LATE BYZANTINE THESSALONIKI

Thessaloniki was founded by the synoecism of 26 settlements in 316/315 B.C. by the king of Macedonia, Cassander, in the innermost recess of the Thermaic Gulf, between the sea and the foothills of Mt. Hortiatis (anc. Kissos), i.e. at a site that was both strategic and commercial, and whose advantages continue to the present day. While the city was always an active port, connecting the Balkans with the Aegean and the Mediterranean, the sea was never its only productive area. Thessaloniki always looked inland and towards the roads leading to it, that is towards the Thessaloniki plain to the West, the Mygdonian basin to the North, and the East/Southeast towards the Halkidiki.

In the mid-14th century, the productive and commercial region of Thessaloniki was defined by the castles built in 1341 by Andronikos III Palaeologus: Chrysoupolis at the mouth of the river Strymon, Siderokastron north of Serres, and Gynaikokastron northwest of Kilkis, which commands the valley of the Axios below it. Coins of Anna Palaeologina, empress of Thessaloniki (1354 -1365), and of John V Palaeologus minted in Thessaloniki have not been discovered further than Drama, Serres, and Pella, thus testifying to the limits of their circulation.

The plain of Thessaloniki that extended to the lake of Yenitsa (Giannitsa) and the river Loudias was traversed by the Axios and Gallikos (ancient Echedoros) rivers. This unhealthy and sparsely settled alluvial area had no harbors, but it was suitable for agricultural cultivation, hunting, and animal husbandry. In the Late Byzantine period, water mills operated on the hills neighboring the city, like those along the stream of Polichni. During periods when the countryside was unsafe and during sieges, the processing of agricultural products and other workshops were transferred to the city, if one is to judge from the discovery in the upper city of a water tower that converted the flow of water from springs in the region into motive power, as occurred north of the church of Osios David.

The plain was also traversed by a road system with three branches: one connected Thessaloniki with the region of Morava and Serbia through the valley of the Axios and Skopje. The *kastra* (forts) identified in the valley of the Gallikos, the *kastron* of Aëtos at Panteleimon, Melanthion, Kolchis, Plaghia, and Sebaston, were connected via this road. The second road, towards Upper Macedonia, led to the lakes of Prespa and Ohrid and thence through Adriatic ports to Venice. The third road led

South through the administrative region (*katepanikion*) of Kitros, the plain of Pieria, the castle at Platamonas, and the valley of Tempe; beneath the shadow of Mt. Olympus, it linked Thessaloniki with Thessaly and central Greece.

The second of the three roads mentioned above was joined with the famous Via Egnatia, which crossed the plain of Thessaloniki and entered the Mygdonian basin through the lower valley of the Gallikos. A branch of the Via Egnatia led from the Mygdonian basin to Thessaloniki (the Litea Gate) through the narrow pass of Derveni. The Mygdonian basin had two lakes, Langadas or Aghios Vasileios (ancient Koroneia) and Bolbe, which were described in a charming fashion by Ioannes Kameniates in the early 10th century. An olive press north of Bolbe is dated to 1324/1325, and the tower of Aghios Vasileios is connected with agricultural and fishing production in the area during the 14th century.

The fort at Rendina, at the easternmost point of the valley, commands the valley through which the Rhechios River channels the waters from Bolbe into the Strymonic Gulf, and the Via Egnatia led on towards Constantinople. This road, as Angeliki Laiou has shown, was unsafe for travelers as early as the 1320s; after 1341 there is no testimony of its having functioned as a connection to Constantinople, and the area east of the Strymon ceased to be economically linked with Thessaloniki. The gradual decline in 14th century coins minted at Thessaloniki, and the construction in the mid-14th century at Rendina of a church having the characteristics of Thessaloniki's ecclesiastical architecture attest to the fact that in this century Rendina was the easternmost edge of its shrunken countryside.

Apart from Rendina, another important city in the Mygdonian basin and a crossroads on the Via Egnatia was Langadas, which served as a base for those besieging and conquering Thessaloniki. The Bulgarian leader Ionannitzes camped there in 1207, as did John VI Kantakouzenos when he was preparing to suppress the Zealots in 1350, and Murad II when he was getting ready to take Thessaloniki in 1430.

The administrative region (*katepanikion*) of Kalamaria primarily covered the western Halkidiki, and was part of the theme of Thessaloniki from 1300. Mt. Athos documents contain much information about monastic wealth, villages and toponyms, which made it possible for J. Lefort to compose a plan detailing land use in this region during the Byzantine period. The close relation between Thessaloniki and Kalamaria in the Late Byzantine period is reflected in the ceramics trade. Glazed pottery from

Olynthus presents close similarities to that of Thessaloniki, and in all likelihood originated in its workshops. The final productive part of Thessaloniki's countryside that remained linked by the sea with the city even after the conquest of Kalamaria by the Turks was the Kassandra peninsula. The Palaeologan tower at Nea Fokaia served the control of the cultivation of olive trees, the production of oil, and its transport to Thessaloniki. It was precisely this provisioning of the city that caused the Thessalonians to repeatedly request Venice between 1423 and 1429 to repair the fortifications at Potidaia and to strengthen the defense of Kassandra during Ottoman expansion.

In 1372, Turkish raiders appeared before the walls of Thessaloniki. During the years that followed, the plain of Thessaloniki was occupied by the *ghāzīs* of Evrenos, and the process of Thessaloniki's conquest began in three phases: devastation of the countryside, subjugation, occupation. Nomadic Turks (*yürüks*), whose religious center was the tomb of Evrenos at Yenitsa (Giannitsa), settled in the area during the reigns of Murad I (1385) and Bayazid I (1393). The Turks besieged Thessaloniki between 1383 and 1387, and with the surrender of its residents was subjugated from 1387 to 1403. The city's economy collapsed. No work of art in the city is dated post-1380, and there is no mention of any work of art in the countryside during this era. During the period 1365-1376, the city's mint issued bronze coins depicting the martyrdom of St. Demetrius, probably with the purpose of showing the parallel between the violation of Thessaloniki by the Ottomans and that of St. Demetrius by his executioners. During the same period, in the depiction of the patron saint of Thessaloniki he appears as a soldier armed with a bow and three arrows, which are the symbols of Turkish rule.

Fourteenth-century plates from Spain and the khanate of the Golden Horn are incorporated into the walls of Vlatadon Monastery as rare pieces, but Late Byzantine excavation levels in Thessaloniki did not yield fragments of imported ceramics to attest to the existence of systematic trade. Commerce in Thessaloniki was based chiefly on the production and export of grain, and on the import and export of textiles, and was directed towards Greece, Epirus, Serbia, Dalmatia, and Venice. That is, it was connected with the Venetian trading network, which was carried out through the plain and harbor of Thessaloniki and thence through Chalkida (Negreponte) in Euboea. A testimony to trade with Venice after 1430, and the channel through which Thessaloniki received some breathing room, is the monumental tomb of the grain merchant Loukas Spantounes, which was constructed in Venice and set up in 1481 in

the basilica of St. Demetrius. This monument, which can only be compared to the tombs of the doges, is the last from the Byzantine aristocracy, and the only one dedicated by Thessaloniki's upper class in the place where its wealth was acquired.

SHAPE, EXTENT, AND SIZE OF THE CITY. The triangular shape of Thessaloniki's fortification wall did not change from the time it was established in the mid-3rd and rebuilt in the 5th century. Consequently, Late Byzantine Thessaloniki occupied the same area as the Roman and Early Christian city. That is, Thessaloniki, like Constantinople and Nicaea, did not shrink, as happened to many cities following antiquity, and life continued there without interruption from ancient to medieval times.

The question that arises, then, is this: did the size of Late Byzantine Thessaloniki correspond to the total territory it occupied? During the same period in Constantinople, Nikolaos Mesarites (ca. 1200), describing the area around the church of the Holy Apostles in the heart of the City (viz., Constantinople), mentions plants, trees, fruits, vines, olive trees, and grain fields. According to the accounts of two travelers, the North African Abn Battuta (1332) and the Spaniard Clavijo (1403), there were scattered neighborhoods within its walls. Dimitrios Kydonis relates that these residential areas of Constantinople were separated by dense growth. A. Bryer has connected this phenomenon with "*dioikismos*", the opposite of "*synoikismos*" (synoecism), and has expressed the view that such "*dioikismos*" was a widely distributed feature of the Late Byzantine city.

THE PLAN OF THE CITY. In accordance with the natural lay of its land, Thessaloniki was divided into a lower, flat, seacoast city and into an upper city, along the slopes of the rocky foothills of Mt. Hortiatis. The line separating the two regions was the street that crossed the city at the height of the basilica of St. Demetrius, which had been built on the ruins of a Roman bath on the first terrace formed in the city center.

The ancient streets that have been discovered in recent rescue excavations of Thessaloniki frequently coincide with the modern city's streets, thus confirming the view of H. von Schoenebeck and M. Vickers that both before and after the 1917 fire and the establishment of a new city plan, the streets of the city more or less followed the Hippodamian system of the ancient city. This is to be expected in a city with

continuous occupation and continuous use of its streets, and the same phenomenon appears in other Hellenistic cities in the eastern Mediterranean: Nicaea, Sinope, and Trebizond. A major excavation conducted for the laying of water mains in Thessaloniki along the length of Aghiou Dimitriou Street ascertained that in the Late Byzantine period the ancient road had narrowed, since large buildings occupied part of its raised, packed-earth surface, and many building blocks had been done away with. The Hippodamian system extended as far as the beginning of the upper city. In the rest of the upper city and on the acropolis, the location of gates and entrances to Byzantine monasteries and churches dictated that streets did not follow the Hippodamian system.

The harbor operated in the southwest corner of the city, even when the land routes around Thessaloniki were closed. Although Dimitrios Kydonis refers to it as a large, fortified harbor, it appears that after the Zealots (1342-1350), it fell upon hard times. It is probable that it had been silted up, like the shoreline in front of the sea wall. Ioannes VI Kantakouzenos reports that near the harbor gate a neighborhood of sailors had been created; they were armed, and played an important role in prevailing over the Zealots. Ioannes Anagnostes refers to the tower of Samaria, from which the "*tsyrembolon*" began; this was a type of mole to protect the harbor from the open sea and silting, where the ships on which the Venetians escaped in 1430 were anchored. The view of P. Odorico, viz. that in the Late Byzantine period the *tsyrembolon* was a large drainage channel, does not explain why it was characterized by Anagnostes as a *diateichisma* (cross-wall), or how it " jutted out into the sea".

The northern, triangular section of Thessaloniki known today as the "Acropolis" was a later Byzantine addition to the city's fortifications. In the Early Christian period, there was at this site an independent defensive enclosure, within which there was a three-aisled Early Christian basilica. I believe that this complex was the *fort of the local martyr Matrona*, referred to in the *Miracles* of St. Demetrius. Byzantine sources referring to the "acropolis" of Thessaloniki sometimes mean this triangular portion of its fortifications as a whole, while at other times they are referring to some citadel within it which would have existed, since it is referred to in 1208/9 by Henri de Valenciennes as a *castiel* and by other sources in 1235 as a *kastellion* (*καστέλιον*). In the first half of the 14th century, Ioannes VI Kantakouzenos describes this section as inhabited and in some fashion distinct from the city: "the demos of the acropolis, which resembles a small city, has its own inhabitants", he

writes. The acropolis communicated with the city via two gates, which locked from within and whose keys – in common with the keys of the third gate leading out to the countryside – were in the possession of the keeper of the keys, who resided on the acropolis. The three gates referred to here are: the main gate beside the tower of Lapardas, opposite Vlatadon Monastery, which was discovered recently; the gate opposite the Aghioi Anargyroi church, and the gate on the eastern side on Heptapyrgiou Street. Within the acropolis there were cavalry stables, an armory, and a prison, either as independent buildings or as parts of the citadel. In other words, during the years of Kantakouzenos, the acropolis was both a barracks and an area inhabited by civilians, who sometimes assumed different stances concerning political issues arising in the lower city.

Inside the acropolis the remains of houses, cisterns, and churches have been found. The archbishop of Thessaloniki Symeon (1416/17-1429) informs us that during Thessaloniki's subjugation (1387-1403), the Turks tore down all the churches within the acropolis, including that of the Savior, which was the most important. It seems logical to me that this clearing away of churches took place, in view of the settling of a Turkish occupation army within the acropolis.

The citadel at the northern corner of the acropolis is today known as the "Heptapyrgio". According to the Ottoman inscription on the main entrance, it was built by Çavuç Bey, the first Turkish governor of Thessaloniki, who stayed in it immediately following the capture of the city in 1430. According to C. Striker, the results of dendrochronology are in agreement with the inscription. However, a fortress at this site was not built from the foundations up in 1430/31. Excavation research around the foundations of the southern wall yielded Late Roman pottery, which is connected with the Early Christian fort of Aghia Matrona, and attests to habitation of this area as early as this period.

The acropolis of a Late Byzantine city afforded security to its leaders, and Thessaloniki's acropolis played the same role: the great *primicerius* Ioannes Apokaukos governed the city from his home, but when his relations with the Zealots worsened in the summer of 1344, he felt safer staying on the acropolis. Of course, the emperors and members of the imperial family stayed in Thessaloniki in a palace or important imperial residence (Gk. *βασίλεια*), which was destroyed by the Zealots; atop its remains there was built by Makarios Choumnos immediately after 1360 the Nea Mone, which was not Prophitis Elias, as Th. Papazotos has shown. Taking into

consideration the conditions that burdened both external and internal security, and the social unrest prevailing in Thessaloniki in the mid-14th century, I am of the opinion that after the Zealots, John V, his mother Anna Palaiologina, and Manuel II Palaiologos as despot of Thessaloniki (1382-1387) preferred to stay on the acropolis rather than in the lower city, transforming its fortress into a royal residence and administrative center, viz., a palace. It is precisely because of its fortress-like nature that this palace is referred to as "*theofroureton*" (guarded by the gods) and "*theophylakton*" (protected by the gods) (1375).

Ioannes Anagnostes mentions the *Trigonion*, which was not the northeast, round corner tower of the fortification, but the northeast area of Thessaloniki's walls. Due to its triangular shape, Anagonstes employs this name to refer to the Roman acropolis of Thessaloniki, for which, as G. Velenis has shown, the northeast corner of the city was chosen by virtue of its naturally steep and rocky ground. Salvage excavations have shown that at this point there was an internal wall that cut off the *Trigonion* from the rest of the city. We do not know what the function of the *Trigonion* was in Late Byzantine times; from Anagnostes' description, we know that there were no houses there.

BUILDINGS. The archaeological data on which I base my answers to the question of whether or not the size of Late Byzantine Thessaloniki corresponded to its area fall into two groups: surviving structures and excavation finds. Likewise, the surviving buildings may be divided into two sub-groups: older buildings that continued in use during the Late Byzantine period, and buildings constructed during that era.

To the first group belong churches, which by virtue of their size, their preeminent position in the religious life of the city and their great historical, spiritual, and artistic value, were cared for and preserved by the Thessalonians so as to function throughout their history. The form of the Rotunda in the Late Byzantine era was no different from what it has today. Its surrounding corridor, which had doubled the Rotunda's capacity in the Early Christian period, was not preserved because the walls of other buildings were found in its place, and it is probable that portions of it had been replaced by an open portico. Inside, apart from its attractive mosaic decoration, also preserved *in situ* is the Early Christian pulpit (*ambo*). Apart from the surrounding

cemetery, graves were opened beneath its floor; within these there were found glazed plates of the Palaiologan period.

Despite numerous and repeated interventions, in the Late Byzantine era the basilica of St. Demetrius preserved its original form of a five-isled basilica with a transept. The inscription of Michael VIII Palaiologos (1261-1282) or Michael IX, who remained in Thessaloniki for two years (1319/20), and which concerns the replacement of the entire timber roof, attests to the fact that the emperors and high officials were always interested in the maintenance of the basilica of Thessaloniki's patron saint, and that it received offerings and donations, as the marble capital of a small 14th century iconostasis column capital bearing the monogram of the Palaiologoi (probably Laskaris Matthaios Palaiologos) also attests.

To the preserved Early Christian mosaics and wall paintings there were added new wall paintings with depictions of the martyrdom and miracles of St. Demetrius and other scenes, from among which I note the two mounted saints, Georgios and Demetrius, to the right of the entrance to the chapel of St. Euthymios. The chapel walls were painted in 1303 at the expense of a high official, the high military official Michael Glavas Tarchaniotis, sent to Thessaloniki in 1298 by Andronikos II to regulate relations with the Serbian *kral* Milutin. In addition, the entrance to the tomb of St. Demetrius was repainted; from these frescoes are preserved the figures of a mounted St. Demetrius and St. Foteini.

The crypt played an important role in the functioning of the basilica during the Late Byzantine period as a place where a host of pilgrims drew holy water-myrrh in cups bearing the monogram of St. Demetrius. The crypt lost its importance after 1387, when the Turks began to become involved in city affairs. The holy water-myrrh stopped flowing in the crypt after the conquest of the city in 1430, though it continued to gush forth from the tomb of St. Demetrius until 1493, when the basilica was converted into the Kasimiye Tzami. It appeared only on certain days of the year, filling the *phiale* built during that era in front of the church for use by both Christians and Muslims.

The fill around Acheiropoietos in the Late Byzantine era would have been at a fairly high level. The southern entrance with its monumental propylon would have functioned as the main entrance to the church during that era. Opposite the entrance, the front of the southern colonnade was painted at the beginning of the 13th century

with a depiction of the Forty Martyrs, which draws its stylistic characteristics from the mosaics of the Rotunda.

The original floor of marble paving slabs (length: 4 m.) in the central aisle of the basilica continues in use today. It bears traces of the setting of the large *ambo* (pulpit) with its two staircases that was in use until 1430, pieces of which were found built into the Ottoman wall on the northern side of the narthex.

St. Sophia was the metropolitan church of Thessaloniki from its founding up until its conversion into a mosque in 1523/24. For this reason, there are references to the tombs of archbishops of Thessaloniki Basileios the Confessor (d. 870?), Konstantinos Mesopotamites (before and after the period of Latin rule), Gregorios Koutales (1336), Gregorios Palamas (1359), and others. The box-like form of the church is owing to repairs following the 1890 earthquake. However, the original architectural form of the church had already changed in the Middle Byzantine period. For example, the initially visible domes above the narthex were covered, and to create a gallery they were filled in the 11th century with broken, useless coarse ware vessels.

In the early 15th century, the archbishop of Thessaloniki Symeon left a detailed description of the St. Sophia of his own era. He mentions the floor of the church with its marbles paving whose veins, as in the Acheiropoietos, were characterized by the Archbishop as "like a river" where the waters flowed towards the *ambo* with its two staircases, situated in the center of the church. I believe that pieces from the Early Christian marble *ambo* that were found some years ago during excavation of the church, and which remained in use until its conversion to a mosque, belong to this *ambo*. There was also a second, smaller *ambo* in St. Sophia, as at Philippi, Amphipolis, and other churches in Thessaloniki. This was a monolith that according to Symeon was called an *anabathra* (Gk. *αναβάθρα*).

North of St. Sophia was the bishop's residence, described during the years of the Latin Kingdom (1204-1224) by Ioannes Apokaukos, metropolitan of Naupaktos, as a large, intricate, two-story brick building, devoid of windows, with a *triclinium* and long corridors. According to a proposal by E. Marki based on the finds from salvage excavations, the complex included chapels and gardens. From the open gallery (Gk. *περίπατος*) the archbishop followed the ceremony of the exaltation of the Holy Cross on September 13. After sunset, cantors and readers, holding candles and wooden sounding boards (*semantra*) ascended to the upper galleries and roof of the

church, to a balcony surrounding the four-sided base of the dome. From there, some of them emerged via a narrow staircase to the eastern side of the dome and raised the cross to its highest point in the presence of the entire city.

If we note the locations of these four large churches, we see that all are in the center of the lower city. Anagnostes calls them *katholikoi*, meaning that they were not parish churches. Apart from these, there were other Early and Middle Byzantine churches in operation during the Late Byzantine period. In the upper city, the *katholikon* of the Latomos monastery, beyond its Early Byzantine mosaic and 12th century wall paintings, received an additional wall painting ca. 1300. In the lower city, in the southwestern corner of the *Megalophoros*, i.e., the main market (agora), is preserved the Church of the Virgin (1028), known from the 19th century as Panagia Chalkeon. In the first half of the 14th century, the western wall of the church was painted with a representation of the Akathistos hymn. This wall painting is probably connected with larger repairs on the superstructure of the narthex, whose arches and vaults differ in shape from those of the main nave and the central dome, and deviate from the lengthwise axis of the main nave.

Apart from these, there were other churches functioning in Late Byzantine Thessaloniki that were either demolished or rebuilt in later periods. One example is the *katholikon* of the monastery of St. Theodora, known in 837 as the monastery of St. Stephanos. Worship of the *myroblytes* St. Theodora reached its peak in Late Byzantine Thessaloniki. Her figure was depicted on a marble relief icon in the Museum of Byzantine Culture, and was depicted with that of St. Demetrius on small lead ampullae produced in the 13th and 14th centuries for pilgrims to the city; they contained myrrh from the tombs of the two saints.

A salvage excavation in the courtyard of the monastery of St. Theodora revealed a portion of its old *katholikon*. The semicircular apse with its trilobe window belongs to the 9th/10th century. In the Late Byzantine period, the church was a three-aisled basilica with tombs beneath its floor. The encomium in memory of the saint by the writer and theologian Nikolaos Hamaetos (14th century) is connected with its southern extension, where the tomb of St. Theodora would have been. When fire destroyed the church in 1917, it was no different than other 19th century basilicas in the lower city, beneath which are normally discovered the remains of Byzantine churches (St. Antonios, St. Athanasios, St. Charalambos, Ypapante, St. Menas, Nea Panagia, Panagia Gorgoepekoos, Panagia Lagoudiane).

FINDS. Rescue excavations in Thessaloniki have brought to light few finds of the Late Byzantine period in comparison with the host of Late Roman and Early Christian finds. The Late Byzantine finds are composed of foundations, normally of roughly constructed buildings, and they are mingled with buildings belonging to both earlier and later periods. The Hippodamian system of ancient Thessaloniki was also maintained in Late Byzantine times, though with narrower and resurfaced roads, some of which ceased to exist when buildings were erected atop them. Chiefly, however, it has been ascertained that lower Thessaloniki was densely populated in comparison to the upper city. I cite two examples:

An extensive salvage excavation was conducted in the center of the lower city, north of Egnatia Street and between Acheiropoietos and the Bey Hamam. E. Marki reports that at this site there was discovered the second vertical street cardo east of the marketplace (Agora), which coincides with the modern-day Menelaou Street. In the building block west of this street there were found densely-packed buildings dating from the 10th to the 14th centuries, at the same level with Late Roman and Early Christian constructions, parts of which they incorporated. For example, an early Christian house was incorporated into a chapel around which pit burials of the 12th and 13th centuries were found.

The excavation in Dioikitiriou Square, south of Aghiou Dimitriou Street (which, as I remarked above, may be considered the dividing line between the lower and upper city) offers a similar picture of continuous evolution in the city plan, but with less frequent incorporation of the older walls. I. Kanonidis reports that the greater part of a building block (*insula*) east of a vertical road (cardo) with a width of 6 meters that led down to the harbor area, was occupied by a large Early Christian house of the Greco-Roman type, which had replaced a house of the same type and size belonging to the second century A.D. We do not know if the Early Christian house was still in use in the Late Byzantine period. Isolated walls belonging to Middle Byzantine buildings and a glass workshop were found further north in the same building block. The Late Byzantine period is represented in the northeastern corner of the excavation area, with a one-room chapel built on the site of a large barrel-vaulted tomb, with cist and pit graves around it. The cemetery was connected with humble houses of Late Byzantine times and small rooms. The houses yielded a large quantity of household pottery and coins of Thessaloniki belonging to the reigns of Andronikos

II Palaeologus (1282-1328), Andronikos III Palaelogus (1328-1341), and Michael IX Palaeologus as co-emperor (1294/5-1320).

Small private homes in Late Byzantine Thessaloniki are described in documents of Mt. Athos. These were small, one-room apartments that belonged to various owners, who shared a common courtyard. Narrow lanes led from the city streets to these courtyards. Groups of such houses with small churches and courtyards among them replaced the large houses of antiquity, comprising maze-like neighborhoods within once-large building blocks (*insulae*).

These small houses bore no relation to the "enormous" Thessaloniki homes Nikephoros Choumnos extolled in 1310, nor with the large and beautiful houses Murad II bestowed on his officers after 1430. A picture of houses of this category, which would have been in the lower city, e.g. around St. Sophia, is offered by the old, two-story houses with interior courtyards that were preserved before the Second World War in the area of the Rotunda, and which were described by Apostolos Vakalopoulos.

One concludes that in Late Byzantine Thessaloniki there were the four "*katholikoi*" churches, monasteries, churches and chapels between residences, built in densely populated neighborhoods. These social and environmental units, built around churches and small marketplaces, created many independent building entities in the heart of the city, and altered perceptions about its scale and size. The large dimensions of the ancient city were replaced by the medieval microcosm.

ANTIQUITIES. In addition to all these, in Late Byzantine Thessaloniki there were also older buildings, remains of the city's Roman past. I might note the Arch of Galerius, the portico known in the 19th century as the *Eidola* (Idols) or *Incantadas* (Enchanted Ones) with relief pilars that Emmanuel Miller transported to the Louvre in 1863, and the triumphal arch with elaborate reliefs from the second half of the 1st century, known from 19th century engravings as the western Golden Gate. We do not know why these buildings escaped destruction. Perhaps their reliefs called forth a Christian interpretation, or magical properties of some sort, and it was for this reason that the people and the authorities took care that they be preserved. The Byzantine sources are silent, although the high official and scholar Nikephoros Choumnos (1250/5-1327) encouraged painters of his time to imitate the works of Lysippos and Apelles. One notes an indifference of the citizens to these buildings, but the fact that

they were preserved testifies to the opposite attitude. Nevertheless, one might express the opinion that in that era there was a humanistic interest in antiquities, an echo of which is found in the description of Thessaloniki by Cyriacus of Ancona in 1431.

In the center of the city was the Roman agora, whose colonnades and buildings had already fallen into disrepair and half vanished in fill from the 7th century, and whose marbles had been reused. The *cryptoporticus* had been converted to a water cistern in the 6th century, but this too had filled with earth. The odeum/theater was not converted into a fortress as at Miletus, or into a residential neighborhood as at Aphrodisias, Messene, and Arles; rather, it was filled with earth and employed as a burial ground in the Late Byzantine period, as were other points in the agora. No Byzantine buildings were found in the agora; there were only pottery kilns of this period found in its northeast corner. In Late Byzantine times, the area was an open space without anything recalling the monumental agora of the Roman period. However, this open area must be identified with the "public agora" that Ioannes VI Kantakouzenos refers to near Acheiropoietos in the mid-14th century as a place for executions, pilloryings, and stonings, and where people were beaten to death. The agora was also a favorite spot for Thessalonians to gather for discussion and gossip, and doubtless for the taverns mentioned by the abstemious historian Nikephoros Gregoras. It was in this square that the Venetians raised the flag of St. Mark on September 14, 1423.

The palace complex built by Galerius in the early 4th century at the eastern edge of the lower city was also in a ruinous state in Late Byzantine times. Dominating this area were the ruins of the Octagon. The antechamber of this large building was employed as an open cistern for watering gardens. Palaiologan glazed pottery was found in large quantities during the excavation of the palace, suggesting either workshops or a garbage dump.

The hippodrome, lying between the palace and the eastern wall, was also in a ruinous state and employed as a burial ground. On the ruins of the *spina* (*nyssa*) of the hippodrome, next to the road that led to the coast outside Thessaloniki's eastern walls, at the site today called "Nea Panagia", and at some distance from inhabited areas, a monastery of the Virgin was founded by Hilarion Mastounes in 1185 or earlier. This too was in ruins at the beginning of the 14th century, and in 1324 it was repaired by the monk Lavrentios Kladon.

A large Early Christian building excavated at the western edge of the lower city, near the western wall, was also in ruins during Late Byzantine times and another building of smaller dimensions (a monastery?) had been installed in its place. The width of the street along the northern side of the large Early Christian building was narrowed in the Late Byzantine period because some building of this period had occupied part of it.

Consequently, in the lower city of Late Byzantine Thessaloniki, there were open spaces with ancient ruins that were used for burials, workshops, and even as garbage dumps. Monumental Roman complexes at the fringes of the lower city were not taken care of by the Thessalonians, and with the passage of centuries they fell into ruins. The spaces they had once occupied were used in the Late Byzantine period for burials, cultivation, or taken up by monasteries.

MONASTERIES. The picture of Late Byzantine Thessaloniki is completed with the preserved Late Byzantine buildings that were constructed within 100 years (1280-1380), and which were almost exclusively the *katholika* of monasteries.

Only two of these were built in the densely populated eastern part of the lower city: St. Panteleimon, north of the *Leophoros* (Mainstreet), considered to be the *katholikon* of the monastery of the Peribleptos, and whose founder was the archbishop of Thessaloniki James/Isaac (1289/93-99). According to the pre-1917 topographic plans of Thessaloniki, the monastery's grounds would have covered an area of 1,000 sq. m. The second building is the burial chapel of Soteras, dedicated to the Theotokos, which is dated after 1340.

The other Late Byzantine churches are scattered throughout the upper city and the western outskirts of the lower city. St. Nikolaos Orphanos, near the eastern walls, has frescoes datable to the second decade of the 14th century. The old entrance to the monastery is preserved on Herodotou Street. Today, its grounds occupy an extent of 4000 sq. m. A little further up was the church of the Taxiarchs, also the *katholikon* of a monastery in operation in the Late Byzantine period, of unknown name and extent. The crypt with its burial chambers (*arcosolia*) is preserved. St. Aikaterina, near the western walls, was built at the end of the 13th century or – in accordance with dendrochronology – in 1315, as the *katholikon* of a monastery probably dedicated to Christ.

The Church of the Holy Apostles (Aghioi Apostoloi) is considered to be the *katholikon* of the monastery of the Theotokos. It was located at the western edge of the lower city, 10 m. from the city's western wall, south of Aghiou Dimitriou Street and near the western (Litea) gate. The founding of the monastery is connected with the patriarch Niphon (1310-14), since his name, as patriarch and founder, appears three times on the church's façades. This dating, however, has been brought into doubt by C. Striker in accordance with the results of dendrochronolgy, which suggest that the church should be dated 15 years later, to 1329. From the grounds of this monastery is preserved its entrance, which was on a horizontal road running along the length of the monastery's south side and a vertical one running along the exterior side of the walls. North of the *katholikon* and within the monastery enclosure there is preserved a large cistern that gathered water from the springs at Polichni, Asvestochori, and Retziki. The monastery encompassed a total area larger than 10.000 sq. m., while during the same era the monastery of the Peribleptos (St. Panteleimon), located in the densely populated center, covered an area of only 1,000 sq. m.

After the Zealots (1342-1350), the landowners acquired power, and large monastic complexes were founded in Thessaloniki by the local ecclesiastical elites. Examples include the Nea Mone, founded in the 1360 by Makarios Choumnos, who ten years later was the hegoumen of Stoudios monastery in Constantinople, and the Vlatadon monastery, which was built on a natural plateau in front of the northern wall by the brothers Dorotheos and Markos Vlatades, on the site of an older church that it partially incorporated. Today, it covers an area of 13,000 sq. m. This monastery played an important role in the life of the city, because it possessed three large cisterns from which water from Mt. Hortiatis was channeled to the city.

These institutions, like other monasteries, were not exclusively religious foundations. Although their income came from the exploitation of land, their activities included *scriptoria* in the galleries of the *katholika*, and workshops for the minor arts and crafts, which produced many of the works preserved today from Late Byzantine Thessaloniki, e.g. the famous embroidered *epitaphios* (1300) in the Museum of Byzantine Culture. Urban monasteries were not isolated building complexes. Outside their enclosures there were houses for the monastery's servants and their families, and other ancillary buildings that formed neighborhoods bearing the monastery's name. A bathhouse on Theotokopoulou Street in the upper city, which operated in the Late

Byzantine period and up to modern times, was intended for the bodily hygiene of the city's citizens or monks.

We do not know how many monks lived in these monasteries. P. Charanis has estimated that there were between 10 and 20 in each of them. A comparison with a monastery in the countryside, at Synaxis Maroneias, where the refectory sat up to 24 people at one time, shows that the number of monks was not related to the population of the cities, which in the case of Late Byzantine Thessaloniki is reckoned to have been between 25,000 and 40,000, a number that allowed Pachymeres and Gregoras to characterize it as "of many men" (*πολυανδρούσα*) and "populous" (*πολυάνθρωπον*).

The locations of preserved Byzantine churches show that the large monasteries were founded on the city's fringes, particularly in the upper city. Why was this? N. Karydas, based on recent rescue excavations, has come to the conclusion that in the furthest, upper section of the Hippodamian portion of the city (north of Kassandrou Street), large Early Christian houses that took up an entire block were converted to monasteries from the beginning of the Middle Byzantine period. Salvage excavations have also shown that the upper city and the city outskirts were sparsely settled in the Middle and Late Byzantine period. It is very probable that walls from the Byzantine period were preserved until recently in the upper city as enclosure or support walls. In any case, there are not many finds from this area of the city, and in relation to the uninterrupted and dense habitation in parts of the lower city, one forms the opinion that the residential area of Thessaloniki where city functions operated was limited in extent in the Middle Byzantine period, and that this phenomenon continued into the Late Byzantine period.

Despite the shrinking of its residential space, the city was not confined by the relocation of its walls, because empty spaces were at once employed for needs that demanded an immediate solution. Activities that were conducted outside the walls in the Early Christian period, such as monastic life and handicraft workshops, were now transferred into the city. I have already mentioned that rescue excavations have shown that Early Christian houses in the lower part of the upper city were abandoned and gradually converted to monasteries, and preserved Late Byzantine *katholika* are found scattered throughout the upper city. Residents found the opportunity to move their animals into the city, and to cultivate empty areas so as to transfer a small part of the productive space of the countryside inside the walls. Furthermore, the monasteries, which were spread out in these areas of the city, had their own gardens. The natural

rock offered possibilities for quarrying stone for building works; certainly there would have been areas with quarries within the city, as the name of the Latomos (from Gk. *λατόμος*, "quarryman") monastery attests. Near the gates there would have been buildings to serve local retail trade, but some areas of the city were entirely deserted. Ioannes Apokaukos met secretly with the leader of the Zealots, Michael Palaeologus, in "uninhabited parts" of the city, and murdered him without anyone taking notice.

Consequently, the insecurity of the countryside due to invasions and civil wars during Late Byzantine years prodded the monasteries to seek refuge in fortified cities, as the monks of Mt. Papikion in Rhodope found refuge in neighboring Peritheorion, at Lake Bistonis which was fortified in that era. At the beginning of the 14th century, Andronikos II urged the monks of Mt. Athos to abandon their unsafe monastic centers there and to move to cities. Perhaps in this way, and after the enfeebling of the countryside, he wanted to support the cities. There are many examples of this; they have been collected by Svetlana Popović. An example near at hand is that of the monastery of Hortaïtis, in the foothills of Mt. Hortiatis, which however is referred to by Gregoras (1322) and by Anagnostes (1430) as being situated quite near Thessaloniki's eastern wall. I have no reason to doubt that for the same reasons new monasteries were built within Thessaloniki, at the city's fringes and in the upper city, because these areas offered available space by reason of the shrinking of the residential space of the city, isolation, and the possibility for cultivating food, as the many small cisterns found in these areas testify.

CEMETERIES. The insecurity outside the walls that had become part of daily life from as early as the late 6th century, the development of neighborhoods, and the new, "microcosmic" perception of the city were all reasons for the cemeteries outside the walls ceasing to function regularly, and for burials to occur inside the city. In rescue excavations throughout the city, the commonest find is tombs: pit, cist, and large barrel-vaulted ones resembling those of the Early Christian period, and which frequently reappear in the Late Byzantine period as ossuaries.

CONCLUSION. The picture we have of Thessaloniki during the Late Byzantine period is the following: the city still had its Late Roman and Early Christian walls; it covered the same area, and it had the same city plan. In the Middle and Late Byzantine periods, the core of urban life and the city's main functions were

limited to the lower city, and its center shifted slightly eastward. There were densely populated neighborhoods, with churches and marketplaces in labyrinthine building blocks, in which dwellers shared common courtyards and chapels. Among them there were old churches (*katholika*) and monasteries. In the lower city there were also areas covered by ruins, which were used as workshops, burial grounds, or garbage dumps. This urban core was not bounded by some enclosure; everyone had free access to the upper city. Although the upper city remained within the city limits, its population gradually abandoned it from as early as the Middle Byzantine period, and the empty habitable space was occupied by monasteries, vegetable gardens, small fields and workshops or used as cemeteries.

Consequently, to answer the question I posed initially, viz., whether Thessaloniki's size in the Late Byzantine period was not identified with its area as defined by its walls, but was in fact smaller and limited to the lower city. This distinction, however, is not clear in Late Byzantine texts relating to Thessaloniki, and the theory of *dioikismos* that Bryer proposed for Constantinople was only partially applied. The acropolis and the harbor appear in the 14th century as separate quarters of Thessaloniki, although they clearly had different functions – military and administrative for the former, commercial and maritime for the latter. In contrast, Manuel II Palaiologos perceived Thessaloniki as a single entity when he recommended to Dimitrios Chrysolares that he visit it: "everything is within the walls: you can go for walks without tiring yourself if you want to recuperate, you can play, breathe fresh air, or delight in the beauty of the flowers. You have no need at all of a good horse". The same view is concealed in Anagnostes' narrative of the conquest of Thessaloniki: the city was a single unity, protected by its walls and by its *myroblytes* patron St. Demetrius.

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