

Asia Minor in the Long Sixth Century

Current Research and Future Directions

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A change of appearance. Urban housing in Asia Minor during the sixth century

Inge Uyterhoeven

Introduction

Throughout the fourth, fifth and part of the sixth century, the urban elites of the Mediterranean World put a clear stamp on the late antique city by constructing large and richly ornamented private residences. Examples of imposing mansions in the towns of Asia Minor, known through written and material evidence, illustrate that in this region members of the upper political, ecclesiastical and socio-economic layers of the society made themselves visible and represented their power through private buildings. Like their contemporaries in other areas of the Mediterranean, the urban aristocracy of Western Asia Minor opted for houses with a common architectural and decorative language that had a strong representative character (Uyterhoeven 2007a; 2007b, 38–43) (Fig. 2.1). Luxurious houses, provided with lavish reception spaces, peristyle courtyards regulating interior circulation, a variety of private rooms and a range of service spaces, were realised on different scales, ranging from 'normal' elite dwellings to enormously large residences. Deliberately selected forms of ornamentation, including wall paintings and marble revetment, mosaic floors, water features and statuary, underscored the importance and hierarchy of the spaces within the house and contributed to the self-representation of the house owner towards outsiders, who were in a controlled way allowed in the house (Özgenel 2007; Uyterhoeven 2014a; 2014b).

Between the fourth and mid-sixth century the elite mansions in Asia Minor kept their impressive architectural and decorative features. Afterwards, between the mid-sixth and mid-seventh century they continued to be occupied, but only after having undergone some clear changes, related to both the general appearance of the houses and the use of space. This paper discusses the processes of continuity and transformation that took place from the mid-sixth century onwards in the imposing

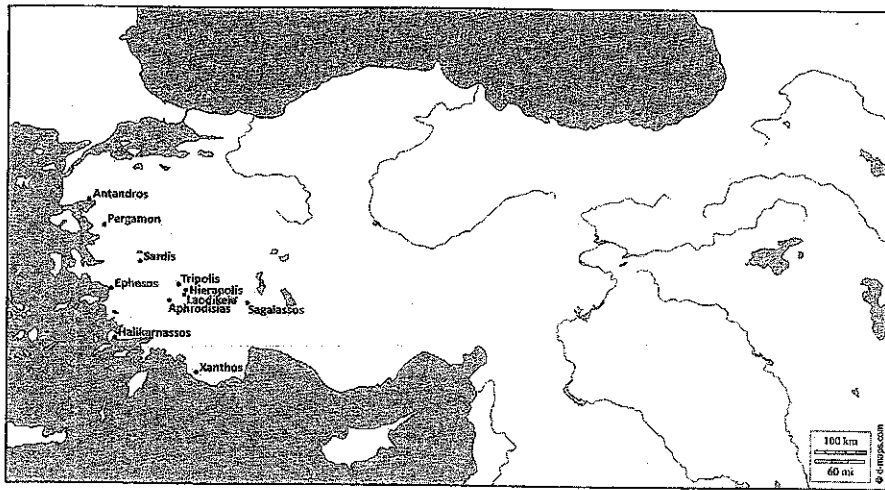


Figure 2.1: Map of Turkey showing the ancient sites with late antique houses discussed in this paper.

late antique elite residences of the towns of western Asia Minor. It considers the degree of innovation of these developments and focuses on the people who used the buildings in their new shape, by placing the phenomenon of sixth- to seventh-century private housing in the broader context of late antique urban and rural society.

The changing character of urban elite houses in the sixth century

Whereas the large urban elite houses built during the fourth and fifth centuries in Asia Minor had been characterised by luxurious and impressive architectural shapes, such as spacious audience halls and dining rooms, embellished with lavish ceiling, wall and floor decoration, their appearance thoroughly changed from the mid-sixth century onwards (Uytterhoeven forthcoming). Older richly ornamented rooms, courtyards and porticoes were frequently subdivided into smaller spaces by means of poor-quality walls in mortared or dry rubble, which typically included reused materials. Similar walls were also used to block door and window openings as well as intercolumnar spaces of peristyle courtyards. Several houses attest to this type of intervention, including the House of the Doric Courtyard at Hierapolis (Zaccaria Ruggiù 2007, 219; Zaccaria Ruggiù and Cottica 2007, 157), the North Temenos House at Aphrodisias (Dillon 1997, 732 and n. 5) and the Urban Mansion at Sagalassos (Waelkens *et al.* 2007, 504; Uytterhoeven *et al.* 2014, 376). These new additions not only resulted in the creation of new, smaller units, but also influenced the interconnection between individual spaces and the circulation patterns within the buildings, especially in the areas of the peristyle courtyards, which had formed important hubs of interior movement in the fourth- and fifth-century houses (Uytterhoeven 2014b).



Figure 2.2: Sagalassos, Urban Mansion. Floor in beaten earth and floor tiles constructed on top of an older mosaic in Space LVII (© Sagalassos Archaeological Research Project).

Typical of this time was also the lack of regard for earlier ornamentation. Decorated floors were removed or overlaid with more simple types of pavement, as happened in a waiting room (Room LVII) in the Urban Mansion at Sagalassos, where a floor in beaten earth and floor tiles was arranged on top of a geometric mosaic (Uytterhoeven *et al.* 2014, 379–81) (Fig. 2.2). Further changes include the dismantling of hypocaust floors and associated *pilae*, which can, for example, be seen in the private baths in the Terrace House at Antandros

(Polat *et al.* 2008, 457) and in the Urban Mansion at Sagalassos (Uytterhoeven 2011, 299). Similarly, wall paintings and stone revetment were stripped off. The removed materials were frequently piled up for later reuse or for lime slaking. Piles of building ceramics (bricks and tiles) and marble floor tiles of a nearby private bath space, found in the portico of the southern peristyle courtyard (Courtyard LXIX) of the Urban Mansion at Sagalassos, illustrate these dismantling and recycling practices (Uytterhoeven and van Beeumen 2014, 245). In addition, in the early seventh century a large lime kiln was constructed in the northern, representative wing of the same residence to recycle marble revetment and statuary from the neighbouring spaces as building material (Uytterhoeven 2009, 442; Uytterhoeven *et al.* 2014, 376).

All these changes turned the once lavishly decorated public and private spaces of the residences into plain and rather disorderly organised areas that were also repurposed. Larger-scale facilities for storage, rural and industrial activities were constructed. The animal troughs that were installed under the arcades of a courtyard in the Urban Mansion at Sagalassos (Waelkens *et al.* 2007, 504; Uytterhoeven *et al.* 2014, 376) and the glass manufactory that was arranged in the private baths of the Southern Villa at Laodikeia (Şimşek 2009, 422–23; 2013, 302) are only two examples of the encroachment on private space by rural and industrial activities. The arrangement of cooking places and hearths all over the buildings, the appearance of rudely-built rubble benches, mortars and basins known, for instance, in the houses in Sectors MMS and MMS-S at Sardis (Rautman 1995, 62) and in the Urban Mansion at Sagalassos (Uytterhoeven forthcoming), may be interpreted as indications of the co-existence of separate living units within the same houses. In some cases, the cooking activities seem to have surpassed the household level and to have had a commercial character, as seen in the House of the Doric Courtyard at Hierapolis (Zaccaria Ruggiù 2007, 219, 221) (Fig. 2.3).

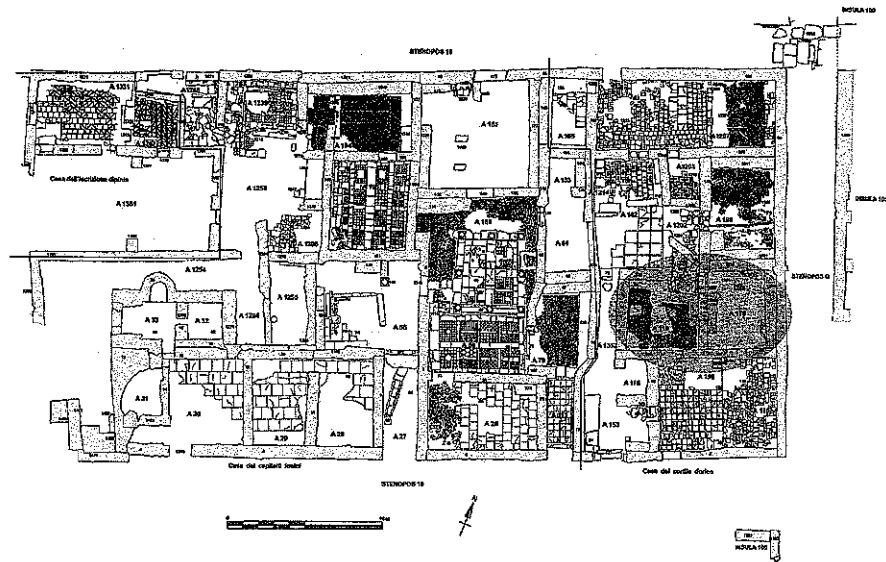


Figure 2.3: Hierapolis, House of the Doric Courtyard. Possible tavern composed of a kitchen with L-shaped bench (left) and consumption area (right) (adapted from the plan owned by the Archivio della Missione Italiana a Hierapolis).

Dating the late interventions in the urban residences of Asia Minor

Based on the currently available evidence for late antique urban upper-class houses in Asia Minor, it is difficult to determine the exact moment when the new features started to appear. The building materials and techniques of the newly-added architectural and infrastructural elements generally do not allow a precise dating and, unless they can be related to datable floor levels offering at least a *terminus post quem* for the construction, their absolute chronology remains vague. A pavement composed of floor tiles and *opus spicatum* that was arranged on top of an earlier figurative mosaic floor in one of the main spaces of the House of the Ionic Capitals at Hierapolis is one of the few examples of late interventions that can be dated precisely thanks to the presence of coins in its substrate (coins ranging between 330 and the first half of the sixth century) (Zaccaria Ruggiù 2007, 233, 242–43; Zaccaria Ruggiù and Cottica 2007, 149). An extra obstacle for precise dating is the fact that interventions often followed each other very rapidly in time. This is illustrated in the west portico of the large southern peristyle courtyard of the Urban Mansion at Sagalassos, where a quick succession of floors and subdivision practices was recorded in a rather brief timespan between the mid-sixth and mid-seventh century (Uyterhoeven and van Beeumen 2014, 245). In addition, later overbuilding of the late antique houses and their use as quarries for building materials obscures our understanding of the mid-

Table 2.1: Table showing the appearance of transformation and change in late antique houses of Asia Minor.

Site	Dating of new features and activities	Source
Antandros, Yamaç Ev	Fifth to sixth century	Polat and Polat 2005; Polat <i>et al.</i> 2006; 2008
Aphrodisias, North Temenos House	Sixth century	Dillon 1997; Smith and Ratté 1998
Aphrodisias, Triconch House	Late sixth to early seventh century	Berenfeld 2009
Ephesus, Insula M01	Last occupation phase (Phase 4)	Boulasikis 2004; 2010
Hierapolis, House of the Ionic Capitals	Mid-sixth to first half of the seventh century	Zaccaria Ruggiù 2007; Zaccaria Ruggiù and Cottica 2007
Hierapolis, House of the Doric Courtyard	Mid-sixth to first half of the seventh century	Zaccaria Ruggiù 2007; Zaccaria Ruggiù and Cottica 2007
Laodikeia, House A	Early seventh century	Şimşek 2013
Laodikeia, Southern Roman Villa	After the late fifth century	Şimşek 2009; 2013
Sagalassos, Urban Mansion	Mid-sixth to mid-seventh century	Waelkens <i>et al.</i> 2007; Uyterhoeven <i>et al.</i> 2014
Sardis, House of Bronzes	Late sixth to early seventh century	Foss 1976
Sardis, Sector MMS	Mid-sixth to early seventh century	Rautman 1995; 2011
Sardis, Sector MMS/S	Late sixth to early seventh century	Rautman 1995; 2011
Xanthos, Residence on the Lycian Acropolis	Late sixth to mid-seventh century	Manière-Lévêque 2002; 2006; 2007

sixth- and seventh-century activities and interventions too. For instance, in the tenth century the late antique building known as the Byzantine Palace at Ephesus was the scene of lime slaking, as attested by a lime kiln. Moreover, in the Middle and Late Byzantine periods part of the house was used as a cemetery and this continued into the fourteenth century (Pülz 2011, 69–70). Similarly, the late antique houses of Insula 104 at Hierapolis became partly obscured by two houses dated between the ninth and eleventh century (Zaccaria Ruggiù 2007, 232, 248–54; Zaccaria Ruggiù and Cottica 2007, 159–62), while twelfth- and thirteenth-century activities have been ceramically attested in the Residence on the Lycian Acropolis at Xanthos (Pellegrino 2000, 351; 2003, 441–42).

Although the currently available chronological data for interventions in late antique houses are vague, especially after the mid-sixth century (Ellis 1988, 565), putting them together gives some important clues to understand what happened (Table 2.1). In most cities of western Asia Minor, the mid-sixth century seems to have been a crucial period. Whereas the luxurious standards of the late fourth and fifth century generally seem to have been kept into the early sixth century, the situation clearly changed later in the century. On many sites the latest occupation phase(s) of

the houses, characterised by the significant adaptations and changes described above, continued into the seventh century. Apart from chronological differences between cities and houses, there is also the issue of distinguishing individual interventions and transformations within a single private house.

Written sources, particularly legal documents, help to put the archaeological data in their broader chronological framework. Although most of the late antique laws that have been preserved, such as the fifth-century *Codex Theodosianus* and the sixth-century *Codex Iustinianus*, are related to Constantinople, some of them were extended to provincial cities that were dealing with similar issues as the capital (e.g. *Cod. Iust.* 8.10.13 of 531). Julian of Ascalon's treatise for Palestina is an exceptional example of a set of building regulations that were specifically issued for a region outside Constantinople (Hakim 2001; Saliou 2007). Several legal texts dating to the period between the fourth and sixth century deal with regulations regarding one- and multi-storey private constructions (Saradi 1994; Baldini Lippolis 2007). These include regulations controlling encroachment on public space by private buildings, as well as rules concerning neighbouring houses, preventing, for instance, the obstruction of views from a house by other dwellings and defining the distances between balconies. Many of these laws aimed at reducing fire risks in the densely-built late antique city centres. Some of them refer to the restoration and maintenance of houses (e.g. *Cod. Iust.* 8.10.6.1 of AD 321; *Cod. Iust.* 8.10.8 pr. and 1 of AD 377; Saradi 1998, 21–22). However, it should be kept in mind that the laws preserved go back to the time when urban elite houses were still in their 'high days' and thus predate the changes and transformations of the mid-sixth to seventh century. Therefore, these legal texts cannot simply be applied to this later period. Apart from that, we do not have any specific data about legal restrictions concerning the interior organisation and appearance of private houses, which according to the material evidence underwent such significant changes from the mid-sixth century onwards.

The impact of sixth- and seventh-century interventions on urban elite houses

The new architectural and infrastructural features that were imposed upon urban houses of Asia Minor in the sixth and seventh centuries certainly changed their general character. However, it is not entirely clear to what extent these additions and transformations were recognisable from the outside and how much they affected the urban environment in general. In certain late antique cities outside Asia Minor, such as Philippi in Greece and Ostia in Italy, the interior of houses underwent changes within the limits of the earlier ground plans (Baldini Lippolis 2007, 217–19). The outer facade of a house through its architectural and decorative characteristics often communicated a message and thus influenced the way the house was perceived by passers-by (Helg 2009, 497, 500, 502; 2012, 146). Examples from sites where dwellings have been well-investigated, like Pompeii, show that Roman house owners and inhabitants did take the impression their houses gave to outsiders into account. For

instance, economic activities within the Pompeian atrium house were organised in such a way that they were hidden by the facade and thus not, or hardly, visible from the street, guaranteeing that the house itself did not lose its social appearance (Helg 2009, 503; Flohr 2012, 2, 11–12). Unfortunately, with some exceptions of smaller urban elite houses, such as House A at Laodikeia (Şimşek 2013, 307–19) and the three houses of Insula 104 at Hierapolis (Zaccaria Ruggiù 2007; Zaccaria Ruggiù and Cottica 2007), most of the elite complexes known in late antique Asia Minor have only been partially excavated to date and as a result, their entrances have been exposed in only exceptional cases, for example in the Residence on the Lycian Acropolis at Xanthos (Manière-Lévêque 2006; 2007). This situation makes it difficult to build a clear picture of the outer appearance of the buildings and their connection with the immediately surrounding urban setting.

By contrast, the new elements that appeared from the mid-sixth century onwards no doubt strongly affected the interior of the mansions. Not only did their appearance totally change, becoming much plainer and less luxurious, but the internal circulation patterns and use of space, frequently involving distinct types of undertakings, were also completely altered. Certain principles of physical or visible separation within the mansions may have been used to organise the range of domestic, as well as (sometimes smelly and noisy) industrial and agricultural activities in such a way that they caused as little nuisance as possible. For instance, separating devices, including wooden shutters and screens, curtains and hangings, which are known to have been used in the Greek and (late) Roman world (Stephenson 2014; literary evidence for Roman curtains: Carucci 2008, 169–70), may have been applied to define living and working spaces, to ensure some privacy, to make separations between different users' groups (e.g. male – female; inhabitants – workers) and to keep certain activities out of view. Since nothing has been left of such devices, certain activities or strategies currently escape us.

Whereas these (no longer preserved) elements could help to effectively hide certain activities from view, it must have been less easy to camouflage certain sensory effects, such as noises and smells, as house owners of earlier periods already experienced (Harrington 2015). Therefore, certain infrastructural elements seem to have been installed in such a way that they caused a minimum of hindrance for other users of the buildings. For instance, installations for animals, which were frequently introduced in the urban domestic context, were kept separate from the living areas, as seen in the Residence on the Lycian Acropolis at Xanthos where an earlier reception room close to the house's main entrance was transformed into a sheepfold or stable (Manière-Lévêque 2000, 346–47; 2001, 231–32; 2002, 236; 2012, 20, 33).

Mid-sixth and seventh-century interventions in their broader context 'Innovative' features and activities in the mid-sixth and seventh centuries

The mid-sixth to seventh-century interventions in the elite houses of Asia Minor clearly resulted in a new appearance, layout and spatial organisation of the interior

compared to the late fourth and fifth-century situation. However, some of the processes, constructional changes and infrastructural features, as well as the related activities may have occurred already in private houses in earlier periods, but remain currently largely invisible in the archaeological record. Due to the complex history of late antique houses investigated thus far, with an occupation often going back to the Hellenistic period, traces of earlier phases have largely or even totally been obliterated by later building interventions. This is, for instance, the case with the House above the Theatre (Baier 2013) and the house in Insula M01 at Ephesus (Boulasikis 2004 and 2010), and the Urban Mansion at Sagalassos (Uytterhoeven *et al.* 2014).

As far as architectural interventions are concerned, the obstruction of intercolumnar spaces of porticoes, which became a typical feature of the large mansions in the mid-sixth and seventh century, was not entirely new. Many republican and imperial houses, including examples at Pompeii and Herculaneum, are known to have had peristyle courtyards with removable or permanent closures in between the columns. Fences and walls offered protection against sun and rain, helped to regulate circulation and created closed spaces, especially gardens (Vipard 2003). This is also attested outside Italy. For example, in the imperial period the brick arcades that surrounded Courtyard XXV of the Urban Mansion of Sagalassos were closed off with (wooden) fences. The practice was also applied in the later, late antique houses, even before the mid-sixth century. In this time too, the intercolumniations of peristyle courtyards were frequently blocked with wall sections that could either entirely fill the openings between the columns or leave some space for air and light circulation. This is illustrated by the marble-clad walls that (at least partly) closed the interspaces between the columns of a long corridor in the North Temenos House at Aphrodisias (Dillon 1997, 732 and n. 5; Smith and Ratté 1998, 231). In this way separate functional areas could be created and certain activities were kept invisible from other parts of the dwellings.

Functional segregation was a practice that was already in use long before late antiquity and was especially important when residential and representative activities were taking place alongside commercial and/or industrial ones. Smaller portable objects, such as hand looms for weaving and spindles for spinning found in ancient Greek and Roman house contexts, have revealed that household activities could take place all over the house. However, certain areas that were provided with fixed installations, such as large standing looms, indicate that these spaces were (at least at some moments) reserved for textile production (Larsson Lovén 1998, 86; 2013, 141, 145 and n. 56). Apart from household tasks, luxurious atrium houses (*e.g.* at Pompeii) often enclosed well-defined areas for other, larger-scale industrial and artisanal activities (Flohr 2012). In line with this, houses in the Vesuvius cities also show that originally luxurious Roman domestic space was at later stages sometimes (partly) given up to artisanal activities, as may have happened in the *fullonica* of Stephanus at Pompeii (for the discussion: Flohr 2011, 89–94).

In addition, specific parts of a house could also be separated from the rest of the dwelling and given for rent. Rental housing units, such as *tabernae* (taverns, shops

and workshops opening to the street) and *cenacula* (upper-floor space), sometimes formed integral parts of the *domus* and were each provided with their own external entrance (Pirson 1999, 138–41). Apart from this, archaeological and written evidence also attests the subdivision of larger Roman houses into apartments (Pirson 1999, 141–44).

The co-existence of several types of activities was often facilitated thanks to a vertical organisation of houses and functional clustering at different floor levels. Based on the concentration of utilitarian spaces on the ground floor of the large residences in Asia Minor during the mid-sixth and seventh century, it might be well possible that commercial and productive infrastructure as well as smaller house units (rented out) generally occupied the ground level of the mansions, whereas the residential and more representative functions of the houses were transferred to the upper floors of the buildings (Uytterhoeven forthcoming). Similar arrangements occurred already earlier. In Pompeii and Herculaneum several houses were vertically expanded shortly before AD 79 (Helg 2012, 145, 154–55, 157). The same patterns may thus have been followed in later imperial times and in late antiquity, both in Italy and elsewhere, but the poor preservation of upper floor levels generally impedes our understanding of their appearance, layout and use (Baldini Lippolis 2007, 217). Nevertheless, the presence of upper floors is ascertained in several late antique residences. Thus, the remains of several masonry-built stairs were discovered in the Urban Mansion at Sagalassos (Uytterhoeven *et al.* 2014). Also collapsed floors, which are sometimes recovered in destruction layers during excavations, reveal additional information about upper storeys. For instance, the pavement fragments found in the collapse of the Urban Mansion at Sagalassos evidence that in the late fourth and fifth century private spaces with plain bichrome mosaics were located at the upper floor of the representative wing alongside public spaces with complex polychrome geometric floors (Uytterhoeven *et al.* 2014).

In line with this earlier Roman and late antique situation, reception and representation may have continued to take place on the upper floors, while the lower levels were gradually more and more occupied by more utilitarian activities. As evidenced by the luxurious goods that were retrieved from late sixth- to early seventh-century layers in the Urban Mansion at Sagalassos, in this period an elite lifestyle may have been maintained on the upper floors. Expensive items, such as imported pottery and Nile fish, were found in secondary refuse contexts nearby a large reception hall (Waelkens *et al.* 2007, 506) and, even if the kitchen area related to the dining hall was no longer in use by this time (Putzeys *et al.* 2005, 234), the finds indicate that dining remained important.

In this way, the mid-sixth to seventh-century houses likely formed a transitional phase between older traditions and later developments. Indeed, multi-storey houses in which aristocratic interactions took place on the upper floors are attested for later times at different places in the Mediterranean (Ellis 2007, 14–15), including Early Medieval Italy (Polci 2003) and Visigothic Spain (Osland 2017, 97–98) in the West and

Cyprus in the East (e.g. Huilerie at Salamis during its seventh- to twelfth(?) century phase; Argoud *et al.* 1980; Sodini 1997, 496).

The examples mentioned above illustrate that several of the mid-sixth to seventh-century characteristics were already known before. However, the scale on which these types of processes developed in the lavish elite mansions of Asia Minor during their last occupation phase(s), the character of the building materials applied (which became much ruder) and the way the new features invaded the pre-existing lavish house contexts is striking.

The integration of rural housing features in an urban private context

During their sixth to seventh century phase(s) the late antique mansions had characteristics in common with (contemporaneous) houses in the countryside. Unfortunately, despite the increasing scholarly attention towards Hellenistic, Roman and late antique rural housing in Asia Minor and the rest of the Eastern Empire (Bowden and Lavan 2004, xxv-xxvi; Chavarría and Lewit 2004, 3-4), our knowledge of rural private life remains even more limited than that in the cities (Uytterhoeven 2007b). Apart from some exceptional written attestations, the currently available evidence still mainly relies on surface surveys (Ceylan 2009, 46-47), which have their limitations (Armstrong 2002; Vanhaverbeke *et al.* 2004, 249-50; papers by Elton and Terpooy, this volume). For instance, certain chronological periods may remain undistinguished, due to the superposition by later occupation phases. Besides, it is difficult to pinpoint developments that took place within a short time span; whereas these might be visible in the stratigraphy of urban excavations, they are not always recognisable in surface ceramics (Bowden and Lavan 2004, xxi-xxiii; Chavarría and Lewit 2004, 5-6; see paper by Elton, this volume). The regions best-known thus far in Asia Minor are Pisidia, Lycia, Cilicia and Isauria (Chavarría and Lewit 2004, 18). Excavated rural estates, such as an example near Lampsakos in the Troad (Koçyiğit 2013, 155-56), are rare, but have proven to offer a much more detailed picture of the various occupation phases of rural houses than can be obtained through surface survey (Bowden and Lavan 2004, xxiii). Due to the current state of research, the available evidence thus generally only gives a broad idea about the layout of these estates in the different regions and the productive activities that took place there. Nevertheless, larger-scale studies, such as that on Cilician rural houses and agricultural installations (Seleucia ad Calycadnum: Eichner 2011; Kanytellis: Aydınoğlu and Mörel 2015; Aydınoğlu *et al.* 2015), illustrate the immense potential of rural housing to fill the gaps in our understanding of the still under-appreciated life in the countryside.

In rural estates certain types of infrastructure (e.g. wine and olive presses) and production waste related to industrial production (especially iron, glass and pottery) occurred alongside some (difficult to date) signs of luxury, including fragments of window glass and marble revetment (Vanhaverbeke *et al.* 2004, 259). This suggests that they fulfilled a combined residential and productive function. Other, more modest

rural dwellings may have housed members of the middle classes, including peasants, shepherds and craftsmen (Trombley 2001, 224; Sodini 2003, 45-48; Uytterhoeven 2007b, 47-48).

Some of the productive activities attested in the countryside, such as wine and olive oil production evidenced by press installations and palynological evidence (for agricultural production: Chavarría and Lewit 2004, 10-15; Rough Cilicia: Aydınoğlu 2010, 252, 255-56), seem to have intruded into urban mansions in the mid-sixth and seventh century. For instance, the facilities for wine production that were installed in the early seventh century in the third housing unit (House III) of House A at Laodikeia included a press installation and a reservoir (Şimşek 2013, 316). These are in line with the ones found in contemporaneous rural estates, such as a sixth- to seventh-century rural estate near Lampsakos (Koçyiğit 2013, 155-56) or rural houses with evidence for wine and oil production at Kanytellis in Rough Cilicia (Aydınoğlu and Mörel 2015; Aydınoğlu *et al.* 2015).

Furthermore, the possible vertical development of late urban houses mentioned above seems to have parallels in rural contexts. As can be observed in different areas of Asia Minor, storage spaces, storerooms/cellars and working areas were generally arranged on the ground floor of rural houses, while the living spaces were located on the upper floor (Ceylan 2009, 49; Rough Cilicia: Aydınoğlu 2010, 251, 257; e.g. at Kanytellis: Aydınoğlu and Mörel 2015; Aydınoğlu *et al.* 2015).

Parallel developments in public and private urban contexts

When looking at the level of the late antique city in Asia Minor, interventions like those observed in urban elite houses are well-known in the context of urban space too (Saradi 1998, 20-21). These range from the overbuilding and subdivision of public buildings and porticoes into basic living and working spaces and the encroachment of houses and workshops upon streets, squares and other open areas, to the construction of industrial/artisanal and agricultural infrastructure. Thanks to the preserved legal documents (see above), we know that these processes had become a major issue by the fourth and fifth century. The fact that the laws were issued, however, illustrates that in this period there was still a clear concern about the preservation of the outer appearance of the cities (Jacobs 2013, 675-76). Among the people 'plundering' public buildings by removing valuable materials, such as stone and marble plates, in this period, were upper-class members of society who used the stripped off material in their own luxurious private houses (Saradi 1994, 300). Antoninus, bishop of Ephesus, who embellished his dining space with spoliated columns from a church and adorned his private bath with marble from a baptistry, was in AD 400 deposed as bishop because of this (Palladius, *Dialogus* 13, 164-67; Jacobs 2013, 388-89), which shows that there was indeed still an attempt to control these kinds of practices.

In contrast, from the second half of the sixth century onwards, contemporaneously with the transformation of the urban mansions, the situation in the cities in general deteriorated (Jacobs 2013, 652-55, 675-78). To this period date certain activities that

strongly affected the appearance of cities and spatial use within them, such as the dismantling and piling up of reusable building material, the construction of lime kilns and the dumping of waste material (Jacobs 2013, 654–55, 676). For instance, in Sardis the street running south of the late antique houses in Sectors MMS and MMS-S, as well as the plaza in Sector MMS-N reveal evidence of dismantling and dumping in a public framework (Rautman 1995, 63; see paper by Jeffery, this volume). As Helen Saradi has pointed out (1994, 308), of the 53 decrees on public works in the Theodosian Code (*Cod. Theod.* 15.1, 321–425) only 22 were taken over in the Justinianic Code (*Cod. Iust.* 8, 11, 338–472). Apparently, by the sixth century some of the processes regulated by earlier laws had become irreversible and ‘typical’ features of the late antique town were no longer considered striking or legally unacceptable.

The late antique structures encroaching on earlier buildings and open spaces allow us a glimpse of living and working areas of the middle and lower classes of society, which generally remain rather obscure in the archaeological and historical record (Sodini 2003, 42–48; Roskams 2006; Zanini 2006, 375–84). Their growing presence and visibility in the city centres in late antiquity compared to earlier times may be related to a move of people who had previously been active in the margins of the urban areas and outside the city’s perimeters towards the centres, coined ‘micro-migration’ by Zanini (2006, 402–4). The appearance of smaller house units and/or workshops, resembling those known already from public urban areas, from the mid-sixth century onwards in the urban elite residences too might indicate that around this time a shift took place in the socio-economic status of (some of) the inhabitants and users of these private buildings.

The users of houses in the sixth and seventh centuries

Literary, epigraphical and archaeological evidence attests that the builders and owners of the luxurious residences that were constructed in the cities of Asia Minor during the fourth and fifth centuries belonged to the political and ecclesiastical urban elites. Although these mansions have frequently been identified as *episkopeia* and governor’s palaces without convincing arguments, they must have belonged to a much broader range of elite members, who all shared the same architectural and decorative language in their houses (Uytterhoeven 2014a). Some identifications have been based on specific finds in late antique house contexts, as illustrated by the House of Bronzes at Sardis, which due to the considerable number of bronze objects found in a storage room has been ascribed to a high church dignitary (Foss 1976, 43–44). In exceptional cases, we know the name of these late antique house owners through inscriptions. Thus, Margareites lived in the Terrace House at Antandros (Polat and Polat 2005, 90), Eustochios decorated the North Temenos House at Aphrodisias with marble wall revetment (ala2004 46–47; Scheibelreiter-Gail 2012, 152), and Charidemos refurbished his large house at Halikarnassos with new mosaic floors (Isager 1995, 210; Poulsen 1995, 203; Scheibelreiter-Gail 2012, 145–46).

When the lavishly-decorated urban mansions started to undergo changes and transformations from the mid-sixth century onwards, these developments may have been connected to a new type of owners and/or dwellers. As pointed out above, the new interior organisation of the urban elite houses, especially on ground floors, which involved subdivision in smaller units and the arrangement of industrial and rural infrastructure, is generally considered an indication that members of the middle class or even lower-class people started to settle in the earlier elite mansions (e.g. Saradi 1998, 23–24). For instance, the construction of subdivision walls and the blocking of doors is often seen as a reflection of legal regulations for houses that were owned or rented by different owners (Baldini Lippolis 2007, 228–30) and the subdivision of the earlier luxurious mansions into smaller separate apartments (Ellis 1988, 565–69). In this way, different dwellers could share the maintenance costs of the mansions, which must have become too high for the upper-class owners (Saradi 1998, 30–43; 2006, 168). In Asia Minor, many houses show traces of subdivisions of the earlier mansions into (work) shops and/or smaller housing units for different families. Examples are the Late Roman Townhouse in Sector MMS at Sardis (Rautman 1995, 62–63), the Terrace House at Antandros (Polat *et al.* 2006, 45) and Insula M01 (the so-called Freudenhaus) at Ephesus (Boulasikis 2004, 38–40; Groh *et al.* 2006, 88). This reorganisation into multiple-family houses is also suggested by the arrangement of fire places and ovens throughout the residences. For instance, the individual households that lived next to each other in the Urban Mansion at Sagalassos each had their own cooking facilities (Waelkens *et al.* 2007, 507; Uytterhoeven *et al.* 2014, 376; Uytterhoeven forthcoming). Given the resemblance of the smaller living units in the mansions with lower to middle-class dwellings and (work) shops in public urban areas, as well as with certain aspects of rural house forms, several occupants in the mansions may have been from a similar background as the artisans and traders, peasants and small landowners who inhabited these other types of housing.

However, it is quite possible that, alongside these non-elite groups, people belonging to the higher levels of the society continued to reside in the residences too. Although it is thought that many upper-class people left the provincial cities for the capital (Saradi 1998, 25), others stayed. As mentioned above, these elites may have mainly lived on the (currently less well-preserved) upper floors of the mansions or may have used specific rooms on the ground floor that kept, in contrast to other spaces, some degree of distinction. Some of the earlier reception spaces indeed seem to have continued to play a certain representative role, although their previous lavish floor and wall decoration had (partly) been replaced by simpler ornamental forms. This is the case with Room D in the late antique residence of Sector MMS-S at Sardis (Greenewalt and Rautman 1998, 484–85) and the southern apsidal room in the Triconch House at Aphrodisias (Berenfeld 2009, 224). These spaces may still have been the scene of dining practices, as suggested by the remains of luxury goods and the use of marble sigma tables, which have been found in reception spaces of houses that remained occupied into the seventh century, such as the Triconch House at

Aphrodisias (Berenfeld 2009, 214), the Urban Mansion at Sagalassos (Uytterhoeven *et al.* 2011, 272) and the houses in Sectors MMS and MMS-S at Sardis (Rautman 1995, 59). Thus, certain earlier elite practices of communal dining may have continued, though in a different setting and in more limited areas than before, while 'lower status' activities contemporaneously took place in other sections of the mansions. Besides, certain sections of the houses may even have been abandoned entirely, as happened in the late antique house in Sector MMS at Sardis (Rautman 1995, 62–63), and in the Urban Mansion at Sagalassos, where specific parts of the residence had already been given up by the early seventh century (Uytterhoeven *et al.* 2011, 273).

Nonetheless, the precise identity of these possible upper-class inhabitants remains vague, since written evidence for the sixth and seventh century is lacking. The find of 21 glass weights, located in a small space behind the apse of a reception room in the house in Sector MMS-S at Sardis and datable to the late sixth or early seventh century based on stratigraphic and numismatic data is an exceptional example of archaeological evidence giving some clues about the identification of residents during the later occupation phases of the residences in Asia Minor. The weights, each provided with a stamped cruciform monograph resembling that of the emperor Heraclius (610–641), have been linked with a well-to-do businessman or urban official who may have resided here in the early seventh century (Greenewalt and Rautman 2000, 651–52; Rautman 2011, 20).

The question why from the mid-sixth century onwards elite members of society may have left their residences and/or leased or sold parts of their mansions to new inhabitants of a lower status is not easy to answer. Several possible explanations related to the changing character of the late antique city administration and urban social structure have been proposed in recent years, including the 'crisis of the (Christian) urban elite': upper-class members no longer played the same traditional role as before and their upper-class status was no longer dependent on their family background but on the offices they fulfilled in the imperial administration (Saradi 2006, 168; 2008, 320). Furthermore, apart from the plague, natural disasters such as earthquakes and climatological changes have also frequently been considered factors leading to changes in late antique society (e.g. Saradi 1998, 24–25; Jacobs 2013, 676–77; Izdebski *et al.* 2016; for Sagalassos: Vanhaverbeke *et al.* 2004, 263–65), while military attacks and raids have additionally been put forward as likely explanations (Saradi 1998, 26–27). Although these elements must all have had an impact on the ancient urban organisation and way of life to a certain extent, they are not easy to pinpoint (Gregory 2005, 158–60) and can only rarely be recognised in the archaeological evidence (e.g. archaeological responses to water scarcity in the period c. 350–470: Izdebski *et al.* 2016, 203–204). Moreover, similar types of events had always been overcome in earlier times, while archaeological evidence for continued occupation into the early Byzantine period points towards an ability to recover in later times too (for Sagalassos: Poblome 2015, 106). For instance, after earthquakes city dwellers would create new floor levels on top of the debris in both public and private buildings and

thus resume occupation. This approach was, for example, applied in a public structure at Laodikeia after an earthquake in the late third or early fourth century (Kumsar *et al.* 2016, 528–31), in larger parts of the city of Assos after a seismic shock in the later fifth century (Böhlendorf-Arslan, this volume) and in the Urban Mansion at Sagalassos in the early seventh century (Uytterhoeven *et al.* 2011, 273; 2014, 379). Therefore, more research is needed to extend our insights in the characteristic developments of the mid-sixth to seventh-century situation in Asia Minor and in the factors that caused the changes and evolutions at the end of late antiquity.

Conclusion

Around the mid-sixth century the large mansions of the urban elite that had been built during the preceding 150–200 years changed their appearance drastically, though also continued some earlier aspects. For reasons that are not entirely clear yet, many of these luxurious aristocratic dwellings underwent subdivision, storage, ruralisation and industrialisation. These changes were reflected in rudely built structural and infrastructural elements, the removal of decoration, as well as the piling up and recycling of building materials. Processes that had been occurring in the public area already for some generations as well as processes typical of houses in the countryside now entered the private upper-class house and led to the formation of a 'new' type of housing, combining productive and residential elements, presumably in an often vertically organised house-formation. Moreover, new inhabitants of a lower socio-economic status seem to have lived in the houses, perhaps alongside elite house owners who may have occupied the more representative parts of the residences. However, the precise organisation of activities very much differed from house to house, indicating that the inhabitants and users may have been different for each individual example.

With their long occupation and building history into the seventh century and the large variety of changes and transformations they underwent during their long occupation, the late antique urban elite residences of Asia Minor thus form valuable tools to explore not only the diachronic development of architectural, ornamental and functional aspects of private housing, but also to understand the underlying social, economic, political and cultural ideas reflected by this redefinition of private space.

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3

Pagan-mythological statuary in sixth-century Asia Minor

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The fate of statuary in Late Antiquity has drawn a lot of scholarly attention in recent decades. All newly produced honorific statues have recently been assembled in the *Last Statues of Antiquity* database, their styles, honorands, chronology and geographic distribution discussed in the accompanying volume (Ward-Perkins and Smith 2016). In addition, it is now realised that older statues continued to be viewed, honoured and moved around far into the sixth century (Bauer and Witschel 2007, *passim*; Smith 2007). Overviews of attitudes and reactions towards pagan and mythological statuary are provided in *The Afterlife of Greek and Roman Sculpture* (Kristensen and Stirling 2016a). In their introduction to the volume, Kristensen and Stirling (2016b) draw a chronological sketch of attitudes towards such statues. Production, relocation and re-carving was still rife in the fourth and even fifth century. By contrast, the sixth century was rather bleak, with discard and destruction becoming more widespread. At best, statues played no significant part in urban life anymore but 'had simply remained standing while a city changed around them' (Kristensen and Stirling 2016b, 21). In this paper, I will argue that active interventions and, as a consequence, interest in pagan-mythological statuary were in fact far more common than scholars currently assume, but they are difficult to distinguish. The reasons for their continued usage were very diverse and cannot simply be reduced to, at best, appreciation of cultural heritage or decoration, or, at worst, indifference.

In order to demonstrate the many uses to which statuary was still put in the sixth century, I will focus on the city of Sagalassos, where several sixth-century interventions and statuary relocations, almost all of statues of a pagan-mythological nature, have been recognised in the archaeological record. Sagalassos was a medium-sized city in ancient Pisidia, located at an altitude between 1400 and 1700 m in the Taurus Mountains (Fig. 3.1). At the start of the sixth century, the town was hit by an