Thessaloniki: The Modern Museum of an Ancient City

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Keywords: spatial analysis; Greco-Roman urbanism; urban archaeology; urban cartography; urban museum

Introduction

This study* is part of a broader research project dealing with the configuration of present-day urban fabric developed from (and over) antique cities in Europe.[1] For each case study within this project, the purpose is to identify what could have been inherited by the current urban fabric from the ancient configuration. This involves a focus on physical elements, encompassing parts of the street network and built structures, as well as more subtle traces, such as shapes or, occasionally, remnants or elements derived from previous configurations.

Thessaloniki, currently the second largest city in Greece, is an ambiguous and unfortunate case study in the context of my research. Not only was it one of the largest among the Roman cities,[2] but it also maintained continuous use within the ancient fortification until the modern period. The unique combination of these two aspects makes it a special case for examination. A hundred years ago, even after the devastating Great Fire of 1917, it still preserved very much of its traditional fabric – thus having a considerable potential for encapsulating elements of the ancient city in its structures. However, a closer look on the built stock[3] indicates that, at least in terms of quantity, most of that potential was definitively lost in the process of acerb modernization. The fire at the beginning of the 20th century was just the initial pretext for the implementation of a powerful desire to change the image of the previously "oriental" city – a modernization which was materialized extensively in the second half of the same century. The outcome is essentially a rigid amalgamation of an urban skeleton structuring the (more or less)

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* The more detailed analyses are more explicit in the online, full-color version of the illustrations that follow.

1 This work was supported by a grant of the Ministry of Research, Innovation and Digitization, CNCS – UEFISCDI, project number PN-III-P1-1.1-BSO-2016-003, within PNCDI III. The grant was intermediated by New Europe College in Bucharest, within the "Ștefan Odobleja" program, 2022-2023.

2 John W. Hanson, *An Urban Geography of the Roman World, 100 BC to AD 300* (Oxford: Archaeopress, 2016), 93 - despite some inadequacy (the same author considers only the Hellenistic foundation, *id.*, 691, which was smaller than the Roman fortification).

3 It was not possible to discuss the analysis of the evolution of minor built stock for the lower city, but the main idea can easily be grasped by consulting two sources available online: a plan drafted in 1994, presenting the age of the buildings from the modern period - Alexandra Yerolympos, *Urban Transformations in the Balkans (1820-1920): Aspects of Balkan Town Planning and the Remaking of Thessaloniki* (Thessaloniki: University Studio Press, 1996), 95, and *Google StreetView* (for comparative purpose). Even if the former is slightly outdated, they both indicate the same: there are no more than 20-30 buildings or small groups of buildings dated before 1917, all over the ca. 320 ha of the lower city (this estimation does not include the historical monumental buildings). The main conclusion of my brief analysis is that these buildings, which are the most likely to have preserved isolated elements of the ancient city, are - ironically! - situated predominantly within the area burnt by the Great Fire of 1917 (Fig. 1). Similar conclusions, but from different perspectives, at Eleni Bastéa and Vilma Hastaoglou-Martinidis, "Modernization and its Discontents in Post 1950s Thessaloniki: Urban Change and Urban Narratives," *in Landscapes of Development…*, ed. Panayiota Pyla (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2013), 98. For the monumental architecture, which obviously has a great potential to integrate ancient structures, see an inventory at Charalambos Bakirtzis, "The Urban Continuity and Size of Late Byzantine Thessalonike," Dumbarton Oaks Papers 57 (2003): 48 *sqq*.

ancient street network in concrete high-rise buildings, with some fancy "furniture" under the spotlight here and there: the historical monumental buildings and the primary archaeological areas of the city. Thus, it is easy to overlook the fact that *the entire* historical city, or rather what it once was, *is* – or rather *was* – also an archaeological site. An open-air museum, one may say; indeed, except this was supposed to be a living city, similar to numerous urban centers that have endured since Antiquity.

Regarding the physical configuration of historical Thessaloniki, two approaches were identified in existing literature: the "urban history" line, developed by scholars mostly interested in the city's changes, particularly its modern transformations in the 20th century,[4] and the "archaeological" line of scholars, interested in the pre-modern heritage of the city.[5] Typically seen in urban historiography, despite the shared focus on the same extensive subject (the city), the two directions have barely been tangent. The data from these directions is simply not integrated, even if they are sometimes cross-referenced.[6] In this study, I will endeavor to correlate these two previous directions by integrating data and employing spatial analysis, methods frequently absent in the current scholarship of many cities.

After providing a necessary introduction to the history and configuration of the city (Section 2), the study pursues two directions. Firstly, the evaluation of the street network determines to what extent the current layout might inherit the ancient one, by using the layout of the traditional city as the primary intermediate reference (Section 3). Surprisingly, there is a significant overlap between the current configuration and that of the traditional city, more than one might imagine when perusing the historical literature on the city. Hence, the shift was radical, but not complete – and the contribution of this study is to present a heatmap in this sense. The second part of the analysis focuses on one of the main archaeological areas of the city, namely the palatial complex of Galerius (Section 4), where urban archaeology benefitted massively – albeit seemingly remaining far from the ideal[7] – from the opening of new streets and the replacement of the built stock.

A Brief History and the General Configuration of Historical Thessaloniki (Section 2)

Originally a Hellenistic foundation, Thessaloniki was an important urban center under Roman, Byzantine and Ottoman administrations, having had consistent continuity throughout its twenty-four centuries of existence.[8] It became, in the early days of Late Antiquity, one of the six

4 Kalliopi Amygdalou, "Building the Nation at the Crossroads of 'East' and 'West': Ernest Hébrard and Henri Prost in the near East," *Opticon1826* 16 (2014); Bastéa and Hastaoglou-Martinidis, "Modernization;" Eleni Bastéa and Vilma Hastaoglou-Martinidis, "Urban Change and the Persistence of Memory in Modern Thessaloniki," in *Thessaloniki: A City in Transition, 1912–2012*, ed. Dimitris Keridis and John Brady Kiesling (London, New York: Routledge, 2020); the multiple contributions of Alexandra Yerolympos on the matter are similar in content and approach for the topics I was interested in, therefore I cited mostly her book published in English (1996); see also *id.*, 2007.

5 On the late Byzantine heritage, Bakirtzis, "The Urban Continuity;" on the Roman heritage, Polyxeni Adam-Veleni, "Thessalonike: History and Town Planning," in *Roman Thessaloniki*, ed. Dēmētrios V. Grammenos (Thessaloniki: Thessaloniki Archaeological Museum, 2003); on the Roman city plan, Hans von Schoenebeck, "Die Stadtplanung des Römischen Thessalonike," in *Bericht über den VI. Internationalen Kongress für Archäologie, Berlin, 21–26 August, 1939*, ed. Internationaler Kongress für Archäologie and Archäologisches Institut des Deutschen Reiches (Berlin, Boston: De Gruyter, 1940); on the Hellenistic traces of the city, Michael Vickers, "Hellenistic Thessaloniki," *The Journal of Hellenic Studies* 92 (1972).

6 Only English and French sources were consulted, without pretending extensiveness. I admit that Greek literature, or other sources that I have not consulted, may change this rough account.

7 Slobodan Ćurčić, *Architecture in the Balkans. From Diocletian to Süleyman the Magnificent* (New Haven, London: Yale University Press, 2010), 22: "(...) one is left with the taste of the kinds of frustrations that exist in attempting to grasp the appearance and the functions of the Palace of Galerius."

8 Some short syntheses on the history of the city at Eftychia Kourkoutidou and Anastasia Tourta, *Wandering in Byzantine Thessaloniki* (Athens: Kapon Editions, 1997), 12-13; Yerolympos, *Urban Transformations*, 88, 97-99.

imperial capitals established by the emperors of the Tetrarchy – a turbulent time in the history of the Roman Empire, when Rome was no longer enough, and Constantinople had not yet been planned.[9] The fortifications of the city reached their maximum extent in the late 4th century AD, covering about 250 ha,[10] and remained in use – with partial reinforcements – until the 19th century. There is a unanimous agreement regarding the continuity of the city throughout this period.[11] In the early 20th century, the city visibly preserved traces of the ancient urban structure in a considerable proportion, with the inherent structural transformations of its street network and islands, and a typical oriental aspect in terms of architecture.[12]

A devastating fire destroyed almost half of the lower city in 1917,[13] an event promptly perceived as a great opportunity for a new, modern development. Since then, except for the area of the upper city (defined below), the historical city underwent multiple phases of substantial interventions, partially at the level of the street network, but mainly on the built stock level, thus altering its aspect dramatically.[14]

Within the limits of the fortifications,[15] the city is split, from a topographical point of view, between the hilly slopes in the north-east part and the plain area towards the sea.[16] The "upper city" and the "lower city" used in the literature are not always properly defined, thus their meanings may vary. For methodological purposes, I will define the following conventional terms – largely consistent with the already established ones.[17] All mentions within this paper refer to these delimitations (Fig. 1):
— the historical city is the entire area formerly encompassed by fortifications; largely speaking, there were three fortified areas: the main fortification, the harbor area, and the acropolis;[18]
— the lower city is considered here to be the area south-west of Olimpiados St., while the upper

9 John B. Ward-Perkins, *Roman Imperial Architecture* (London: Penguin Books, 1985), 441.

10 The number of ca. 300 ha is predominant in the literature, presumably having the same source (Bastéa and Hastaoglou-Martinidis, "Urban Change," 261; Yerolympos, *Urban Transformations*, 61). The estimation of ca. 250 ha is according to my calculations (Fig. 1, and note 18).

11 Bastéa and Hastaoglou-Martinidis, "Urban Change," 261; Bakirtzis, "The Urban Continuity," 40; Yerolympos, *Urban Transformations*, 61, 88 and 97.

12 For the street network, see Vickers, "Hellenistic Thessaloniki," 157, and Schoenebeck, "Römischen Thessalonike;" on the urban fabric, generally, see Yerolympos, *Urban Transformations*, 11, 14, 98. A more detailed and reliable account on the historical architecture in Thessaloniki, at Vassiliki G. Mangana, "The Commercial Center of Thessaloniki, Greece: Architectural Forms and Significations 1875-1930," *Traditional Dwellings and Settlements Review* 6:2 (1995): 39 *sqq.*, who identified "significant elements of the local Macedonian architectural tradition," but the circumscription of the latter to the broader "oriental" architecture is accountable (*ibid.*). As a pretext for change, the entire aspect of the city was considered oriental (as opposed to the desired westernisation), including the narrow and irregular streets, see *id.*, 49; Bastéa and Hastaoglou-Martinidis, "Urban Change," 263.

13 On the causes and the extent of the event, see Ch. K. Papastathis and Evanghelos Hekimoglou, *The Great Fire of Thessaloniki* (1917) (Thessaloniki: E. N. Manos Ltd., 2010), 12-16. The burnt area was approximated, based on Yerolympos, *Urban Transformations*, 102, at ca. 180 ha - i.e. almost half of the lower city, respectively almost 40% of the historical city (see Section 2 for the topographical delimitations, and Fig. 1 for illustration).

14 Bastéa and Hastaoglou-Martinidis, "Urban Change," 261 *sqq.*; Alexandra Yerolympos, "Thessaloniki before and after Ernest Hébrard," (Thessaloniki: White Tower Museum of Thessaloniki, 2007), 16.

15 On the description of the fortifications, see Bakirtzis, "The Urban Continuity," 39-45, especially n. 48; Kourkoutidou and Tourta, *Byzantine Thessaloniki*, 15-9. More recent hypotheses on the southern and eastern fortification lines are presented on the official webpage of the Galerian complex (visited March 11th, 2023) http://galeriuspalace.culture.gr/en/monuments/teixi/; unfortunately, no bibliographic reference is offered.

16 See the schematic plan of the city from 1784 at Yerolympos, *Urban Transformations*, 35, relevant for the representation of the relief surrounding it properly like a natural theatre.

17 Bakirtzis, "The Urban Continuity," 42, defines the limit between the "lower" and the "upper city" to be Ag. Dimitriou St. While it can be relevant in the orientation within the city, being one of the two main streets connecting the principal city gates, it is not in the delimitation of different configuration patterns of the urban fabric - which is of direct interest here.

18 The main fortification = ca. 250 ha (ca. 190 - the lower city, ca. 60 ha - the upper city), the medieval acropolis = ca. 17 ha, and the harbour area = ca. 16 ha; thus, a total of ca. 280 ha – based on the plan

Fig. 1: Thessaloniki, the main elements and areas mentioned in the paper.
Inside the fortification walls (preserved or demolished, partly after Ćurčić, Architecture in the Balkans, fig. 94, correlated to the satellite image): the two main ancient streets connecting the city gates, [1] Via Egnatia St. and [2] Ag. Dimitrios St.; [3] Olimpiados St. - the arched shaped street to the north, separating [4] the lower city from [5] the upper city; [6] the Acropolis; [7] the historical harbour; [8] the burnt area in the Great Fire of 1917 (based on Yerolympos, Urban Transformations, 102); [9] the palace of Galerius (presumable area, as resulted from this study).

city is the area located north-east of the same street – both referring exclusively to the historical city.

The main difference between the lower and the upper city is visible in the configuration of the urban fabric (Fig. 1, the satellite image layer), as the latter was obviously influenced by the topography.

Via Egnatia and Agios Dimitriou are the two main streets crossing the historical city from west to east, and, in the city's literature, the common denominator when it comes to elements inherited from the ancient street network; this role was actually impossible to ignore, since they were connecting the main gates until the fortifications were partially dismantled in the 19th century.[19]

published by Ćurčić, Architecture in the Balkans, 101, fig. 94, scaled and overlapped on the satellite imagery.

19 City gates and the main streets: Kourkoutidou and Tourta, *Byzantine Thessaloniki*, 19.

Another notable element of configuration – although plainly invisible at a first glance over the modern city's aerial view – is the imperial ensemble of Galerius.[20] This may come as a surprise for the *connaisseurs* of Thessaloniki, because it is usually presented as an archaeological area, not an element in the configuration of the city; it will gradually become apparent why I considered the latter. Like the palaces in Rome, Split, Trier, and other imperial premises,[21] this ensemble once had significant importance in terms of urban and architectural qualities, displaying strength, hierarchy and luxurious monumentality. It occupied a slice of about 20-25 hectares in the eastern margin of the main fortification – that is, more than 10% of the lower city.[22] Today, this site lies beneath dozens of concrete blocks, with only sporadic appearances of a Rotunda, a fragment of what was once an even more impressive triumphal arch, and some remains of other main buildings which were randomly preserved in time – like the Octagon –, or deemed too lavish to build upon once uncovered by the bulldozers.[23]

The Street Network Analysis (Section 3)

Based on the overlapping and interpretation of a historical plan before 1917,[24] and a recent satellite image of the historical city[25] (Figs. 2 and 3), the following types of streets have been identified (Fig. 4):

A. Preserved streets (predominantly old) – present day streets apparently having the same axis and, perhaps, even the footprint as those depicted in the historical plan, with minor interventions of rectification.

B. Rectified streets (hybrid) are considered here to be relatively major interventions made upon the streets, while still preserving them - at least in a sense. Theoretically, the situations range from a partial physical preservation in the current configuration (of the footprint, of the position of the street fronts etc.) – also containing its function –, to the exclusive preservation of the function (the replacing street is located in the immediate proximity, with a different positioning of the axis – usually parallel – and implicitly of the street fronts, but with the same function as the replaced street). I chose to categorize these streets separately because the elements replacing them (as included in *E. New streets*, see below) serve as an indirect testament to a prior configuration rather than constituting an entirely new one with a completely different function.

This category is presented on the plan in the double configuration — old (blue) and new (red) — for both methodological and statistical reasons (i.e. to be easily traceable for further re-evaluation, respectively to allow relevant estimations regarding preservation *versus* change - since they count for both). These hybrid situations (neither predominantly old, neither entirely new) are as follows:

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20 Galerius was emperor between 305 and 311 AD, previously being *caesar* to emperor Diocletian since 293 AD. Perhaps the most famous image of this emperor is seen by millions of tourists in Venice, where the porphyry Portrait of the Four Tetrarchs was installed (as *spolia*) in the façade of St. Mark Basilica.

21 Among the imperial palaces of the six capitals established in the same period, the ones in Thessaloniki and Trier are best represented in terms of architectural preservation; the other four, in Nicomedia, Sirmium, Antioch and Milan, were poorly preserved either in terms of elevation (the first two), or amount (the last two). Without having the status of capital, the Palace of Diocletian in Split is practically part of, and contemporary to the same program - Ward-Perkins, *Imperial Architecture*, 441-442; for the importance of the program, see also Ćurčić, *Architecture in the Balkans*, 32. The imperial palace in Rome: (the same period) *id*., 415 *sqq*., and (generally) Adriano La Regina, *Archaeological Guide to Rome* (Milano: Electa, 2007), 60 *sqq*.

22 At Trier, the complex occupied "many insulae in the north-east part of the town," Ward-Perkins, *Imperial Architecture*, 442.

23 The subject is detailed in Section 4, with the relevant literature.

24 The plan published and interpreted by Michael Vickers in 1972, intensively used in this study, was based on a historical plan dated before 1917 and initially published in 1922 - *The Town Planning Review* IX (1922), pl. 33, *apud* Vickers, "Hellenistic Thessaloniki," 157, n. 3).

25 *Google Satellite* imagery, released in 2016, and obtained with attached georeferenced data via *Quantum GIS*.

Fig. 2: The plan of the city before 1917, overlapped on *Google Satellite* imagery (2016).
(Black: Vickers, "Hellenistic Thessaloniki," fig. 3) The thicker lines on the plan are considered by Vickers to be the Hellenistic street network, of which streets A (Via Egnatia St.) and B (Ag. Dimitrios St) were the ones connecting the main gates of the fortification (see also Fig. 1); the last two eastern streets on the NS direction correspond today to Filippou Dragoumi St. and Arrianou St. (see reference in Section 4). South and south-east to point C is an area affected by a large fire in the late 19th century, followed by programmatic reorganization of the street network (*id.*, 157).

B1. Streets with an offset axis - the direction and function are preserved, but the street fronts are advanced or retracted compared to their previous state. Technically, the footprints of the previous and of the new street could overlap.

B2. Streets with a (slight) change of direction, implicitly a partial change of the axis; the footprints may partially overlap.

B3. Relocated streets, with the same or slightly different direction as previous ones. The new street functionally replaces a previous, physically disbanded street. This category is situated at the limit with the category *D. Lost streets*, hence some situations may be read in both ways.

C. Reminiscences of old (lost) fragments of streets or alleys - I marked these distinctively because they generated elements which are also (remote) witnesses of previous configurations. In these situations, what we see as lines on the plan could be traces of previously built elements,

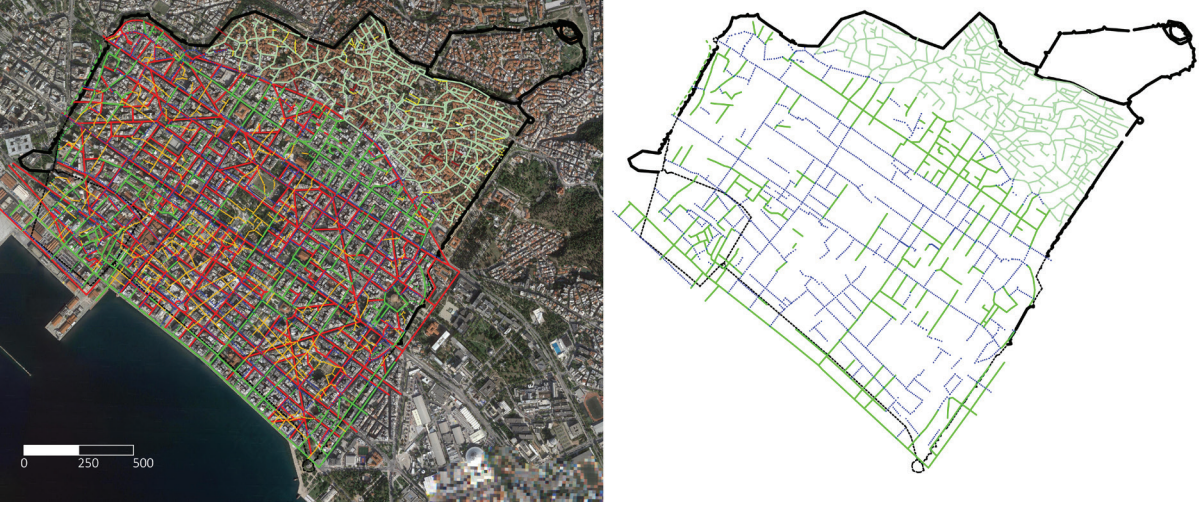

Fig. 3: The street network analysis.
Left: the vectorization of the city plan before 1917 (Vickers, "Hellenistic Thessaloniki," fig. 3), overlapped on the 2016 *Google Satellite* imagery; based on the latter, the red lines are the axes of the streets cut or visibly rectified after 1917. *Right*: Selection of layers - green: preserved streets, blue: rectified streets, illustrating the potential elements to preserve the ancient configuration.

which changed their function (e.g. a building wall which was formerly a fragment in a street or alley front, became the limit between two building blocks).

D. Lost streets - elements which completely disappeared from the apparent configuration (they could still be highlighted archaeologically).

E. New streets category contains the rectified streets (which replace the ones in category B, see above), extensions of existing streets or entirely new streets.

It was often challenging to differentiate between the categories (A and B; B and D; and the two types of E, except for the extensions). This is because, over time, most streets underwent some degree of rectification – whether their fronts were straightened and/or (re)aligned, expanded on one or both side fronts, on smaller or longer lengths, but precisely how that occurred cannot be obvious from this data set only. However, for the purpose of this study, my interest was to highlight the possibly preserved structures of the city's previous/traditional configuration; in this respect, both categories A and B count (as they inherit something from the past), but theoretically, the ones in category A are likely to convey more historical elements than the ones in category B. Likewise, as previously mentioned, some situations of *rectified streets* (B) are at the diffuse border with the *lost streets* (D), therefore also influencing the interpretation of the corresponding new street, situated at the border between *the new, pertaining the hybrid category* (B/E) and *the entirely new* (E).

While being as precise and consequent as possible in my analysis, I must also stress that, regardless of the possible local errors in the interpretation of the street category, the numbers would not differ considerably, nor would the deriving conclusions, as I will further explain.

One important observation based on the numbers in Table 1 is that the total length of the old streets represented in the historical plan is largely the same as the total length of the present-day streets (almost 89,300 meters for the former, compared to ca. 82,500 meters for the latter). This explains why other numbers are similar: ca. 44% of the total streets of the historical plan are preserved, and they represent almost 48% of the current total streets. However, largely half of these are in the upper city, meaning that only a fifth of the lower city preserves the traditional street pattern more or less as is (see their distribution in Fig. 6). As for the streets in the historical plan, about a quarter of them were rectified (according to the categories presented above), another fifth are completely lost (ca. 21%), while segments summing almost 10% may have left some (much smaller) traces in the current configuration. Notably, ca. 95% of the streets in the upper city are old, while in the lower city about 30% can be considered old, until further examination.

		Total			Lower town			Upper town		
		length (m)	%		length (m)	% rel. total	% rel. area	length (m)	% rel. total	% rel. area
A	Old streets, preserved	39.442	44,18	47,79	20.416	22,87	24,74	19.026	21,31	23,05	95,29
B	Old streets, rectified	23.119	25,89	28,01	22.984	25,74	36,74	135	0,15	0,68	
C	Reminiscences of old streets	8.284	9,28		7.830	8,77		454	0,51		
D	Lost streets	18.439	20,65		17.527	19,63		912	1,02		
T1	**Total old streets** (*1)	**89.284**			**68.757**	**77,01**		**20.527**	**22,99**		
E	New streets, including rectified	43.090	52,21		42.149	97,82	67,37	941	2,18	4,71	
E-B	Exclusively new streets	19.971	24,20		19.165		30,63	806		4,04	
A+E	**Total present streets**	**82.532**			**62.565**	75,81		**19.967**	24,19		
	(1) T1 = A+B+C+D										

Table 1. The street network statistics.
Based on the vectorization presented at Fig. 3. Highlights with light grey are relative to the historical configuration, while the dark grey highlights are relative to the new configuration.

The new streets account for largely half of the current street network; however, about half of the new streets are in fact rectifications or replacements of old streets (equivalent to the previous observation that a quarter of the old streets were rectified). Therefore, only a quarter of the current street network is completely new, and most of the corresponding street segments (ca. 98%) were built in the lower city. To sum up the data in round numbers for the lower city, the depositary of the initial Hellenistic / Roman configuration, about one third of the streets are old, one third were rectified, and one third are entirely new (i.e. built in the 20th century).

The archaeological evidence for the ancient street network

Like in most cities, archaeology in Thessaloniki means predominantly rescue excavations. This implies that the sites "are entirely random and are not determined by any investigative plan."[26] Perhaps this, and other bureaucratic aspects as well, is also the explanation for which "it has not been possible to produce [yet] an accurate archaeological map of the city."[27] The conclusions drawn from the archaeological literature are somewhat contrasting to the ones of the scholars dealing exclusively with the modern city (see Section 2):

> "The ancient streets uncovered by rescue excavations frequently coincide with those of modern Thessaloniki. This is understandable in a city that has been continuously inhabited from Antiquity to the present and whose main roads at least were in constant use."[28]

That the modern Ag. Dimitriou St. proved to coincide with an ancient *decumanus* is not surprising for anyone, but the fact that other eight contemporary streets adjacent to it also coincide with ancient streets (*cardines*)[29] is quite significant (Fig. 5).

Out of the nine archaeologically attested street correspondences, my study identified three as "rectified," and the rest as "preserved," compared to the plan before 1917; among the rectified, one has a slight change of direction (thus, type B2), while the other two were difficult to discriminate between the ones with an offset axis (type B1), as assigned, and the ones preserved

26 Bakirtzis, "The Urban Continuity," 40, n. 43, point 1.

27 *Id.*, point 4; although Dēmētrios V. Grammenos, *The Archaeological Museum of Thessaloniki* (Athens: Olkos, 2004), 311, mentions plans for such an endeavour, I couldn't identify whether they were accomplished by now.

28 Bakirtzis, "The Urban Continuity," 42. (Cf. with Yerolympos, *Urban Transformations*, quoted here multiple times, see especially note 35.) In the same study, Bakirtzis continues: "This discovery confirms the view put forward first by H. von Schoenebeck and later by M. Vickers that both before and after the fire of 1917, Thessalonike's street plan more or less followed the Hippodamean grid plan of the ancient city." (*ibid.*)

29 *Id.*, 42-3. The discoveries were made during infrastructure excavation on the main street. The ancient secondary streets (*cardines*) correspond to the contemporary streets named, according to the quoted author: (1) Philota, (2) Aghiou Nikolaou, (3) Sophocleous, (4) Aghias Sophias, (5) Euripidou, (6) Sokratous, (7) Filippou Dragoumi, and (8) Lazou Exarche. Notably, based on the data available in Google Maps, Sokratous St. doesn't intersect Ag. Dimitriou St.; after it was cut by a new diagonal boulevard, the name of the northern segment was probably changed to M. D. Koufitsa St. I'll consider the latter to be the one where the evidence of street continuity was found.

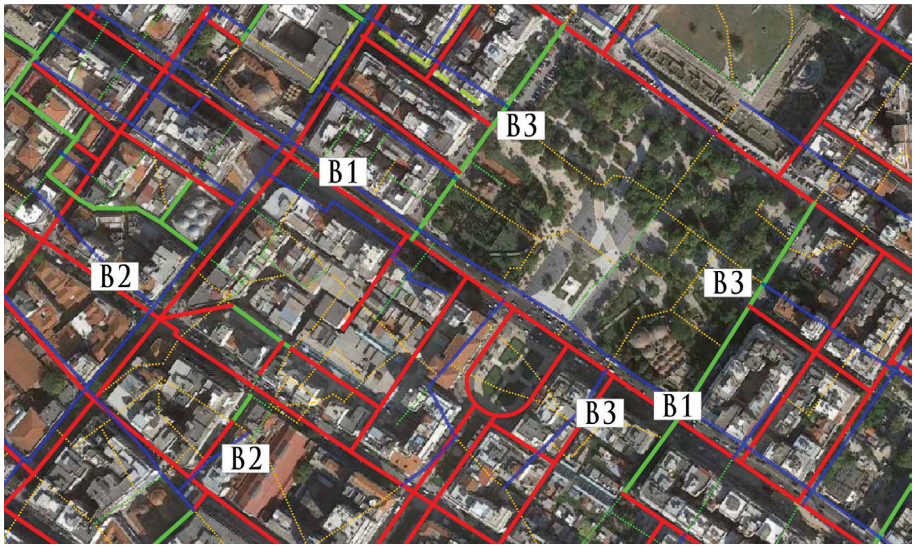

Fig. 4: The typology used in the street network analysis.
Examples of rectified streets, according to the typology in the text, pointed on a fragment of the plan illustrated in Fig. 3-left. Base: *Google Satellite* imagery.
B1 = streets with an offset axis;
B2 = streets with a (slight) change of direction;
B3 = relocated streets. The line codes are as follows: green = old street, preserved; blue = old street, rectified (the old axis); red: new street (newly cut; or rectified, the new axis); dotted green = streets which disappeared but might have left traces in the urban print (alleys, limits of properties, or of buildings); dotted yellow = streets which disappeared without apparent trace in the present footprint.

Fig. 5: Contemporary streets corresponding to ancient streets, mentioned in the text.
Illustrated on a fragment of the plan at Fig. 3 - left; base: Google Satellite imagery.*Left*: (2) Aghiou Nikolaou, (3) Sophocleous, (4) Aghias Sophias, (5) Euripidou. *Right-top*: (1) Philota. *Right-bottom*: (6) Sokratous / M. D. Koufitsa, (7) Philippou Dragoume, and (8) Lazou Exarche. They are all perpendicular on Ag. Dimitrou (one of the main streets, see section 2).

(type A).[30] In respect of the defined typology, Ag. Dimitriou St. was also considered rectified (type B1), because there is an important offset of the street axis between the two sources used (ca. 14 m) – meaning that important alterations of the street profile were implemented in the 20th century, although it was already known to inherit an ancient main street. Overall, this situation theoretically proves two points: (1) that the contemporary orthogonal street grid (corresponding to what is called here "lower city") is practically and largely the same as the one in the historical plan, albeit with some alterations; (2) that while reading the plans of the analysis, it is crucial to consider not only the streets categorized as "preserved" (in green), but also the rectified ones (in the blue-red pairs) for verification of correspondence to the ancient grid.

Other ancient streets coinciding with contemporary ones are known from multiple excavations,[31] but an extensive approach should be the object of a different study; for the purpose of this study, the evidence already presented would suffice.

Before closing this section, it is relevant to note this synthetic evolution of Ag. Dimitriou St., as it was documented archaeologically; presumably, the process would have been similar for others:

> "Beneath the modern street the late Roman and early Christian cobbled or paved road surface of the *decumanus* has been revealed (...). During the late Byzantine period the road was narrowed as large buildings were built on its pavement. In late Byzantine times it had a packed earth surface. It had mostly been destroyed by nineteenth and twentieth-century structures."[32] (I would place emphasis on the twentieth.)

In terms of length, the street network density was preserved compared to the situation documented by the historical plan; obviously, the total footprint of the current streets is larger if we consider only the boulevards. Upon reviewing Fig. 3, it can be asserted to a significant degree that the green streets are likely inherited from the ancient city; some of them are already confirmed by archaeological data. The blue-red street binoms are also a relevant category for potential continuity, but further research is necessary to determine, for each of them, to what extent they were rectified or, conversely, emerged as entirely new streets.[33] Notably, the absence of archaeological data can indeed be put on the account of destruction of such evidence over time, including in the historical periods. Some elements, for example, parallel or perpendicular streets to others which are archaeologically confirmed, can be preliminary considered as being part of the ancient scheme, albeit with reserves until confirmation.

On the other hand, many of the entirely new streets prolonged or connected previous streets, either by paralleling the existing orthogonal system, or by diagonals. Thus, in many ways, the traditional street network dictated, *volens nolens*, the configuration of the newly inserted elements. Another argument pointing in the same direction is that some of the important new streets had the role to visually connect the most important medieval and ancient monuments.[34] The latter could be interpreted as a museumification of the city's primary historical buildings, which is quite an erroneous perspective, since they were obviously not intended to be connected in this manner upon their conception. Yet, we can regard this today as an honest (and now historical) mistake.

In conclusion, it is not fair to imply that the contemporary layout of the historical city is "entirely" indebted to the urbanistic design of the 20th century;[35] in fact, it is the altered and

30 I refer to streets (1) Philota (type B2), (5) Euripidou and (7) Filippou Dragoumi (both type B1).

31 *Id.* 55 *sqq.*; Vickers, "Hellenistic Thessaloniki," 159, with n. 12-13.

32 Bakirtzis, "The Urban Continuity," 42.

33 Presumably a relevant direction is the archival material produced after the fire in 1917, when the devastated area was surveyed by topographers - probably for both purposes of obtaining a precise land register and accuracy for the urban planning operations. For the survey, see Yerolympos, *Urban Transformations*, 106; the names of the survey coordinators at Papastathis and Hekimoglou, *The Great Fire*, 16.

34 Amygdalou, "Building the Nation," 12; Yerolympos, "Thessaloniki before Hébrard," 9; *id.*, *Urban Transformations*, 113.

35 *Id.*, 88: "Modern Thessaloniki, in spite of its anarchical, unplanned growth since the War, still continues to draw the constituent elements of its design from the city plan which was worked out after the Great Fire

here-and-there distorted skeleton of the ancient Thessaloniki, displaying a network of glorious monuments from its past, merged between insanitary high-rise concrete blocks.[36] A historical urban structure of inestimable value, whose previous comprehension rather failed, thus leading to irreversible interventions and significantly altering its coherence and authenticity. The following section will add further arguments to these conclusions.

The Palatial Complex of Galerius (Section 4)

When discussing the palace and the Rotunda of Galerius, it may be necessary to highlight that the terminological variations between "palace," "palace complex," or simply "complex" is rather irrelevant, but also very confusing in the absence of their definition specific for the case. This terminological confusion is widespread among the sources cited below. Therefore, I deliniated "the (palatial) complex" to encompass the entire ensemble from the Rotunda and its surroundings to the sea, thereby also including what is currently designated as the formal "palace"; hence, the Rotunda may be seen as a part of the palace. What I also want to stress is that they were *all part of the same ensemble*, regardless of the terminology we use. It must also be stated that the purpose of this section is not to prove any particular configuration variant, but rather to engage with them in pursuit of my primary goal, which is to highlight the correlation between the traditional urban fabric (according to the corresponding cartographic data) and the ancient structures that it overlapped – structures that are either already documented archaeologically, or presumed. In this area of investigation multiple unknown factors will consistently be part of the equation, therefore any plain and clear version of interpretation should be taken with due caution.

Dated at the beginning of the 4th century AD, the palatial complex of Galerius[37] was built to serve multiple functions, of which I will only mention the most important: pragmatic ones — hosting emperor himself, as well as his court, including the bureaucratic apparatus of his corresponding part of the Empire, as a co-emperor in the Tetrarchy; and the symbolic/ideological function — representing the image of the emperor and of the Empire. The architectural program for such requirements had been implemented and adapted for the past centuries by then in Rome, but also during the same period, in Split and in the other new capitals of the Tetrarchy. Two main characteristics were identified for this program, which are relevant in my construction: (1) it was an ensemble and (2) it was composed of two parts, one dedicated to the public life of the emperor and his apparatus, while the other was the private part.[38] Although I admit it is not certain that

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of 1917. This plan, known as the Hébrard plan, represented a radical intervention in the city's historical evolution process, imposing entirely new spatial patterns in the urban fabric." This quote highlights what this analysis proves to be quite inaccurate, with regard specifically to the configuration of the plan. See also *id.*, 121.

36 This is a subjective assessment based on the contrast between narrow streets and high buildings, which can be seen on most secondary streets; Bastéa and Hastaoglou-Martinidis, "Modernization," 94, 96, 98 hint in the same direction: "(...) the newly designed center featured smaller squares and plots than those in the original plan (...)"; "The notorious increase of the building coefficients in 1956 and 1960 permitted an extensive exploitation of building plots (...) and triggered feverish building activity throughout the 1960s and 1970s"; "(...) tall, anonymous, and unarticulated apartment buildings that destroyed the earlier neighborhoods and turned the streets into dark and narrow passages."

37 Literature on the palace: Jean-Michel Spieser, "Réflexions sur le Palais de Galère à Thessalonique," [Reflections on the Palace of Galerius in Thessaloniki] in *The Emperor's House…*, ed. Michael Featherstone *et al.* (Berlin, Boston: De Gruyter, 2015); Ćurčić, *Architecture in the Balkans*, 19-22; Adam-Veleni, "Thessalonike," 164-168; Bakirtzis, "The Urban Continuity," 57-58 (Late Byzantine phase, and the Octagon); Ward-Perkins, *Imperial Architecture*, 449-454; Michael Vickers, "A Note on the Byzantine Palace at Thessaloniki," *The Annual of the British School at Athens* 66 (1971); see also the official website, http://galeriuspalace.culture.gr/en/.

38 For the palace(s) in Rome, see La Regina, *Rome*, 60-61: "It was Domitian (…) who created the dynastic palace par excellence: this was a wholly new architectural model, consisting of a self-enclosed complex, where the public part and the private were kept sharply separate for the first time (…)". For other examples

this scheme was also applied in Thessaloniki, it would be an error to actually ignore it; therefore, my subsequent approach explores the possibilities that this hypothesis is true.

The bipartite structure north and south of Via Egnatia was identified by some authors (with variants of interpretation),[39] although missing the emphasis on the division between the public and the private parts (which is present in the other better-known examples cited above), while the composition as a whole (again, *ensemble*) was rather neglected. The axis connecting the Rotunda with the Arch, presumably continued further south towards the sea, was indeed mentioned in the already quoted sources (visible as well in the various restitutions of the area), but this was both the beginning and the end of the ensemble approach. An example on how this could be extended is offered below, nevertheless limited to the abovementioned purpose of this paper.

It would make a difference whether the palace ensemble was physically separated from the rest of the city, or only functionally; in the former case, when the palace was functional there should have been some important element(s) of separation, which surely would have left some traces in the urban fabric. In this sens, a secondary (or rather primary) question is *Where were the limits of the palace?* – regardless of their nature, either enclosure[40] or rather permeable[41] (e.g. islands having different functions, simply separated by streets). My analysis does not resolve these issues (which should be addressed, eventually), instead advances the idea that some answers may be suggested by the obsolete traditional urban fabric – implicitly by the historical plan, in substitution for the lost urban fabric.

The site chosen for the palace was located within and next to the south-eastern corner of the fortification, a place presumably less densely occupied in the previous period.[42] The corresponding area had to be adapted to fit the new ensemble, which was "planned and built as a whole, [and] changed the cityscape of Thessaloniki. It necessitated new urban planning (...) and the partial destruction and rebuilding of the city walls."[43] One can only grasp an idea about the size of the intervention by analyzing some theoretical reconstructions of the city and of the site, since the archaeological data itself is too scarce and too spread to speak for its own.

An evolutionary restitution of historical Thessaloniki, of which I have selected the ones before and after the construction of the palace, is suggestive for the intervention at the scale of the city (Fig. 6). These graphic representations are, obviously, hypothetical, although some of the main elements are real (the fortifications – albeit having wrong proportions –, the main street axes, the Agora etc.). In the particular area where the palace of Galerius was built, the restitution indicates

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of bipartite (public and private) compositions for the imperial palaces, see Ćurčić, *Architecture in the Balkans*, 23-24 (Romuliana), and especially 29 (Split): "(…) the planning scheme of Diocletian's town (...) here too the enclosed complex was divided into a basically public (northern) and a basically private (southern) sector. [notably, there was also] (…) a large tetrapylon at the crossroads of the two principal avenues. (…) Such tetrapylons became commonplace in late antique imperial architecture. A number of them, (Antioch, Constantinople, and to an extent also Thessaloniki) were located in front of the entrances to imperial palaces, physically linking the public notion of imperial palaces with the emperor's residence."; *id.*, 63, for the general traits of the program.

39 The two parts seen as *palace and mausoleum* (the Rotunda), but nevertheless an ensemble: Ward-Perkins, *Imperial Architecture*, 449. Ćurčić considers the Rotunda to be part of the palace ensemble, but dated from a later period, see *Architecture in the Balkans*, 19, 22. See also the following note and note 44.

40 On the official website of the ensemble such a boundary was physical: "The Hippodrome was built (...) between the city walls and the east boundary of the palace." The boundary is also visible in the reconstruction (see more images on the website). http://galeriuspalace.culture.gr/en/monuments/ippodromos/. For the original ("self-enclosed") model in Rome, see La Regina, *Rome*, 60. See also the following note.

41 Ćurčić, *Architecture in the Balkans*, 22, suggests that the limits were permeable, like it was in Rome at that time; see also a comparison between the palace in Rome and the one in Split at *id.*, 32, 63.

42 For building 4 in Fig.7: "This area was inhabited before the palace complex was built, as was determined by the building remains of luxurious houses dating to the 2nd and 3rd centuries A.D." http://galeriuspalace.culture.gr/en/monuments/kke/.

43 Laura Nasrallah, "Empire and Apocalypse in Thessaloniki: Interpreting the Early Christian Rotunda," *Journal of Early Christian Studies* 13:4 (2005): 474.

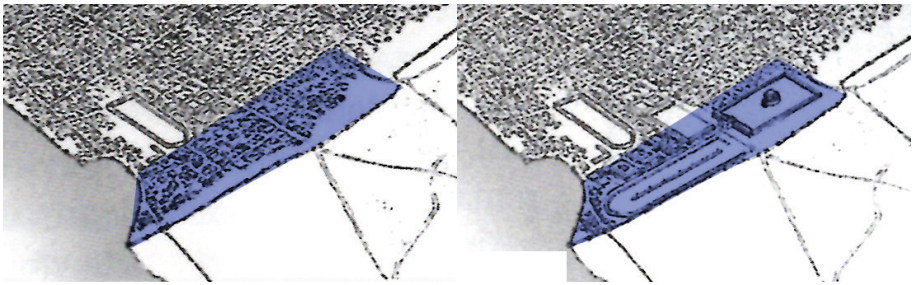

Fig. 6: Restitutions of the city (fragments).
Left: the second half of the 3rd c. AD. *Right*: the end of the 3rd-beginning of the 4th c. AD. A cropped version was preferred because the proportion of the fortification is wrong, thus rendering the palace area less important than it was. Blue: the presumable area affected to the palace (the rectangular square was ignored, in lack of an archaeological reference to it). (After Adam-Veleni, "Thessalonike," 124-125.)

for the previous phase minor buildings in a rarefied distribution, and an unbuilt strip next to the fortification. Thus, the hippodrome was set largely on the previously unbuilt strip, while the rest of the buildings of the ensemble probably required the demolition of the pre-existing buildings (at least in part). The restitution presents the important buildings next to the hippodrome – all pertaining to the palatial ensemble – rather blurry (except the wider rectangular space for which I haven't found the archaeological correspondent); instead suggests an important rectangular precinct for the Rotunda. Obviously, there is no real argument for the shape itself, but the idea of the enclosure – or at least some sort of delimitation – has a point in the light of a theoretical approach, regardless of the functional interpretation of the Rotunda.[44] I will revisit this aspect after a necessary detour.

Another ideal restitution of the palace ensemble is the one presented at Fig. 7 – bottom. It is largely based on archaeological evidence, but obviously not entirely. One conjecture is the presence of a continuous wall between the hippodrome and the rest of the main buildings of the palace, separating them all the way to the sea.[45]Another interpretation is the western delimitation of the palace buildings, rather blurry, by means of one or more streets, having quite an intricate route, continuing with a straight street crossing Via Egnatia St. This latter hypothetical street (*id*., no. 9) is problematic for at least two reasons: it gets too close to the western annexes of the Rotunda (also visible in the restitution: there is a chaotic arrangement of tiny buildings between them, which is unlikely if we consider their representational function),[46] and it has no support in the street network of the traditional city (*id*., top, no. 9). It is true that the archaeological evidence indicates an ancient street fragment right there (*id*., middle, no. 9), but nothing else suggests that it was longer; or maybe it was longer, but before the Rotunda was built. In fact, the archaeological street fragment coincides with a smaller street on the 19th c. plan (a shortcut between Via Egnatia St. and Arrianou St., see no. 10), but it had no continuity south of Via Egnatia St., nor did the longer main street west to it (*id*., top, no. 10). In fact, in this area the plan clearly indicates some "anomalies," compared to the rest of the street network.

44 It was argued that "Although conceived and built in conjunction with Galerius' palace the Rotunda complex belonged to a separate construction project; still, the original Galerian planning did treat the landscape of both temenos and palace as a unified perception (...)," Aristotle Mentzos, "Reflections on the Interpretation and Dating of the Rotunda of Thessaloniki," *EGNATIA* 6 (2001–2002): 60, *apud* Nasrallah, "Interpreting Rotunda," 476-477, n. 25.

45 To be taken with reserves. One is that the walls of the hippodrome, except for the entrances, are a serious delimitation on their own - why another? Second: what would have happened in that long and narrow corridor…?

46 Some authors consider these to be from secondary phases of the Rotunda; likewise, some other authors consider the Rotunda itself to be later; for the discussion on the ensemble I prefer not to take all these details into account and picture a simpler scenario. Either way, when it was built, the Rotunda would have had significant and congruent space around it, for a controlled perception.

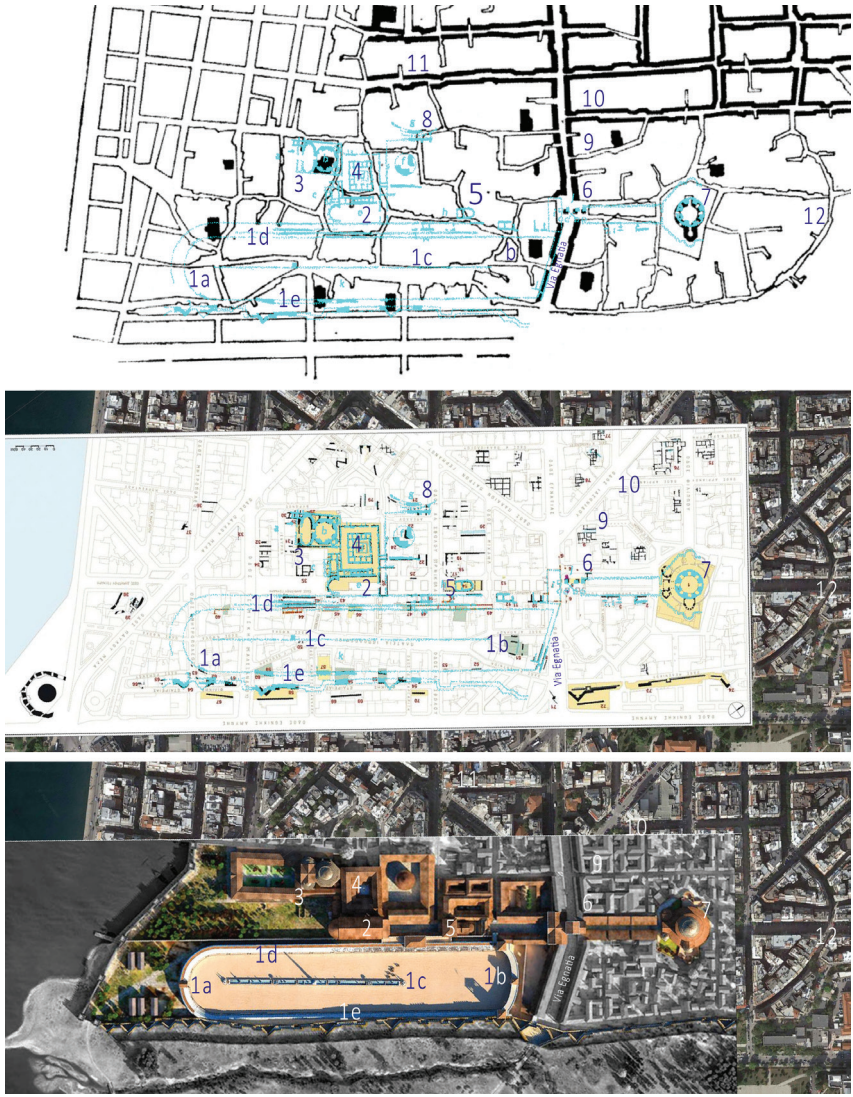

Fig. 7: The Palace of Galerius – spatial analysis of cartographic and archaeological evidence. *Top*: the support is an excerpt from the plan before 1917 (Vickers, "Hellenistic Thessaloniki," fig. 3). Cyan: the plan of Spieser, "Palais de Galère," 20, with the main archaeological discoveries in the area, and suggestions for restitution. *Middle*: the archaeological plan of the area (http://galeriuspalace.culture.gr/en/excavation/; accessed March 10th 2023), presenting with filled black (presumably) all the ancient structures excavated on the various plots in the past decades; the yellow hatch indicates areas open to the public, and the green hatch indicates the disparate elements of the hippodrome identified so far. Overlapped is Spieser's plan (cyan), for conformity. *Bottom*: the ideal restitution of the ensemble, based on the archaeological plan. *Common*: 1, The hippodrome (*circus*) - a = *sphendone*, b = *carceres*, c = *spina*, d/e = seats; 2, Basilica; 3, the Octagon; 4, building with peristyle court; 5, the so-called "apsidal hall"; 6, the Arch of Galerius; 7, the Rotunda; 8, possibly an ancient theatre, (partially) corresponding to a rounded structure in the early modern street network; 9, former street in the historical plan (top), corresponding to an ancient street identified in an archaeological section (middle); 10, Arrianou St., and 11, K. Paleologou St. - variants for the western limit of the ensemble; 12, the arched street indicating a possible delimitation of the ensemble towards North (today, K. Melenikou St.).

Looking back at the plan of the city before 1917 (Fig. 2), one can observe that the streets highlighted by Vickers – i.e., the ones which were presumably part of the Hellenistic street network – have an orthogonal layout with its own anomalies, due to the inherent transformations which occurred in time (some streets were closed, others were opened etc.). Nevertheless, the initial network can easily be restored by simply filling in the blanks. One can also notice that the more-or-less rigorous layout is surrounded by other types of urban fabric – having either a different base topography (the upper city), or a different recent evolution (such as a significant prior fire followed by a programmatic reorganization of the street network, see the indication on the plan). Yet one large area seems to be from a different story compared to all the others, having a rather coherent configuration, albeit irregular: it starts south of Ag. Dimitrios St., and goes all the way to the sea (we should ignore the late 19th century systematization of the shore), while to the west it seems to be delimited by the pair of streets which partially correspond today to Filippou Dragoumi St. and Arrianou St.[47] All this area has the morphology of a lung: it looks like a conglomerate of alveoli with varying shapes, where the streets serve as interstitial elements connecting them. (This is the well-known typical "medieval" urban structure.) But if we look closer and try connecting visually the disparate street segments, it turns out that the base structure is the same orthogonal layout next to it. Hence, what happened there?

If we go back to Fig. 7 – top, where the main archaeological elements of the Galerian palace are overlapped to the historical plan. And what we see there are the following:
— one alveole fits perfectly the basilica (no. 2);
— another alveole fits roughly the building with peristyle courtyard, and some extra corridors or other spaces (no. 4);
— the Octagon (no. 3) occupies half of another alveole - and we don't know what was next to it;
— etc. (This is what we know so far, it could be similar for other alveoli.)

Some smaller buildings, indeed, lost their trace in the later configuration - see the baths, between points 2, 3 and 4, but also the apsidal building at no. 5. Nevertheless, the bigger picture of the ancient city and the configuration of the late 19th century have a lot of things in common. Two other types of common traces can be observed:
— 19th century streets that follow the particular shapes of antique buildings: no. 8, where the modern street coincides with the arched shape of an unidentified building (possibly a theatre);[48] no. 1b, where the western half of the *carceres* coincides with a modern street segment. Yet, curiously enough, this is the only direct trace of the two important arched segments of the hippodrome (ensuing that they were presumably dismantled soon after they went in disuse); conversely, the wide space of the hippodrome generated other types of traces – see next point;
— radial 19th century streets generated by the round antique structures. In the southern part, the *sphendone* (no. 1a) was divided by four streets converging near the center of the arched structure, where a fifth street ran approximately parallel to the *spina* (no. 1c); notably, the median one, towards south (and the sea), used to be a circulation also in Antiquity.[49] Other four streets intersect radially adjacent to the point on the *spina* where the presumed location of an obelisk was identified (in this context, the straight eastern street might have connected to the new streets laid after the demolition of the eastern wall; three historical streets still remain); this latter meeting point of radial streets was the southern end of a place named, quite suggestively, *Prodromi*, in the late 19th century.[50] The elongated piazza continued into the northern part of the former hippodrome, where the flat arch of the *carceres* (no. 1b) was also divided by three streets, while a fourth street was entering the place through the corner.

47 I admit that this interpretation was influenced by the emphasized representation of the presumed Hellenistic streets on Vicker's plan; the real limit can be anywhere in that area, and it may also have varied – both in space (to the north and to the south of Via Egnatia), and time.

48 Ćurčić, *Architecture in the Balkans*, 22.

49 The entrance for the spectators, see also the reconstruction.

50 Michael Vickers, "The Hippodrome at Thessaloniki," *The Journal of Roman Studies* 62 (1972): 25 *sqq.*, with other strong indications for the preservation of the toponym since the Antiquity.

Hence, the palace was configured in the late 3rd – early 4th century AD within a previous and more regular, albeit marginal, urban structure, which was adapted to fit the main volumes of the required buildings, and their important functional and visual connections (corridors, streets etc.).[51] After the palace went out of its initial use, the late antique urban fabric gradually silted, being reoccupied mostly by modest houses, during a period of over a millennium. This is what we can see in the urban fabric of the traditional city, south of Via Egnatia St.

Things are similar north of Via Egnatia St., where the same alveolar system can be seen on the plan of the city before 1917, delimited by the quasi-elliptical Konstantinou Melenikou St.[52]. However, the overall composition here is more straightforward, given the apparent dominance of one central piece – the Rotunda. Everything else was distributed around it, with a notable emphasis on the connection between the Rotunda and the Arch of Galerius. Having this in mind, when revisiting the question of delineating the palace ensemble, we can reexamine the proposed architectural restitution (Fig. 7 – bottom): in the way suggested here, the ensemble ends with the back wall of the Rotunda itself, surrounded by small, disproportionate houses arranged in all the directions. This restitution completely ignores the later urban fabric, and it is obviously not based on archaeological evidence (Fig. 7 – middle). Hence, for this area between Via Egnatia and Konstantinou Melenikou St., this main question arises: What was here in Antiquity, surrounding the Rotunda?, with the sustaining questions: Why does the transformed urban fabric bear such a striking resemblance to the one situated south of Via Egnatia, where the (generic) palace was presumed to be located? Is it possible for the palace ensemble to also contain this large urban fragment? Even if the public/private separation of the ensemble, or even the idea of ensemble itself between the Rotunda and the palace south of Via Egnatia is proven incorrect, the essential compositional challenge persists for the urban area around the Rotunda. Normally, building archaeology may have answered these intriguing questions, albeit in a puzzling manner, if only the traditional urban fabric had survived. It is a pity that the modern development chopped it, although it had completely escaped the Great Fire of 1917. As a form of redress, this study indicates that, regardless of the approach taken, the conjecture of its possible appearance should also integrate the configuration of the urban fabric from the late 19th-early 20th centuries.

The final phrase of Schoenebeck's short study on Roman Thessaloniki is a suitable ending for this section. Note that it was written in 1939, before most of the damage to Thessaloniki was done:[53]

> "It would be desirable that, at least in the last unmodernized parts, the basic features of ancient planning were still somewhat taken into account and preserved. This applies above all to the area surrounding the triumphal arch, the northern boulevard, the circular building [Rotonda] and temenos, and south of the arch the palace[54] and hippodrome, i.e. the representative buildings of Galerius, which, as a magnificent remainder of the Roman city, are almost the only thing we know about it."[55]

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51 Note this observation on the configuration of the palace: "The plan is curiously episodic, suggesting a series of interlocking units rather than a tightly coordinated scheme, but this impression may of course be due to the limited area exposed," Ward-Perkins, *Imperial Architecture*, 450.

52 See Fig. 7, no. 12. The limit may have very well extended beyond this rounded street, but that is less important here. Likewise, whether the limit was an enclosure or not, it is also a matter beyond the purpose of this paper (although it can be certainly stated that if there was any, the enclosure was *not* rectangular - as presented in the restitution at Fig. 6). The area of the ensemble delimited as such would considerably increase, compared to the one considered by recent scholarship. For a similar interpretation of the street network, see the elliptical shaped street in the plan of von Schoenebeck, "Römischen Thessalonike," 481, Abb. 1, as part of the Roman street network (although not explaining its unusual shape; perhaps it was all too obviously related to the Rotonda); in his scenario, the Rotonda was a temple, and the possible limit of the containing alveole (my term, not his) was the *temenos* (*id*., 482).

53 For reference, there is an aerial photograph dated in 1938, see Yerolympos, *Urban Transformations*, 120.

54 Note that he also didn't consider the Rotonda and its surrounding to be part of the palace itself, but rather an adjacent composition to the latter.

55 Schoenebeck, "Römischen Thessalonike," 482.

While his perspective on urban heritage preservation was considerably ahead of Schoenebeck's time, it is disconcerting to see that such recommendations had absolutely no effect.

Conclusions

The analysis in Section 3 indicates that, despite the heavy interventions made in the past century, the street network of the lower city may still preserve important correspondences with the ancient one. It should be reiterated that the "bone structure" of a city, represented by its street network, is arguably the most resilient element it possesses. In Section 4, dedicated to the palace of Galerius, significant arguments were correlated to demonstrate that the urban fabric visible in the early modern historical plan is a great resource for comprehending the ancient architectural ensemble surfaced in the scattered archaeological evidence, still insufficiently understood.[56]

Overall, both sections of analysis are relevant to support the thesis that the traditional urban fabric developed organically from, and upon, the previous Ottoman, Byzantine (or other intermediate phase), and ancient structures is *very* relevant for the configuration of the latter, and *vice versa*. The conclusion can be applied roughly to any ancient/modern city. This implies that, even in the unfortunate cases where bulldozers were the rule in the past century, data can be retrieved by means of complementary sources, particularly historical city plans. This study also advocates for using these plans to their true potential - which also implies understanding the incredible value of the urban fabric they represent, including the minor one, surrounding the major buildings. Obviously, in the fortunate cases where this traditional fabric still stands, it is imperative for its value to be reassessed, and to preventively consider its potential of integrating ancient structures.

Another result of this study is that structures displaying irregular patterns (clearly indicating previous orthogonal street networks) are also of significant interest. The intricate elements of an apparently irregular street network may also have something to say – either this was a wider place abandoned, by shape maybe a *circus* – hence people settled in it random when they ran out of space; or some important, but atypical urban structures were in this area, maybe a palace. Hence, contrary to some preconceived ideas circulating at all academic levels for quite a long time now, the Roman cities which expanded and adapted over many centuries are not made exclusively out of regular urban fabric. Consequently, it can be deduced that the irregular urban fabric is not limited solely to the medieval city, let alone when it overlaps an ancient one.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS:

I am grateful to the two reviewers for the effort of reading my paper, especially for the side comments on the manuscript that helped me improve the overall argumentation. Many thanks to the editors for their perseverance and flexibility towards publishing this study.

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56 This idea of tracing an ancient street network by "reading" it on a modern city plan was apparently implemented for the first time by J. Sauvaget, see Vickers, "Hellenistic Thessaloniki," 158, and notes.

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