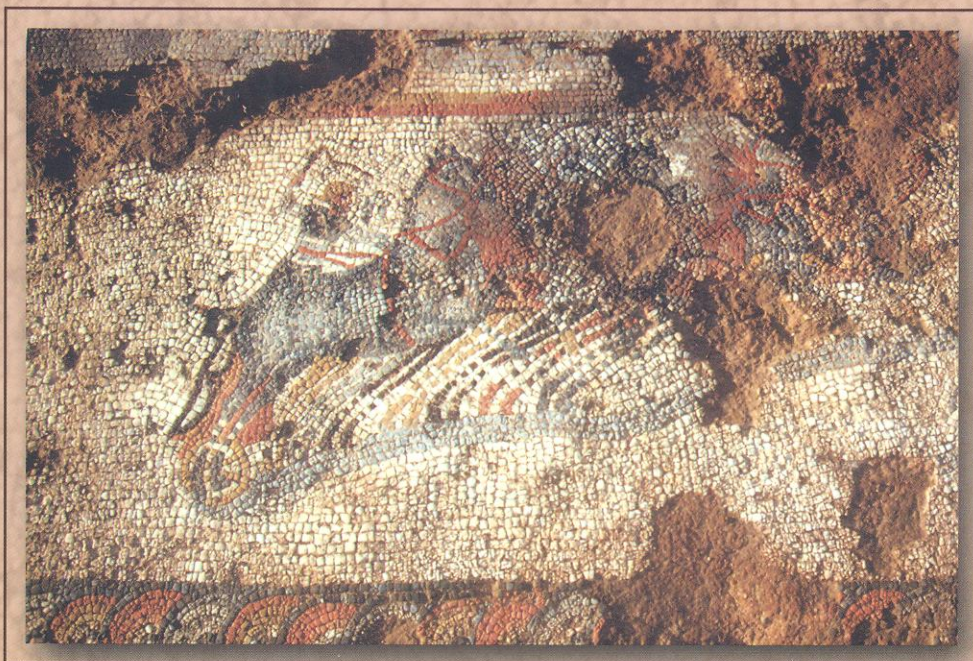


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ΜΕΤΑΒΥΖΑΝΤΙΝΗ ΠΕΡΙΟΔΟΣ



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Κ. & Μ. ΑΝΤ. ΣΤΑΜΟΥΛΗ
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LEPETYMNOS

Studies in Archaeology and Art
in memory of Georgios Gounaris

*LATE ROMAN, BYZANTINE,
POSTBYZANTINE PERIOD*

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Edited by
Ath. Semoglou, I.P.Arvanitidou, Em.G. Gounari

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Μελέτες Αρχαιολογίας και Τέχνης
στη μνήμη του Γεωργίου Γούναρη

*ΥΣΤΕΡΗ ΡΩΜΑΪΚΗ, ΒΥΖΑΝΤΙΝΗ,
ΜΕΤΑΒΥΖΑΝΤΙΝΗ ΠΕΡΙΟΔΟΣ*

Επιμέλεια

Αθ. Σέμογλου, Ι. Π. Αρβανιτίδου, Εμμ. Γ. Γούναρη

ΕΚΔΟΤΙΚΟΣ ΟΙΚΟΣ Κ. & Μ. ΑΝΤ. ΣΤΑΜΟΥΛΗ
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Επιμέλεια: Αθ. Σέμογλου - Ι. Π. Αρβανιτίδου – Εμμ. Γ. Γούναρη

Τιμητική επιτροπή:

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G. Koch

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Κ. Τσουρής

Οργανωτική επιτροπή:

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Τηλ. 2310-264.748

2310-900.777

69.46.461.460

email : anstamoulis@hotmail.com

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PUBLIC BATHS IN THE EARLY BYZANTINE THESSALONIKI

The historian Procopius of Caesarea, in his third work “*De Aedificiis*”, remarks that the bath facilities in a city were a welfare indicator¹. Indeed, the existence and the size of bath complexes were directly linked to the periods of acme or decline of a city.

The philosophy about baths started in ancient Greece and was spread worldwide through the Roman Empire. In the Byzantine period, the bath tradition was likewise widespread and the baths retained their significant social role, also after Christianity became the dominant religion. It is indicative that emperor Anastasius I as a part of reconstruction programs included the construction of baths in every city of the Empire².

Thessaloniki was a principal roman city and it played a significant political, economic and religious role since the beginning of the Byzantine Empire, when it became the second most important city after Constantinople. Although the city’s reconfiguration began in the 4th c. AD, when the emperor Gaius Galerius Valerius Maximianus appointed Thessaloniki as his administrative capital and built his palace in the southeast part of the city, the 5th c. AD was the city’s prosperous period³, as confirmed by the intense construction activity observed in ecclesiastic and urban buildings.

Thirty-four roman and byzantine bath facilities were discovered *intra muros* in Thessaloniki⁴, out of which twenty-six were roman constructions. Eleven roman baths continued their function also in the Early Byzantine period, during which six more

1. H. B. Dewing (trans.), *Procopius, On Buildings*, Cambridge 1940, vol. 5.4.

2. L. A. Dindorf (ed.), *Ioannis Malalae, Chronographia*, Bonn 1831, vol. 409.15,

3. According to *Notitia dignitatum*, Thessaloniki was mentioned as the seat of *Praefecti praetorio per Illyricum*, the seat of *Dioceses Macedonia* and also the seat of *Provincia Macedonia*. According to *Synekdemos* of Hierocles, Thessaloniki was the capital of the Eparchy of Macedonia Α’. Δρακούλης 2012-2013, 24-26.

4. I. P. Arvanitidou, *Byzantine Baths in the Prefecture of Illyricum*, PhD thesis, Rome 2016, 16-17 (MAC.A.-GR. 11 – MAC.A.-GR. 26).

baths were built⁵. In Thessaloniki, almost all bath facilities came to light by means of rescue excavations and because of that they are of limited size. In most cases it is very difficult to understand the use of the facility (public, domestic, ecclesiastic etc.). Thus, researchers try to make conclusions combining data, such as the size of the complex, the number of the chambers, the amount of water used in every facility etc.

In the context of the present study, the Byzantine city of Thessaloniki is conventionally divided into four sectors, delineated by a horizontal axis, the modern Egnatias Str.⁶ (*Via Regia*), and a vertical one, the modern Eleftheriou Venizelou str.⁷. It can be observed that most of the baths are concentrated in the northeast quartile, following the northwest. Only five baths were excavated in the southeast area and none on the southwest one.

North – East Section

In the northeast area of the city, which was the heart of the residential area, twenty-one roman⁸ and early byzantine bath facilities were excavated and eleven of these were

5. The other two bath complexes, in 15-17 Mavilēs str. and in Theotokopoulou str., are dated back to the Late Byzantine period. For the bath in 15-17 Mavilēs str. see *AA* 56-59 (2001-4), B3α, 257-259. For the bath in Theotokopoulou str. see Σ.-Ρ. Τρυψιάνη - Ομήρου, Το βυζαντινό λουτρό της οδού Θεοτοκοπούλου στην Άνω πόλη Θεσσαλονίκης, *AEMΘ* 10B (1996) 587-598.

6. In the Byzantine period, it was called “λεωφόρος”, see Ch. I. Makaronas, *Via Egnatia and Thessalonike*, Studies presented to D. M. Robinson, St. Louis 1951, 380-388.

7. Although the city’s division is conventional, the choice of the axes is based on archaeological data, see Δρακούλης 2012-2013, 35, σημ. 67. Σ. Ακριβοπούλου, Στο δρόμο για το λιμάνι. Πολεοδομικά και τοπογραφικά Θεσσαλονίκης, στο Φ. Καραγιάννη (επιμ.), *Medieval Ports in North Aegean and the Black Sea. Links to the Maritime Routes of the East*, International Symposium (Thessaloniki, 4-6.12.2013), Proceedings, Thessaloniki 2013, 145-146.

8. Ten Roman baths appear to have ceased their functioning in the late roman period and they were not active in the Early Byzantine period. For the bath in the Roman forum, see *AA* 51 (1996), B2, 423. Π. Αδάμ - Βελένη, Π. Γεωργάκη, Η. Ζωγράφου, Β. Καλαβρία, Κ. Μπόλη, Γ. Σκιαδαρέσης, Αρχαία Αγορά Θεσσαλονίκης: Η στρωματογραφία και τα κινητά ευρήματα, *AEMΘ* 10B (1996) 501-531. *AA* 52 (1997), B2, 631-633. Π. Αδάμ - Βελένη, Βαλανείο προγενέστερο της αγοράς Θεσσαλονίκης, *AEMΘ* 11 (1997) 351-364. *AA* 53 (1998), B2, 549-554, 596-597. Π. Αδάμ - Βελένη, Η. Ζωγράφου, Β. Καλαβρία, Αικ. Μαυρομιχάλη, Αικ. Μπόλη, Αρχαία Αγορά Θεσσαλονίκης: Η οικοσκευή του Βαλανείου, *AEMΘ* 12 (1998) 85-102. *AA* 54 (1999), B2, 517-521. For the bath in 73 Olympiados str., see *AA* 56-59 (2001-2004), B3α, 278. For the bath in 8-10 Antiochou str., *AA* 52 (1997), B2, 694). For the bath in 22 Kouphitsas str., see *AA* 54 (1999), B2, 579-581. For the bath in 47 Platōnos str., see *AA* 31 (1976), B2, 241. For the bath at the intersection of Hagίου Dēmētriou and T. Papageōrgiou str., see Α. Τασιά, Η σωστική ανασκαφή της ΙΣΤ’ Εφορείας στην πλατεία Διοικητηρίου, *AEMΘ* 7 (1993) 329-338. For the bath at the intersection of Hagίου Nikolaou and Galilaiou str., see *AA* 34 (1979), B2, 292-293. For the

active in various phases of the Early Byzantine period. Five baths are identified as domestic⁹ and four bath complexes can be identified as public or ecclesiastic facilities, while there is not enough available information for two buildings, which were identified as baths¹⁰.

According to the, until recently, prevailing view, the bath beneath the Acheiropoiētos' basilica was one of the earlier roman baths excavated in the city, dated to the 2nd c. AD. In the mid-5th c. AD, the large roman bath partially was occupied by the newly-built basilica, while its north part remained in use alongside the basilica¹¹.

K. Raptēs¹², in his doctoral dissertation, re-examined the findings and he completely disconnected the building beneath Acheiropoiētos church with the niche located on the northeast corner of the basilica. The niche belongs to the *tepidarium* or the *caldarium* of the bath, as its floor rests on hypocaust pillars and traces of *tubuli* were found in the inner side of the wall. K. Raptēs argued that the niche is located higher than the mosaic floor of the roman building of the 4th c. AD, which was found under the northern aisle of the basilica¹³, and consequently it is part of an independent early byzantine building occupying the next residential insula to the north¹⁴. K. Raptēs considers this building as a private one, which was in use until the end of the 8th or the beginning of the 9th c. AD¹⁵.

bath at the intersection of 24 Armenopoulou and Apostolou Pavlou str., see *AA* 29 (1973-1974), B3, 687. For the bath in 6 Sophocleous str., see *AA* 29 (1973-1974), B3, 673 and for the bath at the intersection of Theophilou and 8 Eleusinos str., see *AA* 29 (1973-1974), B2, 653. *AA* 49 (1994), B2, 503.

9. The unearthed domestic early byzantine baths of the northeast section of the city are five: for the bath in 90 Kassandrou str., see *AA* 47 (1992), B2, 428. Δ. Μακροπούλου – Α. Τζιτζιμπάση, Σωστική ανασκαφική έρευνα στην οδό Κασσάνδρου 90, *AEMΘ* 7 (1993) 355-372. *AA* 49 (1994), B2, 503. For the bath in 11 Prophētē Hēlia str., see *AA* 29 (1973-1974), B3, 673. *AA* 43 (1988), B2, 389-390. For the bath in 18-20 Sophokleous str., see *AA* 53 (1998), B2, 615-618. Ν. Καρύδας, Ανασκαφές βόρεια της Παλαιο-χριστιανικής οικίας με το τρικλίνιο στην οδό Σοφοκλέους 18-20, *AEMΘ* 14 (2000) 259-272. For the bath in 6 Iasonidou str., see Ε. Μαρκή – Δ. Κομματάς, Ανασκαφή στα θεμέλια του σχολικού κτηρίου της οδού Ιασονίδου 6, *AEMΘ* 16 (2002) 327-337 and for the bath in 138 Olympou str., see *AA* 26 (1971), B2, 387. *AA* 43 (1989), B2, 340.

10. The buildings in 31 Aioulou str. (see *AA* 45 [1990], B2, 340) and 17 Malea str. (see Vitt 1996, 235) were identified as bath facilities, but there are no clear indications that these were bath complexes.

11. Χ. Μπακιρτζής, Ρωμαϊκός λουτρών και η Αχειροποίητος της Θεσσαλονίκης. *Αφιέρωμα στη μνήμη του Στ. Πελεκανίδη*, Θεσσαλονίκη 1983, 310-329. Vitt 1996, 194-197.

12. Ράπτης 2016, I, II, III.

13. Ράπτης 2016, II, 261-264.

14. K. Raptēs does not mention anything about a basin's part, which has been found under the first floor in the north aisle of the basilica and it was one of the key elements for identifying the roman building as a bath, see Vitt 1996, 196.

15. Ράπτης 2016, III, 751.

Even accepting the above-mentioned theory, which according to the archaeological data seems convincing, we should reconsider the theory about the identity of the “building with the bath”, as it is very difficult to categorize a bath facility as public or domestic by a sole finding: the niche of a warm chamber. Additionally, the fact that around 574 AD the northern building housed the episcopal habitats¹⁶ would probably lead us to the assumption that this building was not a private one, but it was public property that was given to the church.

By accepting the aforementioned speculation, namely that the bath was a public one, an answer is directly provided to the question: how were the inhabitants of the region and the clergy of the new church served? Therefore, when the complex was granted to the church in order to house the episcopal habitats, the construction of a new bath facility for the service of the inhabitants and the clergy was essential.

The new bath, in 52 Hagias Sophias str.¹⁷, was constructed in the late 5th c. AD, close to the basilica of Acheiropoiētos, but not exclusively for the service of its clergy¹⁸. If the facility was an ecclesiastic one, apart from the proximity, it would have to ensure to the clergy direct access and their protection from indiscretions. On the contrary, the main entrance of the bath was found along the western *cardo*, the modern Hagias Sophias str.¹⁹. Thus, the new bath facility should be open to the residents of the area, who had access through a central *cardo* of the city.

According to the excavation data thus far, the bath in 52 Hagias Sophias str. was the only working bath facility on the northern side of *Via Regia* during the Early Byzantine period²⁰. It is located approximately 50 m. from the *decumanus maximus* and less than 500 m. from the church of St. George (Rotunda) and Gaius Galerius

16. According to K. Raptēs' theory, in the mid-7th c. AD., the episcopal basilica of Hagia Sophia was replaced by Acheiropoiētos after its destruction by an earthquake, Ράπτης 2016, III, 775-776.

17. *AA* 49 (1994), B2, 511-514.

18. M.I. Kazamia -Tsernou argued that the bath in 52 Hagias Sophias str. was an ecclesiastic bath totally depended by the basilica of Acheiropoiētos, see M. I. Καζαμία - Τσέρνου, *Μνημειακή τοπογραφία της χριστιανικής Θεσσαλονίκης. Οι ναοί: 4^{ος} – 8^{ος} αιώνας*, Θεσσαλονίκη 2009, 141.

19. K. Raptēs refers the above-mentioned entrance as the only localized entrance of the bath facility, see Ράπτης 2016, II, 270. However, the excavator of the site, E. Markē, argues that there was a second entrance on the north wall, which provided access to another space in the northern part of the bath, see *AA* 49 (1994), B2, 513. Perhaps this side-door might have given access to the clergy of the basilica.

20. The late roman building, which was unearthed in 18 Kōnstantinou Palaiologou str. and was in use during the whole Early Byzantine period, was identified as a bath without particular details, judging just “from the large conduit and other findings of the plot”. Clearly, it is not possible to identify a place as a bathing facility without specific findings. For the excavation in 18 Kōnstantinou Palaiologou str., see *AA* 38 (1983), B2, 285.

Valerius Maximianus' Arch, so visitors, traders, travelers, pilgrims and even passers-by had direct access to it.

Undoubtedly, the main objective of the bath complex in 52 Hagias Sophias str. was to serve the needs of the inhabitants, but it could also serve other needs. A lot of people crossed the *decumanus maximus* of the city, *Via Regia*, on a daily basis, entering from the Kassandreōtikē Pylē and exiting from the Chrysē Pylē or vice versa, since Thessaloniki is referred to in multiple late roman and early byzantine texts as a commercial hub on the route of *Via Egnatia* and as one of the most important cities of Macedonia²¹. Thus, the existence of a bath complex, which did not force the travelers to get out of their way, was necessary. Moreover, the construction of the bath could be a decision of the city administration or even a private investment for profit, as the facility is very close to the city's administrative center.

In the outskirts of the Upper City, along the *decumanus*, which is identified as the modern Hagiou Dēmētriou str., a large, public roman bath was running already from the 3rd c. AD²², the surface of which occupied an entire *insula* (now defined by the Hagiou Dēmētriou str., Hagiou Nikolaou str., Kassandrou str. and Makedonikēs Amynēs str.). A part of the bath ceased its function, when the Hagios Dēmētrios' basilica was built, and these parts were used as auxiliary rooms of the basilica. According to G. Sōtēriou, the whole ground-floor bath complex was preserved and transformed into a crypt as a worship center when the basilica was built²³. However, given that the bath complex was bigger than the basilica, a reasonable question that arises is: What happened to the rest of the bath building?

The northern part of the roman bath facility could be transformed to an autonomous section and continue its function even after the construction of the basilica. Two key elements reinforce this assumption. On one hand, the fact that the

21. According to *Itinerarium provinciarum Antonini Augusti* and *Itinerarium Burdigalense/ Hierosolymitanum*, Thessaloniki was an intersection of *Via Egnatia*, from Durres to Byzantium and from Bordo to Jerusalem. According to *Tabula Peutingeriana*, Thessaloniki occupied a prominent place on the regional road network and according to *Expositio totius mundi et gentium*, an anonymous latin text, Thessaloniki was the most important city of Macedonia. See Δρακούλης 2012-2013, 19-21.

22. *ΑΔ* 16 (1960) 222. Σωτηρίου 1952, 37-47. Στ. Πελεκανίδης, Το "θέατρον και το καλούμενον στάδιον" της Θεσσαλονίκης, Θεσσαλονίκη 1972, στο *Τιμητική προσφορά στον καθηγητή Γεώργιο Μπακαλάκη*, 124-127.

23. "Όταν κατά τον 5^ο αιώνα, επί Λεοντίου, ιδρύθη η μεγάλη πεντάκλιτος βασιλική, ολόκληρον το ισόγειον τούτο συγκρότημα του αρχαίου λουτρού διετηρήθη και διεσκευάσθη, μετατρεπέν εις Κρύπτην του ναού, ήτις απέβη κέντρο λατρείας." (*On the 5th c. AD, when Leontius built the great five-aisled basilica, the whole ground-floor of the ancient bath complex was preserved and transformed into a church's Crypt, and became a worship center.*), see Σωτηρίου 1952, 47.

remains are better preserved north of the basilica, where three rooms, a part of the hypocaust system and *tubuli* in the walls were found. On the other hand, the fact that the bathing tradition continued during the Ottoman times²⁴. In the end of the 16th c. AD, this particular place was chosen in order to build Yeni Hamam²⁵ probably by using the already existing infrastructure of the Roman and the Byzantine era. The continuous use of the bath is not supported by the available archaeological evidence, but it was a common practice to use pre-existing infrastructure for the construction of Ottoman baths.

About 300 m. to the north, albeit at a significantly different altitude, a large bath was found at the intersection of Olympiados and Nafpaktou str. The bath was constructed in the Late Roman period and it was in use also during the Early Byzantine period²⁶. The building is arranged on both sides of the modern Nafpaktou str. Initially, some conduits, a well, a cistern and rectangular niches were discovered in the western part and later on a part of the hypocaust system was unearthed in the eastern part. The size of the facility exceeded 150 sq.m. and it occupies an area larger than a modern residential block²⁷. The size of the complex allows its identification as another public bath²⁸, which served the inhabitants of the Upper City of Thessaloniki during the Early Byzantine period²⁹.

24. Μ. Χατζή-Ιωάννου, *Θέρμες ήτοι περί Θεσσαλονίκης*, Αθήναι 1879, 56-57.

25. Β. Δημητριάδης, *Τοπογραφία της Θεσσαλονίκης κατά την εποχή της Τουρκοκρατίας 1430-1912*, Θεσσαλονίκη 2008, 416-417.

26. *ΑΔ* 31 (1976), Β2, 269. Ασημακοπούλου-Ατζακά 1998, 280-282.

27. Ασημακοπούλου - Ατζακά 1998, πίν. 210α-β.

28. According to the excavators, the complex can be associated with the bath referred in Ignatius' narration, see Στ. Πελεκανίδης, *Παλαιοχριστιανικά μνημεία Θεσσαλονίκης*, Θεσσαλονίκη 1949, 45-55.

29. Another Early Byzantine bath was discovered at the intersection of Olympou and Platōnos str. There is little available information about the original phase of the complex, which, according to F. Petsas, belongs to the 5th c. AD and it is linked with the martyrdom of Hagios Dēmētrios, while E. Markē dated the bath in the 5th or 6th c. AD. See *ΑΔ* 24 (1969), Β2, 298-300. Vitti 1996, 191. *ΑΔ* 55 (2000), Β2, 747.

North – West Section

In the northwest area of the city, six roman³⁰ and early byzantine bath facilities were excavated. Only two of them, a public and a monastic one, were active during the Early Byzantine period.

The large early byzantine bath in Proxenōn str.³¹ was revealed in the southwest corner of the courtyard of the building of Ministry of Macedonia and Thrace. The bath is of the 5th c. AD, it is a large facility and according to the excavator it occupies the entire width³² of the modern Hagiou Dēmētriou str.³³ and also sections north and south of it. However, if the facility occupied the entire width of the modern Hagiou Dēmētriou str., the byzantine road would have to pass north or south of the bath complex, although it's not clear from where.

It seems that this area was traditionally linked to the existence of public baths given that few meters to the north a part of a Roman bath was found a few years earlier. Having all the data in his disposal, I. Kanonidis argued that the Roman bath was the original phase of the facility and the early byzantine one was the restored one. Moreover, a third phase is attested a few years later, when some of the chambers were canceled and a new smaller bath was established³⁴.

This bath is less than 400 m. away from Hagios Dēmētrios' basilica and the public bath on the north. If the assumption that a part of the roman bath north of Hagios Dēmētrios' basilica continued its operation during the Early Byzantine period is valid, those two facilities were enough to meet the needs of the residents of this particular zone of the city. Additionally, the two bath complexes were located on the second most important *decumanus* of the city, which connected the New Chrysē Pylē and the Lētaia Pylē. As a result, a number of visitors, traders, travelers, pilgrims and

30. Three roman baths seem to have ceased their functioning in the Late Roman period and they were not active in the Early Byzantine period. For the bath in Mpaltadōrou str., see *AA* 29 (1973-1974), B2, 64-66. Δ. Ναλπάντης, Η βυζαντινή Θεσσαλονίκη και τα μνημεία της, *Αρχαιολογία* 7 (χ.χ.) 17-22. For the bath in the intersection of Egnatias and Antigonidōn str., see *AA* 25 (1970), B2, 371-372 and for the bath in 7 Hēphaistiōnos str., see *AA* 50 (1995), B2, 524. *AA* 51 (1996), B2, 503.

31. *AA* 41 (1986), Χρονικά, 134. I. Κανονίδης, Σωστική ανασκαφή στο χώρο της πλατείας Κυπρίων αγωνιστών (Διοικητηρίου), *AEMΘ* 4 (1990) 259-266. Κανονίδης 1993, 343-354. *AA* 49 (1994), B2, 491-497. Κανονίδης 1996, 559-570.

32. Κανονίδης 1993, 347-348.

33. The modern Hagiou Dēmētriou str. is considered as another byzantine *decumanus* of the city, parallel with the *decumanus maximus*, the modern Egnatia str., see Vitti 1996, 69-71. Δρακούλης 2012-2013, 35.

34. Κανονίδης 1993, 348.

even passers-by were moving on a daily basis in the street, which was almost in the same position as the modern Hagiou Dēmētriou str.³⁵.

At the western end of Thessaloniki, about 150 m. from the city's wall, another bath facility was revealed. A monastic complex was constructed in 9 Mavilēs str., after the 518 earthquake³⁶ and the destruction of the previous Octagon complex. The monastery was in use throughout the Byzantine period and its bath was built on the martyrdom of the previous Octagon complex³⁷. The bath was considered to be a small sized facility and aimed to provide services to the monks.

Like most excavations in Thessaloniki, the monastic complex of 9 Mavilēs str. is partially excavated. The identification of the bath was made based on the finding of a hot chamber, apparently the *caldarium*, with semi-circular niches with basins on its narrow sides, as well as the directly associated *praefurnium*. On the northern part, three cisterns, coated with hydraulic mortar, are extant and supply the complex with water, while the function of the eastern chambers is unclear from the extant remains.

The existence of three cisterns for the bath supply raises questions about the size of the facility and the amount of water needed for its operation. At the same time, on the east part of the plot, a large space was uncovered, under the floor of which water supply and drainage conduits were found running through the entire building. Finally, the location of the complex is worth mentioning, which was less than 150 m. from *Via Regia*, very close to the western entrance of the city and on the city's entry/exit route. As a conclusion, even if we accept that it was a monastic bath, the possibility of it being open to the public and covering the needs of the inhabitants of the region, as well as of the travelers and visitors, should not be excluded.

South – East Section

In the southeast part of the city, five Roman³⁸ and Early Byzantine bath facilities were excavated and three of them, two public and the bath in Gaius Galerius Valerius Maximianus palace, were active during the Early Byzantine period.

35. About 100 m. to the south, in the southwest corner of the Kypriōn Agōnistōn sq. (at the intersection of the modern Iōnos Dragoumē and Olympou str.) a building of the late 5th c. AD was found, which was identified as a bath without additional information, see Κανονίδης 1996, 564.

36. Μαρκή 1983, 122.

37. *AA* 29 (1973-1974), B3, 681, 737. Μαρκή 1983, 131.

38. Two Roman baths appear to have ceased their functioning in the late roman period and they were not active in the Early Byzantine period. For the bath in 7 Prasakakē str., see *AA* 49 (1994), B2, 521-523, and

According to the archaeological data, the southeast region of the city was sparsely populated, but not completely uninhabited. M. Vitti speculated the existence of at least one residential row of *insulae* south of *Via Regia*³⁹ based on the discovery of some Late Roman and Early Byzantine houses not far from the axis of *decumanus maximus*. However, according to the excavations from 24⁴⁰ and 37⁴¹ Palaïōn Patrōn Germanou str. and 94 Egnatias str.⁴², which were identified as houses, and in some other remains of buildings⁴³, the existence of not only one but at least three residential *insulae* may be suggested. However, given that not even one *decumanus* was revealed south of the *Via Regia*, it is sounder to talk about a residential grid instead of residential *insulae*.

The existence of byzantine neighbourhoods in the southeast part of the city is confirmed by the presence of two public baths in the region. The first one is the well-known bath in 12 Makenzi king str. and the second one is a bath complex was revealed in 3 Agapēs str. It is commonly accepted that the late roman bath in 12 Makenzi king str.⁴⁴ was a public facility with an area of approximately 290 sq.m.⁴⁵ and in the 4th c. AD, it was one of the most important bath complexes in Thessaloniki. However, the construction of Hagia Sophia's ecclesiastic complex seems to have changed the balance in the area. The late roman bath appears to have been passed in the jurisdiction of the church in order to serve the needs of the clergy. However, we cannot be sure that it stopped being open to the public, although the construction of a new bath building in the area could mean that the Late Roman one ceased to have its gates open to common people.

The new bath in 3 Agapēs str.⁴⁶ belongs to the 5th c. AD and it consists of rectangular chambers in a row. The cistern of the facility was found in the east, while in the west end of the plot another part of the complex was unearthed. Although the building was described as “a small bath” by its excavator, the description of the complex leads to the assumption that this was a fairly large facility for a house.

for the bath in the intersection of Palaïōn Patrōn Germanou and 7 Spyrou Louē str., see *AA* 29 (1973-1974), B3, 661-662. *AA* 31 (1976), B2, 244. Vitti 1996.

39. Vitti 1996, map 6.

40. *AA* 29 (1973-4), B3, 661-662. *AA* 31 (1976), B2, 244.

41. *AA* 24 (1969), B2, 304. *AA* 25 (1970), B2, 368-371. *AA* 38 (1983), 285.

42. *AA* 26 (1971), B2, 382-385.

43. Some walls from a Late Roman and Early Byzantine building were discovered in 8 Zeuxidos str., see *AA* 39 (1984), B, 214-216. A late roman and early byzantine round building was uncovered in 85 Megalou Alexandrou str., see *AA* 29 (1973-4), B3, 661-664.

44. *AA* 34 (1979), B2, 275. *AA* 35 (1980), B2, 360-362. *AA* 38 (1983), B2, 265-267. Vitti 1996, 202.

45. *AA* 35 (1980), B2, 362.

46. *AA* 51 (1996), B2, 490-493.

Therefore, the bath should rather be identified as a public facility. Indeed, its construction in the southeast section of the city confirms the residential development of this area during the 5th c. AD, as the people who lived there needed a bath to meet their everyday needs.

Additionally, the new bath complex is less than 100 m. away from *Via Regia* and about 200 m. away from the road connecting the Galerius' palace with the Arch and the Rotunda. From this perspective, apart from the residents of the area, the bath served also the city's administrative center.

South – West Section

Not even one bath complex was discovered in the southwest part of Thessaloniki and most of the area's excavations brought to light parts of the southern defensive wall, the *proteichisma* (bulwark) and buildings related to Thessaloniki's port, such as shipyards and storage rooms. The theory of M. Vitti that the row of *insulae* that existed in the southeast part of the city continued also in the southwest region seems to be weakened from the latest excavation research findings. In recent years, even close to *Via Regia*, more and more structures⁴⁷ adjacent to the port were uncovered. The two buildings, which were identified by M. Vitti as houses⁴⁸, could be easily be part of buildings related to the city's port given that there are no particular characteristics, which can lead to reliable conclusions about the use of the premises.

Conclusions

Given the importance of the bathing habit in the byzantine society, the present study confirms the fact that during the Early Byzantine period the residents of Thessaloniki had the choice of using public baths. In fact, several baths operated at the same time in the city in order to serve the citizens by region.

Several roman baths continued to operate in the city also in the Early Byzantine period and when these facilities were abolished, for various reasons, the need for new public buildings was born. The populated areas of the city have never been without a public bath, because, apart from the important issue of hygiene, the baths also played a

47. Ε. Μαρκή, Το Κωνσταντίνειο λιμάνι και άλλα βυζαντινά λιμάνια της Θεσσαλονίκης, στο Φ. Καραγιάννη (επιμ.), *Medieval Ports in North Aegean and the Black Sea. Links to the Maritime Routes of the East*. International Symposium (Thessaloniki, 4-6.12.2013) Proceedings, Thessaloniki 2013.

48. For the building in 9 Valaōritou str., see *AA* 29 (1973-4), B3, 653. For the building in 8 Egnatias str., see *AA* 29 (1973-4), B3, 658.

significant role as a part of the people's gathering and socialization. In addition, public baths were part of the touristic and commercial infrastructure of a city, as they were necessary to serve all types of city's visitors.

By reversing the argument, the existence of a public bath in a particular area is a sign of habitation. A typical example is the bath facility in 3 Agapēs str., whose existence in that area should lead to the conclusion that another byzantine neighbourhood was there, despite the fact that the excavation findings in that area are few.

Being first-aid buildings, public bath complexes were built on the axis of the main roads or at the intersections of these. Therefore, finding a public bath at a certain point is a strong indication that one of the main streets of the city was passing nearby.

The size of the Early Byzantine baths cannot be compared to the large bath complexes of the Roman and Late Roman periods. In the Early Byzantine period, although the bath facilities continued to be important centers of a city's social life, they lost the prestige they had in the past and therefore there was no need for large gathering rooms. Thus, their design and construction was limited to the basic chambers with a purely utilitarian character.

The categorization of the bath complexes into public, ecclesiastic or monastic, especially in a metropolis such as Thessaloniki, should be debated. The so-called ecclesiastic baths of the city (under Hagios Dēmētrios basilica, in 52 Hagias Sophias str.), as well as the monastic bath in Mavilē str. could also serve the public. Indeed, in the aforementioned cases the use of the baths by residents and visitors of the city is rather imperative, as otherwise an important question arises, namely how would the bathing needs of the city's residents and visitors be satisfied in the 5th and 6th c. AD.

In any case, numerous are the questions that arise: How many baths were operating in Thessaloniki? In what distance one from each other? Did every neighbourhood have its own bath? Who benefited from the income of these bath facilities? And many more, which are difficult to answer, given that excavations in the big cities are ongoing and a lot of information has been lost.

Περίληψη

ΔΗΜΟΣΙΑ ΛΟΥΤΡΑ ΣΤΗΝ ΠΡΩΤΟΒΥΖΑΝΤΙΝΗ ΘΕΣΣΑΛΟΝΙΚΗ

Ο 5^{ος} αιώνας ήταν για την Θεσσαλονίκη, τη δεύτερη τη τάξει πόλη της Βυζαντινής Αυτοκρατορίας, περίοδος ακμής και αναδιαμόρφωσης κι αυτό αποτυπώνεται και στην έντονη οικοδομική δραστηριότητα που παρατηρείται στα εκκλησιαστικά και αστικά κτήρια της εποχής. Συνολικά, στην πόλη της Θεσσαλονίκης έχουν ανασκαφεί είκοσι έξι δημόσια και οικιακά ρωμαϊκά λουτρά. Έντεκα εξ αυτών ανακαινίστηκαν ή αναδιαμορφώθηκαν και συνέχισαν τη λειτουργία τους και στην Πρώιμη Βυζαντινή περίοδο, ενώ παράλληλα χτίστηκαν έξι νέα λουτρικά συγκροτήματα.

Ο βορειοανατολικός τομέας της πόλης αποτέλεσε την καρδιά της οικιστικής ζωής της. Κατά τη διάρκεια της Πρωτοβυζαντινής περιόδου, φαίνεται πως τουλάχιστον τρία δημόσια λουτρά εξυπηρετούσαν τις ανάγκες των κατοίκων και των επισκεπτών της πόλης: το λουτρό στην οδό Αγίας Σοφίας 52, το λουτρό βορείως της βασιλικής του Αγίου Δημητρίου και το λουτρό στη συμβολή των οδών Ολυμπιάδος και Ναυπάκτου.

Το μεγάλο πρωτοβυζαντινό λουτρό στην οδό Προξένων εξυπηρετούσε τον βορειοδυτικό τομέα της πόλης. Παράλληλα, το νεοϊδρυθέν μοναστηριακό λουτρό του 6^{ου} αιώνα, στην οδό Μαβίλης 9, θα μπορούσε να έχει ανοιχτές τις πύλες του και στο ευρύ κοινό προκειμένου να καλύψει τις ανάγκες του μεγάλου αριθμού επισκεπτών της πόλης.

Ο νοτιοανατολικός τομέας της πόλης φαίνεται πως αρχικά εξυπηρετούνταν από το μεγάλο, δημόσιο, υστερορωμαϊκό λουτρό στην οδό Μακένζυ Κίνγκ, ενώ μετά την κατασκευή του εκκλησιαστικού συγκροτήματος της Αγίας Σοφίας το εν λόγω λουτρό τέθηκε στην υπηρεσία του κλήρου και το νέο λουτρό, στην οδό Αγάπης 3, ανέλαβε να εξυπηρετεί τους κατοίκους της περιοχής και όχι μόνο.

Ο νοτιοδυτικός τομέας της πόλης φαίνεται πως ήταν αφιερωμένος αποκλειστικά στις βοηθητικές εγκαταστάσεις του λιμανιού, όπως ναυπηγεία και αποθήκες. Κανένα λουτρικό συγκρότημα δεν έχει βρεθεί σε αυτό το τμήμα της πόλης, αν και θα ήταν χρήσιμη η παρουσία ενός λουτρού για να εξυπηρετεί τους ανθρώπους του λιμανιού και τους καταφθάνοντες μέσω θαλάσσης στην πόλη.

Αξιοσημείωτο είναι ότι οι κατοικημένες περιοχές της Θεσσαλονίκης δεν έμειναν ποτέ χωρίς δημόσιο λουτρό. Μάλιστα, για την κατασκευή των δημόσιων λουτρικών συγκροτημάτων επιλέγονταν θέσεις επάνω σε μεγάλους δρόμους, ώστε να έχουν εύκολη πρόσβαση οι κάτοικοι αλλά και οι επισκέπτες της πόλης, στη διάθεση των οποίων πιθανότατα είχαν τεθεί και εκκλησιαστικά και μοναστηριακά λουτρά.

ABBREVIATIONS

- Ασημακοπούλου - Ατζακά 1998: Π. Ασημακοπούλου - Ατζακά, *Σύνταγμα των παλαιο-χριστιανικών ψηφιδωτών δαπέδων της Ελλάδος. ΙΙΙ. Μακεδονία – Θράκη. 1. Τα ψηφιδωτά δάπεδα της Θεσσαλονίκης*, Θεσσαλονίκη 1998.
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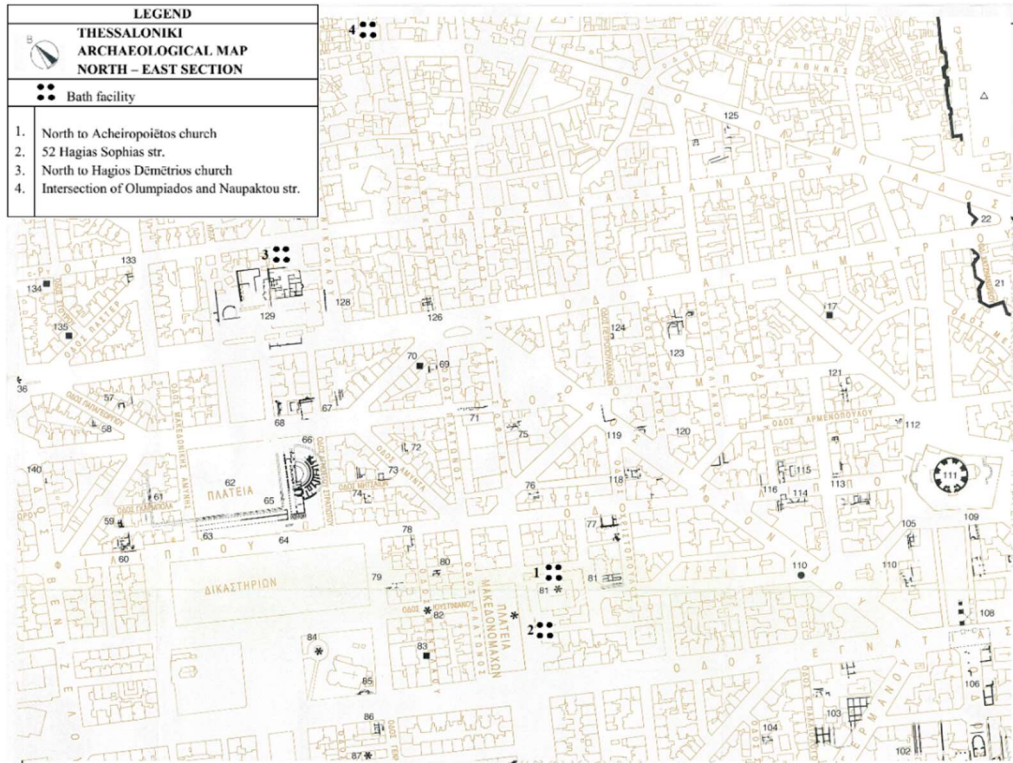


Fig. 1 Thessaloniki. North – East Section (modified from: Vitti 1996).

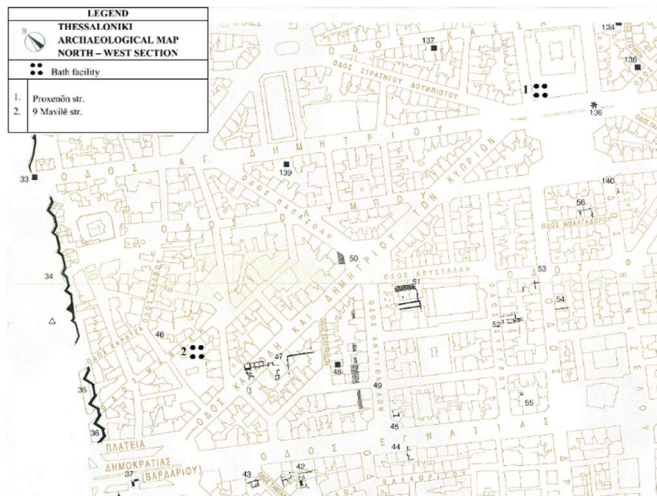


Fig. 2 Thessaloniki. North – West Section (modified from: Vitti 1996).

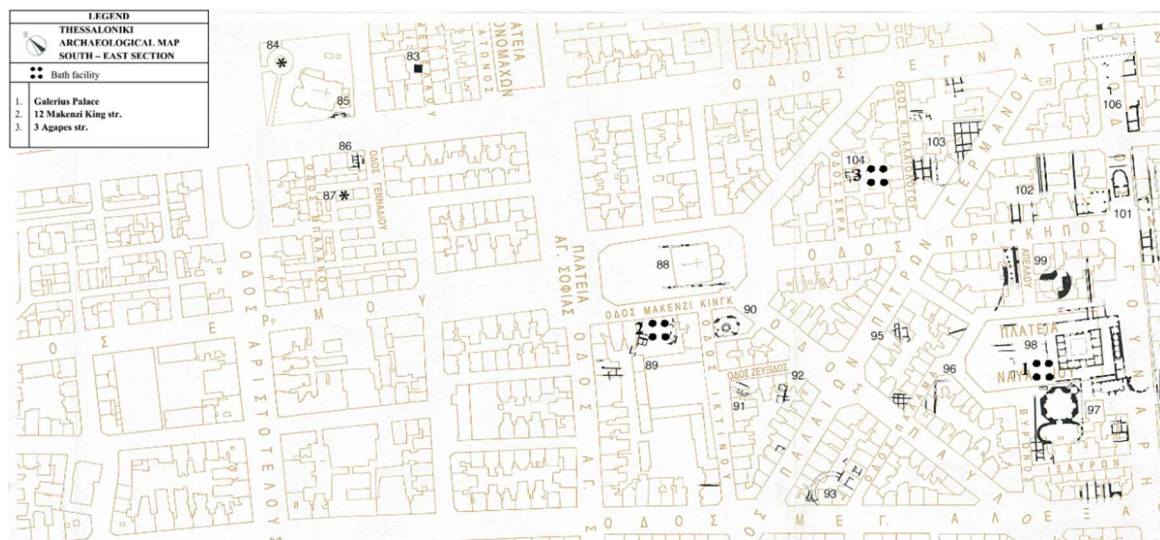


Fig. 3 Thessaloniki. South – East Section (modified from: Vitti 1996).

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Εξώφυλλο: Φίλιπποι, νησίδα Υαλουργείου, ψηφιδωτό Ιπποδρόμου, τέθριππο.

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