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Enthymesseis (memories) and semiomata (historical notices) in monastery codices

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НА ЦЕНТЪРА ЗА
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ВИЗАНТИЯ И СЛАВЯНИТЕ
BYZANCE ET LES SLAVES

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SCIENTIFIQUE
INTERNATIONALE
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ENTHYMESSEIS (MEMORIES) AND *SEMIOMATA* (HISTORICAL NOTICES) IN MONASTERY CODICES.

VASSILIS KATSAROS – CHARALAMBOS PAPASTATHIS

We will try to treat briefly a subject that seems to be quite vast. Our intention is not to exhaust either the subject or the audience of this Conference, for which we warmly thank Professor Axinia Dzurova for her kind invitation. Our topic is part of a research project entrusted to us by the Aristotle University of Thessaloniki. It concerns the contents of the manuscript codices of the Monastery of St. John Prodromos of Serres, which are, obviously, extremely important for the history of Serres and the wider area, and since many years preserved in the Center Dujčev.

The learned monk Christophoros Demetriades, in his exquisite book on this Monastery [«Προσκυνητάριον τῆς παρά τάς Σέρρας Ἱερᾶς Σταυροπηγιακῆς καί Πατριαρχικῆς Μονῆς τοῦ τιμίου Προδρόμου», published in 1904], has described the contents of the archives and the inscriptions existing at the Monastery at the beginning of the twentieth century. We have the information that a new edition of this valuable book is under way.

Christophoros Demetriades mentions:

1) **Two "ancient codices on paper"**. These are of course the famous cartularies A and B, "monuments of the history of Serres during the Middle Ages", according to Professor André Guillou.

2) **Three "original membrane chrysobulls issued for the Monastery"**, which do not seem to be extant.

3) **Five "original membrane patriarchal sigillia"**, which also do not seem to be extant.

4) **"A great many Firmans"** issued by various Sultans, which have not been detected as yet.

5) **Five "codices of charity and donations by pilgrims"** for the years :
   a) 1728-1761
   b) 1761-1782
   c) }
   d) } from 1780 to 1797, in one of which donations were registered until
   e) } 1840.

6) **Four codices of yearly accounts:**
   a) from September 1772 to September 1806;
   b) from 1807 to 1864, where are registered, at its beginning, the valuable objects, the estates and the debts of the Monastery;

c) from 1864 to 1865, where similar items and official minutes are registered, and

d) from 1885, May 1st onwards, with similar contents.

7) "Other codices containing copies of the most official documents of the Monastery, starting from the year 1820 onwards".

8) "Various inscriptions copied or still extant", and

9) The ancient codex of the Holy Metropolis of Seres containing, among other dating from 1604 to 1834, some documents pertaining to the Holy Monastery".

Christophoros writes in his account that "from these authentic and excellent sources has been drawn the history of our Holy Monastery". His effort and his contribution are undoubtedly precious and unique. Nevertheless, modern research requires:

a) to collect all items of information without personal criteria of evaluation;

b) to edit the sources with a commentary;

c) availability of the texts, so that scholars may have access to them at all time in order to draw information from, or offer a new approach of the authentic documentary sources.

Christophoros further adds: "We have preferred to shed little or no light on some periods [of the Monastery's history] … rather than to light them through hypotheses and presumptions". This statement by a monk of that time is surprising.

Still, what picture do we really have of these periods?

A great lacuna exists between Christophoros' and our time. Sources have disappeared and the question marks grow bigger. We certainly wish to be able to consult the texts and find out on what information he learned and which one he by-passed or omitted.

Information is the term which sums up and is at the epicenter of our interest today: What is information, how is it controlled, how is it evaluated. The discussion is –and has always been–, interesting. Sometimes it is useful to one scientific field or irrelevant to some other.

We focus on History, since all other fields served by those here present are used as its accessories. Philology may search for traces of the language, for texts with a certain color or emotional tones that would touch the sensitive heart, because it is the most pure expression of human sciences. A friend once –at a symposium on Serres–, complained that the reports did not touch matters of everyday life, as represented in the written sources. This is Micro-history, focused on a given place and population, at a given time, for which there may be or not information. It is none the less our duty to collect every tiny bit of it.

In the case of Serres and its region, the Monastery of Prodromos is the central source of information. The city itself would have been, if more documentary sources –similar to the ottoman registers or the Chronicle of Papasynadinos–, were available. Thus, the contents of the codices of the monastery must be approached with patience, curiosity for the slightest detail and, of course, hope.

The scope of our search could be broadened with such questions as:

- What kind of people visits the Monastery? Men, women, children; old, young, rich, poor; Bulgarians, Greeks, Turks, Armenians; pious, generous , etc.

- Where do they come from? Nearby or faraway? Which countries, boroughs or villages?

- What do they donate to the Monastery? Aspres? Gross? Articles of worship, icons, candles? Fields, cattle and sheep?

We could even ask less glorifying questions, as:

- How much did an oil lamp and its indefinite burning before the Baptist's icon cost two hundred years ago?

- To how much did the Monastery collect on its yearly feast day? What were its expenses and its debts?

- What did it spend on *djereme* (indemnity for real or fictitious wrongdoings), *bachtshish* (tips) and various financial charges? How much did a trip to Constantinople cost in those days?

In the effort to answer these questions we may better understand why the contents of the codices present such a great interest. Exactly because it reflects the micro-history of society at that time. This is evidenced by the fact that inscriptions recorded in the codices are not preserved in the Monastery, as archaeologists and engineers witness today.

The codices of the Prodromos Monastery in Serres contain texts of the following categories:

1) Imperial and Patriarchal acts; Turkish, ecclesiastical and private documents –such as minutes, agreements and other documents of private transactions.

2) Letters **from**, to and for the Monastery.

3) Regulations issued for the functioning of the Monastery or its school.

4) Documents issued by the Land Record Office, claims of property within the Serres region or outside of it concerning *metochia*, i.e. monastic dependencies.

5) Last but not least, there are to be found **historical notices** (of the βραχέα χρονικά type) and statements (ἀναγραφές) in financial records («κατάστιχα»), which, according to our late and well-remembered Teacher Linos Politis, "are most precious texts".

We will not endeavor to describe further the inner treasures of the codices of the Prodromos Monastery. May we just add that the results of the research project related to these codices will be published in separate units of documents, according to the categories described above. Shortly, we hope, we will publish the **historical notices** (χρονικά σημειώματα) from the registers (κατάστιχα) of the years 1760-1806, editing all the available material we have.

A list of all the precious items and articles of worship mentioned in the codices will be published next. This will enable us to find out what did exist and which of these are still preserved at the Monastery.

Last, a third publication will comprise all the land records preserved for the period going from the middle of the eighteenth to the end of the nineteenth century.

All these are texts of immense bearing to the history of the region. Names of people, places and localities; activities and relationships pertaining to the area, all constitute big or tiny pieces that will help reconstruct the puzzle of social, economic and cultural life in the town of Serres, its region and its once thriving monastery.

The Days of St. Emperor Constantine and Helena

NIŠ AND BYZANTIUM

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Stavros Gouloulis
Vassilis Katsaros

THE ROTUNDA OF THESSALONIKI:
A NEW INTERPRETATION OF THE MOSAIC DECORATION*

The Rotunda of Thessaloniki, its architecture, its mosaic decoration, its inclusion or not in the imperial complex of Galerius, the purpose of its foundation, have troubled and still do a large number of scholars[1]; [**Fig. 1**] this is confirmed by two recently elaborated works: the study by professor N. K. Moutsopoulos on the "archaeological research and restoration of the monument"[2] and Ch. Bakirtzis' monumental work "The mosaics of Thessaloniki", on the presentation and interpretation of the mosaic decoration[3].

Even if the research has showed great interest in the monument, the big issues, like first of all the identity of the monument, the initial use and the conversion into a place of Christian worship, but mainly the interpretation of the iconographic program of its decoration as a whole, still remain doubtful and vague, so that every interpretative proposal represents only the views of the researchers that express it.

The initial conception for the foundation of the Rotunda is in practice connected with the imperial complex of Galerius, a view accepted by the majority of scholars, especially after the research of G. Velenis for the restoration and function of a tetrapylon, the famous Arch of Galerius[4]. The Rotunda constitutes a continuation of the initial ensemble of the palaces and is being incorporated in the actualization plans of the emperor's vision, who, after his win at the

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1 * This paper is an introduction to a more extensive forthcoming study about the problems of identity of the monument and interpretation of its iconographical program.

M. Cr. Carile, *The Vision of the Palace of the Byzantine Emperors as a Heavenly Jerusalem*, Fondazione Centro Italiano di Studi sull' alto Medioevo, Spoleto 2012, 49-99, with the complete bibliography.

2 Ν.Κ. Μουτσόπουλος, *Η Ροτόντα του Αγίου Γεωργίου στη Θεσσαλονίκη. Αρχαιολογική έρευνα και αναστήλωση του μνημείου* (ed. Β.Κ. Κατσαρός), Θεσσαλονίκη 2013.

3 Χαρ. Μπακιρτζής (ed.), *Ψηφιδωτά της Θεσσαλονίκης 4ος-14ος αιώνας*, Καπόν, Αθήνα 2012, 51-127.

4 G. Velenis, Some Observations on the original Form of the Rotunda in Thessaloniki, *Balkan Studies*, 15 (1974), 298-307.
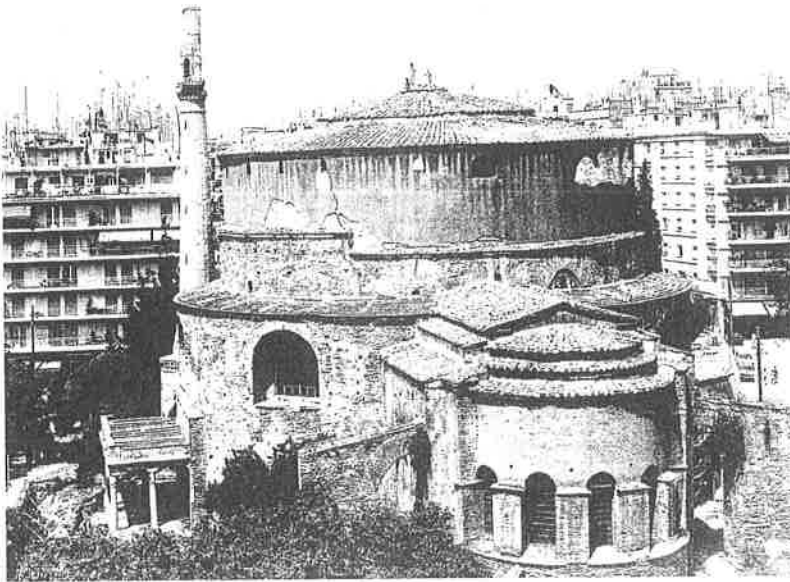
Fig. 1. Rotunda, exterior view (photo: N.K. Moutsopoulos).
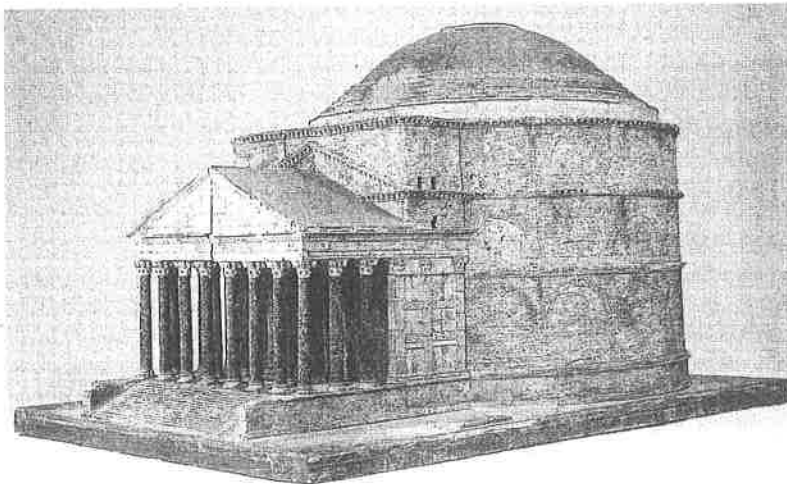
Сл. 1. Ротонда, изглед споља (фото: Н.К. Муцопулос)

Fig. 2. Pantheon, exterior view (model Chichi, 1782). G. Sperling, Das Pantheon in Rom. Abbild und Mass des Kosmos, Neuried, 1999, p. 5.

Сл. 2. Пантеон, изглед споља (модел Chichi, 1782.). G. Sperling, Das Pantheon in Rom. Abbild und Mass des Kosmos, Neuried, 1999, p. 5.

war against the Persian Empire (297/298 AD), feeling the power and having financial prosperity derived from the riches of the loots, undertook building activity, wishing to highlight Thessaloniki as the new capital city of the eastern roman state[5]. Consequently, Rotunda was designed, in the framework of this building program, as a sacred place of imperial worship, a rounded building of large dimensions, in imitation of the pattern of the famous Pantheon of Rome. Indeed, the Rotunda of Thessaloniki is the biggest circular-domed building after Pantheon.

The Pantheon of Rome, as a sacred foundation, was identified with the imperial worship at the capital city of the empire. It was realized by Agrippa (27-25 BC) to honor Augustus and from the start it was build on the basis of a new building program, which was designed and started by Traian and completed by Hadrian (ca. 115-125 AD). [**Fig. 2**] The Pantheon was not dedicated

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5 Sl. Čurčić, *Some Observations and Questions Regarding Early Christian Architecture in Thessaloniki*, Υπουργείον Πολιτισμού - Εφορεία Βυζαντινών Αρχαιοτήτων Θεσσαλονίκης, Θεσσαλονίκη 2000, 10-18. Sl. Čurčić, *Architecture in the Balkans from Diocletian to Süleyman the Magnificent*, Yale University Press, New Haven and London, 2010, 18 ff, 53-54, 69 ff.

Fig. 3. Rotunda,
Mosaic of the cupola.
Ch. Bakirtzis (ed.),
Ψηφιδωτά της
Θεσσαλονίκης, 4ος-
14ος αιώνας, Καπόν,
Αθήνα 2012, p. 113.

Сл. 3. Ротонда,
мозаик на куполи,
Ch. Bakirtzis (ed.),
Ψηφιδωτά της
Θεσσαλονίκης, 4ος-
14ος αιώνας, Καπόν,
Αθήνα 2012, p. 113.
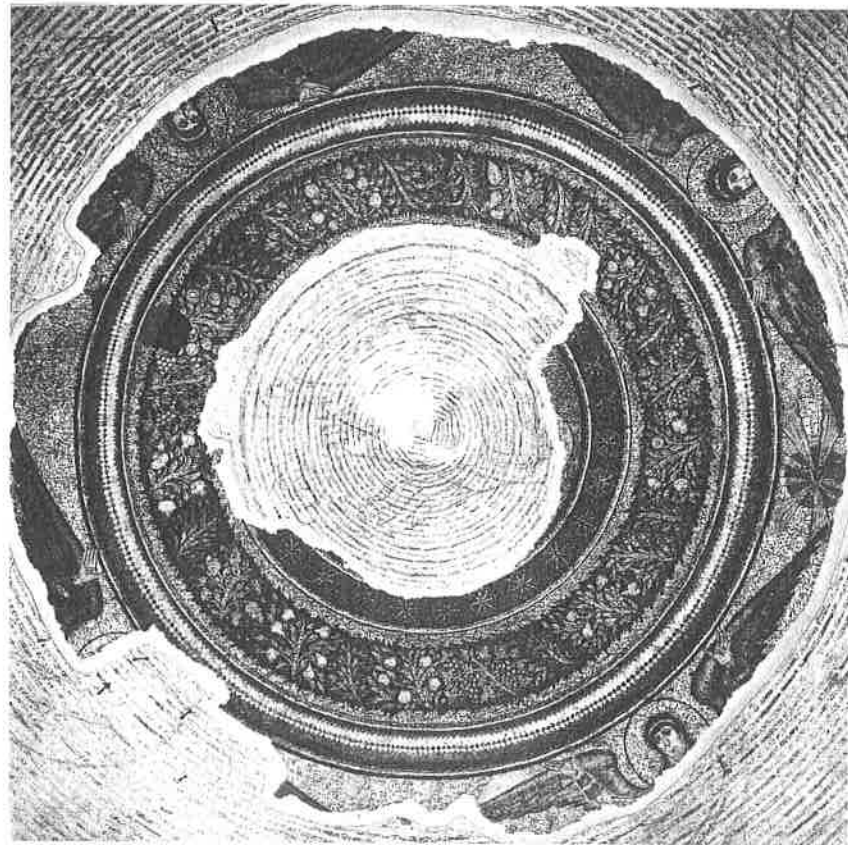
only to the Twelve Gods (Dodekatheon), but to the universal, to the pantheon of the universe, as was expressed by Jupiter's will, the ultimate god-governor of the global roman state, that wanted to highlight the cosmocrat Rome and its leader, the emperor, as masters of the universe. This holy shrine had been connected with the imperial presence. It was used for club's ceremonies, such as the collegium *Fratres Arvales*, the priestly college which was originated from Romulus, and for other attendances of the emperor. It can also be referred here, the presence of Hadrian in public trials and the monument represented whatever the most known sanctuary of the Antiquity or later of the Christian world represented[6].

The renovated imperial worship during the period of the Tetrarchy in the face of Galerius, felt the need to be expressed through the creation of a proportional holy place in a city, which was across Olympus, the mythical residence of Zeus and the (olympian) pantheon of the twelve gods. For Galerius, son of a priestess of gods of his fatherland's mountains, it was natural to honor polytheism (the gods Zeus, Mars, Dionysus-Alexander and Romulus, Apollo). He believed that he belonged to the generation of the Jovius emperors of the Tetrarchy[7]. Therefore, it was natural to incorporate the Rotunda in the total build-

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[6] K. de Fine Licht, *The Rotunda in Rome: A Study of Hadrian's Pantheon*, Copenhagen 1968, especially 181-186 (sources), 186-187. W.L. MacDonald, *The Pantheon. Design, Meaning and Progeny*, Harvard University Press, Cambridge MA. ²2002. G. Sperling, *Das Pantheon in Rom. Abbild und Mass des Kosmos*, Heinz Essmann GMBH, Ars Una, Neuried, 1999.

[7] O. Nicholson, The Wild Man of the Tetrarchy: A divine Companion for the Emperor Galerius, *Byzantion* 54 (1984), 253-275. S. Dušanić, Imitator Alexandri and Redditor Libertatis, *The Age of the Tetrarchs*, ed. Dr. Srejović, Belgrade, 1995, 76-98. Θ. Στεφανί-
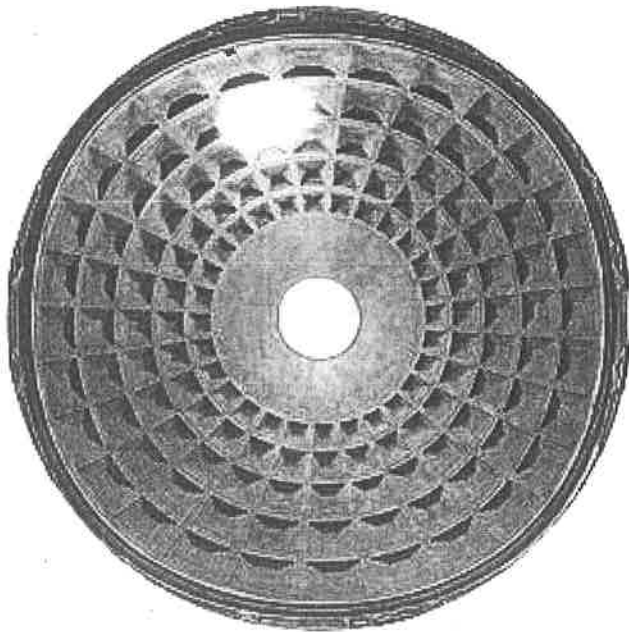
Fig. 4. Pantheon, Dome, panels.

Сл. 4. Пантеон, купола.

ing program of the roman palace at Thessaloniki, as a holy place to serve the imperial worship. The reconstruction of such a sanctuary expressed the conception that composed its political ideology and intention to support the "old religion" which was lurching. Moreover, Galerius was the architect of great persecution against the Christians, the most vivid originator and the most fanatic persecutor (303/304 AD and afterwards).

The sanctuary of the imperial worship in Thessaloniki was built from the beginning on uncovered ground, which was designed on the etching of the urban tissue of the imperial palace, but it was placed higher, so that it would be distinguished from the rest of the ensemble. Although it was decided that it would be connected also with the road that marked the axis East-West, with an official porch, the quadruple bow, on which, on the one hand, the gathering of the Gods, with prime mover Zeus, was imprinted and, on the other, the power of the Empire in military win force, i.e. the triumph of Rome against the powers of the East, whose submission was imprinted on the monument facing to the portico entrance of the Rotunda, the tetrapylon-arch of Galerius, in front of the gate where the road to the East would begin[8]. So the region of the holy place of the imperial worship used to define in real and symbolic level the starting point of the Galerian, tetrarchic, "Drang nach Osten".

We should not forget that imperial ensemble and also the region of the Rotunda were built on a military region (campus martius, today Κάμπος)[9], as also happened in the case of the Pantheon of Rome, which was built on the Campus Martius. This choice refers to the imperial power by force. The historic

δου-Τιβερίου, *Το μικρό τόξο του Γαλερίου στη Θεσσαλονίκη*, Βιβλιοθήκη της εν Αθήναις Αρχαιολογικής Εταιρείας αρ. 151, Αθήναι 1995, 73-74, no. 264, 77, with bibliography.

8   G. Velenis, Architektonische Probleme des Galeriusbogens in Thessaloniki, *Archeologischer Anzeiger*, 1979, 249-263, abb. 16. A. Mentzos, Reflections of the Interpretation and Dating of the Rotunda of Thessaloniki, *Εγνατία* 6 (2001-2002), 57-80, 60-61. N. Μουτσόπουλος, *Η Ροτόντα του Αγίου Γεωργίου*, 152-153, 254-255.

9   M. Vitti, *Η πολεοδομική εξέλιξη της Θεσσαλονίκης από την ίδρυσή της ως τον Γαλέριο*, Βιβλιοθήκη ΑΑΕ αρ. 160, Αθήνα 1996, 112-113, 114-115. For Kampos (19th century) and its relation with Campus martius cf. Π. Νίγδελης, Η οικογένεια των ιταλικών Auli Avii στη Θεσσαλονίκη: Με αφορμή μία νέα δίγλωσση αναθηματική επιγραφή, *Τεκμήρια* 1 (1995) 47-65, σ. 55-56, σημ. 24, with bibliography. E. Μαρκή, *Η Νεκρόπολη της Θεσσαλονίκης στους Υστερορωμαϊκούς και Παλαιοχριστιανικούς χρόνους (μέσα του 3ου έως μέσα του 8ου αι. μ.Χ.)*, ΥΠΟ-ΤΑΠΑ, αρ. 95, Αθήνα 2006, 41.
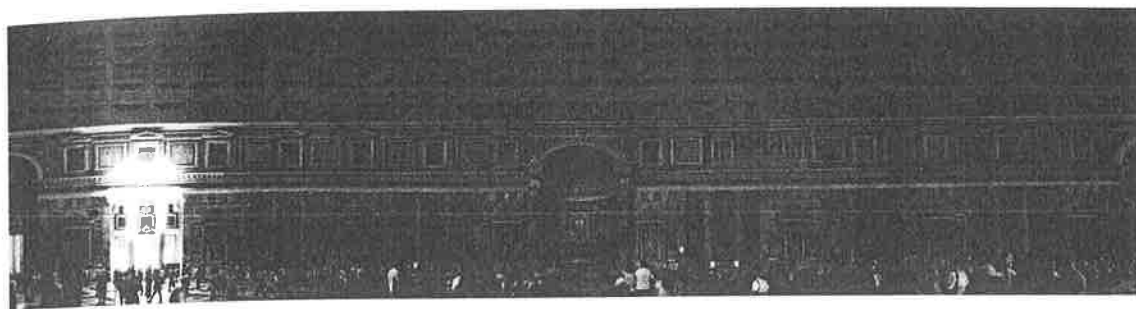
Fig. 5. Pantheon, Attica zone. G. Sperling, Das Pantheon, p. 65.

Сл. 5. Пантеон, зона поткровља. G. Sperling, Das Pantheon, p. 65.

route of things changed almost ten years later for the roman empire and its new political ideology, when Constantine decided to apply the program of coexistence of religion and politics under one single empire of East and West, with the face of the one and only leader and anchor the "new army" of the East serving as a guarantor. Since 317 BC, Thessaloniki was on the hands of Constantine; he lived here during 322-323 and his son Crispus used its harbor as a springboard, with his battle worthy fleet.[10] Certainly, the presence of Constantine at the city connects him with the palatial complex but also with the problem of the existence of Rotunda.

It has been suggested that Rotunda is a building of Constantine, with the purpose to be used as his mausoleum[11]. This new perspective of the identity of the monument, disconnects it from the whole Galerian building program. But this opinion encounters a series of arguments that weaken its support and acceptance. Would it be possible for a loyalist emperor to annex so spontaneously a monument like Rotunda, that expresses with its size a policy of the Tetrarchy? Did he had a legal right to transform it to a private property? The burial ensembles, especially of the Tetrarchy, were located outside the cities. Even the so-called Tor Pignattara, which is considered to be his mausoleum in Rome and where his mother Helene was buried, follows this rule[12]. Could Constantine cut the symbolic presence of the monument from the imperial ideology of Rome in an era when he was attempting to contribute to the unification of East and West? The answer to the problem of Constantine's involvement to the matter of Rotunda is that he, being respectful to the traditional roman ideology, could attach a new meaning to the old values. This transformation is being recognized

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[10] T.D. Barnes, *Constantine and Eusebius*, Harvard Univ. Press, Cambridge Massachusetts - London, 1981, 67. T.D. Barnes, *The New Empire of Diocletian and Constantine*, Harvard University Press, Cambridge Massachusetts, London, 1982, 69, and not. 99, 72-76, 82. Θ. Στεφανίδου-Τιβερίου, *Το μικρό τόξο του Γαλερίου*, 57, 102, with bibliography. Γ.Ι. Θεοχαρίδης, *Ιστορία της Μακεδονίας κατά τους Μέσους χρόνους (285-1354)*, Θεσσαλονίκη 1980, 82-86.

[11] The initial proposal is of Sl. Ćurčić, *Some Observations*, 11-13, who dates the mosaics in the period of Theodosius I. Ch. Bakirtzis - P. Mastora, Are the Mosaics in the Rotunda into Thessaloniki linked to its Conversion to a Christian Church?, *Niš and Byzantium*, IX (2011), 33-45. Χαρ. Μπακιρτζής (ed.), *Ψηφιδωτά της Θεσσαλονίκης*, 115-117· their arguments for a dating of the mosaics in the period of Constantine are accepted.

[12] A. Mentzos, Reflections of the Interpretation and Dating of the Rotunda of Thessaloniki, *Εγνατία* 6 (2001-2002), 57-82, 61. Cf. Sl. Ćurčić, *Some Observations*, op. cit.

Fig. 6. San Vittore, Cupola.
G. Mackie, Symbolism and .
Purpose in an Early Christian
Martyr Chapel: The Case of
San Vittore in Ciel d' Oro,
Milan, Vol. 34, no 2 (1995), pp.
91-101, fig. 1.

Сл. 6. Сан Виторе, купола.
G. Mackie, Symbolism and
Purpose in an Early Christian
Martyr Chapel: The Case of
San Vittore in Ciel d' Oro,
Milan, Vol. 34, no 2 (1995), pp.
91-101, fig. 1.

at the iconographic program of decoration of the preexisting building with mo-
saics, a program which alone can be attributed to Constantine's initiative. The
classicistic style and the iconographic elements of the mosaics refer to an early
era and indicate a first expression, a primitive program in which the new official
imperial Christian art is being formulated. The pagan elements and the new
Christian symbolisms should be examined all together under the "new univer-
sal ideology", which was expressed from that moment by the roman-christian
emperor. Constantine was already in a position to realize such an iconographic
program in a building, which was already constructed by Galerius.

The iconographic program of the mosaics is familiar and it is not going to
occupy us, except from the parts that constitute starting points for the interpreta-
tion of the whole program. According to the real data at the top of the cupola,
a dominant figure, dressed in white, seems to hold at the one hand a cross or a
rod or a cruciform rod, while the other hand is free and in a prayer position. To
that figure they turn all the other figures which are depicted in a circular provi-
sion. Everything depends on the identity of this enigmatic figure, from the move
that achieves on the air with orientation to the axis East-West, a direction that
indicates Christian substance, without the abolition of the axis North-South that
the Galerian building used to have, according to the model of Pantheon of Rome
(main axis South to North).

The representation of the figure of Christ has dominated the research and
the interpretation of the whole composition of the program was attributed as a
primitive triumph composition or as the Second Coming, more or less an ide-
alistic variation on an imperialistic ritual[13]. Indeed, the latest studies, by Char.
Bakirtzis and Pelli Mastora, tend to suggest that the enigmatic face depicted on
the top of this ritual is the figure of Constantine himself, which incarnates his
apotheosis, as the carrier of the new imperial ideology. [**Fig. 3**]

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13   H. Torp, Les mosaïques de la Rotonde de Thessalonique: l' arrière fond conceptuel
des images d' architecture, *Cahiers Archéologiques*, 50 (2002), 3-20, with bibliography. M.
Cr. Carile, *The Vision of the Palace*, 49 ff.

Fig. 7. San Vittore, Cupola.
G. Mackie, Symbolism and
Purpose in an Early Christian
Martyr Chapel, fig. 3.

Сл. 7. Сан Виторе, купола.
G. Mackie, Symbolism and
Purpose in an Early Christian
Martyr Chapel, fig. 3.
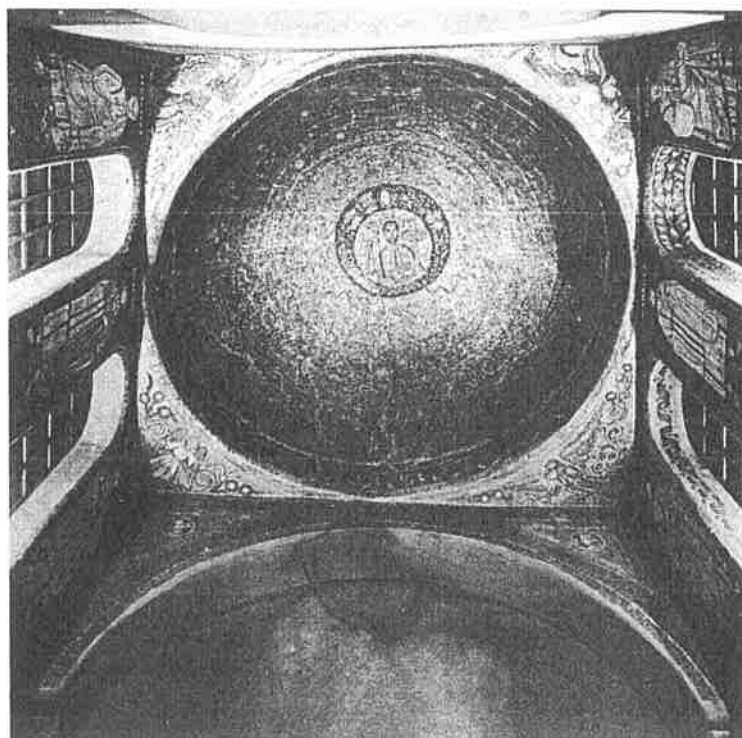
The presence of the "flying" figure is placed in the space of the Sky. The 28 stars depicted around the figure do not illustrate "aureole", as believed until recent research, but the starry depth of the space that is being opened and in which the main figure is put. The starry circle marks the opening of the oculus which preexisted the Galerian building, an opening of communication between the earthly world with the natural sky, the world of God. The building, as a copy in a smaller scale of the Pantheon, follows numerically the 28 lines of the panels, that concluded at the oculus. The light of the sun that entered at the inside through the oculus was captured at the golden ray around corona of the branches. **[Fig. 4]**

Moreover, other zones of the iconographic ensemble of Rotunda remind of the representational decoration of the inside of the Pantheon. The distinction of the surface in zones responds to the provision of Pantheon; the first zone with the decoration on marble forms eight spaces that are equivalent to the eight exedras and aediculae of the Pantheon, the zone of architectural is equivalent to the middle attica zone of the Pantheon **[Fig. 5]** and the next zones, which symbolize the celestial sphere, respond to the five zones with the 28 lines of panels that portray the stars at the Pantheon. Certainly, the zone of the white-dressed at Rotunda attributes the new content of the program which converses with the old one. Additionally, that means that the iconographic program responds to the symbolic tradition of the Pantheon, which expressed the religious-political identity of Rome, and that the Rotunda keeps alive the basic lines of the tradition, with the difference that the imperial worship of the old Pantheon replaces now the "new Pantheon". At Rotunda a "new supernatural vision", occurs in front of a choir of the Martyrs, most of whom are almost unknown and none of them is connected with Thessaloniki and they all belong to the male sex. How can the specificity of the ensemble be interpreted?
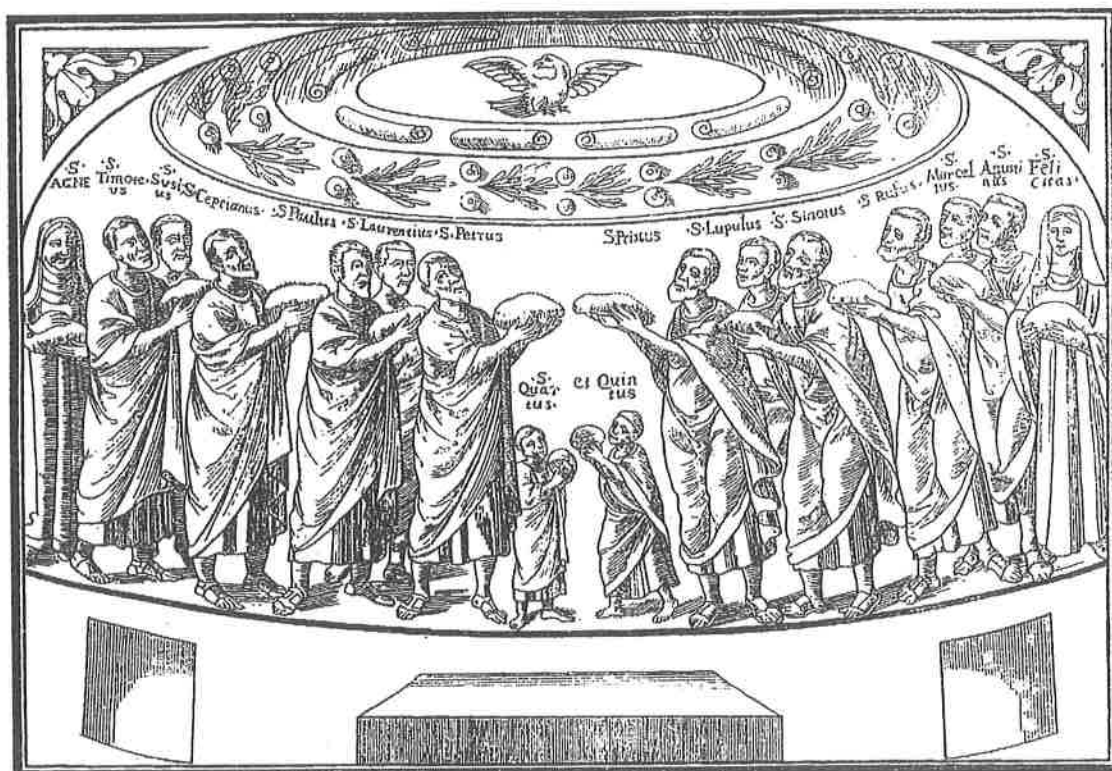
Fig. 8. San Vittore, Zone with portraits of Martyrs. G. Mackie, Symbolism and Purpose in
an Early Christian Martyr Chapel, fig. 2.

Сл. 8. Сан Виторе, зона са портретима мученика. G. Mackie, Symbolism and Purpose in
an Early Christian Martyr Chapel, fig. 2.

The answer to the question could be based on the first reading of the
monument. Some of the researchers accept the fact that the initial use of the
Christian monument was as a Martyrium[14].

During the excavations, that were performed by H. Torp, a bloodstained
fabric of some honoree martyr was found at the encaenium of the transformed
into Christian temple monument[15]. Primitive iconographic programs that por-
tray martyrs in a place that symbolizes the celestial concave are not extant, but

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[14] Ν. Μουτσόπουλος, Η παλαιοχριστιανική άποψη της Ροτόντας του Αγ. Γεωργίου
Θεσσαλονίκης, *Πρακτικά 10ου Διεθνούς Συνεδρίου Χριστιανικής Αρχαιολογίας*, Β΄, Θεσσα-
λονίκη, 1980, 1984, 355-375, 362. Ν. Μουτσόπουλος, *Η Ροτόντα του Αγίου Γεωργίου*, 252.
The same aspect proposes W.E. Kleinbauer, The Iconography and the Date of the Conversion
of the Rotunda of Hagios Georgios, Thessaloniki, *Viator*, 3 (1978), 27-108, 56, 58. W.E.
Kleinbauer, The original Name and Function of Agios Georgios in Thessaloniki, *C. Arch*,
XXII (1972), 55-60, 56-58, connecting Rotunda with the circular martyrium of the Holy
Tomb of Christ. E. Dyggve, Recherches sur le palais imperiale de Thessalonique, *Studia
Orientalia* 1953, 59-70, 87.

[15] Ν. Μουτσόπουλος, *Η Ροτόντα του Αγίου Γεωργίου*, 166-167. Ν. Μουτσόπουλος, Η
παλαιοχριστιανική φάση της Ροτόντας, 374. E. Dyggve, *Corso di cultura sull'arte ravennate
e bizantina*, 1957, II, 82. E. Dyggve, La region palatiale de Thessalonique, *Acta Congressus
Madvigiani, Hafniae*, MDMLIV, vol. I, Copenhagen 1958 (= *2nd International Congress of
Classical Studies, J.N. Madvig Congress, Copenhagen, August 23rd - 28th 1954*), 353-365,
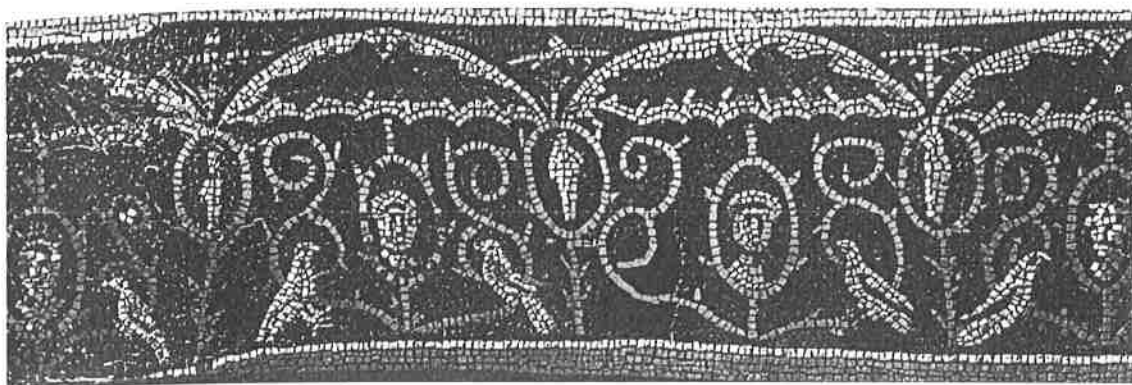356-357, fig. 7.

Fig. 9. Capua, San Prisco, Sanctuarium capuanum, collectore Michaele Monacho, 1630.

Сл. 9. Капуа, Сан Приско, Sanctuarium capuanum, collectore Michaele Monacho, 1630.

there is also connection with the martyrium of Saint Victor at the Ambrosian basilica of Milan (end of 4th, beginning of 5th CE), that is accompanied by martys' medals surrounded by blastus[16]. **[Figs. 6, 7, 8]**

At Rotunda the enigmatic figure, that is lifted by the hands of the four angels at the narrow space that depicts the sky, is framed under the twenty Martyrs of the East and above the twenty four figures of the white-dressed presbyters; this space connects the earthly world with the celestial, the earthly dominion that converts the army of the martyrs into martyrs-soldiers of Christ and the power of the throne of God at the celestial sphere. The space that constituted military area, at the Pantheon and at the Rotunda also, is being transformed into an artistic expression of the imperial ideology. The two worlds depict the *acclamatio* of some great martyr (μεγαλομάρτυς) that perhaps is being hidden in the enigmatic figure that is not saved anymore at the top of the cupola of Rotunda.

We know that Constantine follows a fixed respectful policy of the Martyrs of the Christian faith. He thinks of the martyrs as soldiers of Christ of the "new imperial ideology". Besides, he based his dynamic dominance to the soldiers of faith of his own enforcement. The emergence of the figure of some leading martyr in Thessaloniki's space, was serving the political program of a mild transformation from the roman tradition to the roman-christian one.

In the case of the Rotunda, the honored martyr could be somebody from the grant military martyrs, like Saint George (the survival of his name was maintained at the name of the church of Rotunda) or the patron Saint Demetrios (who martyred at the same city, but the place of the emergence of this worship can be found elsewhere). However, the most possible personality is a victim of Galerius himself "in medio Macedoniae et Thessal{on}i{c}ae", who martyred at the neighboring Pydna, and he was Alexander, an officeholder (palatinus) that accompanied Galerius' contingent. As a Christian, he was denounced, judged and executed. With Galerius' order, he was transferred by citizens of Thessaloniki to their city, in a space which is called in the Greek version of his martyrium "Thorgiai" (Θωργίαι), meaning "Theoriai", Spectacles, a place that means the obvious martyrium.[17]

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[16] G. Mackie, Symbolism and Purpose in an Early Christian Martyr Chapel. The Case of San Vittore in Ciel d' Oro, Milan, *Gesta* 34.2 (1995), 91-101.

[17] *AASS* Martii, II, στ. 344-345; republished in Φ. Δημητρακόπουλος, Ἅγιος

At the Latin original text of Saint Alexander's martyrium, it is mentioned that Galerius sentenced him, but after the martyr was decapitated, Galerius saw his figure (i.e. the soul) of the martyr who was ascending to the sky on the hands of four angels. It is not excluded that this literary expression uses as a pattern a three-dimensional artwork. It is very possible that his author knew about the visual ensemble of Rotunda. The interface of Galerius' monument and that of the Martyr is undeniable. If we also assume that there was some statue of Galerius, as the founder of the building, inside or outside of the monument, the victimizer was gazing figuratively the moment of the "apotheosis" of his victim[18].

The remembrance of Saint Alexander was honored in Thessaloniki at November 9, the next day of the celebration of the Hagioi Asomatoi (November 8). Consequently, there is a functional continuity of the two celebrations. Based on the celebration of the Hagioi Asomatoi, the saved relics of the twenty four white-dressed figures of the upper zone were depicted in the form of angels, but we consider that they are the 24 presbyters that move in the space that attribute symbolically the throne of God. The celebration of Asomatoi coincides with the roman celebration *Mundus Patet* (November 8), that gained great value under Constantine. The inauguration of the basilica of the Saviour at the Latran, the cathedral of Rome, happened on the 8th November 318 and the initial Divine Liturgy on the 9th. Constantinople was also founded on 8th November 324. Mundus was a burial construction in Rome and was opened three times per year (August 24, October 5, November 8) so that the offers, the fruits and the blastus would all be thrown in[19]. Mundus was always a central point of joint between the upper world with the world of the souls in every newly-founded city and, as was also the case with Constantinople, whose dedication coincided also with the burial celebration of Lemuria (May 11)[20]. Taking all these clues and symbolisms for the communication opening between the earth and the sky into account, one can see at the artwork of the Rotunda the presence of the corona with the branches and the fruits as an invitation of souls of Martyrs and the twenty four presbyters at the space where the sky is opened. An equivalent example of branches of Mundus can also be observed at the arch-symbol of the celestial space in the Martyrium of Saint Priscus at Capua (5th Century), where also martyrs are depicted (destroyed in 1659, but saved in gravures of 17th century[21].

Ἀλέξανδρος Πύδνης ἤ Θεσσαλονίκης, *Ἑλληνικά* 29.2 (1976), 267-275, 275-277.

[18] Στ. Γουλούλης, Τα acta martyrii του Αγίου Αλεξάνδρου Θεσσαλονίκης: αναζήτηση του τόπου αθλήσεως και μία εικαστική έκφραση του ταφικού μαρτυρίου, *Μνημείο και Περιβάλλον*, forthcoming.

[19] H. H. Scullard, *Festival and Ceremonies of the Roman Republic*, London 1981, 180-181, 191, 197. W. Warde Fawler, Mundus patet. 24th August, 5th October, 8th November, *JRS*, 2 (1912), 25-33.

[20] Στ. Γουλούλης, Οι Ψυχές των Προγόνων και η οικοδομή της Πόλης: το πλατωνικό υπόβαθρο των εγκαινίων της Κωνσταντινουπόλεως, *Βυζαντιακά* 18 (1988), 288-307.

[21] *Sanctuarium Capuanum, opus in quo sacrae res Capuae, et per occasionem plura, tam ad diversas civitates regni pertinentia, quàm per se curiosa continentur*, collectore Michaele Monacho decretorum doctore, canonico presbytero Capuano. Published **1630.** Apud Octauium Beltranum in Neapoli. R. Garrucci, *Storia dell'arte Cristiana nei primi otto secoli della chiesa*, Prato G. Guasti, 181-82, vol. 4, pl. 254-255. De Rossi, in *Bulletino di archeo-*

[Fig. 9] Also, in the chapel of Saint Victor (his feast coincides with 8th May) at Milan the martyr is depicted on the top of the cupola with other local martyrs around. It is probable that the church was dedicated in connection with the feast the Deads of Lemuria (first day, 9th May: 8th dedication, 9th initial liturgy), as in the case of Rotunda with the feast of the Souls Mundus Patet.

An iconographic program very high-priced cannot but to be combined with a generous imperial sponsorship for the completion of its luxurious mosaic decoration. The presence of Constantine in Thessaloniki (322-323 AD), during the preparation of his military campaign against Licinius, had been noticed especially by Sl. Čurčić[22]. Determined to give the decisive blow against him, he intended to deter Licinius' withdrawal to the patrimonial religion of the Romans. The road to the East that Galerius had defined using Thessaloniki as a base, was open for Constantine, who was now being prepared with new soldiers and used the Martyrs as an example of faith. Constantine had put the honor of the Martyrs to the highest level of his values, since he dedicated Constantinople itself at the God of the Martyrs. He wished to impose new patterns to the state, not far from the traditional roman patterns, that is the *mos Maiorum* and the *devotio*, and reconstitute the glamour of the New Rome with those determined to sacrifice themselves as his soldiers.

The visual ensemble of Rotunda symbolizes the new world of the army of Rome, its new supernatural defenders, replacing with a district way the old with the new religion. Alexander was probably a palatine officer of Galerian Thessaloniki. Theodosius had this element in mind, when in 380 completed the program of conversion of a roman building and martyrium into a Christian temple of its first phase, and when he announced on 27 February Christianity as the state religion of Roman Empire[23], on the day of the celebration of the horsemen of the army of Rome (Equirria, the old feast of the horsemen of Rome in Campus Martius which was inaugurated by Romulus[24] and also the birthday of Constantine[25], who trusted the army of the martyrs who would be sacrificed for the preservation of the new universal religion of the Roman Empire.

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logia cristiana, 1883, pl. II, III, 1884-85, 104-125. *Dictionnaire d'Archéologie Chrétien et Liturgie*, 2.2, Paris 1910, Capue, col. 2064 ff, pl. 2049-2050. *Dictionnaire d'Histoire et de Géographie Ecclésiastiques*, XI, Paris 1949, Capue, col. 890-891. A. Grabar, *Martyrium. Recherches sur le culte des reliques et l'art chrétien antique*, I, Paris 1946, 429, not. 3, 535, II, 36-37, 109-110, 113, pl. XLIV, 1-2.

22   Sl. Čurčić, *Some Observations,* op. cit.

23   J. Boojamra, Theodosius and the legal establishment of Christianity, Βυζαντιακά 9 (1927), 387-407.

24   A. Piganiol, *Recherches sur les jeux Romains. Notes d'archéologie et d'histoire religieuse*, Strasburg-Paris 1923, 103-104. H.H. Scullard, *Festival and ceremonies*, 82, 268.

25   T.D. Barnes, *The New Empire*, 39.

Ставрос Гулулис, Василис Кацарос
СОЛУНСКА РОТОНДА:
НОВА ИНТЕРПРЕТАЦИЈА МОЗАИЧКОГ УКРАСА

Ротонда у Солуну је велика архитектонска и декоративна грађевина са мозаицима, коју је проучавао велики број истраживача скоро читав један век. У овом раду дата је нова перспектива, топографски, историјски и у односу на историју уметности овог споменика. Ротонду је подигао тетрарх Галерије, као део обновљеног царског култа Доминатуса у Солуну, новој престоници Римског царства, користећи Пантеон у Риму као модел. Најпре је професор Сл. Ћурчић тврдио да је зграда настала у време Константина Великог. Након тога, Цх. Бакирзис и П. Мастора упорни су у ставу да је споменик изградио тај исти Константин, да би служио као његов маузолеј.

Већина истраживача подржава идеју да је у врху куполе представљен Христ у својој слави. Цх. Бакирзис и П. Мастора сматрају да је постојао лик цара оснивача. Аутори овог рада сматрају да је у смислу функције ове грађевине као мартиријума, много прикладнија суштина часног великомученика који је био повезан са Солуном и царском канцеларијом Галерија, као и са хришћанским мученицима преко поштовања Константина. Због тога је у периоду његовог боравка у Солуну (323.-324.) Константин претворио храм идола у мартиријум и украсио његову велику куполу. Јединствена тема велике површине мозаика насликана је у пратњи мученика у облику царске акламације али не пред Исусом Христом већ пред новим великомучеником Светим Александром, који је био Галеријев официр и кога је исти цар погубио око 300. године и по његовој наредби је сахрањен Солуну.

Дани Св. цара Константина и царице Јелене

НИШ И ВИЗАНТИЈА

ДВАНАЕСТИ НАУЧНИ СКУП

НИШ, 3 - 6. ЈУН 2013.

ЗБОРНИК РАДОВА
XII

Уредник

МИША РАКОЦИЈА

НКЦ

Ниш, 2014.