



Summary :

Hebdomon was one of the most important suburbs of Constantinople. The splendid edifices that adorned it were considered similar to those of the Byzantine capital. But besides architecture, the location was of great importance, since it was the site where the legions camped and the starting point of imperial triumphal processions to the capital.

Date

first half of the 4th c. onwards

Geographical Location

outside the city walls, around 10 klm to the west of the Milion, mod. Bakirköy

1. Location

Hebdomon was one of the most important suburbs of Constantinople. Many suggestions have been made on the identification of its [location](#).¹ However, according to the prevailing view expressed by Professor Van Millingen, Hebdomon was located in the wider area of the sea of [Marmara](#), seven Roman miles (little more than 10 klm) westwards of the [Milion](#). Traversed by the Via Egnatia, it was the point of depart of imperial triumphs toward the city (figs. 2 and 3).² Until 1922, the site of the Byzantine Hebdomon was occupied by the Greek village Makrochorion, while today the same area has been renamed Bakirköy.

2. Significance of the suburb

Already in the 4th century the imperial army would camp in Hebdomon. It also possessed a platform, the Tribunal, on which the emperor presented himself to the troop. The wide valley (which was called Kampos, imitating the Roman Campus Martius), its immediate access to the sea and mainly its short distance from the capital were the reasons that rendered Hebdomon the ideal place for the legions of [New Rome](#) to camp. It is not a coincidence that the [Senate](#) would welcome there the Emperor after a campaign, for the procession towards the city to begin.³

Hebdomon was also a location of great political significance, since it was where the emperor was acknowledged as commander of the Roman army and even his proclamation often took place there as well.⁴ The area was the starting point of every official procession to Constantinople. This suburb was also of great religious importance, which is indicated by the great number of churches built there on the one hand, and on the other by the fact that, after the powerful [earthquakes](#) of 447/448, the people of the city rushes in Hebdomon to pray with the Emperor and the Patriarch.⁵

3. Secular architecture

In the greater Hebdomon area there were numerous and fine edifices, both secular and religious. Today little is preserved and in very bad condition. Hebdomon was considered an imperial suburb and was increasingly embellished with edifices. It seems that [Valens](#) took charge of the monumental elevation of the Tribunal, where he was proclaimed emperor, so much that Themistius castigates him that he neglects the capital itself.⁶ In the [Patria](#), [Constantine I](#) appears to have built the church of St. John the Theologian in Hebdomon, and during the reign of Theodosios I the church of the Baptist was built to receive the relic of the saint's head.⁷ During the reign of [Justinian I](#) porticoes, [fora](#) and baths were built and many older buildings were renovated, which matched corresponding edifices in Constantinople. Moreover, the harbour of Hebdomon, which probably dates back to the end of the 4th century, was cleaned.⁸ The area suffered destructions by [Arab raids](#) in late 7th- early 8th century, and by raids of the Bulgarians under Krum in 813.⁹ However, a number of churches were renovated by [Basil I](#) and in the *Book of Ceremonies* the area appears to have preserved – at least until the 10th century – its importance as a location for the reception of the emperor after a military campaign. A few



examples of Hebdomon's secular architecture is the Tribunal, Magnaura, the palaces of Jucundianae or Secundianae, the columns and the statue of Theodosios II, the circular mausoleum, fortresses and **cisterns**.

3.1. Tribunal

The Tribunal (or *Bema*) was a kind of elevated platform on which the emperor would ascend to address his army. It was built by Emperor Valens after his proclamation in 364. As far as its form is concerned, it had a round shape and its front faced the so-called *Kampos*. On the facade of the building niches opened in regular distances, where statues of emperors were placed (fig. 4).¹⁰ The width of the platform was approximately 2.40 m., while its height is uncertain. However, the maximum height of the surviving parts reaches approximately up to 5 m. on the west side and 3 m. on the east side.

3.2. Palaces

3.2.1. Magnaura

As in the Mangaura of the [Great Palace](#), the analogous Magnaura in Hebdomon housed the ceremony of the Senate for the Emperor's victorious arrival from a campaign. The building was erected under the reign of emperor Marcian and the identification of its location was possible thanks to the excavations of Th. Macrides.¹¹ Foundations of a Byzantine quayside and marble semicircular bases were found on the western side of the harbour. According to Macrides, they were bases of piers that supported a circular construction, possibly the solar of Magnaura.

3.2.2. Palace of Justinian

According to Procopius and other sources, Justinian I erected in Hebdomon the palace of Jucundianae or Secundianae. Theophanes refers to the palace in relation to the porphyry column of Theodosios, which collapsed during the earthquake of 558. According to the chronographer, the column had been placed in front of the palace of Justinian I.¹²

3.3. Fortresses

Hebdomon possessed two fortresses, one on the east side and the other on the west side of the harbour. The first one was known as 'cyclobion' or Kastellion Stroggylon' (circular fortress) and the second one as "Castle of the Theodosianae".¹³ Few fragments of the second fortress survived until the mid-20th C., while today a modern building stands on its place.

3.4. Cisterns

To the northeast of modern Bakirköy, a large Byzantine [cistern](#) survives until today, in a relatively good condition. Rectangular in shape, it measures 127×76 m. and is 11 m. deep.¹⁴ It was not the only cistern, since there have been located four others, three of them open and one covered, known as the Cistern of Magnaura, rectangular in shape with 98 columns.

4. Religious architecture

Apart from the numerous and impressive secular buildings that embellished the imperial suburb, many churches were also built. Today few of them survive and the rest are known to us from the written sources, mainly from the synaxaria. Janin counts the churches of St. Theodote, St. Menas and Menaius, of St. Vicentius, the monastery of the Infants and possibly the hagiasma of St. Mamas.¹⁵

4.1. Church of St. Theodote

The church was built by Justinian I during the reign of his uncle [Justin I](#).¹⁶ The church was probably associated with the feast of St.



Theodote in Hebdomon on July the 29th. The church has been completely destroyed and its exact location in the suburb has not been identified.¹⁷

4.2. Church of St. John the Theologian

The church is ascribed to Constantine the Great (324-337) and it is described as oblong, thus it was probably a basilica.¹⁸ The church was destroyed in the 7th century and it was rebuilt by Basil I during the 9th century.¹⁹ Today it is completely destroyed.

4.3. Church of the Prophet Samuel

The church was built on the occasion of the arrival of the relics of the Prophet Samuel to Constantinople, probably between 406-408, when Arcadius I (395-408) held the throne and Attikos (406-425) was [Patriarch](#).²⁰ It seems that the church was located a little further outside Hebdomon, while Th. Macrides does not even include it in his study. The church collapsed during the earthquake of 557 and it was probably never repaired after that.²¹

4.4. Church of St. John the Baptist

The church is located 4 klm outside the [Golden Gate](#). It was initially excavated by a team of French archaeologists under the guidance of R. Demangel, who first published it in 1945. The last traces of the church disappeared in 1965, when a hospital was built on the site.

The church is mentioned in the Patria and in other sources as a foundation of Theodosios I, where the relic of St. John the Baptist's head was kept. The church was remodelled by Justinian I and, according to Prokopios, the Justinianic church followed the plan of St. Michael of Anaplou. Prokopios' description of the second,²² along with the archaeological evidence, allows a reconstruction of the form of St. John the Baptist in Hebdomon. It was an octagonal church which reminds the ground-plan of its contemporaneous church of St. Vitale. Its apse was semicircular both on the inside and the outside, which is uncommon in Constantinopolitan [religious architecture](#) of this period. The foundations of six piers were discovered in the nave. Two piers in the south- and one in the northeast side were found in their entirety. Thus, we know that they were 2.40-2.75 m. wide and 6 m. high. From the eastern piers which were attached to the apse only their abutted half was found (fig. 5).²³ The church had possibly an [atrium](#) and was surrounded by porticoes. It may also have had [galleries](#) and had been covered with a [dome](#).²⁴

By the 9th century the church had been in ruins and was radically renovated by Basil I.²⁵ However, we do not know if this renovation altered the plan of the Justinianic church.

1. For the different opinions of various scholars see Τζιζιρας, Ν., *Το Έβδομον του Βυζαντίου και η ελληνική κοινότητα Μακροχωρίου* (Αθήνα 1992), pp.33-42.

2. Μακρίδης, Θ., «Τό βυζαντινό Έβδομον και αι παρ'αυτω μοναι Αγίου Παντελεήμονος και Μαρμαντος. Κοιμητήρια και τάφοι», *Θρακικά* 10 (1938), fig. 42, 43.

3. After the return of the Emperor from an expedition on European lands, the Senate received him in Hebdomon, while the military commanders would return to Rhegion to meet the emperor there. In case he returned winner from the East, both the Senate and the dignitaries with the military commanders welcomed him in Hebdomon. The captives and the loot of war were transported one day before to the plain in front of the Golden Gate. See Constantine Porphyrogennitos, *De cerimoniis*, Reiske J.J. (ed.), *De cerimoniis aulae Byzantinae*, 1 (CSHB, Bonn 1829), p. 496.

4. The proclamation of Valens in 364, and of other Emperors, is characteristic. See. Dagron, G., *Η γέννηση μιας πρωτεύουσας* (trnsl. Μ. Λουκάκη) (Αθήνα 2000), p. 118 and Janin, R., *Constantinople Byzantine: Développement urbain et répertoire topographique* (Paris 21964), p. 139.



5. *Chronicon Paschale*, ed. L. Dindorf (CSHB, Bonn 1832), p. 589.
6. Themistius, VI, 83a, Downey, G.-Schenkl, H. (ed.), *Themistii orationes quae supersunt* 1 (Leipzig 1965), p. 123.
7. Pseudo-Codinos, *Patria Constantinopoleos* III. 144-5, Th. Preger (ed.), *Scriptores originum Constantinopolitanarum* 2 (Leipzig 1907, repr. 1975), p. 260.
8. Theophanes, *Chronographia*, ed. C. de Boor, 1 (Leipzig 1883, repr. Hildesheim 1963), p. 228.
9. In 717, during the reign of Leo III the Isaurian, the Arabs landed in Hebdomon and besieged Constantinople for the second time, see Theophanes, *Chronographia*, ed. C. de Boor, 1 (Leipzig 1883, repr. Hildesheim 1963), p. 353. On the destruction of the area by Krum, see Symeon Magister, *Chronographia*, Bekker, I. (ed.), *Theophanes Continuatus, Ioannes Cameniata, Symeon Magister, Georgius Monachus* (CSHB, Bonn 1838), p. 614.
10. Demangel, R., *Contribution à la topographie de l'Hebdomon* (Paris 1945), p.9, fig. 4, pl. I, II.
11. Μακρίδης, Θ., «Τό βυζαντινὸ Ἑβδομον καὶ αἱ παρ' αὐτῷ μοναὶ Ἁγίου Παντελεήμονος καὶ Μαρμάρου. Κοιμητήρια καὶ τάφοι», *Θρακικά* 10 (1938), pp. 137- 98; 11 (1939), pp. 35-80.
12. Prokopios, *Buildings*, 1.11.16, Wirth, G.- Haury, J. (ed.), *Procopii Caesariensis opera omnia* 4 (Leipzig 1964), pp. 43-4; Theophanes, *Chronographia*, ed. C. de Boor, 1 (Leipzig 1883, repr. Hildesheim 1963), p. 231.
13. «Φρούριόν ἐστιν ἐν προαστείῳ τῆς πόλεως, ὃ περὶ Στρογγύλον ὁ μόνυ μὼς τῆ τοῦ ἐρύματος συνθέσει καλοῦ σιν», Prokopios, *Buildings*, 4.8.4, Wirth, G.- Haury, J. (ed.), *Procopii Caesariensis opera omnia* 4 (Leipzig 1964), p. 134. Cf. Janin, R., *Constantinople Byzantine: Développement urbain et répertoire topographique* (Paris ²1964), pp. 446, 447.
14. Τζίρας, Ν, *Το Ἑβδομον του Βυζαντίου και η ελληνική κοινότητα Μακροχωρίου* (Αθήνα 1992), pp. 93, 94 (figs).
15. Janin, R., *Constantinople Byzantine: Développement urbain et répertoire topographique* (Paris ²1964), pp. 446-7. Cf. Janin, R., *La géographie ecclésiastique de l'Empire byzantin I: Le siège de Constantinople et le Patriarcat Œcumenique, iii: Les églises et les monastères* (Paris ²1969), pp. 63-4, 335, 366.
16. «καὶ τὸ Θεοδοτῆς ἁγίας ἐν προαστείῳ καλουμένῳ Ἑβδόμῳ. τοῦ τα γὰρ ἅπαντα ὁ βασιλεὺς οὗτος ἐπὶ τοῦ θεοῦ Ἰουστίνου βασιλεύοντος ἐκ θεμελίων ἐδείματο, ἅ παγγέλλεσθαι μὲν οὐ ῥᾶ δια λόγῳ, θαυμάζεσθαι δὲ ὄψαι κατὰ τὴν ἁξίαν ἁμήχανα», Prokopios, *Buildings*, 1.4.29-30, Wirth, G.- Haury, J. (ed.), *Procopii Caesariensis opera omnia* 4 (Leipzig 1964), p. 26.
17. Janin, R., *La géographie ecclésiastique de l'Empire byzantin I: Le siège de Constantinople et le Patriarcat Œcumenique, iii: Les églises et les monastères* (Paris ²1969), p. 146.
18. Pseudo-Codinos, *Patria Constantinopoleos* III. 144-5, Th. Preger (ed.), *Scriptores originum Constantinopolitanarum* 2 (Leipzig 1907, repr. 1975), p. 260.
19. *Vita Basilii* (*Theophanes Continuatus* V), Bekker, I. (ed.), *Theophanes Continuatus, Ioannes Cameniata, Symeon Magister, Georgius Monachus* (CSHB, Bonn 1838), p. 340.
20. Pseudo-Codinos, *Patria Constantinopoleos* IIa. 2, Th. Preger (ed.), *Scriptores originum Constantinopolitanarum* 2 (Leipzig 1907, repr. 1975), p. 211.
21. Janin, R., *La géographie ecclésiastique de l'Empire byzantin I: Le siège de Constantinople et le Patriarcat Œcumenique, iii: Les églises et les monastères* (Paris ²1969), p. 449.
22. Prokopios, *Buildings*, 1.8.15-6, Wirth, G.- Haury, J. (ed.), *Procopii Caesariensis opera omnia* 4 (Leipzig 1964), p. 35.



23. Mathews, T., *The early churches of Constantinople: Architecture and Liturgy* (University Pa. 1971), pp. 55-32, fig. 27, 59.
24. Demangel, R., *Contribution à la topographie de l'Hebdomon* (Paris 1945), p. 29; Janin, R., *La géographie ecclésiastique de l'Empire byzantin I: Le siège de Constantinople et le Patriarcat Oecuménique, iii: Les églises et les monastères* (Paris 21969), pp. 413-4.
25. *Vita Basilii* (Theophanes Continuatus V), Bekker, I. (ed.), *Theophanes Continuatus, Ioannes Cameniata, Symeon Magister, Georgius Monachus* (CSHB, Bonn 1838), p. 340.

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Glossary :

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|  | atrium |
| 1. Antiquity: The large, open space within a building, which is enveloped by colonnades. 2. Byzantium: The forecourt of a church in early Christian, Byzantine, and medieval architecture. It was usually surrounded by four porticoes (quadriporticus). | |
|  | cistern |
| A receptacle for holding rainwater, but also water transported from elsewhere, in order to keep it stored. The cisterns were either covered either open, and they could have more than one compartments. | |
|  | dome |
| A characteristic element of Byzantine architecture. The dome is a hemispherical vault on a circular wall (drum) usually pierced by windows. The domed church emerges in the Early Byzantine years and its various types gradually prevail, while they are expanded in the Balkans and in Russia. | |
|  | forum |
| The roman agora. Public market-place, open square or place of assembly for judicial and other public business in a Roman town or city. | |
|  | gallery |
| The upper level of a house where the women resided. In ecclesiastical architecture it is the corridor above the aisles and narthex of a church, from where women attended the Liturgy. Originally (in the Byzantine period) the gallery, having a special entrance, was used exclusively by the emperor and the members of the royal family. | |

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Quotations

The monumental elevation of the Tribunal of Hebdomon by Valens

ἡ πῶς οὐκ ἄτοπον τὴν μὲν ἐσχατιάν, ἐφ' ἧς τὴν ἀλουργίδα ἐνήψω, περιφανεστέραν ποιῆσαι κρηπίδι καὶ βήματι καὶ ἀνδριάσι, τῇ πόλει δέ, ἦν οὐκ ὀκνεῖς ὀνομάζειν μητέρα τῆς ἀναρρήσεως, μὴ οἶσθαι ἐποφλισκάνειν τὰ χαριστήρια;

Themistios, VI 83a, Downey, G.-Schenkl, H. (ed.), *Themistii orationes quae supersunt* 1 (Leipzig 1965), p. 123.

Arcadius I erects the church of the prophet Samuel

καὶ τοῦ προφήτου Σαμουὴλ τὸ ἅγιον λείψανον εἰσηλθὲν ἐν τῇ πόλει ἐπὶ Ἀρκαδίου τοῦ υἱοῦ αὐτοῦ καὶ ἐτέθη εἰς τὸν ναὸν τοῦ



Ἐβδόμου· ὁ δὲ Ἀττικὸς ἦν πατριάρχης τῷ τότε καιρῷ καὶ κατέθετο ταῦτα ὡς εἴρηται εἰς τὸ Ἐβδομον.

Pseudo-Codinos, *Patria Constantinopoleos*, IIα.2, Th. Preger (ed.), *Scriptores originum Constantinopolitanarum* 2 (Leipzig 1907; repr. 1975), p. 211.

The churches of St. John the Theologian and of St. John the Baptist in Hebdomon

(144.) Τὸ δὲ Ἐβδομον ὁ δρομικὸς ναὸς ἐκτίσθη παρὰ τοῦ μεγάλου Κωνσταντίνου εἰς ὄνομα τοῦ ἁγίου Ἰωάννου τοῦ θεολόγου.

(145.) Ὁ δὲ στρογγυλόστεγος ὁ ἔχων τὰς κόγχας ἠνομάσθη Προδρόμος καὶ ἐκτίσθη παρὰ Θεοδοσίου τοῦ μεγάλου, ὅτι ἐν τοῖς χρόνοις αὐτοῦ ἡ ἁγία κεφαλὴ τοῦ Προδρόμου εἰσήλθεν, καὶ ἐδέξατο αὐτὴν εἰς τὸ Ἐβδομον ὁ βασιλεὺς καὶ ἀπέθετο εἰς τὸν ναὸν τοῦ Θεολόγου μετὰ Νεκταρίου πατριάρχου. Ὁ δὲ μάγιστρος Ρουφίνος ἐπεισεν τὸν βασιλέα κτίσαι ναὸν τοῦ Προδρόμου εἰς τὸ τεθῆναι τὴν ἁγίαν αὐτοῦ κάρα.

Pseudo-Codinos, *Patria Constantinopoleos*, III. 144-5, Th. Preger (ed.), *Scriptores originum Constantinopolitanarum* 2 (Leipzig 1907; repr. 1975), p. 260

Building activity of Justinian I in Hebdomon

α. Φρούριόν ἐστὶν ἐν προαστείῳ τῆς πόλεως, ὅπερ Στρογγύλον ὀμωνύμως τῆ τοῦ ἐρύματος συνθέσει καλοῦσιν.

Prokopios, *Buildings*, 4.8.4, G. Wirth (post J. Haury), *Procopii Caesariensis opera omnia* 4 (Leipzig 1964), p. 134.

β. καὶ τὸ Θεοδότης ἁγίας ἐν προαστείῳ καλουμένῳ Ἐβδόμῳ. ταῦτα γὰρ ἅπαντα ὁ βασιλεὺς οὗτος ἐπὶ τοῦ θείου Ἰουστίνου βασιλεύοντος ἐκ θεμελίων ἐδείματο, ἀπαγγέλλεσθαι μὲν οὐ ῥάδια λόγῳ, θαυμάζεσθαι δὲ ὄψει κατὰ τὴν ἄξιαν ἀμήχανα.

Prokopios, *Buildings*, 1.4.29-30, G. Wirth (post J. Haury), *Procopii Caesariensis opera omnia*, 4 (Leipzig 1964), p. 26.

The Arabs invade Hebdomon in 717

Τούτῳ τῷ ἔτει ὁ προλεχθεὶς τῶν θεομάχων στόλος ἀναβάλας προσώρμισεν ἐν τοῖς Θρακικοῖς μέρεσιν ἀπὸ τῆς πρὸς δύσιν ἀκρότητος τοῦ Ἐβδόμου, ἧτοι τῆς λεγομένης Μαγναύρας, μέχρι πάλιν τοῦ πρὸς ἀνατολὴν ἀκρωτηρίου τοῦ λεγομένου Κυκλοβίου.

Theophanes, *Chronographia*, ed. C. de Boor, 1 (Leipzig 1883; repr. Hildesheim 1963), p. 353.

The renovation of the church of St. John the Theologian in Hebdomon by Basil I

Οὐ κατὰ τὴν πόλιν δὲ μόνον τὰ τοιαῦτα τῶν ἔργων θεοφιλῶς τε ἅμα καὶ φιλοτίμως εἰργάζετο, ἀλλὰ καὶ ταύτης ἐκτὸς τὴν ὁμοίαν ἐπεδείκνυτο ἐπιμέλειαν. μεθ' ἧς καὶ τὸν τοῦ ἀποστόλου καὶ εὐαγγελιστοῦ Ἰωάννου τοῦ θεολόγου ἐν τῷ καλουμένῳ Ἐβδόμῳ ναὸν τῷ χρόνῳ πονήσαντα καὶ καταβληθέντα ἀνίστησι, καλλοναῖς τε ὠραῖσας καὶ ὀχυρώμασι κατασφαισάμενος. ἔτι δὲ καὶ τὸν πλησιόχωρον αὐτοῦ τοῦ προδρόμου οἶκον, πρὸ πάντων πολλῶν καταπτωθέντα χρόνων καὶ ἐρείπιον ἀντὶ ναοῦ χρηματίζοντα, περικαθαίρει μὲν τῆς ὕλης καὶ τῶν χωμάτων, ταχίστη δὲ οἰκοδομῇ καὶ ἐπιμελείᾳ τῶν περιφανῶν καὶ μεγάλων ἴσον καθίστησι.

Vita Basilii (Theophanes Continuatus V), Bekker, I. (ed.), *Theophanes Continuatus, Ioannes Cameniata, Symeon Magister, Georgius Monachus* (CSHB, Bonn 1838), p. 340.