LATE-ANTIQUE PALACES: THE MEANING OF URBAN CONTEXT
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LATE-ANTIQUE PALACES HAVE ATTRACTED CONSIDERABLE scholarly attention, despite the fact that not a single complex or building from that time has survived intact.¹ To make matters worse, not a single room from any of these palaces has been preserved with its original decoration or furniture in place. To comprehend the magnitude of the problem, one would have to imagine, for example, the study of palatine architecture in the age of Louis XIV relying on the foundation walls of Versailles or, for that matter, of the Ottoman palatine tradition without the Topkapi Palace. Yet, notwithstanding such discouraging odds, the subject of late-antique palaces is highly deserving of further attention.

At the moment, we stand at an important scholarly watershed in late-antique palatine studies. The subject has been persistently, if somewhat unevenly, explored by specialists in various disciplines, while the body of physical evidence, owing to new archaeological discoveries, has continued to grow during the past few decades.² This, I believe, presents us with an opportunity and a responsibility to attempt to break the present major historiographical stalemate that has resulted from polarized views formulated by proponents of very different methods of investigation. The views of the older and the more numerous of these two groups were articulated by such scholars as Karl Swoboda and Ejnar Dyggve, among others.³ Their method of investigation, largely typological and iconographic, led to the establishment of certain convenient clichés which, all too easily, have become fossilized in general scholarly literature. The most prolific exponent of the opposing group has been Noël Duval.⁴ His method, which he would define as “archaeological,” for all the validity of some of his critical remarks, has evolved into a veritable crusade against the “methodological establishment.” His often too obsessive criticisms have tended to obscure some very relevant issues through his insistence on, among other things, an over-restrictive application of terms such as “palace” and “palatine.”⁵

These terms are, to be sure, problematic and require prudent consideration. In insisting on “correct” terminology, however, we must bear in mind that the existing ambiguities had their origins in late-antique times. The late-antique authors themselves not uncommonly used such seemingly distinct terms as palatium and villa loosely and even interchangeably.⁶ That attitude is certainly deserving of our attention, as it may reveal more than mere sloppiness in the use of classical literary standards. This, however, is a separate subject, too large to be dealt with here.

In this paper, I propose to reexamine a fundamental aspect of late-antique palatine architecture—its urban setting and its interaction with, and borrowing from, that urban setting. In the process, I also hope to clarify some of the semantic dilemmas which confront us.

The first and essential step of my investigation is to come to terms with the phenomenon of proliferation of imperial palaces.⁷ Inasmuch as its most obvious phase should be associated with the period of the first Tetrarchy, established by Diocletian in 293, this was actually a process with a much longer history. It was already remarked on by Cassius Dio, earlier in the third century, who noted that the term palatium was to be understood as implying any dwelling occupied by an emperor.⁸ This important conceptual notion was given new physical reality during the Tetrarchy, when several imperial palace complexes came into being in major cities in the Roman Empire. As Rome herself ceased to be the center of imperial power, so the imperial residence on the Palatine Hill ceased to be the imperial palatium. The new Tetrarchic palaces at Trier, Milan, Thessaloniki, Antioch, and other centers, all built during the last decade of the third and the first decade of the fourth centuries, were conceptually indebted to the palatine prototype in Rome, notwithstanding the innovative idiosyncrasies of their own planning and architecture.⁹ The particular aspects of the Roman palatium which were emulated had to do with the topographical and functional relationship between the palace and the city. Some of these, especially the huge hippodromes situated alongside palatine complexes, have already received considerable attention in scholarship.¹⁰ I will therefore concentrate on examining other aspects of late-antique palaces and their urban settings and on the impact of urban forms on late-Roman palatine architecture in general.
Turning to two specific examples, I will begin with the imperial palace at Antioch, built most probably by Emperor Diocletian in the last years of the third century. Nothing of this palace complex has survived, and the archaeological excavations conducted in the general area of its presumed location were not successful in uncovering its remains. Yet, a literary account, written in 360 by the writer Libanius, provides us with some invaluable insights into the very question of the relationship between the palace and its urban setting. The following quotation is taken from Glanville Downey's translation of Libanius's Oration XI:

[203]... 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 unfinished wall surrounds it like a crown. From four arches which are joined to each other in the form of a rectangle, 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.

Further on Libanius states: "[292]... the district in front of the palace shares the grandeur within, even though it is itself inferior to what is within." Here Libanius evidently refers to a relatively open area surrounding the short approach avenue to the palace. It is within this space, it would seem, that Emperor Constantine built his famous Great Church in 327. Libanius, a pagan, makes no mention of this monument, but the Christian court historian Eusebius describes it in some detail. The large church was octagonal in form, and was surrounded by open porticoes.

Libanius's description of the imperial palace in Antioch has been used by modern historians, most notably by Downey, in attempts to reconstruct its layout in the most general outlines (fig. 1). My purpose for bringing it up again is to draw attention to a number of specific points, the significance of some of which has been noted inadequately or not at all.

1. Libanius makes an important point that the palace was built within a new city.
2. This new city was located on an island in the Orontes river, and was completely enclosed within a circuit of fortification walls.
3. The palace itself was very large and occupied a full fourth of the area within the new city.
4. In front of the palace lay an intersection of two major colonnaded avenues ("stoas"), their crossing marked by a quadrifrons ("omphalos"; also referred to as the "Tetrapylon of the Elephants" by Malalas).
5. Three stretches of these colonnaded avenues emanating from the quadrifrons led to three fortified city gates within the enclosing wall.
6. The fourth, much shorter avenue (referred to as the "Regia" by Malalas) was more beautiful than the other three, and led to the entrance into the palace proper.
7. One flank of the palace abutted the circuit wall, in place of whose battlements in that area was a colonnaded gallery providing a splendid view.

Precisely the same features can be recognized in the remains of the palace of Diocletian at Split (figs. 2 and 3). It was located on a bay, its main exterior exposure taking advantage of the view through an open-arcaded gallery replacing the battlements of the fortification walls much as in Libanius's description of the palace at Antioch (figs. 4 and 5). As at Antioch, too, the palace is preceded by a system of intersecting arcaded avenues, their crossing marked by a monumental quadrifrons arch, whose foundations were brought to light in recent archaeological excavations. Three of the four arms of these intersecting avenues terminate in elaborate fortified gates in the circuit wall. The fourth arm, shorter than the rest, has a pavement at a level lower than the other avenues, and is approached by three steps. Opposite the quadrifrons, the short avenue—generally, if mistakenly, referred to as the "peri-style"—leads up to the monumental pro styron which marks the entrance into the palace proper (fig. 6).

The palace proper, as can be judged from the general plan, occupies approximately one-fourth of the fortified enclosure, as was the case with the Antioch palace. Fronting it is a large, basically open area consisting of two distinctive parts. The first, closer to the palace, was actually lower and related to its basement level (figs. 3, 4, and 6). The second part was made of two walled-in court-
yards flanking the so-called peristyle. The western of these courtyards contained three small temples; the eastern one the octagonal mausoleum of Diocletian (figs. 2, 3, and 4). This entire area fronting the palace proper was apparently accessible to the public, and would have corresponded to the open spaces which flanked the Reggia at Antioch, described by Libanius as "the district in front of the palace [which] shares the grandeur within."22

The key remaining unknown in this comparison of the palace at Split with that at Antioch is what function the fortified enclosure beyond the palace proper served at Split. At Antioch, as Libanius informs us, the corresponding area was built up; it was the "new city," as he calls it.23 At Split this remains a gray area in our understanding of the complex as a whole. Only fragmentary remains, insufficient to yield any kind of comprehensive knowledge about the general character of the northern half of the fortified enclosure, have been archaeologically explored. A general ex silentio conclusion among scholars is that the area was most likely occupied by the emperor's guard, horse stables, workshops, and other related facilities.24

I would like to introduce a different line of thought and, basing my thinking in a preliminary manner on the analogy of Antioch, propose that the fortified enclosure at Split was, in fact, a small city and that the area in question was a residential district. At first, such an idea may strike one as improbable.25 Why should, one might ask, such a small fortified city have been built not far from the already existing large city of Salona? The answer is found in the example of Antioch where a relatively small fortified new city was built on an island, adjacent to a major existing city.

If this admittedly vague analogy does not fully satisfy us, we may turn to other forms of information which support the proposed notion that the so-called palace of Diocletian at Split was, in fact, a small city with a palace in it. The first of these is an internal piece of evidence—found in the upper frieze decorating the interior of the mausoleum of Diocletian.26 Amidst the high-relief scenes depicting erotes hunting and carrying garlands with masks, we find three imagines clipeatae within laurel wreaths. One of these depicts Hermes Psychopompos, and the other two depict Emperor Diocletian and a woman, identified in scholarship as his wife Prisca (figs. 7a and 7b).27 Skirting the question why a wife's portrait would have been appropriate in a major public building built for an emperor who had abandoned the traditional system of dynastic succession to the imperial throne, it behooves us to examine the head of the lady more closely. We discover that she is wearing a type of headgear resembling a crown, which would not commonly have been worn by women, not even an empress, at this time. The headgear is, in fact, a mural crown worn by a tyche, or personification of a city. An important confirmation of such an idea—the juxtaposing of an imperial imago clipeata with that of a tyche—is found on a small, highly decorated marble arch of an unknown function, excavated in the imperial palace in Thessaloniki (fig. 8).28 The front of this arch displays two imagines clipeatae: the one on the right contains the portrait of Diocletian's co-emperor Galerius; the one on the left is a tyche, in all likelihood the personification of Thessaloniki. As at Antioch, the construction of the new imperial palace in Thessaloniki appears to have involved the addition of a whole new sector to the existing city, warranting the perception that Galerius was a city founder, as suggested by this pairing of his portrait with the image of the city tyche.

At Thessaloniki, Galerius is thought to have planned his burial in a large mausoleum, situated on the main axis leading toward the entrance to the palace proper. Now known as the Rotunda of St. George, this building evidently never did serve as an imperial mausoleum.29 A passage from Epitome de Caesaribus indicates that Galerius died and was buried in a new town which he had built and named in the memory of his mother Romula.30 A recent archaeological discovery of an inscription at the site of Gamzigrad, in eastern Serbia, supports an earlier suspicion that Gamzigrad was, indeed, Romuliana.31 At Romuliana, it would seem, we have the final confirmation that during the period of the Tetrarchy small-scale fortified new towns outfitted with imperial palaces were being built simultaneously with major additions to the newly established imperial capitals (fig. 10). Particularly relevant in this context is the following comment by Libanius, in reference to the size of the imperial palace at Antioch: "I believe that, if this palace stood by itself in some insignificant city, such as are numerous in Thrace, where a few huts form the cities, it would give the one that possessed it good reason to claim a proud position in the catalogue of cities."32 Is it not possible, then, that the complex at Split was originally a small city, built by Diocletian in the general area of his birth, and dedicated to the memory of his own mother?33 While the name of
this town remains a mystery, the preserved personification of this city, juxtaposed with the bust of Diocletian in his mausoleum, is an important indication that such a concept was, indeed, implemented.

The second phase of the fortification walls at Romuliana, also built during the Tetrarchy, is characterized by immense polygonal towers, measuring fifty to sixty feet in diameter. The west and the east side of the complex featured imposing twin-tower gates, whose elaborately decorated façades can be hypothetically reconstructed (fig. 11).34 Such symbolic imagery no doubt was intended to reflect the imperial presence within these walls. It would appear, also, on the basis of the examples at Split (the Golden Gate) and Trier (Porta Nigra), that during this period city gates—at least on a symbolic level—began to be associated with imperial palaces.35 This postulated process is confirmed by such later examples as the late-fifth-century seaside palace at Polače on the island of Mljet (ancient Meleda) on the coast of Dalmatia (figs. 12 and 13), and by the early-sixth-century palace of Theodoric in Verona, known only from a literary description (Anonymous Valesianus) and from a tenth-century drawing (Iconographia Rateriana).36

A different, but related, manner of borrowing urban architectural forms for use in palatine architecture is seen in the relatively common employment of triumphal arches, mostly of the quadrifrons variety, close to the points of entry into palatine complexes. We have noted such a feature at Antioch and Split, but the finest partially preserved example is the so-called Arch of Galerius in Thessaloniki.37 This huge quadrifrons with lateral extensions was built to commemorate the emperor’s victory over the Persians in 297, and was appropriately decorated with reliefs illustrating the various episodes from this war. The arch was constructed so as to span the Via Egnatia, the main east-west road passing through Thessaloniki; its lesser axis related to the vestibule of the imperial palace to the south and the rotunda planned as the mausoleum for Galerius at the north end (fig. 14).38

Interesting adaptations of such triumphal arches are found in two extra-urban palatine complexes. The earlier of the two, dating from the Tetrarchic period, is the well-known villa at Piazza Armerina in Sicily, whose postulated imperial ownership has recently been challenged (fig. 15).39 Here the approach to the entrance into the villa proper led through a triple archway, with a large colonnaded courtyard behind it.40 This courtyard appears to have served a function similar to that of the short avenue—the Regia—in front of the palace at Antioch, or the so-called peristyle in front of the palace proper at Split.

The second example, probably dating from around 421, is the so-called Palace of the Giants in Athens, in the area of the ancient Agora, but at the time of its construction situated outside of the city wall dating from A.D. 267 (fig. 16).41 The patronage of this large palatine complex has been linked to Empress Eudocia, the wife of Emperor Theodosius II.42 Here the triple archway was supported by reused statues of giants and tritons, originally belonging to the Antonine remodeling of the porch in front of the Odeion of Agrippa. Beyond this triple archway one would have entered a large colonnaded forecourt, and only from there the actual palace proper. The ostentatious nature of the arcuated approaches, both at Piazza Armerina and at the Palace of the Giants, leaves no doubt as to their deliberate borrowing of known urban architectural forms—i.e., triumphal arches—and employing them in palatine contexts in extra-urban settings. We may postulate that the specific borrowed urban architectural motif had by this time lost its direct urban connotations. Seen in another way, we may suggest that it was actually lending an urban aura to palaces outside the city.

Closely related to the colonnaded forecourts at both Piazza Armerina and the Palace of the Giants, we find baths (figs. 15 and 16). The one at Piazza Armerina was directly accessible from the villa, as well as from the forecourt, suggesting that it may have had more than merely a private function.43 The location of other bathing establishments in comparable locations in related complexes leads us to the same conclusion.44 Libanius, in his Oration XI, mentions baths in reference to the “new city” on several occasions, but unfortunately, he does not specify where they were.45 A luxurious residence, built and modified from the second through the fifth century, has come to light at Paphos, on Cyprus, and has been labeled the “House of Theseus” because its wealthy occupants remain unknown (fig. 17). As large in floor area as the villa at Piazza Armerina, the House of Theseus was also equipped with a large bathing establishment in its southeast corner, accessible both from the exterior and from within.46 Archaeological excavations conducted in Split in recent years have revealed the remains of two baths, situated in the open area, just in front of
the palace proper (figs. 2 and 3). The placement of these baths at Hadrian's Villa at Tivoli, at Piazza Armerina, and in the House of Theseus at Paphos suggests that these were deliberately and routinely planned arrangements, presumably reflecting some functional requirements which, for the moment, elude us. While research into this question must continue, it is possible to hypothesize that these baths were open to the outside so that invited visitors and their retinues could refresh themselves before being formally admitted into the residence itself. Nor should we ignore the possibility that they may also have had a security-related role, in addition to the postulated, more hospitable, social function.

The preceding observations on the links between the late-antique imperial palaces and the urban environment, as well as the phenomenon of later palatine borrowings from urban forms, can be fruitfully summarized by turning to the late-antique imperial palace par excellence, the Great Palace in Constantinople. Though archaeological evidence in this case is meager, the written sources facilitate a hypothetical reconstruction of the critical aspects of this complex which are of particular relevance to this discussion (fig. 18).

The Great Palace was begun by Constantine I, with the aim of replacing the imperial palatium in the abandoned capital city of Rome. In a general sense, it followed in the tradition of Tetrarchic imperial palaces. Conceptually, it also emulated the Roman prototype in general outlines, most notably by virtue of a large hippodrome along its western flank. The subsequent augmentations of the palace of Constantine paralleled the rapid growth of the city itself (fig. 19). By the sixth century, the major components of the palace complex within its urban setting were sufficiently established to permit the following summary:

1. The capital city was enclosed by a circuit of fortification walls built initially by Constantine I. In 412–13, this circuit of walls was replaced by a larger, more sophisticated one built by Emperor Theodosius II to protect a much larger urbanized area. The imperial palace occupied a site overlooking the Sea of Marmara at the southeastern edge of the peninsula on which the city was located.

2. The main city gate, known as the “Golden Gate,” was also built under Emperor Theodosius II (fig. 20). Its triple-arch design and its marble facing both allude to triumphal arch imagery, deliberately utilized here as an appropriate way of declaring the imperial presence within the city walls.

3. The major colonnaded avenue—the so-called Mese—led from the Golden Gate to the imperial palace.

4. Near the palace, the Mese terminated at a large quadrifrons arch, called the Milion. This arch, appropriately decorated with statues of various members of the imperial family, also contained a milestone from which the distances from the capital city were measured. Thus, the Milion was the “omphalos” of Constantinople, in the same sense as the Tetrapylon of the Elephants was in Antioch.

5. Beyond the Milion, and leading up to the palace gate known as the Chalke, was a short but impressive colonnaded avenue, referred to as the Reggia. Similar arrangements, as we have already seen, existed at Antioch and at Split. In all three cases, the short avenue was part of the public domain, though ceremonially linked to the palace. To the north of the Reggia in Constantinople was a large public square, the so-called Augusteon, with its display of imperial monuments and statuary.

6. On the opposite, south side of the Reggia were the baths of Zeuxippos. This large bathing establishment was strategically situated in such a way that it was probably accessible to the public as well as to the occupants of the Great Palace.

7. The large hippodrome, along with the baths of Zeuxippos, the Reggia, and the Augusteon, must be perceived as a kind of semi-open buffer zone, which separated the Great Palace proper from the city. In addition to providing a greater degree of security for the palace, this buffer zone must have also prevented the spread of fires from the congested city, where such disasters must have been commonplace.

8. The Great Palace in Constantinople by all accounts was not laid out on a regular rectangular plan, as was the case with the palace at Split and possibly at Antioch. Yet, as at Split and Antioch, a section of the palace abutting the sea walls in all likelihood did feature an open gallery (galleries?) overlooking the Sea of Marmara.

In conclusion, then, the urban character of late-antique imperial palaces is not in doubt. My paper has aimed at reexamining the meaning of “urban context” as a function of time. The...
process of change, as we saw, appears to have begun with the increased mobility of Roman emperors in the course of the third century. By the end of that century and as part of the Tetrarchic reforms, a multiplicity of imperial residences was given new meaning through the establishment of new capitals, each equipped with its own imperial palatium. The creation of new capitals entailed large additions to the existing cities and often, as in the case of Antioch and Thessaloniki, these additions were regarded as “new cities.” In other cases, and for different reasons, miniature fortified cities, such as those of Romuliana and Split, were built. These contained minuscule urban quarters, of little more than symbolic significance, alongside imperial residences and mausolea of their founders. At this stage, it is quite apparent that the traditional meaning of both terms—city and palace—had already undergone a dramatic change. Furthermore, the Tetrarchic examples reveal major differences in scale and in physical layout. Here, the results of new research reveal both the manner and the degree to which earlier scholars, who sought to define typological or iconographic formulas, had gone astray. At the same time, late-antique imperial palaces are not without a common denominator, as Duval would have it. The major binding factor in their design, it would seem, was in their topographical layout. Various symbolic elements appear to have been used in standardized sequences, relating palaces to—and at the same time setting them apart from—their urban settings. Such relationships could and did exist, regardless of the scale or any particular abstract qualities, such as axially or symmetry, of the layout.

An attempt at thwarting the process of change was made by Constantine the Great, who sought to reestablish a single imperial capital—Constantinople—with a single imperial palace in it. His efforts were relatively short-lived, and the multiplication and diffusion of palatine structures continued. During the second half of the fourth and throughout the fifth century, various “palaces,” imperial and non-imperial, were built, often in the suburbs or the country. In such cases, the sense of urban topography was commonly re-created by symbolic means. It would appear that, as the late-antique city underwent the process of irreversible decline, the traditional sense of the Roman urban palatium became more and more diffused. The palace at Polače, on the island of Mljet (Meleda), is the ultimate product of this long process. In it we see the various elements taken from the urban setting, along with the essential components of palatine architecture, all molded into a compact architectural statement. By the end of the fifth century, then, the process of the dissolution of the Roman urban palatium was essentially finished, as the new concept of a fortified, self-sufficient, urban or extra-urban palace block—so familiar in the medieval and the Islamic world—began to emerge.
Notes

1. There is no good general survey on the subject of Roman and late-antique palaces. Alexander G. McKay, *Houses, Villas and Palaces in the Roman World* (Ithaca, 1975), is superficial. Karl M. Swoboda, *Römische und Romanische Paläste*, 3rd ed. (Vienna, Cologne, Graz, 1969), was the first serious attempt at addressing this vast subject. First published in 1918, it has been republished and updated twice, but though it continues to be used as the most authoritative book on the subject, it is seriously outdated on several accounts.

2. The subject of late-antique palaces has been addressed, among others, by Fergus Millar, *The Emperor in the Roman World* (Ithaca, 1977), esp. 40–57; and Sabine G. McCormack, *Art and Ceremony in Late Antiquity* (Berkeley, Los Angeles, London, 1981), passim. Among the most important archaeological discoveries of late-antique imperial residences in recent decades are those of the villas of Maxentius on the Via Appia outside Rome, at Sirmium, and at Gamzigrad. For the complex on the Via Appia, see Giuseppina Pisani Santorio and Raisa Calza, *La villa di Massenzio sulla Via Appia*, I monumenti Romani, 6 (Rome, 1976); also Lucos Cozza et al., *La residenza imperiale di Massenzio: Villa, circo e mausoleo* (Rome, 1980). For Sirmium, see Vladislav Popović and Edward Ochsenschlager, "Der spätkaiserzeitliche Hippodrom in Sirmium," *Germania* 54 (1976): 156–81. For Gamzigrad, see Dragoslav Srejović, "Felix Romuliana, Palais impérial ou . . . ?," *Starinar*, n.s. 37 (1986): 94–102, and also n. 31 below.

3. Swoboda, *Römische Paläste*; E. Dyggve, *Ravennatum Palatium Sacrum*. La basilica episcopale per cerimone. *Studii sull’architettura dei palazzi della tarda antichità* (Copenhagen, 1941), is the best known of Dyggve’s several studies dealing with the subject of late-antique palace architecture.


6. Particularly instructive is the case of Emperor Diocletian’s residence at Aspalathos (Spalato; modern Split). The confusion among the ancient authors writing about this complex was analyzed by Frane Bulić and Ljubo Karaman, *Palača cara Diokletijana u Splitu* (Zagreb, 1927), 12–13. They pointed out that certain ancient authors (Eutropius, Tiro Prosper) refer to Diocletian’s residence as a *villa*, while others (notably St. Jerome, cod. Leyden) use a curious formula "in *villa* suae *palatio*.” The term *palation* was used in the late tenth century by Constantine Porphyrogenetos. Thomas F. Magner, *Aspalathos, Spalatum, Split," in *Classics and the Classical Tradition*, ed. E. N. Borza and R. W. Carrubba (University Park, 1973), 95–116, offers an extensive etymological analysis of the problem. More recently the issue has been analyzed again by Tadeusz Zawadzki, "La résidence de Diocletien à Spalatum. Sa dénomination dans l’Antiquité," *Museum Helveticum* 44, fasc. 3 (1987): 223–30 (I am grateful to Mark Johnson for bringing this reference to my attention). Zawadzki concludes that there was: (1) considerable flexibility in using terms such as *villa* and *palatum* in late antiquity, and (2) that changes in meaning were a function of time. He, along with Bulić and others before him, rejects any etymological links between the term *palatinum* and the name of the location—Spalatum (Aspalatum). N. Duval, "Le ‘Palais’ de Diocletien à Spalato," 90, troubled by the modern uses (and misuses) of the terms *villa* and *palace*, proposes that the residence of Diocletian at Split would best be referred to as a “château” (a fortified residence). I find that the introduction of the term *château* (first employed by Ernst Hébrard and Jacques Zeiler, *Spalato: Le palais de Diocletien* [Paris, 1912]), confused rather than clarifies the issue. The term, however, has met with some approval; cf. J. J. Wilkes, *Diocletian’s Palace, Split: Residence of a Retired Emperor* (Sheffield, 1986), esp. 56–66. Paradoxically, Wilkes, as is the case with John B. Ward Perkins, *Roman Imperial Architecture*, Pelican History of Art, 2nd ed. (Harmondsworth, 1981), 454–59, continues to use the term “palace” in titles and illustration captions, while describing the complex as a “fortified villa” or a “château” in their texts. Thus, in 1992, we seem to be no closer to having solved the terminological dilemma than were the scholars.
12. Glanville Downey, A History of Antioch in Syria, from Seleucos to the Arab Conquest (Princeton, 1961), esp. 318–23 (on the palace, with a brief overview of the archeological findings and the relevant reports of the excavations).
8. "Thus even when the Emperor is residing somewhere else, the place where he is staying is still called the Palatium" (Cassius Dio: The Augustan Settlement (Roman History 53–55.9), ed. J. W. Rich [Warminster, 1990], 43 [Book 53.16, 6]).
7. A brief but helpful historical introduction to the subject is given by Millar, Emperor, 40–55.
5. The sea façade of the palace of Diocletian at Split has received a great deal of attention as iconographically one of the most significant aspects of the complex. Made famous by the splendid engraving published by Robert Adam, The Ruins of the Palace of the Emperor Diocletian at Spalatro in Dalmatia (London, 1764), pl. VII, this façade has been discussed in a number of specialized studies; see especially Karl M. Swoboda, "The Problem of Iconography of Late Antique and Early Medieval Palaces," Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians 20, 2 (1961): 78–89, esp. 78–84. See also the helpful review of the related issues in McNally, "Introduction," esp. 11–15. McNally also raises the question of the precise relationship between the palace façade and the sea, which has not been fully determined archaeologically. Earlier reconstructions (notably those by George Niemann and Ernst Hébrard) favored the idea of a direct link between the outer wall of the palace and the water, but McNally remains resolutely cautious. Some of her explanations (e.g., "The bay of Split is not the Grand Canal; it is poorly sheltered and strong winds drive high spray that would easily drench the arcaded wall of a second story rising directly from the water" [McNally, "Introduction," 12]) are not convincing. The second-story arcaded gallery is approximately thirty feet above sea level. It would be difficult to imagine waves high enough to cause the problem postulated by McNally in a sheltered bay suited for a harbor.
4. "Thus even when the Emperor is residing somewhere else, the place where he is staying is still called the Palatium" (Cassius Dio: The Augustan Settlement (Roman History 53–55.9), ed. J. W. Rich [Warminster, 1990], 43 [Book 53.16, 6]).
3. It was Andre Grabar, Martyrium: Recherches sur le culte des reliques et l'art chrétien antique, 1 (Paris, 1946), 219, who postulated that the Great Church was probably built in the proximity of the imperial palace, in a physical setting reminiscent of Diocletian's mausoleum in front of his palace at Split. This idea, subsequently quoted by several authors, has been categorically rejected by F. W. Deichmann, "Das Oktogon von Antiocheia: Heroon-Martyrium, Palastkirche oder Katedrale?" Byzantinische Zeitschrift 65, 1 (1972): 40–56, esp. 47–48. Deichmann points out that Malalas makes no mention of the location of the baths of Philip the Arab. Because the baths in question were public, Deichmann concludes that they could not have been in or near the palace. This notion, however, does not hold true, in view of the fact that public baths characteristically appear to have fronted late-antique palaces; cf. the discussion of this matter below and nn. 43–47.
1. who first started addressing the problem two generations ago.

21. The function and the meaning of the peristyle of Diocletian's palace have probably been the most debated aspects of the entire complex. Yet the term "peristyle," which is clearly a misnomer, has never been questioned. For the state of scholarship on this particular subject, see McNally, "Introduction," 17–21. The two most important articles, revealing diametrically opposite points of view, are Ejnar Dyggve, "O izvornom izgledu antičkog Peristilla," URBS 4 (1965): 53–60; and Noël Duval, "La place de Split dans l'architecture aulique du Bas Empire," URBS 4 (1965): 67–95, esp. 78–85.

22. Downey, "Libanius’ Oration," 677. For the temenoi containing the temples and the mausoleum of Diocletian at Split, see Marasović, Diocletian’s Palace, 104–6; also McNally, "Introduction," 21–25.


25. The question of relative sizes of different complexes, including those at Split and Antioch, was raised by Duval, "La place de Split," 70–78; "Split n’est pas à l’échelle d’une ville," 70 and fig. 1. The notion of a "city," with reference to Diocletian’s palace at Split, was first obliquely suggested by André Grabar, Martyrium, 1:292–33, and subsequently by Frazer, "Iconography," 386, who phrased it in the form of a question with a negative answer. Neither Grabar nor Frazer pursued this issue further. Sizes of late-Roman cities varied greatly. In my opinion, the relatively small size of the "palace" of Diocletian at Split should not be used as a criterion for excluding it from consideration as a city. After all, the town of Split which grew up within its walls in modern times (see n. 33 below).


27. McNally, "Frieze of the Mausoleum," esp. 108–9. See also the comments by Wilkes, Diocletian’s Palace, 43–44, who points out that Prisca “never received the dignity of Augusta or empress,” but does not question the identity of the lady in the medallion.


29. The Rotunda of St. George in Thessaloniki—the largest surviving late-antique domed building—has been the subject of many studies and scholarly controversies pertaining to its design, functions, names, etc.; Theocaris Pazaras, The Rotunda of Saint George in Thessaloniki (Thessaloniki, 1985), provides a good summary of the problems and a bibliography. The view held earlier that the Rotunda was built as a mausoleum for Emperor Galerius has been questioned by Georgos Velenis, “Architektonische Probleme des Galeriusbogens in Thessaloniki,” Archäologischer Anzeiger 94 (1979): 249–63, esp. 262–63. Doubts about its function as the imperial mausoleum have further intensified on account of the recent discoveries at Gamzigrad–Romuliana (see n. 31). Ultimately, the issue cannot be settled solely by proving where Galerius may actually have been buried. The original intentions with regard to the planning of the mausoleum are equally important and must be considered independently of the question of the actual burial place.


physical size of Romuliana (Gamzigrad) relative to other late-antique cities in the Balkans was broached by Čanak-Medić, *Gamzigrad*, 148-51. Small fortified towns were commonplace in late antiquity in the Balkans as well as in other parts of the Roman Empire. The town of Abritus, near Razgrad in Bulgaria, can be cited as an example; see Teofil Ivanov and Stojan Stojanov, *Abritus: Its History and Archaeology* (Razgrad, 1985).

33. A text which becomes particularly relevant in this context is the *Historia Salontiana*, written by one Thomas, Archdeacon of Salona (1200-68), who says that "because he [Diocletian] was of Dalmatian origin, he directed that a better building resembling a strongly fortified city be constructed near Salona with the purpose of serving as an imperial palace, within which were erected temples of pagan idols Jupiter, Aesclepius, and Mars, as can still be attested to. Diocletian did all of this to provide a residence for his mother, whom he entrusted with the rule over Salona with the entire province" (see Toma Arhidjakon, *Kronika*, trans. and ed. V. Risondo [Split, 1977], 26; the free English translation is my own). This passage has been commented on by Franc Bulić, *Paloša cara Dioclecijana*, 16, who also refers to Diocletian's mother by name—Diokleja (Dioclea)—with the implication that she is referred to as such by Archdeacon Thomas. The Rismondo edition cited above, however, makes no mention of her name. Bulić also goes on to dismiss Thomas's account as "being of limited credibility." As it now appears, this text may be of greater relevance than previously thought. Regarding the origins of Diocletian as the main factor influencing his choice of the site for his retirement residence, see Wilkes, *Diocletian's Palace*, 11-13. Dedication of new towns by Roman emperors in memory of their mothers may indeed have been in vogue around 300. In addition to emperors in memory of their mothers may indeed have been in vogue around 300. In addition to

34. For the detailed discussion of the reconstruction of the "Porta Decumana," see Čanak-Medić, *Gamzigrad*, 83-85. For the newly discovered eastern gate of Romuliana, see Srejović, "Felix Romuliana" (cf. n. 2 above).

35. For the Porta Nigra at Trier, see E. Gose, *Die Porta Nigra zu Trier* (Berlin, 1969). For the Golden Gate (northern gate) at Split, see Marasović, *Diocletian's Palace*, 54-56; Wilkes, *Diocletian's Palace*, 27-31. The question of palatine symbolism in reference to the gate at Romuliana and the related examples is surveyed by Čanak-Medić, *Gamzigrad*, 83-86.

36. The ruins of a palace at Polače (toponym *polače*, *palače* = palaces) on the island of Mljet (ancient Meleda) in Dalmatia have attracted the attention of a number of scholars, among them Ejnar Dyggve, "Intorno al palazzo nell' isola di Meleda," *Palladio* 9 (1959): 19-28; and Michelangelo Cagiano de Azevado, "Il Palatium di Porto Palazzo a Meleda," *Tardo Antico e alto medioevo. Atti del convegno internazionale* (Rome, 1968), 273-83. Cagiano de Azevedo associates the palace with the patronage of Odoacer (476-93), and dates it to 489-90, as opposed to Dyggve's more general dating in the fifth or sixth century. Dyggve's dating is echoed by Ivanka Nikolajević, "Veliki posed u Dalmaciji u V i VI veku u svetlosti arheologskih nalaza," *Zbornik radova Vizantološkog instituta* 13 (1971): 277-92, who proposes a late-fifth- or early-sixth-century date on the basis of two written documents which shed light on the activity of large landowners on the island of Meleda at that time. A very different conclusion was reached by Ana Deanović, "Les types des fortifications isolées dans la campagne de la côte Adriatique (Yougoslavie)," in *Pyrgoi hai kastra*, ed. N. K. Moutsopoulos (Thessaloniki, 1980), 207-17, esp. 209 ff., who argues that the palace at Polače should be associated with the reign of Emperor Septimius Severus (193-211), but such an early dating cannot be supported. For the palace of Theodoric in Verona, see Bryan Ward-Perkins, *From Classical Antiquity to the Middle Ages: Urban Public Building in Northern and Central Italy*, s.a.d. 300-850 (Oxford, 1984), 160 and fig. 4. The Anonymous Valesianus, as quoted by Ward-Perkins, describes the palace as having had "a portico all the way from the city gate to it." The *Iconographia Raineriana* drawing, on the other hand, shows the palace as a twin-towered building. Thus, it is possible that the twin-towered façade was linked to the twin-towered city gate by a colonnaded avenue.


38. For an overview of the results of the excavations of the imperial palace in Thessaloniki, see N. C. Moutsopoulos, "Contribution à l'étude du plan de Ville de Thessalonique à l'époque romaine," *Atti del XVI Congresso dell'architettura* (Rome, 1977), 187-263. See also Anna Avramta, "Thessalonike (Thessalonike)," in *Tabula Imperii Romani*, K 34, ed. Jaroslav Šašel (Ljubljana, 1976), esp. 143-44.
for a comprehensive up-to-date bibliography on the imperial palace and the related buildings. Recent discovery of the foundation walls of the Roman stadium places this large public building just to the west of and perpendicular to the palace proper. According to the excavator, G. Velenis, this may imply that the palace complex was considerably narrower than previously thought. I am grateful to Professor Velenis for sharing this information with me. The question of the exact palace width, in my opinion, should still be considered open, pending further archaeological information.

Topographical questions related to the stadium (cf., e.g., M. Vickers, "The Stadium at Thessaloniki," Byzantion 41 [1971]: 339-48) will require complete rethinking.

R. J. A. Wilson, Piazza Armerina (Austin, 1983), esp. ch. 3, "Context and Ownership," where the author argues that the owner of the villa was "very probably a private individual of senatorial class, probably a Sicilian, but more likely a member of one of the great aristocratic families of Rome" (p. 98). Also A. Carandini, A. Ricci, and M. de Vos, Filosofiana. La Villa di Piazza Armerina: Immagine di un aristocratico romano al tempo di Costantino, 2 vols. (Palermo, 1982); and, more recently, Giovanni Rizza, ed., La Villa Romana del Casale di Piazza Armerina (Palermo, 1988), a series of essays by several authors sharing the same point of view.

William L. MacDonald, The Architecture of the Roman Empire, vol. 2, An Urban Appraisal (New Haven and London, 1986), "Appendix: The Piazza Armerina Villa" (pp. 274-83), argues that at Piazza Armerina we see "a summary of Roman urban principles in villa form" (p. 274), a "reductive urbanism" whose results resemble "a domesticated town without streets, wherein the traditional architecture of dwellings is secondary to that of rather grand structures clearly of public nature" (p. 279). In other words, MacDonald sees the villa as an "imploded" city, possibly as a result of the private usurpation of what might be seen as the "public architectural domain." This viewpoint differs fundamentally from my own understanding of the same process. I see the process not as a "reductive urbanism," but as a selective borrowing of those specific urban forms needed to give a villa or a palace an urban aura, where it did not otherwise exist. Therefore, the process, in my opinion, should be viewed as a result, not of formal reduction on the urban scale, but of functional and symbolic expansion on the residential scale. It should be noted that all of the examples cited by MacDonald (Piazza Armerina, Hadrian’s Villa at Tivoli, villa at Montmaurin, and villa of Sette Bassi) were all complexes either in the country or in the suburbs, where the various “borrowed” urban forms would have provided the “missing” urban dimension, presumably in the fulfilment of some functional or symbolic need.


Wilson, Piazza Armerina, 17-23, who, consistently with his general interpretation of the owner and the function of the villa, favors the notion of the "local crowd" (clientela) from the surrounding farms and villages; servants and their families) as the probable outside users of the bath.

The most notable earlier example is Hadrian’s Villa at Tivoli, where the visitor came through the vestibule along a path, to the left and the right of which were the so-called small baths and large baths, respectively. The small baths were accessible directly from the main (upper) level of the vestibule, whereas the large baths were accessible by a route which took one through a cryptoporticus below the vestibule. It seems quite clear that both of these bathing establishments were functionally linked to the entrance area of the complex; Eugenia Salza Prina Ricotti, "Criptoportici e galerie sotterane di Villa Adriana nella loro tipologia e nelle loro funzioni," Les cryptoprtiques dans l’architecture romaine, Colloques internationaux du Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique, 545 (Paris, 1973), 219-59; esp. pl. X. A notable late-antique example of baths associated with a palace are those added to the imperial palace on the Palatine Hill in Rome by Emperor Maxentius (306-12); J. J. Herman, Jr., "Observations on the Baths of Maxentius in the Palace," Römische Mitteilungen 87 (1976): 403-24. The baths appear to have been related to the entrance route, and may have had a dual, private/public role.

Downey, "Libanius’ Oration," 676, §§ 218 and 220.


Marasović, Diocletian’s Palace, 94-99. See also Wilkes, Diocletian’s Palace, 49-50; and McNally, "Introduction," 28-29.


51. B. Meyer-Plath and A. M. Schneider, *Die Landmauer von Konstantinopel* (Berlin, 1943); also Müller-Wiener, *Bildlexikon*, 286-95 (land walls), and 312-19 (sea walls).


53. For the Mese, see Müller-Wiener, *Bildlexikon*, 269-70. For the Milion, see Müller-Wiener, *Bildlexikon*, 216-18.

54. For the Chalke, see Cyril Mango, *The Brazen House: A Study of the Vestibule of the Imperial Palace in Constantinople* (Copenhagen, 1959). For the Reggia, if indeed the name is used correctly in this context, see Mango, *Brazen House*, 79-80, who discusses the problem of the name, but who also makes the comparison with Antioch. For the Augusteon, see Mango, *Brazen House*, 42-47.


56. Because of the virtually total lack of archaeological evidence, earlier attempts in scholarship to produce a hypothetical reconstruction of the Great Palace depended heavily on the known examples, such as the complex at Split, and the ideal reconstructions of it, in particular. Among the hypothetical reconstructions of the Great Palace, the one which relied most heavily on the complex at Split was that produced by Jean Ebersolt, whose ideas were later modified somewhat by Albert Vogt; on this, see Mango, *Brazen House*, 15. Ebersolt’s and Vogt’s studies on the Great Palace remain among the most important works on the subject. Hence, it is not completely surprising that, under their influence, even in as late a work as Dagron, *Naissance*, 93, the “fortified palace” of Diocletian at Split continues to be viewed as the paradigm of late-antique palace design in general, associated even with the Great Palace in Constantinople: "Lui aussi est une citadelle adossée à la mer, comme le palais du Diocletien."

57. Mamboury and Wiegand, *Die Kaiserpaläste*, 1-25; also Müller-Wiener, *Bildlexikon*, 225-28, for more current opinions and bibliography. The oldest parts of the palace complex in this area are believed not to be earlier than the sixth century. The no longer extant open-arcaded gallery (known from two nineteenth-century drawings) is now ascribed to Emperor Theophilos (829-42). I am grateful to Professor Cyril Mango for his advice on this matter, and for permitting me to consult the text of his article, "Ancient Spolia in the Great Palace of Constantinople," which is slated to appear in *Byzantine East, Latin West. Art Historical Studies in Honor of Kurt Weitzmann*.

58. On this, see Dagron, *Naissance*, esp. 77-115.

Fig. 1. Antioch. Hypothetical schematic plan of the New City according to Libanius. After Downey; delineated by Joel Kelly.

Fig. 2. Split. Palace of Diocletian Schematic plan. Delineated by Joel Kelly.
Fig. 3. Split. Town and palace of Diocletian. Plan, present state. Delineated by Christoph Panfil.
Fig. 4. Split. Palace of Diocletian.
Partial axonometric reconstruction. Delineated by Christoph Panfil.

Fig. 5. Split.
Palace of Diocletian.
Sea façade, ca. 1750
Engraving from Robert Adam.
Fig. 6. Split. Palace of Diocletian. Partial axonometric reconstruction. Delineated by Christoph Panfil.
Fig. 9. Gamzigrad. Romuliana. Inscription. From D. Srejović.

Fig. 10. Gamzigrad. Romuliana. Plan. From D. Srejović.
Fig. 11. Gamzigrad. Romuliana. West gate. Hypothetical axonometric reconstruction.
After M. Čanak; delineated by Joel Kelly.
Fig. 12. Polače, Mljet (Meleda). Palace. Hypothetical axonometric reconstruction. After E. Dygge; delineated by Joel Kelly.

Fig. 13. Polače, Mljet (Meleda). Palace. Axonometric plan. After E. Dygge; delineated by Joel Kelly.
Fig. 14. Thessaloniki. Palace of Galerius. Hypothetical schematic plan. Delineated by Joel Kelly.

Fig. 15. Piazza Armerina. Villa Plan. Baths indicated by cross-hatching. From R. J. A. Wilson.
Fig. 16. Athens. Palace of the Giants. Plan.  
Baths indicated by cross-hatching. From A. Frantz.

Fig. 17. Paphos. House of Theseus. Plan.  
Baths indicated by cross-hatching. From W. A. Daszewski.
Fig. 18. Constantinople. Imperial palace. Schematic plan. Delineated by Joel Kelly.

Fig. 19. Constantinople. City plan. Hypothetical layout of main topographical features as in the 6th century. After C. Mango and G. Dagron; delineated by Kathryn McPherson.
Fig. 20. Constantinople. Golden Gate. Hypothetical axonometric reconstruction. Delineated by Joel Kelly.