

# Diocletian



- **Diocletian** (*Gaius Aurelius Valerius Diocletianus Augustus*), born **Diocles** (245–311), was a Roman emperor from 284 to 305. Born to a family of low status in the Roman province of Dalmatia, Diocletian rose through the ranks of the military to become cavalry commander to the Emperor Carus. After the deaths of Carus and his son Numerian on campaign in Persia, Diocletian was proclaimed emperor.

# Diocletian's Palace

Diocletian's Palace is an ancient palace built by the Roman emperor Diocletian at the turn fourth century AD for his retirement on 1st May 305 AD.

Today it covers about half of the old town and city center of Split, in Croatia.



# A massive structure

- It resembles a large fortress: about half of it was for Diocletian's personal use, and the rest housed the military garrison. It lies in a bay on the south side of a short peninsula running out from the Dalmatian coast, four miles from Salona, the capital of the Roman province of Dalmatia.

The exterior part is also seen on the reverse of a banknote



- The ground plan of the palace is an irregular rectangle (approximately 160 meters x 190 meters) with towers projecting from the western, northern, and eastern facades. It combines qualities of a luxurious villa with those of a military camp, with its huge gates and watchtowers. The palace is enclosed by walls, and at times, it housed over 9000 people. Subterranean portions of the palace feature barrel vaulted stonework.

# Underground complex and cellars



- The Palace is built of white local limestone and marble of high quality. Some material for decoration was imported: Egyptian granite columns. The Palace was decorated with numerous 3500-year-old granite sphinxes, originating from the site of Egyptian Pharaoh Thutmose III. Only three have survived the centuries. One is still in the Peristyle, the second sits headless in front of the temple of Jupiter, and a third is in the city museum.

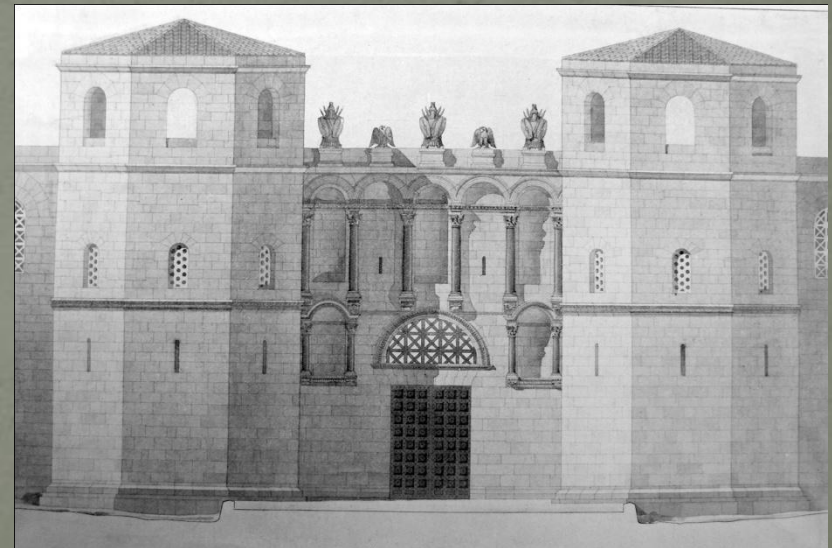
# Granite sphinx at the entrance of the Mausoleum of Diocletian.



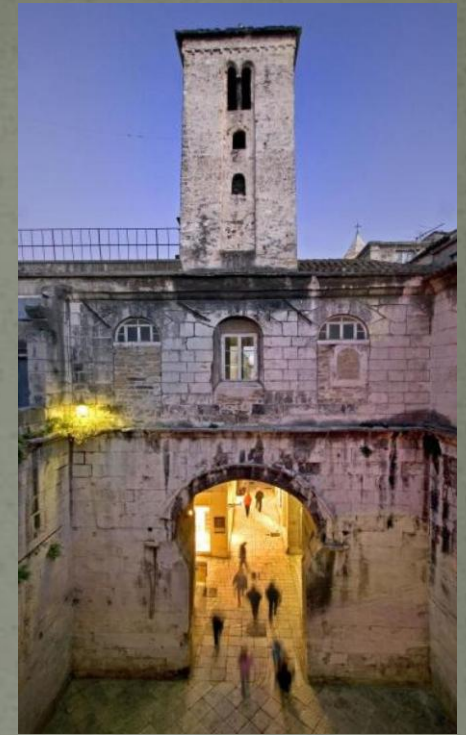


# Golden Gate

- The Golden Gate (*Porta Aurea* or *Porta septemtrionalis*) is the main entrance to the palace and was used by the emperor when he entered his new home for the first time on June 1<sup>st</sup>, 305 AD as he arrived from his nearby town of *Salona*.



# Silver, Brass and Iron Gate



# The Brass Gate

- The brass Gate or Porta Meridionalis is much smaller and simpler than the other gates and originally, the sea reached the very walls of the palace. The Brass Gate was the entrance by sea into the palace. The gate was the “safety gate” because it enabled the emperor and others to escape by sea in case of danger. It also acted as a service entrance for supplies that came by boat.

# The Silver Gate

- The Silver Gate or Porta orientalis was more modest in its decorations than the Golden one. On each side of the gate the remains of the octagonal towers are visible. Entering through those gates the passers by have the opportunity to walk the original ancient pavement on decumanus, walked also, so many years ago, by the Diocletians subjects.

# The Iron Gate

Originally , it was named **Porta Occidentalis**. A relief of Nika, the Roman Goddess of Victory stood on the lintel, but already in the fifth century the Christians carved a cross in its place as their symbol.

In the eleventh century, a small church of our Lady of the Belfry, was built above the door, originally dedicated to St Theodor, with beautiful early Romanesque bell tower. In the Middle Ages the area inside the gate was used as a courthouse.

Declared Cultural heritage in November 1979 by UNESCO



# The Peristyle and its temples

- A monumental court, called the Peristyle, formed the northern access to the imperial apartments. It also gave access to Diocletian's mausoleum on the east (now Cathedral of St. Dominus), and to three temples on the west (the temple of Jupiter, now a baptistery, being one of them). There is one more temple just to the west of the Peristyle dedicated to the god Asculapius.

# The palace façade by night!





We are looking forward to visiting Split next fall!

The students who worked on this presentation are the following:

- Ioannis (John) Pilidis
- Elisavet (Elizabeth) Kotziabasi
- Petros (Peter) Rallis
- Eleni (Helen) Theodosiadou
- Dimitris (Jim) Tzezos
- Olympia Mantziou

The Croatian Team