

The monopteroi in the west precinct of Diocletian's palace at Split

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Upon his abdication in A.D. 305, Diocletian returned to his homeland, Dalmatia, where he resided until his death in 311/312. Uncertainty still surrounds the exact dates of the construction of Diocletian's vast retirement palace at Split. Recent scholarship assigns the beginning of construction to 295.¹ Many unfinished details in the Palace perhaps indicate that the work came to a premature halt upon Diocletian's arrival in 305. This paper examines the two small round buildings in the W precinct of Diocletian's palace. A reexamination of the literary and archaeological evidence raises doubts about the conclusion drawn previously by J. Marasović, that the two buildings were small peripteral temples.

South of the junction of the *cardo* and *decumanus* are three architectural ensembles (fig. 1).² The Peristyle commands the central position and provides an extension of the axis of the *cardo*. Two precincts open onto the Peristyle from the east and west, creating a powerful axial arrangement. The E precinct houses the imposing centralized structure identified as the Mausoleum. The W precinct houses three structures. The rectangular building, identified as the Temple of Jupiter,³ dominates the space by its size, its disposition within the precinct, and by its lavish and expertly carved ornamentation. The remains of two additional structures in the W precinct, both small and circular in plan, were revealed in clearing operations conducted in 1957.⁴ The two small round buildings lie 10 m to the NE and SE of the Temple of Jupiter, a configuration which remains unprecedented in Roman architecture. The two round buildings create a symmetrical configuration within the W precinct and give emphasis to the powerful axial alignment of the structures that comprise the center of gravity of the Palace.

1 J. and T. Marasović, *Diocletian Palace* (Zagreb 1968) 9. For comprehensive bibliography on the Palace see J. J. Wilkes, *Diocletian's Palace. Split: residence of a retired emperor* (Sheffield 1986); and S. McNally, *Diocletian's Palace. American-Yugoslav Joint Excavations V* (Minneapolis 1989).

2 A scaled plan of the Palace incorporating evidence to date has not yet been published.

3 Controversy has long surrounded the identification of the rectangular temple. Early accounts of the Palace (discussed *infra*) associate the temple with Aesculapius, Cybele or Janus. T. Marasović ("A new book on Diocletian's Palace," *JRA* 2 [1989] 376) supports the association with Janus. H. Kähler argued that the temple was dedicated to the ruler cult of Diocletian ("Zur Datierung des Sarkophags von Manastirine," *Mullus Festschrift Th. Klauser* (JbACErg. 1 [1964] 175); and *Der römische Tempel* [Berlin 1970] 32). An examination of architectural settings for the imperial cult refutes Kähler's claim that the temple at Split served such a function. See especially S. R. F. Price, *Rituals and power: the Roman imperial cult in Asia Minor* (Cambridge 1984) 136 f; I. Kalavrezou-Maxiener, "The imperial chamber at Luxor," *DOP* 29 (1975) 230 and 250; and U. Monneret de Villard, "The Temple of the Imperial Cult at Luxor," *Archaeologia* 95 (1953) 98 ff.

Based on the strength of the Jupiter cult during the Tetrarchy, an early account of a statue of Jupiter removed from the Palace, the "temple style" and the iconography of the architectural ornament, and the disposition of the structure, this author identifies the temple unequivocally as one dedicated to Jupiter. For an in-depth discussion of this argument see J. C. Mannell, *The architectural ornament of Diocletian's Palace at Split* (Diss., Univ. of Minnesota 1992) 11-13 and ch. 8.

4 These explorations predated the scientific recovery and documentation of archaeological data conducted in the joint excavations begun in 1967. No full publication on the remains of the round buildings exists. For references to the round buildings, see J. Marasović *et al.* (edd.), *Diocletian's Palace. Report on Joint Excavations in southeast quarter*. Part One (Split 1972) 5; J. and T. Marasović in *Urbs* 4 (1961-62) (Split 1965) 150; Marasović (*supra* n.1) 19-20; T. Marasović, *Diocletian's Palace* (Belgrade 1982) 120-23; McNally (*supra* n.1) 24-25; T. Marasović (*supra* n.3) 376; and J. Mannell in *AJA* 97 (1993) 327-28.