West Corridor)	1.Palace SP North Corridor (traces) 2.Palace NP North Corridor (east end) 3.Palace Basilica (apse) 4.Bath on 138 Olympou St. (possible date: 2 nd half of the 4 th c.) ⁸⁵² 5.Unidentified building on 47-49 Sokratous St. (possible date: between late 4 th and early 5 th c.) ⁸⁵³ 6.Eastern section of East corridor of the agora (possible date: end of the 4 th c.) ⁸⁵⁴ 7.Unidentified building on 94 Egnatias & Mitropolitou Gennadiou St. (possible date: 2 nd half of 4 th c.) ⁸⁵⁵ 8.Christian basilica in Panorama (possible date: 2 nd half of the 5 th c.) ⁸⁵⁶	1.Palaeokastro (North Corridor, room 5) 2.Basilica of Archbishop Peter of Phthiotic Thebes (dated from mid-4 th c. onwards) ⁸⁵⁷ 3.Mediana (dated to 4 th -5 th c.) ⁸⁵⁸
schematic ivy scroll with heart shaped leaves	5 (apse & main hall)	1.Palace Basilica (apse) 2.Palace SP East Corridor 3.Unidentified building on 47-49 Sokratous St. (possible dating: between late 4 th and early 5 th c.) ⁸⁵⁹ 4.Unidentified building on 94 Egnatias & Mitropolitou Gennadiou St. (possible date: 2 nd half of 4 th c.) ⁸⁶⁰ 5.Fragmentary residence (?) on 30 Syggrou St. (possible dating by excavator: 4 th c.) ⁸⁶¹ 6.Palaeokastro (room 5 and East Corridor) early 5 th c.	1.Metroon, Athens (dated to c.400) ⁸⁶² 2.Christian basilica, Epidaurus (dated to early 5 th c.) ⁸⁶³ 3.Theodosian palace, Stobi ⁸⁶⁴ 4.Episcopal basilica in Stobi (possible date: 5 th c.) ⁸⁶⁵ 5.Basilica Γ in Amphipolis (possible date: 5 th c.) ⁸⁶⁶
guilloche	4 (main hall) 5 (apse)	1.NP North Corridor 2.Residence (?) on 24 Palaion Patron Germanou St (possible date: 2 nd half of the 4 th c.) ⁸⁶⁷	1.Two Christian basilicas (Α & Γ) in Amphipolis (possible date: mid-5 th c.) ⁸⁷³

⁸⁴² Mentzos 1990:233; Atzaka 1998:129.

⁸⁴³ Frantz 1988:59, fig.45c.

⁸⁴⁴ Siganidou 1977:216, fig.132c; Atzaka 1998:131.

⁸⁴⁵ Kitzinger 1946:126, fig.176; Frantz 1988:113, n.31; Krautheimer 1981:125.

⁸⁴⁶ Atzaka 1984:382-3; Atzaka 1998:133.

⁸⁴⁷ Smbyraki-Kalantzi 1979:102, pl.1; Atzaka 1987:no.119, fig.310; Atzaka 1998:133.

⁸⁴⁸ Aleksova 1980-1:33, fig.7; Kolarik 1984:469, fig.31; Atzaka 1998:131.

⁸⁴⁹ Srbiniowski 1983:121, 128, fig.1; Atzaka 1998:131.

⁸⁵⁰ Kessiakova 1994:167, fig. LXXXVIII; Atzaka 1998:131.

⁸⁵¹ Kolarik 1984:474-5, fig.68.

⁸⁵² Siganidou 1971:387, pl.10, figs 382b, 383a-c, 384b; Atzaka 1998:242, fig.136a.

⁸⁵³ Kolarik 1982:409; Atzaka 1998:248, fig.151.

⁸⁵⁴ Papadopoulou 1963:197, fig.238a-c; Papadopoulou 1964:329, 330, figs 373a,c and 374; Petsas 1967(a):384; Petsas 1968(b):328, 330; Atzaka 1998:215, 218, fig.75.

⁸⁵⁵ Siganidou 1971:382, 385; Atzaka 1998:232, figs 108, 113b.

⁸⁵⁶ Tsigaridas 1973:500-1, pl.12, fig.462a; Atzaka 1998:266, fig.195a.

⁸⁵⁷ The building has numerous phases from the 4th and up to the 6th century (for the dating of the Basilica see Lazaridis 1987:325 and Ntina 1994:358-62). For the mosaics Ntina 1994:359, fig.8; Atzaka 1998:112.

⁸⁵⁸ Srejović 1993:169-83; Atzaka 1998:109.

⁸⁵⁹ Kolarik 1982:409; Atzaka 1998:248, fig.151.

⁸⁶⁰ Siganidou 1971:382, 385; Atzaka 1998:232, fig.108.

⁸⁶¹ Karamanoli-Siganidou 1970:374, fig.315a; Atzaka 1998:fig.292a

⁸⁶² Frantz 1988:59, fig.45c.

⁸⁶³ Kitzinger 1946:126, fig.174; Frantz 1988:113, n.31; Krautheimer 1981:125.

⁸⁶⁴ Kolarik 1982:213-14, Kolarik 1984:454-5, fig.12; figs 442-3; Atzaka 1998:129.

⁸⁶⁵ Aleksova 1980-1:33, fig.7; Kolarik 1984:455, fig.14; Atzaka 1998:131.

⁸⁶⁶ Lazaridis 1959:44, fig.48a; Stikas 1964:42-3, pl.1; *id.* 1969:57, pl.b.

⁸⁶⁷ Alexandri 1973/74(b):661, pl.5-6, fig.479a; Atzaka 1998:230, figs 104-105b.

	6 (main panel) 8 (main hall) 10 (main hall)	3. Residence (?) on 90 Kassandrou St. (dated to the end of the 4 th c.) ⁸⁶⁸ 4. Bath on 138 Olympou St. (possible date: 2 nd half of the 4 th c.) ⁸⁶⁹ 5. Unidentified building on 94 Egnatias & Mitropolitou Gennadiou St. (possible date: 2 nd half of 4 th c.) ⁸⁷⁰ 6. Unidentified building on 47-49 Sokratous St. (possible date: between late 4 th and early 5 th c.) ⁸⁷¹ 7. Fragmentary residence on 21 Aioulou St. (possible date: early 5 th c.) ⁸⁷² 8. Palaeokastro (apse, main hall, apse North Corridor) early 5 th c.	
key-shaped meander with swastikas	4 (main hall)	1. Palace NP North Corridor 2. Basilica apse 3. Unidentified building on 110 Olympiados St. (possible date: 2 nd half of 4 th c.) ⁸⁷⁴ 4. Fragmentary residence on 21 Aioulou St. (possible date: early 5 th c.) ⁸⁷⁵ 5. Unidentified building on 86 Filippou St. (possible date: 2 nd half of the 5 th c.) ⁸⁷⁶ 6. Unidentified building on 94 Egnatias & Mitropolitou Gennadiou St. (possible date: 2 nd half of 4 th c.) ⁸⁷⁷ 7. Unidentified building at the north side of the Evangelistria cemetery (possible date: 1 st half of the 6 th c.) ⁸⁷⁸	1. Galerius palace, Gamzigrad (early 4 th c.) ⁸⁷⁹ 2. Basilica of Archbishop Peter of Phthiotic Thebes (dated from mid-4 th c. onwards) ⁸⁸⁰ 3. Christian basilica B of Nikopolis (dated to 2 nd half of 5 th c.) ⁸⁸¹ 4. Christian basilica Tria Dontia in Samos (possible date: early 5 th c.) ⁸⁸² 5. Mediana (dated to 4 th -5 th c.) ⁸⁸³ 6. Unidentified complex west of Large Basilica, Heraclea Lyncestis (FYROM) (possible date: 6 th c.) ⁸⁸⁴
Solomon knots inside squares or circles	1 (room II) ⁸⁸⁵ 4 (main hall) 8 (main hall & West Corridor) 10 (main hall)	1. Palace NP East, South & North Corridors 2. Residence (?) on 24 Palaion Patron Germanou St (possible date: 2 nd half of the 4 th c.) ⁸⁸⁶ 3. Bath on 138 Olympou St. (possible date: 2 nd half of the 4 th c.) ⁸⁸⁷ 4. Fragmentary residence on 21 Aioulou St. (possible date: early 5 th c.) ⁸⁸⁸	1. Christian basilica, Epidaurus (dated to early 5 th c.) ⁸⁸⁹

⁸⁷³ Stikas 1967:86, figs 63, 64a; Stikas 1969:55, fig.58; Stikas 1964:42, fig.35a; Atzaka 1998:156.

⁸⁶⁸ Makropoulou-Tzitzibasi 1993:356, 360; Atzaka 1998:235-6, fig.119.

⁸⁶⁹ Siganiidou 1971:387, pl.10, figs 382b, 383a-c, 384b; Atzaka 1998:242, fig.136a.

⁸⁷⁰ Siganiidou 1971:382, 385; Atzaka 1998:232, figs 108, 110a, 111a-b, 112a-b, 113a.

⁸⁷¹ Kolarik 1982:409; Atzaka 1998:248, fig.151.

⁸⁷² Makropoulou 1989(a):257; Atzaka 1998:224-5, fig.94a. The dating is based on a coin of Honorius (395-423) found in the bedding of the mosaic floor.

⁸⁷⁴ Siganiidou 1971:385, pl.9, fig.382a; Atzaka 1998:223, fig.92b.

⁸⁷⁵ Makropoulou 1989(b):257; Atzaka 1998:224-5, fig.94a. The dating is based on a coin of Honorius (395-423) found in the bedding of the mosaic floor.

⁸⁷⁶ Atzaka 1998:261, fig.182.

⁸⁷⁷ Siganiidou 1971:382, 385; Atzaka 1998:232, figs 108, 110a, 111a-b, 112a-b, 113a.

⁸⁷⁸ Pelekanidou 1993:381; Atzaka 1998:263-4, fig.186.

⁸⁷⁹ Kolarik 1994:177, fig.XCIV,2; Atzaka 1998:109.

⁸⁸⁰ The building has numerous phases from the 4th and up to the 6th century (for the dating of the Basilica see Lazaridis 1987:325 and Ntina 1994:358-62). For the mosaics see Ntina 1994:359, fig.8; Atzaka 1998:111.

⁸⁸¹ Spiro 1978:479-80, figs 555-557; Atzaka 1998:149.

⁸⁸² Atzaka 1998:150.

⁸⁸³ Srejović 1993:169-83; Atzaka 1998:109.

⁸⁸⁴ Kolarik 1984:474-5, fig.38.

⁸⁸⁵ Atzaka 1998:233, figs XXXIa-c. Some fragmentary mosaic panels are now stored at the Byzantine Museum of Thessalonica, however most of the mosaic is still in situ.

⁸⁸⁶ Alexandri 1973/4(b):661; Atzaka 1998:229-30.

⁸⁸⁷ Siganiidou 1971:387, pl.10, figs 382b, 383a-c, 384b; Atzaka 1998:242, fig.136a.

⁸⁸⁸ Makropoulou 1989(a):257; Atzaka 1998:224-5, fig.94a. The dating is based on a coin of Honorius (395-423) found in the bedding of the mosaic floor.

⁸⁸⁹ Kitzinger 1946:126, fig.174; Frantz 1988:113, n.31; Krautheimer 1981:125.

		5. Palaeokastro (East Corridor)	
imbrication	4 (main hall) 5 (West room) 10 (main hall)	1. Extremely fragmentary residence (?) on 6 Malea St. (possible date: early 5 th c.) ⁸⁹⁰ 2. Unidentified building on 47-49 Sokratous St. (possible date: between late 4 th and early 5 th c.) ⁸⁹¹ 3. Eastern section of East Corridor of the agora (possible date: end of the 4 th c.) ⁸⁹² 4. Unidentified building on 6-10 Glaukou St. (possible date: early 5 th c.) ⁸⁹³ 5. Christian basilica in Panorama (possible date: 2 nd half of the 5 th c.) ⁸⁹⁴ 6. Louloudies (apse) (2 nd half of the 5 th c.)	1. Christian basilica, Epidauros (dated to early 5 th c.) ⁸⁹⁵ 2. Christian basilica Neou Stadiou, Rhodes (possible date: mid 5 th c.) ⁸⁹⁶ 3. Unidentified complex west of Large Basilica, Heraclea Lyncestis (FYROM) (possible date: 6 th c.) ⁸⁹⁷
small intersecting octagons	5 (Room Δ) 8 (North Corridor) 10 (main hall)	1. Palace NP East & South Corridors (band) 2. Unidentified building on 5 Grigoriou Palama Street (possible date: 1 st half of 5 th c.) ⁸⁹⁸ 3. Unidentified building on 10 Arrianou Street (dated to the 1 st half of the 5 th c.) ⁸⁹⁹ 4. Louloudies (apse) (2 nd half of the 5 th c.)	1. Basilica of Archbishop Peter of Phthiotic Thebes (dated from mid-4 th c. onwards) ⁹⁰⁰ 2. Cemetery Basilica of Dion (dated to 5 th c.) ⁹⁰¹ 3. Christian basilica, Epidauros (dated to early 5 th c.) ⁹⁰² 4. Church of P.Mela-Heimarras in Rhodes (possible date: 5 th c.) ⁹⁰³ 5. Church presbytery of Lavreotiko in Olymbus (possible date: 5 th c.) ⁹⁰⁴ 6. Basilica of Kareklis in Astipalaia (possible date: early 5 th c.) ⁹⁰⁵ 7. Theodosian palace, Stobi ⁹⁰⁶ 8. Mediana (dated to 4 th -5 th c.) ⁹⁰⁷ 9. Basilica Γ in Amphipolis (possible date: 5 th c.) ⁹⁰⁸ 10. Large Basilica of Heraclea Lynkestis FYROM (dated to early 6 th c.) ⁹⁰⁹ 11. Unidentified complex west of Large Basilica, Heraclea Lyncestis

⁸⁹⁰ Atzaka 1998:238, fig.125.

⁸⁹¹ Kolarik 1982:409; Atzaka 1998:248, fig.151.

⁸⁹² Papadopoulou 1963:197, fig.238a-c; Papadopoulou 1964:329, 330, figs 373a,c and 374; Petsas 1967(a):384; Petsas 1968(b):328, 330; Atzaka 1998:215, 218, fig.68.

⁸⁹³ Atzaka 1998:231, fig.XXIX.

⁸⁹⁴ Tsigaridas 1973:500-1, pl.12, fig.462a; Atzaka 1998:266, fig.194a-b.

⁸⁹⁵ Kitzinger 1946:126, fig.176; Frantz 1988:113, n.31; Krautheimer 1981:125.

⁸⁹⁶ Pelekanidis 1974:86.

⁸⁹⁷ Kolarik 1984:475, fig.39.

⁸⁹⁸ This mosaic is unpublished but mentioned by Atzaka (1998:129, 244, fig.141a).

⁸⁹⁹ Atzaka 1998:129, 145-6, 226, fig.99.

⁹⁰⁰ The building has numerous phases from the 4th and up to the 6th century (for the dating of the Basilica see Lazaridis 1987:325 and Ntina 1994:358-362). For the mosaics Ntina 1994:359, fig.8; Atzaka 1998:112, 129.

⁹⁰¹ Mentzos 1990:233; Atzaka 1998:129.

⁹⁰² Kitzinger 1946:126, fig.174; Frantz 1988:113, n.31; Krautheimer 1981:125.

⁹⁰³ Pelekanidis 1974:142.

⁹⁰⁴ Atzaka 1987:142.

⁹⁰⁵ Pelekanidis 1974:46.

⁹⁰⁶ Kitzinger 1946:124, fig.170; Kolarik 1982:213-4, Kolarik 1984:454-5, fig.12; figs 442-3; Atzaka 1998:129.

⁹⁰⁷ Srejić 1993:169-83; Atzaka 1998:109.

⁹⁰⁸ Lazaridis 1959:44, fig.48a; Stikas 1964:42-3, pl.1; Stikas 1969:57, pl.b.

⁹⁰⁹ Kolarik 2012:105.

			(FYROM) (possible date: 6 th c.) ⁹¹⁰
vessels	8 (main hall)	<p>1.Residence (?) on 75 Athinas St. (possible date 2nd half of 4th c.)⁹¹¹</p> <p>2.Unidentified building on 47-49 Sokratous St. (possible date: between late 4th and early 5th c.)⁹¹²</p> <p>3.Unidentified building on 86 Filippou St. (possible date: 2nd half of the 5th c.)⁹¹³</p> <p>4.Unidentified building on 94 Egnatias & Mitropolitou Gennadiou St. (possible date: 2nd half of 4th c.)⁹¹⁴</p> <p>5.Christian church in Panorama (possible date: 2nd half of the 5th c.)⁹¹⁵</p> <p>6.Residence on Aioulou St.(early 5th c.)⁹¹⁶</p> <p>7.Palaeokastro (main hall)</p> <p>8. Louloudies (apse) (2nd half of the 5th c.)</p>	<p>1.Basilica of Archbishop Peter of Phthiotic Thebes (1st phase mosaic possibly dated to mid-4th c.)⁹¹⁷</p> <p>2.Unidentified building in Lefkadia Naoussas (possible date: early 5th c.)⁹¹⁸</p> <p>3.Episcopal basilica in Stobi (possible date: 5th c.)⁹¹⁹</p> <p>4.Basilica Γ in Amphipolis (possible date: 5th c.)⁹²⁰</p> <p>5.Small Basilica of Heraclea Lynkestis (FYROM) (dated between mid-5th and early 6th c.)⁹²¹</p>
birds	10 (main hall)	<p>1.Unidentified building South of Aghia Sofia church (possible date: late 4th c.)⁹²²</p> <p>2.Unidentified building on 86 Filippou St. (possible date: 2nd half of the 5th c.)⁹²³</p> <p>3.Christian church in Panorama (possible date: 2nd half of the 5th c.)⁹²⁴</p> <p>4.Unidentified building at the area of Kleisto Kolimvitirio (possible date: mid-5th c.)⁹²⁵</p> <p>5.Unidentified building at the north side of the Evangelistria cemetery (possible date: 1st half of the 6th c.)⁹²⁶</p> <p>6.Palaeokastro (main hall)</p>	<p>1.Basilica of Archbishop Peter of Phthiotic Thebes (possible date: after mid-4th c.)⁹²⁷</p> <p>2.Christian basilica of Frourio, Larissa (possible date: 5th c.)⁹²⁸</p> <p>3.Baptistery of Christian basilica in Vergina (possible date: mid-5th c.)⁹²⁹</p> <p>4.Two Christian basilicas (A & Γ) in Amphipolis (possible date: mid-5th c.)⁹³⁰</p> <p>5.Episcopal basilica in Stobi (possible date: 5th c.)⁹³¹</p> <p>6.Large Basilica of Heraclea Lynkestis (FYROM) (dated between mid-5th and early 6th c.)⁹³²</p> <p>7.Unidentified complex west of Large Basilica, Heraclea Lyncestis</p>

⁹¹⁰ Kolarik 1984:474-5, fig.38.

⁹¹¹ Orlandos 1969:13-14, fig.10; Atzaka 1998:221, fig.89a-b.

⁹¹² Kolarik 1982:409; Atzaka 1998:248, fig.151.

⁹¹³ Atzaka 1998:261, fig.182.

⁹¹⁴ Siganiidou 1971:382, 385; Atzaka 1998:232, figs 108, 110a, 111a-b, 112a-b, 113a.

⁹¹⁵ Tsigaridas 1973:500-1, pl.12, fig.462a; Atzaka 1998:266, fig.195a.

⁹¹⁶ Marki 1998:146.

⁹¹⁷ for the dating of the Basilica see Lazaridis 1987:325 and Ntina 1994:358-362. For the mosaics Ntina 1994:359, fig.8; Atzaka 1998:127(n.339), 135.

⁹¹⁸ Stikas 1959:85, fig.1, 78d, 79; Atzaka 1984:409; Atzaka 1998:135.

⁹¹⁹ Kitzinger 1946:108, fig.146; Aleksova 1980-1:33, fig.7; Kolarik 1984:455, fig.14; Atzaka 1998:131.

⁹²⁰ Lazaridis 1959:44, fig.48a; Stikas 1964:42-3, pl.1; *id.* 1969:57, pl.b.

⁹²¹ Kolarik 1984:465, fig.25 and n.1.

⁹²² Atzaka 1998:210, fig.XIV.

⁹²³ Atzaka 1998:261, fig.182.

⁹²⁴ Tsigaridas 1973:500-1, pl.12, fig.462a; Atzaka 1998:266, figs 193, 195a.

⁹²⁵ Michaelidis 1967:437-8, fig. 324b-c; Atzaka 1998:264, fig.191.

⁹²⁶ Pelekanidou 1993:381; Atzaka 1998:263-4, fig.187.

⁹²⁷ Ntina 1990:92, fig.9; Ntina 1994:358-9, fig.7; Atzaka 1998:156.

⁹²⁸ Ntina 1990:89, 90, fig.1; Atzaka 1998:156.

⁹²⁹ Loverdou-Tsigarida 1994:159, fig.87.15; Atzaka 1998:156.

⁹³⁰ Stikas 1967:86, figs 63, 64a; Stikas 1969:55, fig.58; Stikas 1964:42, fig.35a; Atzaka 1998:156.

⁹³¹ Aleksova 1980-1:33, fig.7; Kolarik 1984:455, fig.14; Atzaka 1998:131.

⁹³² Kolarik 1984:465, fig.26 and n.1; Kolarik 2012:105.

			(FYROM) (possible date: 6 th c.) ⁹³³ 8.Small Basilica of Heraclea Lynkestis (FYROM) (dated between mid-5 th and early 6 th c.) ⁹³⁴
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⁹³³ Kolarik 1984:474-5, fig.68.

⁹³⁴ Kolarik 1984:465,fig.25 and n.1.

TABLE 2: APSIDAL HALLS AT SITES OUTSIDE THESSALONICA

No.	Site Name	Core of Complex (excavated areas)	Dimensions of hall	Apse diameter	Dating	Orientat ion of apse
1	Louloudies Kitrous (fig.137)	Apsidal hall with at least two suites on each side and adjacent spaces	18.30 x 9.30m.	7.20m. Raised by: 0.20m. ⁹³⁵	Tetrarchic Period ⁹³⁶	South
2	Residence of Montana 1, Bulgaria (fig.138) ⁹³⁷	Apsidal hall with suites, courtyard with rooms, bathhouse	8.40 x 8.40m.	6m.	4 th c. ⁹³⁸	South
3	House VII, Abritus, Bulgaria (figs 140-1) ⁹³⁹	Apsidal hall with suites, peristyle with rooms, shops, portico	15.87 x 9.60m.	6.25m. Floor raised ⁹⁴⁰	4 th c. ⁹⁴¹	South
4	Residence in Mediana, Serbia (fig.145) ⁹⁴²	Apsidal hall with suites, large peristyle surrounded by identical sized rooms, nymphaeum and <i>thermae</i>	18.6 x 11.6m. Floor not raised	>12m.	4 th – 5 th c. ⁹⁴³	South – West
5	Townhouse, Stobi, (FYROM) (fig.146)	Apsidal hall with suites, peristyle with adjacent rooms	17 x 10.70m.	>7m.	4 th c. onwards ⁹⁴⁴	North- East
6	'Theodosian Palace', Stobi, (FYROM) (fig.147) ⁹⁴⁵	Apsidal hall with 2 suites on each side, courtyard and adjacent spaces ⁹⁴⁶	>11.40 x 8.70m.	>7.40m.	5 th c. onwards ⁹⁴⁷	North- East

⁹³⁵ Marki 1993:225.

⁹³⁶ Marki 1994:152 and 1995:541. The excavator mentions in her reports that the complex was built over an earlier residence of the 4th century. Further excavations inside the *triclinium* revealed a mosaic floor dated to the 3rd century possibly of a much earlier building.

⁹³⁷ The site of Montana (with three construction phases) is located at a cross-roads, where the Marcianopolis to Nicopolis-ad-Istrum route crossed the Ratiaria to Naissus route in Moesia Inferior. For reports/comments on the residence see: Hoddinott 1975:115-6; Poulter 1983:87; Mulvin 2002:95-6.

⁹³⁸ Mulvin 2002:96. Several phases from the second century onwards. Dating evidence includes 4th century coins found beneath a mosaic floor (with geometric decoration).

⁹³⁹ Building VII in Abritus, (Moesia Inferior, eastern Bulgaria), has the familiar typology of the apsidal hall with adjacent function suites opening up to a courtyard. For reports/comments on the residence see: Ivanov 1985:24-7, 30; Sodini 1997:453.

⁹⁴⁰ Ivanov 1985:27.b

⁹⁴¹ Ivanov 1985:27. The excavator mentions the coinage found in rooms of the East portico of the courtyard. These are dated from the reign of Arcadius (395).

⁹⁴² The site is situated 3km East of Niš (Naissus) and located on the bank of the river Nisava. It is dated from the early 4th to the 5th centuries and has been associated with Constantine, who was born in Mediana and it is also possible that this residence was used by emperors for their temporary stay and visits. For reports/comments on the residence see: Petrović 1995:232-43; Srejović 1993:170; Mulvin 2002:92-3; Sodini 2003:33.

⁹⁴³ Mulvin 2002:93. The building has been associated with Constantine. Findings such as pottery, coinage, mosaics (with geometrical patterns) and jewellery date the complex to the 4th-5th centuries.

⁹⁴⁴ Mulvin 2002:52. The complex is dated by its peristyle plan.

⁹⁴⁵ The site is located 60m. north of the forum of Stobi. Despite the fact that the residence was identified as a palace, it is more possible to be regarded as an aristocratic domus (Lavan 1999:162). For further commentary on this residence see: Kitzinger 1946:81-164; Wiseman 1973: 44-7; Mano-Zissi 1981:123; Kolarik 1981-1982:204-18; Hattersley-Smith 1996:62-3.

⁹⁴⁶ The building has in fact two complexes, a smaller one and the larger one which we are investigating in this study. The smaller complex had also a small apsidal hall opening to a courtyard (Kitzinger 1946:119-20).

⁹⁴⁷ Kitzinger 1946:121-8. Kitzinger summarises the dating evidence for this complex and based his argument on the architectural difference between the Syrian and the Roman residential layout. He pointed out the absence of the axial disposition of vestibule, atrium and peristyle and the spatial arrangement of the reception rooms around the peristyle rather than the atrium (like the Pompeian examples). Of course, the available late Roman residential examples were limited at the time for further comparative study. Clearer evidence provide the mosaics of the

7	House of Peristerias, Stobi (FYROM) (fig.148) ⁹⁴⁸	Double apsed hall ⁹⁴⁹ with suites, peristyle and rooms, nymphaeum, bath & living quarters	Apsidal 15: >9.2 x 6.5m. Apsidal 16: 8.6 x 7.6m.	Apsidal 15: >4.9m. Apsidal 16: >4.9m	End of 4 th c. ⁹⁵⁰	North-East
8	House A, Athens (Areopagus) (fig.149) ⁹⁵¹	Apsidal hall with adjacent rooms & peristyle	>8.8 x 6m.	>4.8m. Floor raised	Last quarter of 4 th c. ⁹⁵²	North-East
9	House B, Athens (Areopagus) (fig.150) ⁹⁵³	Apsidal hall with adjacent rooms and 2 peristyle courts	>11 x 8m.	>4.8m.	Last quarter of 4 th c. ⁹⁵⁴	North-East
10	'House of Proclus', Athens ⁹⁵⁵ (fig.151)	Apsidal hall with adjacent rooms (not fully excavated)	>10.5 x 9.30m	6.60m. (Depth: 4.4 m.) Floor raised ⁹⁵⁶	After 396 ⁹⁵⁷	South-East
11	House of Pantainos, Athens ⁹⁵⁸ (fig.152)	Apsidal hall with 2 rooms on each side, a peristyle court, library	6.15 x 6.15m.	5.60m. Floor raised	5 th c. ⁹⁵⁹	East
12	House on 19-21 Makriyanni St., Athens ⁹⁶⁰ (fig.153)	Apsidal hall with 2 rooms on each side, other adjacent spaces	9.50 x 8.40m.	>6.30m.	Early Byzantine ⁹⁶¹	South-West
13	Bishop's Palace, Aphrodisias (figs 154-5) ⁹⁶²	Apsidal hall with suites, triconch hall, peristyle with rooms	>12.75 x 8.25m.	6.75m. Not raised	4 th c. onwards ⁹⁶³	West

building, which have geometrical decoration (and very similar to the ones from the Church of Epidauros which belong to the early 5th century).

⁹⁴⁸ It is situated between Via Principalis Superior (on the SW), Via Principalis Inferior (on the SE), Via Axia (on the NE) and Via Theodosia (on the SW). For reports/comments on the residence see: Sokolovska 1975:123; Sodini 1997:459. There are numerous construction phases; its main apsidal hall is dated to the end of the 4th century (Sokolovska 1975:133).

⁹⁴⁹ Apsidal room 16 was smaller than apsidal 15 and its construction technique was significantly poorer. No bricks were used for the walls and its floor was covered with stone slabs, Sokolovska 1975:127, 130.

⁹⁵⁰ Sokolovska 1975:133. Apsidal room 15 has only one mosaic (no earlier phases) and in conjunction with the *opus mixtum* technique, this room is dated to the end of the 4th century. Apsidal room 16 gave a golden solidus of Anastasius I, which dates this area to the 5th century. The complex underwent further renovation following the Gothic invasion of 479.

⁹⁵¹ For reports/comments on the residence see: Frantz 1988:38-9, 45, 47.

⁹⁵² Frantz 1988:38. The excavator believes that all houses of the Areopagus hill are contemporary and they all belong to the end of the 4th century. Frantz takes into consideration the earlier phases of the complexes as well as the similar architectural features of the houses (antechamber, hall, apse, etc.).

⁹⁵³ For reports/comments on the residence see: Frantz 1988:38-9, 41-2, 47; Sodini 1984:346.

⁹⁵⁴ See footnote n.958.

⁹⁵⁵ For reports/comments on the residence see: Frantz 1988:42-7; Sodini 1984:350.

⁹⁵⁶ Frantz 1988:43. Exact height is not being mentioned by the excavator. This feature is also mentioned by Dillon 1997:734, n.11.

⁹⁵⁷ Frantz 1988:44. The complex was probably built after Alaric's invasion (396) and its construction is related to the context of the philosophical schools in relation to Plutarch and Proclus [Ellis (2007:10) points out the correlation between philosophical schools and the function of a domus and how further studies may shed some light on this relationship]. Further mosaic research from Stobi (from R. Kolarik) indicate that the mosaics of the complex must have been constructed in the third quarter of the 5th century. Atzaka's study also helps with the dating of the mosaics (Atzaka 1987:121-3).

⁹⁵⁸ For reports/comments on the residence see: Shear:1975:332-45; Sodini 1984:350.

⁹⁵⁹ Shear 1975:337-45. The original Ionic colonnade was built at around 100 and was rebuilt during the reconstruction programme of the 5th century. Trenches at various areas of the complex brought to light coins of Theodosius I, Arcadius and Constantius II (ranging from 351-95) as well as pottery.

⁹⁶⁰ For reports/comments on the residence see: Alexandri 1968:73-5; Travlos 1974:509; Sodini 1984:359-60.

⁹⁶¹ Alexandri 1968:75. Pottery found as well as coins of Constantine II and Constantius II.

⁹⁶² The Bishop's Palace occupies almost a full city block on the north side of the North Agora, immediately west of the *Bouleutērion*. It is one of the largest and most centrally located houses of Aphrodisias, and certainly the

14	North Temenos House, Aphrodisias ⁹⁶⁴ (fig.156)	Apsidal hall with rooms and a court	15 x 9.5m.	7m. (Depth: 5 m.) Raised ⁹⁶⁵	End of 4 th – 5 th c. ⁹⁶⁶	East
15	Palace of the Dux ⁹⁶⁷ , Apollonia (L. Cyrenaica) (fig.157)	Apsidal hall with suites, peristyle & other rooms	>11.5 x 8.5m.	6m. Floor raised ⁹⁶⁸	Mid 5 th c. ⁹⁶⁹	East
16	'L'Huilerie', Cyprus ⁹⁷⁰ (figs 158-9)	Apsidal hall with adjacent suites and other spaces	>10 x 7.30m.	6.5m. Raised by 0.18m. ⁹⁷¹	Beginning of 5 th c. ⁹⁷²	South-West

most completely excavated. It has been variously identified as a *Prytaneion*, a governor's residence, and a Bishop's Palace. For reports/comments on the complex see: Erim 1966:62; *id.* 1986:70-3; Sodini 1997:474; Lavan 1999:149-50; Rattè and Smith 2004:162-6; Özgenel 2007:240, 253-4. According to Campbell (1996:189-92) the complex is unlikely to be an episcopal residence taking into account the frescoes depicting nudity scenes.

⁹⁶³ Rattè and Smith 2004:163, 165-6. The complex had different phases; the west and south sides were earlier than the apsidal and triconch halls. A coin dated to the reign of Theodosius I was found beneath the mosaic of the triconch. The apsidal and triconch halls were constructed in c.400, which collaborates with the evidence of some bishop's seals and an inscription naming a bishop. The complex has been identified as a bishop's palace and also as a governor's residence.

⁹⁶⁴ For reports/comments on the complex see: Dillon 1997:732-4; Sodini 1997:474.

⁹⁶⁵ Dillon 1997:734. The floor of the apse was slightly raised from the main hall by a marble-revetted step.

⁹⁶⁶ Dillon 1997:732. The excavator dates the complex based on numerous features: Architectural evidence dates to the late second century, which indicates that the complex had earlier phases. Some figured capitals can be compared to other examples from elsewhere (i.e. Thessalonica) and date to the 3rd – early 4th centuries. The mosaics around the pool are dated to the second half of the 4th century. The mosaics of the apsidal hall have been dated to the 5th century and they were probably built by Eustochios according to the inscriptions found. Campbell (1996:190) dates the mosaics of the complex to the 350-375 and they are comparable to the ones from the Bishop's Palace.

⁹⁶⁷ The complex is situated near the centre of the Southern side of the fortified area of the city. It was identified by Goodchild (1960:246-59) as the palace of the Dux of the Pentapolis but its architecture demonstrates similar characteristics of a late Roman elite domestic architecture (Duval 1984:447-70). Also Goodchild 1960: 246-59; Lavan 1999:163-4 and Mulvin 2002:52.

⁹⁶⁸ Goodchild 1960:254.

⁹⁶⁹ Goodchild 1960:247. The excavator dates the complex to mid-5th century (and probably between 450 and 500) based on historical and epigraphical evidence.

⁹⁷⁰ Argoud, Callot and Helly 1980:fig.15 and pl.XLVII; Sodini 1997:496.

⁹⁷¹ Argoud, Callot and Helly 1980:7.

⁹⁷² Argoud, Callot and Helly 1980:46. The trench behind the apse showed evidence that the area had been occupied in the 11th-6th century BC and then in the Hellenistic period. All excavations below the ground level of the house have found no trace of occupation in the period between the Hellenistic era and the earthquakes of 332 and 342. After the earthquakes a new wealthy quarter (including the Huilerie) developed around the Campanopetra basilica and the dating for the first phase of the construction that given by the excavators is the begging of the 5th century.