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***RULER OF THE WORTHY:***  
**CHANGE AND CONTINUITY IN THE HISTORY OF THESSALONIKI**

That the various periods commonly used by historians to chart the historic progress of human populations have no more than a certain conventional value is self-evident: there will always be events and situations to challenge any proposed chronological division, linking precursory manifestations of historical phenomena with their subsequent development. This is equally valid in the history of cities, especially those which like Thessaloniki have always been closely bound up with the history of an extensive hinterland: as early archaeological excavation made apparent and more recent finds have confirmed, the 316/5 BC founding of Thessaloniki (to take but one example) does not preclude the active presence in the same area and with other names of one or more “urban” settlements with a fairly lengthy pre-history. Moreover, Thessaloniki's transition from its Roman to its Byzantine period was bound up with long term changes in the evolution of the entire eastern (at least) half of the Roman Empire, changes which cannot be circumscribed within the narrow chronological boundaries of a single event, however important, such as for example the transfer of the capital from Rome to Constantinople in 330 AD. Even the passage from the Byzantine era to the nearly five centuries of Ottoman rule over Thessaloniki cannot be dated clearly and precisely: apart from the still open question of its repeated capture by the Turks before the final conquest in 1430, there remains the essential issue of the changes in political and social conditions in Macedonia, or rather in the Hellenic peninsula, in the 14th century.

Nor did the liberation of Thessaloniki in 1912 bring about instantaneous transformation: some of the attitudes and institutions established by five centuries of Ottoman rule were by the end (if not the middle) of the 19th century already beginning to alter, while others lived on for many decades after the city had been incorporated into the modern Greek state, stubbornly preserving numerous structural features of its Ottoman past.

But apart from these observations, which of course are associated with the more general issue of continuity or discontinuity in the interpretative approach to historical phenomena, I feel that the history of the city of Thessaloniki displays a number of additional elements, which by virtue of their remarkable persistence may be considered the fundamental components of its historical physiognomy. These are particular phenomena which, like underground streams, have run through the city's history from its founding to the present, ignoring changes in political and cultural sovereignty, human adventures, demographic variation and social reshufflings, natural and urban modifications, and generally all the inevitable and, in the case of Thessaloniki, frequently profound transformations that historical conditions bring about over long periods of time. These perennial characteristics are, it seems to me, related to the following basic and interconnected fundamentals:

(a) Its long (more than twenty-three centuries) and (even more important) continuous historical presence, a phenomenon encountered very rarely in the history of a European city.

(b) Its unfailingly urban function. Unlike a number of other Greek cities, which in time declined from major urban centres to small rural hamlets, Thessaloniki from the time of its founding never stopped being a city, not in name only but in the essential (economic, social and cultural) meaning of the word.

(c) Its metropolitan character. For long periods of its history Thessaloniki was the administrative, economic and cultural centre of a broad geographical area, at various times the Macedonian hinterland, the northern Hellenic territories or much of southeastern Europe.

(d) Its position as second only to the “centre”, the capital of each successive political entity of which it was a part, whether this was Pella, Byzantine/Ottoman Constantinople, or Athens. Always a metropolis, Thessaloniki was never itself the capital, retaining its perennial position as “first after the first”, “co-regent”, “co-capital”. As always there were exceptions, such as the years of the Epirote Doucas dynasty (1227-1246) or the period of the National Defence Movement (1916-1917), but these were no more than brief interludes confirming the rule.

(e) Its role as intermediary between parallel or disparate cultures. At various periods of its history Thessaloniki, by reason of its geo-political and geo-economic position, served as a bridge and an intermediary in the economic, religious, ideological and cultural relationships between Western Europe and the Balkan North, on the one hand, and between the Hellenic world and the Levant, on the other. This, in conjunction with successive subjections to foreign sovereignty (Roman, Frankish, Ottoman), affected the demographic and social composition of

the city's population: in addition to its Greek nucleus (for even at the height of foreign domination the core of the city's population has unfailingly remained Greek), Thessaloniki has for long periods of its history embraced many other communities of different ethnic and religious origin.

(f) Its cosmopolitan and forward-looking society. The peaceful co-existence of population groups of many different cultural origins made Thessaloniki a very diverse urban centre. This had an impact on more than the city's demographic, social and economic development: rivalry and osmosis between different cultural and social trends gave Thessaloniki, in general terms, a modern and liberal outlook. This phenomenon is related to another of the city's fundamental characteristics, for in Thessaloniki cultural and social evolution took place at a certain remove from the mechanisms of the central establishment and thus retained a relative independence with respect to each successive "centre".

In this essay I shall endeavour (jumping chronological steps as necessary) to set out in orderly fashion and as succinctly as possible the historical elements that in my judgement underline the historical physiognomy of this city of Thessaloniki. It goes without saying that I have not restricted myself to existing bibliography (a part of which is listed at the end of the second volume of this history of the second volume of this history), but have drawn extensively on the work of my colleagues in this collective study of Thessaloniki, and particularly on the contributions of Giorgos Hourmouziadis (on the pre-historic period), Michalis Tiverios, Chrysoula Veliyanni and Emmanouil Voutiras (on the historical period, the Hellenistic age, and the Roman era), Alcmene Stavridou-Zafraka, Vassilis Katsaros, and Nikos Nikonanos (on Byzantine Thessaloniki), Charalambos Bakirtzis, Basil Gounaris, Aleka Karadimou-Yerolympou, Albertos Nar, Charalambos Papastathis, and Sidiroula Ziogou-Karastergiou, (on the years of the Ottoman occupation and on some aspects of its modern history), Evangelos Hekimoglou, Pavlos Petridis, and Nikos Terzis (on the period from the liberation of Thessaloniki to the outbreak of World War II), Giorgos Anastassiadis, Niki Eideneier, Giorgos Kehayioglou, Basil Kondis, Nikiforos Papandreou, Miltiadis Papanikolaou, Yannis Stephanidis, Dimitris Themelis, and Theano Tsiovaridou (on post-war and contemporary Thessaloniki).

The "landscape" of Thessaloniki during both the pre-historic and the historic periods was not unlike what we know from later eras. Around the end of the gulf, for example, vegetation was rather sparse, while the surrounding hills and mountains were well-wooded. The sea bit deeply

into the land, towards the north-west and probably towards the north-east as well, which meant that the settlements of Toumba and Pylaia, and indeed Pella, must have been much closer to the coast than they are today. But soil washing down from the encircling hills and from the elevation on which the citadel was later built gradually silted up the shallow waters of the gulf, which lost even more to alluvial deposits carried down from the north-west by the Axios and Echedorus (Gallikos) rivers. Indeed, the steady encroachment of the land into the sea has always been a feature of this landscape, a phenomenon which continued into the modern-day history of the area and continues to a certain extent even into the present. Visitors to the city's monuments see this quite clearly in the differences in elevation from today's much higher street levels. One of the major projects of the 1920s was the diversion of the Axios River farther to the west, to avoid the silting up of the Port of Thessaloniki. Man-made works have further altered the city's shoreline, steadily pushing the sea back: most of the present-day waterfront avenue from the White Tower to Allatini mill lies on reclaimed land. Tentatively initiated in the late 19th century and resumed in a more systematic fashion in the past few decades, this project, which calls for the extension of the waterfront drive as far as the Karabournaki headland, is still ongoing, although at a much slower pace.

The history of Thessaloniki is conventionally accepted as beginning with the founding of the city by Cassander in 316/5 BC. But long before the Hellenistic period, even before the dawn of history, the area subsequently occupied by the city of Thessaloniki was dotted with pre-historic hamlets and centuries-old human settlements, as indeed was the entire area around the head of the Thermaic gulf. And the archaeological finds discovered in the pre-historic Toumba settlement, which take us back into the Neolithic Period, add several more millennia to the age of the "city" (considered of course as an inhabited area, rather than an organised urban centre or even a unified settlement). The systematic and exploratory excavations carried out to date have identified at least seven pre-historic sites in the Thessaloniki area: Karabournaki, Pylaia, Therme (Sedes), Lebet, Stavroupoli, the south-east corner of the International Fair grounds, and particularly Ano Toumba. The initial conclusions from the study of the finds yielded by these sites indicate that the first settlements in the area of "pre-historic Thessaloniki" probably arose in the Neolithic period, that is, in the 6th or 5th millennium BC.

Of these settlements the most imposing, at least during the historic age, was Therme, founded in about 1000 BC. Although our information about this site is relatively scanty, it is sufficient to link the two great periods in the history of this region: that which stretches back

into the pre-historic age, and that which began with the founding of the city of Thessaloniki and continued through subsequent historical eras. The Thermaic Gulf took its name from the city of Therme, which occupied an important geographical position – a coastal site, in fact, according to many historians. But the historical continuity of this area is equally obvious in the evidence of the archaeological finds, which go back to the archaic and classical periods and which come from excavations in some of the twenty-six towns which (as historical sources tell us) supplied the settlers for Cassander's new city of Thessaloniki. These archaeological finds, unearthed in digs on the sites of the ancient settlements of (among others) Toumba, Polichni, Stavroupoli and Efkarpia, also attest to the stability of the economic and cultural relations that had developed at least from the Mycenaean period between these settlements and other parts of the Hellenic world, especially Euboea, Ionia, Attica, and Corinth. Relations between Therme and Athens became even closer when Amyntas of Macedonia extended his rule to the land of Mygdonia, which lay to the east of the Axios and along the central and western shores of the Thermaic. This, which must certainly have occurred by the 6th century at least, marks the beginning of the Macedonian period in the history of this area.

But the real history of Thessaloniki begins of course with the founding of the city itself. Cassander (d. 297 BC), Governor and later (305/4) King of Macedonia, was the son of Antipater and the brother-in-law of Alexander the Great, having married his sister Thessalonike. He took the inhabitants of twenty-six villages, hamlets, and towns from the land lying around the head of the Thermaic Gulf and the western shore of Chalcidice and resettled them in what was this region's first organised urban centre, a city to which he gave his wife's name. While the precise date of this event is not recorded, the considerable indirect evidence we have on Cassander's general policy in Macedonia tends to point to the year 316/5 BC.

The new city occupied an exceptionally favourable geographical position, open to the royal capital of Pella and the Macedonian interior to the north and west, and, to the east, to the fertile valleys of the two great lakes of central Macedonia, the city of Amphipolis (at that time a major mercantile centre) and beyond it Thrace. But in addition to the advantages of its situation in respect of the northern Hellenic territories, Thessaloniki soon acquired a far greater geo-political and geo-economic sphere of activity. It was not long before the new city was reaching out to the south-west, to the Aegean, the maritime highway leading to the coastal cities of Ionia and the southern Greek mainland and beyond to the great trading centres of the Near and Middle East; somewhat later, during the Roman, Byzantine, and Ottoman

periods, the city also turned to the north, establishing a trade route up the broad valley of the Axios to the valley of the Morava and thence to the Danube and into central Europe. This favourable geo-political location, in conjunction with the wealth of its Macedonian hinterland and a number of historical factors that emerged relatively rapidly, enabled the new city to develop extraordinarily quickly into a metropolitan centre with a leading economic and cultural role in a vast and productive territory.

Despite all this, Thessaloniki never became a political capital, neither under Cassander nor in any later period: the city was ruled by a governor, representing the king, with authority over economic as well as purely administrative matters. Throughout the Hellenistic period the capital remained at Pella, even though the changing landscape created by the alluvial deposits brought down by the Axios and the marshes that formed at its delta had deprived the formerly splendid administrative centre of the Kingdom of Macedonia of much of its earlier geographical importance. Thus, while Aiges retained its position as the traditional sacred centre of the realm, and Pella its formal role as administrative capital, the city of Thessaloniki won the more substantial position as the commercial centre of Macedonia, a position which it was to retain throughout all the subsequent periods of its history. Further, while it never acquired a position of formal supremacy, the city did enjoy certain other advantages, preserving a number of the attributes of the autonomy which dated from its founding and which, based on the model of the ancient Greek city-states, included political and community institutions and several powerful agencies of local self-government.

These institutions with exception of the royal governor survived into the years which followed the Roman conquest of Macedonia. Roman military rule over Macedonia was achieved with two Roman victories: the annihilation of the forces of the last Macedonian monarch, Perseus, at the Battle of Pydna in 168 BC and, twenty years later, in 148 BC, the crushing of the last spark of Macedonian resistance under the aspirant to the Macedonian throne, Andriscos, in Thessaly. In 146 BC Thessaloniki became the administrative capital of a vast region, the provincia Macedonia, which stretched far beyond the historical Macedonian territory: this new province included, apart from Macedonia, Epirus, and Illyria, all the lands from the Ebro River to the shores of the southern Adriatic. This development heightened Thessaloniki's military and commercial significance, which became even more marked when, from the 2nd century BC on, the city grew to be the most important station on the major new

highway, the Via Egnatia, which was built to link the Adriatic with Thrace and thus Rome's western provinces with its territories in Asia Minor.

History thus combined with geography to make Thessaloniki for many centuries a bridge between two worlds, between East and West. This renewed and reinforced the historic factors which, from the Hellenistic period, had already and inexorably begun to shape the dual character of the historic physiognomy of the city. Turned, like Janus, to face in two directions at once, Thessaloniki drew together productively opposing or complementary influences in the economic sector, in the transactions of its social relations, and most important of all in its political, ideological and intellectual life. This also explains the religious syncretism of both the Hellenistic and the Roman eras: along with the veneration of the traditional Greek and Macedonian gods Dionysus, Asclepius, and Thessaloniki's "ancestral" divinity, Cabeirus, we find (especially during the Roman age) eastern cults, that of the Egyptian triad of Sarapis, Isis, and Harpocrates being particularly widespread.

By the middle of the 3rd century AD Thessaloniki had acquired even greater military importance, becoming, in the wake of the Gothic invasions, the heart of the Empire's defence against the incursions and ever increasing pressures of the restless tribes to the north. Eloquent expressions of the new status of the city (which had in the meantime been honoured by the Romans with the titles of "metropolis" and *colonia*) are the newly rebuilt city walls and the host of monuments erected at this time. And when a few years later (303), during the period of the tetrarchy, the Emperor Galerius Maximus established his headquarters in Thessaloniki, he ornamented the city with buildings and monuments (Rotunda, Triumphal Arch, octagonal palace complex, etc.) whose magnificence, technical mastery, and architectural design were more reminiscent of an Imperial capital than a mere provincial administrative centre. This same period probably saw the tracing of some of the city's main streets, particularly those running parallel to the sea (Egnatia, and the present-day Aghiou Dimitriou), and certain of the vertical arteries intersecting them.

Thessaloniki's significant position within the Roman Empire, in conjunction with the presence in the city (since Hellenistic times) of a sizeable Jewish community, was one of the factors that brought the Apostle Paul here in the years 50 and 57 to proclaim the Gospel of Christ. Thessaloniki, together with Philippi and Veroia, thus became the "golden gate" through which the new religion made its way into Europe. The history of Thessaloniki's first Christian community (which was also the first Christian "ekklesia" in Europe), dates from this time. This

community produced a number of eminent churchmen, as well as some of the most notable martyrs of the Christian faith, foremost among whom was the city's first martyr and later its patron saint, Saint Demetrius (d. 305).

The removal of the imperial capital from Rome to Byzantium and the founding of Constantinople in 330 AD opened new horizons for the city of Thessaloniki, the broadest in its history to date. During the centuries of the Byzantine imperium Thessaloniki developed not only into the second greatest city in the Empire (after Constantinople) but also into the most important administrative, political, military, economic, commercial, and cultural centre in its European territories. This further reinforced the city's intermediary role as a bridge between East and West, and particularly between the vast mosaic of Slavic peoples to the north and the Greek Orthodox world of the Byzantine empire. One of the principal factors in the development of this role, as well as in the commercial and economic growth of the city itself of course, was the harbour built by Constantine the Great at the south-western edge of the city in 322/3.

In the meanwhile, Thessaloniki continued to serve as the bulwark of the Empire's operations against the Goths, whose raids were directed not only against northern and western Balkan territory but even against the Greek provinces in this region. This activity led to the first systematic construction work on the city's walls, and the fortifications built at this time, between the late 4th and the early 5th century, remained largely intact into the modern period of the city's history. It is fair to say that, apart from the repairs carried out in the 6th, 7th, 10th, 13th, and 14th centuries, and the additions made in the early years of the Ottoman occupation (especially the three great towers: the "White" Tower, the Trigonion and the Towers of the Citadel), Thessaloniki's walls have for the most part preserved their initial form and construction. These fortifications ("τείχεσιν ἀρρήκτοις", according to the 4th century brick inscription in the square tower in the eastern wall), the second most extensive in the Empire after those of Constantinople itself, were the salvation of the city, for between then and the early decades of the 15th century Thessaloniki was repeatedly attacked and besieged, from both land and sea, and on several occasions captured, by a host of different aggressors: Goths (late 4th century), Avars, Slavs (late 6th - early 7th century), Bulgars (from the end of the 9th to the beginning of the 13th century), Arabs (904), Normans (1185), Franks (1204), Catalans (1308), and finally the Ottoman Turks (1387, 1391-1403, 1430). In these circumstances Thessaloniki once again acquired a certain importance as a military and administrative centre



for the Balkan peninsula, whether as the seat of the single theme of Thessalonica or as the “ruler of the [Empire's] western themes”.

Despite these changes in administration or sovereignty, Thessaloniki managed to retain many of its traditional communal institutions, institutions which, as we have seen, had begun to take shape during the Hellenistic and Roman eras. This relative autonomy was preserved even through the various periods of foreign domination, such as the twenty-year Latin occupation (1204-1224), the brief Venetian interregnum (1423-1430), and under different historical conditions throughout the long period of Ottoman rule (1430-1912). Thus, Byzantine Thessaloniki already had its two fundamental communal bodies, the “senate” or council of twelve (“συγκλήτου”, “βουλής”, “δωδεκάδοξ”), whose members were drawn from the nobility, and the “popular assembly”, in which all citizens could take part. The functioning of these bodies was of course affected by the social evolution of the city. On the one side were the “gentry” (οι “μεγάλοι”, οι “δυνατοί”, οι “άριστοι”, οι “επιφανείς”), usually large land-owners who owned most of the real estate in the city as well; and on the other the “commons” (ο “δήμος”, οι “πολλοί”), people for the most part with no rights, workmen and artisans, dockers, day labourers, and refugees from the countryside fleeing wars and invasions. Between these two social groups were the “householders” (οι “μέσοι”, οι “οικητορες”), the bourgeoisie or “middle class” of the day; these were mainly merchants or craftsmen, but they also owned property both inside and outside the city.

Despite its economic dynamism, Byzantine Thessaloniki knew frequent and deep-seated economic crises, which, in conjunction with social inequalities, dynastic conflicts, and the decline of the city's institutions, provoked sharp intra-communal rivalries and serious politico-religious disturbances, especially after the 10th century. These crises climaxed in 1341-1350, first with the so-called Hesychast controversy and later in the Zealot revolt. The Hesychast controversy, which arose out of theological dispute in the religious centres of Mount Athos and Thessaloniki, was also an expression of the antagonism between the two cultural currents which had always characterised Thessaloniki's ideological history. On the one hand there was the world of tradition and the established values of the East: the principal exponent of this current was the Athonite monk and distinguished theologian (and later Archbishop of Thessaloniki) Gregory Palamas; on the other there were the newly emerging social forces (of the “middle class” in particular) which, in the name of western rationalism, challenged the immobility of the social establishment and claimed a place in the local administrative hierarchy:

these forces were led by Barlaam, a well-educated theologian who came to the Byzantine East in 1327 from Calabria.

At about the same time as the Heychast controversy (which ended with the victory of the forces of tradition), Thessaloniki was shaken by another, more specifically social, conflict. In a period of economic crisis which had brought to the brink of despair not only the lower classes but also the heavily taxed merchants and craftsmen, there reached Thessaloniki the echoes of the civil, dynastic war between John Cantacuzenus and the Palaeologi. All this led in the summer of 1342 to a violent clash between (on the one hand) the “gentry” (οι “ἀρχοντες”) and the “powerful” and (on the other) the representatives of the mercantile and artisanal guilds, the Zealots and for a time the ordinary people, the common folk (ο “δῆμος”). Unfortunately, all the information we have about this mass popular uprising (one of the most important in all of mediaeval Europe, which also knew several similar insurrections) is entirely one-sided, emanating from the opponents of the Zealots. It is however evident that what the Zealots were seeking was the elimination of certain antiquated social institutions, a re-organisation of local self-government (with a view to greater popular participation), a re-distribution of wealth, etc. Finally, in 1349, this early “popular Republic” (as certain modern historians have described it) collapsed under the burden of the combined inexperience and excessive demands of the revolutionaries plus the resulting “breach of faith” of the “middle class” against the “populace” and the reaction of the imperial government in Constantinople.

Thessaloniki's prestige, however, was first and foremost the product of its peaceful and productive achievements. Despite the crises, the city's economic life was in the main prosperous and dynamic. Since the 4th century Thessaloniki had been famous for its tanneries, textiles, dyers, enamellers and coppersmiths. These arts were practised at extremely high levels throughout both the Byzantine and the Ottoman ages, especially after the influx of Sephardic refugees in the late 15th and early 16th centuries. The single most telling indicator of the city's perennial importance as an economic centre is the great annual trade fair which, with the proclamation of Saint Demetrius as its patron saint, was re-named in his honour the “Demetria”. This fair, known at least from the Roman period, was held throughout the Byzantine era and into modern times at the end of October, to coincide with the feast day of the saint. This annual fair brought to Thessaloniki hosts of merchants and peddlars not only from Macedonia and the Byzantine provinces, but from many other parts of eastern and southeastern Europe, from the Italian and Iberian peninsulas and even the lands “beyond the

Alps” and the “lands of the Celts”. Among other things, these regular assemblages brought the Byzantine world into contact with other peoples and cultures, and particularly the Slavs. It is not therefore surprising that the Byzantine Empire used Thessaloniki as its base for its Christianising and cultural missions to the Slav peoples.

Towering above all other figures in this outreach to the Slav world in the 9th century were of course the Thessalonian missionaries Constantine-Cyril and Methodios. These “Apostles to the Slavs” initially worked in the Black Sea area and later (863) in Greater Moravia and other parts of southeastern Europe. In addition to their missionary and diplomatic activities, the two Greek scholars undertook to create a philological and general cultural infrastructure for the Slav peoples, devising the first systematic alphabet for the Slav tongues, the so-called Glagolitic alphabet, and translating into Old Slavonic the Bible, certain basic liturgical books, and numerous important ecclesiastical, canonical and legal texts.

It is indeed astonishing that, despite internal dissension even in the 14th century and frequent attacks by foreign enemies, Thessaloniki never ceased to be one of the most brilliant intellectual and artistic centres in the eastern Mediterranean, “first after the first and queen of the worthy” (“πρώτη μετά την πρώτην και τοις αγαθοίς βασιλεύσουσα”). This fact acquires even greater significance when one considers that, after the Arab conquest of the great cultural centres of the Levant, Constantinople tended, as a centralist state, to monopolize the Empire's intellectual, artistic, and cultural initiatives generally. From the 4th century on, therefore, in an age when provincial centres were withering and the cultural tradition of Athens was no more than a memory, Thessaloniki managed to continue its remarkable and even more important unbroken cultural productivity.

In Thessaloniki, then, the city described by 14th century Byzantine scholars as the “mother of orators” and the “Helicon of the Muses”, we find anonymous and eponymous writers of ecclesiastical, hagiographic and philological works (such as the exponents of the centuries-old tradition of hagiography and the cycle of literary production associated with the martyrdom, the miracles and the veneration of Saint Demetrius, and men of letters like Eustathios in the 12th century and Thomas Magister and Dimitrios Triclinios in the 14th), authors of important treatises on ecclesiastical and canon law (Bishop Michael Houmnos of Thessaloniki in the 12th century, the *dikaiophylax* Georgios Phoboinos, Matthew Blastares and, first and foremost, the great jurist and “universal judge” [“καθολικός κριτής”] Constantine Armenopoulos in the 14th century), eminent exponents of Byzantine philosophical and theological thought (Gregory

Akindynos, Dimitrios and Prochoros Kydones, the brothers Neilos and Nicholas Cabasilas, and Gregory Palamas, all in the 14th century), writers of homilies and poetry (such as Metropolitans Isidorus Galvas, Gabriel and Symeon), historians and “popular” chroniclers (Ioannes Caminiates in the 10th and Ioannes Anagnostes in the 15th century).

But the most fascinating memorials of Byzantine Thessaloniki's cultural history are its artistic and architectural monuments. In its early Christian and Byzantine churches, with what remains of their mosaics and frescos, Thessaloniki can still offer examples of almost all the successive phases of mediaeval Greek art and architecture, from the earliest Christian period through the 15th century. It has been said (and this is surely no exaggeration) that even if all the other Byzantine monuments in the world were to be lost, those in Thessaloniki would suffice for the study of the historic evolution of Byzantine art from its earliest manifestations (4th century) to the eve of the Ottoman conquest. It is obvious that the artistic achievements of mediaeval Thessaloniki (those which are the work of professionals, at least) are those of a society which enjoyed the prosperity and the social conditions and the cultural level required to seek monuments of inspired grandeur. In other words, the city's Byzantine monuments are yet another example of the “metropolitan” character of its artistic contribution not only to the Macedonian and Balkan region, but to the entire Empire.

The history of the arts in Byzantine Thessaloniki presents a further peculiarity, one which might indeed be described as an historical paradox; and this is the fact that the 13th, 14th, and early 15th centuries, ill-fated years for the city because of the repeated hostile invasions and the religious and social strife, were nonetheless in both art and letters its “golden age”. The troubled 14th century, for example, the century of the Hesychast controversy and the Revolt of the Zealots, was also the century of the construction, in Thessaloniki, of numerous magnificent churches of exceptional architectural design, splendidly ornamented with marvellous wall paintings (as far as we can tell from what survived the devastation of the Turkish occupation). And outside the city, too, on Mount Athos, across Macedonia and in Serbia as well, master craftsmen from Thessaloniki left marvellous works of art, such as the wall paintings by the brothers Michael and Eftychios Astrapas in St. Clement's in Ochrid, and of course the magnificent work of Manuel Panselinos in the Protaton on Mount Athos.

But apart from the major monuments and works of art produced by famous artists and craftsmen, Thessaloniki also has a wealth of more “popular” and provincial art, such as for example the wall paintings on the early Christian tombs found in the city's eastern and western

sectors. Indeed, we know that the city had numerous workshops producing mosaics, paintings, carvings, and metalwork, and that it attracted many anonymous architects, artists and painters of icons. In other words, the city had an artistic tradition rooted deep in its past, which continued into its post-Byzantine generations. It is no accident that throughout the centuries of Ottoman rule, and for several decades after its liberation, Thessaloniki had some of the finest icon painters and craftsmen in metal anywhere in Greece.

But this flowering could not resist the gathering storm forever. By the end of the 14th century virtually all of Macedonia, and most of the Balkan peninsula of which Thessaloniki was an integral part, had been brought under Ottoman domination. From that point on Thessaloniki, now an island of Christianity in an ocean of Muslim-occupied territory, lived constantly even during the brief interval of Venetian rule (1423-1430) under the menace of Ottoman conquest. Indeed, with the first Ottoman occupation of the city (in 1387) its citizens had already had a taste of life under the Turkish yoke. Its definitive fall, on 29 March 1430, opened a new chapter in the history of the city, one which portended evil days for the devastated city and its decimated Christian population.

And yet: Thessaloniki not only survived the trials and tribulations of prolonged occupation by a people of a different culture and faith but, as it had in the long centuries of its Roman occupation, succeeded in exploiting the geo- historical advantages that had proved impervious to time and human intervention and in displaying once again those perennial characteristics that were discussed in the first part of this essay. This achievement was the result of a combination of factors. First of all, the Ottoman conquest changed the geo-political context: the territory within which the city played its economic and cultural role not only expanded but, even more important, recovered the administrative unity lost as the result of more than two hundred years of shifting sovereignty. Then, about fifty years after its fall, Thessaloniki showed the first signs of demographic recovery, as its population, which had collapsed during the final siege, began to climb back towards its original numbers. The change was initially brought about by the arrival in the city of many Christian families from the surrounding villages, from central and western Macedonia, from Epirus and Thessaly, thus preserving part of the Byzantine substratum and breathing new life into the basic human element in the historical continuity of the city: its Greek nucleus. This meant that even during the harsh first years of the Turkish occupation the Christian population of the city was able to retain four great churches including those of St. Demetrius (which remained a site of particular veneration for

the people of Thessaloniki until 1492), St. Sophia (until 1523-24) and St. George (until 1590) and, for an even longer period of time, the monasteries of Vlatades and St. Theodora. Also during this same dark period, a segment of the Greek population of the city managed to maintain its commercial and cultural contacts with the Christian West or so the extraordinary history of the ancient Byzantine Spandounis family indicates, as attested by the monumental tomb erected to Lucas Spandounis in the basilica of St. Demetrius in 1481.

Between the end of the 15th and the early decades of the 16th century the population of the city suddenly shot up. This increase was accompanied by a radical change in the demographic and ethno-religious make-up of the city, due to the arrival in Thessaloniki, like many other major urban centres throughout the Ottoman territories, of some 15,000 Jewish refugees, most of whom (Spanish-speaking “Sephardim”) were fleeing persecution in the Iberian and southern Italian peninsulas. Thus within a few decades of its occupation, Thessaloniki was beginning to recover (and would soon exceed) not only its pre-conquest population but also its ancient cosmopolitan character. Available demographic figures are not of course always either clear or accurate, and in many cases show considerable disparity; but despite the reservations raised by these differences, we may safely say that the population continued to climb, especially during the initial and the final periods of Ottoman sovereignty. Thus, from the 2,000 survivors of the final siege and capture of Thessaloniki, the population of the city had by 1478 climbed to 10,400, reaching 29,000 by the beginning of the 16th century, 40-50,000 by 1723-1733, 65-70,000 by the end of the 18th century, dropping slightly to 50-60,000 early in the 19th century, climbing again to 80-90,000 in the 1870s, to reach 120-130,000 by the end of the 19th century and 150,000 by the beginning of the 20th. The first systematic census in Thessaloniki, carried out by the Greek authorities on April 28, 1913, showed a population of 157,889: this is indisputably a major change, and one which (by the standards of the day, of course) transformed Thessaloniki once more into a real metropolis.

But the demographic changes during this period were not always positive: a variety of causes (fires, earthquakes, epidemics, wars, economic crises) produced marked, and occasionally dramatic, fluctuations in population levels. These fluctuations sometimes concerned the entire population, and sometimes only certain groups. The Jewish community, for example, was seriously affected in the 17th century by the schism provoked by the activities of Sabbetai Sevi, by the Venetian mercantile crisis in the eastern Mediterranean (based largely on the Jewish population of Thessaloniki), and by the diversion of European

interest towards Constantinople and Smyrna. The Muslim community and the poorer strata of the Jewish community tended to be the worst hit by fires and epidemics. While the Greek community was also affected by the epidemics, it suffered even more from Ottoman misrule, especially during periods of anti-Turkish rebellion in the Greek territories. The waves of refugees, for example, which fled to southern Greece in the wake of the massacres, the hangings, and the mass persecutions of the Greek population of Thessaloniki during the period of the 1821-1827 Revolution, in conjunction with the resulting independence of the free Hellenic state, caused a substantial depletion of the Greek population of the city, which however recovered to its pre-Revolution levels within a few decades.

And despite these demographic fluctuations, Thessaloniki never lost its urban character. In a period when Turkish occupation was transforming flourishing Byzantine cities into sluggish small towns, Thessaloniki was developing into the largest urban centre in the Ottoman Empire's European territories. The catalyst of this transformation was the productive engrafting of the Jewish community into the city's active population and the securing of certain favourable conditions for its economic activity. These incomers brought with them an ancient tradition in the commercial and financial sector, as well as in a number of arts and crafts (textiles, gold and silverwork, soap-making). The scene soon changed, as the Greek and Muslim communities were drawn into the arena. The Greeks, who had preserved many of their traditional Byzantine industries (tanning, linen and cotton weaving and dyeing, copper-working, wine-making), brought into the city the products of the Macedonian hinterland, trading in some of its basic commercial and export goods (cereals, wool, cotton, hides, and tobacco). The Muslim community engaged in similar trade, concentrating on the exploitation of the land and trade in agricultural products.

For Thessaloniki, the road to economic and commercial development was neither short nor straight. Despite the arrival of the Jews and their virtually exclusive devotion to the manufacture and sale of woollens, the early years of the Ottoman occupation of the city continued to be marked by economic distress. However, by the third decade of the 16th century the first signs of economic recovery were making themselves felt, in both industrial activity and domestic trade. But a variety of factors were to produce a new recession in the 17th century, which (as we saw earlier) most seriously affected the Jewish community. In the end, the first real economic boom came with the end of the 18th century, once the city had become integrated in the international market: the combination of increased cotton production

in Macedonia, expanded Western European trade in the eastern Mediterranean, and the restoration of trade relations between the Habsburg and the Ottoman Empires (with the peace treaties of Passarowitz, in 1718, and Belgrade, in 1739) favoured Thessaloniki's contacts with markets in the Habsburg territories in the Balkans and through them with markets in Central Europe. These links became even closer in the late 18th and early 19th century with the rise of southeastern Europe's trade routes consequent on the continental blockade of the Napoleonic period. All these factors tended to stimulate the foreign trade of the northern Greek provinces and to establish Thessaloniki once again as the economic capital and metropolitan centre of a vast territory stretching from Macedonia, Thessaly, and Epirus to the Danube.

This time it was Thessaloniki's Greek community that benefited most from the new turn of affairs. Although estimates suggesting that two thirds of the city's commerce was in Greek hands are probably exaggerated, it is certainly true that the Greek community forged ahead of the other two in both foreign and domestic trade, at least during the period from the middle of the 18th century to the Greek Revolution of 1821. This flowering initiated a new (and unusual for the times) period of construction and rich decoration of a number of large churches in various Greek parishes, such as Nea Panaghia and St. Anthony in the 18th century, and Panaghia Lagoudiani, St. George (next to the Rotunda), St. Athanassios, Panagouda and Hypapanti, in the early decades of the 19th.

It is strange that the economic recovery and renewed cosmopolitanism that marked Thessaloniki in the 18th century were not accompanied by an analogous intellectual activity, at least in the city's two larger ethnic communities, the Jewish and the Greek. Our information about the scholarship of the Muslim population of the city in the early part of the Ottoman occupation, while not disappointing, is not however useful: most of it concerns the operation of the *mendreses*, or theological schools: three in the 16th century, two in the 17th, and six during the mid-18th century. Nor does the general nature of the references to eminent 17<sup>th</sup> century scholars and poets, as for example Senazi Çelebi, allow us to form a clear picture of the intellectual activities of the city's Muslim population during this period. Even the interesting information concerning the operation of a Turkish printing press in Thessaloniki in 1727 – that is, at a date quite early for the entire Ottoman Empire – requires additional documentation. In contrast, the wealth of specific data we have at our disposal about Turkish education and publishing activity at the end of the 19th and especially in the early 20th century allows us to appreciate the important contribution by Thessaloniki's Muslim community



towards a total reform of the educational system in the Empire during the era of the Ottoman reforms (Tanzimat).

The intellectual decline of the Jewish community in the 18th century was particularly marked, especially in comparison with the brilliance of its past. Indeed, between the beginning of the 16th and the middle of the 17th century, Thessaloniki had developed into a world centre of Hebrew learning, producing exceptional figures in education (religious and secular), philology and literature, copyists and printers (the first printing press in the East), jurists, Talmudists, and scientists (mathematicians and astronomers, and particularly physicians and pharmacologists). This intellectual renaissance came to an end in the middle of the 17th century; and it was not until the early decades of the 19th century that economic recovery ushered in a new flowering of Jewish scholarship and a new and brighter chapter in the history of the Jewry of Thessaloniki.

The economic supremacy of Thessaloniki's Greek population in the 18th century was insufficient to help it overcome the intellectual and educational decrepitude that marked this community throughout the early period of the Ottoman occupation. The retrogression from the brilliant tradition of the 14th century began with the physical destruction of the city, the demographic and social decline of its Christian population and the emigration to the West of some of its most prominent scholars. There are of course specimens of intellectual activity, coinciding with the sporadic presence in the city of some scholars and teachers, but these do not alter the overall impression of stagnation. Not until the 18th century do we see signs of any intellectual stirrings; and even then, and despite its economic ascendancy, Thessaloniki's Greek-Orthodox community was still unable to compare with other centres of the Greek Enlightenment, or even to make a productive contribution to the activities of the near-by Athonite School. The reasons for this torpidity should probably be sought either in the social and professional character of the members of this community, or else in the peculiar internal history of Christian education in Thessaloniki at that time. In any case, it was not until the middle of the 19th century that the Greek Thessalonians began to participate in a belated "dawning" of intellectual activity like that which had begun to flower in certain centres of the Hellenic world as early as the beginning of the 18th century and in some cases before that.

But Thessaloniki's 18th century economic reflowering was not to be long-lived: by the first decades of the following century the decline was already making itself felt, most noticeably in the dramatic collapse of shipping activity and in the disappointing performance of the

commercial and financial sectors. Chronic misadministration, heavy taxation, declining agricultural production throughout Macedonia and a shift of European interest to other markets, combined with the persecution of the Greek community during the period of the Greek Revolution (1821-1822) and the repeated crises associated with the Eastern Question, set Thessaloniki's economic development back fifty years at least. By the middle of the 19th century, however, a new political and economic conjuncture the inception of the Ottoman reform programme, more systematic trade relations between the Empire and the West, and increased demand for Macedonia's cotton and grain opened a new chapter in the history of the city, the final chapter of its history under Turkish rule. This new phase, which was to last for about sixty years, was marked by a westernizing trend and by the efforts of the Ottoman authorities, the various communities and individual private citizens as well to reform the terms of economic and social life. It might well be said that this sixty-year period saw more changes in Thessaloniki than had the previous four hundred years.

As was true of many other urban centres in the Ottoman Empire, it was Western European capital and technical investment that realised most of the major modernisation projects carried out in Thessaloniki. Belgian companies built the city's new water system (1887-1900), British firms the gas network (1887), French companies the port facilities (1897-1905) and (with capital from a consortium of countries) the railway line to Skopje; French and Italian ships (and later British, Russian, Belgian, Ottoman and Greek) plied regularly between Thessaloniki and central and western Mediterranean ports, and at least two foreign postal services, in addition to the Ottoman service, assured postal communications with the outside world. Whatever the source of the capital and the technology, the fact remains that by the late 19th century and the dawn of the 20th Thessaloniki had her horse-drawn (1892) and later electric (1908) trams, her electric telephones (1908), her first electric lights, modern docks in the port and, most important of all, her first real industries (1879-1880). A major factor in the development of Thessaloniki's economic relations with southeastern and central Europe was the construction of the railway linking the city to the Serbian rail network (1871-1888). The construction of two more lines, one thrusting through western Macedonia as far as Monastir and one running across Thrace to Constantinople (1891-1896), in conjunction with the expansion of the shipping lines to serve the ports of the Black Sea and Asia Minor, once again made Thessaloniki the centre of a vast economic region, but this time under much more

favourable conditions. This of course had a tremendous impact on the economic and social evolution not only of the city itself, but of the entire Macedonian region.

The adaptation of Ottoman society to the imperatives of westernization required more than structural change: it also dictated urban and architectural interventions designed to transform the city into a European one. Some of the projects carried out during this period literally transformed the urban and architectural face of the city, which for so many centuries had remained virtually unchanged. The most important of these works were probably the razing of whole sections of the eastern and western walls (below the citadel, towards the sea), the demolition of the seawall and the waterfront fortifications (with the exception of the White Tower complex), and the construction of the quay, the widening and paving (1868-1879) of the central “high street” (today's Egnatia), and of Tsimiski St. and the vertical arteries Sabri (now Venizelou) and Haghia Sophia, as well as the construction of a third vertical artery, Hamidie Avenue (now Ethnikis Amynis). Equally important was the redesigning of the historic city centre, the area around the Cathedral and St. Sophia. This urban renewal, effected in the wake of the great fire of 1890, affected an area of some 20 hectares lying between Egnatia and the sea. This period also saw the construction of many new public and private buildings, schools, hospitals, churches, etc., in a variety of styles eclectic, neo-classical, and western, which gradually changed the face of the eastern suburbs particularly. A pre-eminent position in this explosion of construction activity was occupied by the Italian architect Vitaliano Poselli, who designed some of the city's most important turn-of-the-century buildings.

But the westernization of this period did not eliminate the city's traditional economic activities: the cottage industries, the small brokers, the crops grown within and without the walls, the sales of land and buildings, and other such traditional occupations. Alongside the retailer of European goods and the agent of a western-style economy and a renewed capitalism, there lived on a world of small family businesses, small shop-keepers, small farmers and the equally traditional large land-owners, the host of casual labourers and the underemployed populace. It was inevitable that this late and rather hasty coupling of two very different social and cultural orders should create, beyond the older social and cultural social distinctions, new discrepancies. The combination of the new and westernised with the traditional “oriental”, a customary pattern in the history of Thessaloniki, was highlighted by the existence cheek by jowl of the magnificent new mansions and villas and the older, usually wooden, houses, with their timber-frame construction and their enclosed balconies, between

the broad, paved “avenues” and the narrow laneways, between the orderly public parks and the open ground and vineyards.

These two worlds were also reflected in the city's ideological condition, with, on the one hand, internal rivalries within the three religious communities opposing the traditionalists and the “liberals”, the rising middle class and the proletariat and, on the other, conflicts between the three ethno-religious communities. Typical of the former class of conflict was the political fragmentation of the Israelite community, dividing it into upper middle class devotees of French liberalism and European education, the inward-looking “conservatives”, the socialist representatives of the working class, and the Zionists. Similar divisions sundered Thessaloniki's Greek community: During the last two decades of the 19th century the “liberals” (mainly the petty bourgeoisie and the working class, the small businessmen, artisans and labourers) strove to take over control of education and administration within the community from the “conservatives” (the prosperous middle classes, the merchants and industrialists, the landed gentry and the traditional “urban aristocracy”) in whose hands these functions had remained for so long.

Before the apparition of national conflicts (particularly that opposing the Greeks and the Bulgarians), Thessaloniki was little affected by inter-communal strife. Of course, the city's three major communities had for centuries lived apart from one another, each entrenched in its own social, ideological, and cultural space. This insularity was reinforced by their geographical separation, fixed from the earliest years of Ottoman domination. The Muslims established their own neighbourhoods, especially after the great fire of 1620, building their houses on the larger lots available in the Upper Town (“Bairi”) and along the eastern walls. There were two main reasons for this choice: these higher and less central areas were not only healthier, but also safer and farther removed from the pernicious influence of the “infidels”, who were crushed together in the lower, densely populated and less healthy quarters of the lower city. The Jewish community occupied a broad area extending from the centre (today's “Diagonios”) south-west to the “Barra” district and Vardari, while another Jewish quarter grew up around the port. The Greek Orthodox community inhabited the ancient city centre and the area to the south-east, the Kamara and Hippodrome quarters and the newer parishes of St. Athanasios, Panagouda, Panaghia Dexia, Hypapanti, St. Anthony and Nea Panaghia, as well as parts of the western suburbs (the parish of St. Minas).

The insularity which characterised the three ethno-religious groups was directly linked to the internal structure and institutions of their autonomous administrative organisation, which in turn was part of the millet (autonomous self-governing religious community) system established throughout the Ottoman Empire. Some of these institutions, however, had other historical origins. The professions traditionally practised by each community, and organised within each one into vertical guilds, were to a considerable degree adaptations of situations pre-dating the Turkish conquest. And certain features of the autonomous self-government system applied within the Jewish and Christian communities under the Ottoman administration may, *mutatis mutandis*, be traced back to a more distant past: in the case of the Jews, to some of their fundamental, age-old religious traditions (modified by the centuries spent in central and western Europe), and in the case of the Greeks, to the earliest days of the history of Thessaloniki (the Hellenistic and Roman periods).

Setting aside the much-discussed question of the origin of these structures and institutions, the fact remains that the separation of the three communities for centuries served an effectual purpose as a safety valve, neutralising economic and social rivalries and, on certain levels, blunting the unbridgeable cultural and ideological differences between them. It should, however, be noted that this well-established regime did not always guarantee a comfortable balance, especially when the system began to degenerate (as early as the middle of the 17th century) with the progressive decline of the Ottoman administration. In any case, Thessaloniki's three main religious communities maintained their autonomous internal organisation until the middle of the 19th century, stubbornly preserving their own social, economic, educational, and ideological mechanisms.

As the Ottoman reforms gained ground, however, they fostered new conditions, and these caused the first cracks in the traditional partitions, bringing about both an auspicious social convergence and acute social confrontation. These changes had for the most part gestated in the city's foreign (private) schools, which accepted pupils of any nationality or religion; this is why the sectors initially affected were those of education and culture. It was not long before new types of groups began to form, groups with shared internationalist ideologies and cosmopolitan tendencies, with parallel or joint social events and even with combined economic and consonant class interests. The transcendence of the centuries-old isolation of the millet system made its appearance principally at the two extremes of the social scale, with, on the one hand, the undifferentiated cohabitation of prosperous families from all three traditional

communities plus the Dönmes in the new eastern suburbs and, on the other, the fast-growing class solidarity among the workers.

The establishment of labour relations beyond the sovereign structures of the traditional community guilds favoured the spread of the union movement in the city and even more important its transformation in the early years of the 20th century from an initially Jewish nucleus (Abraham Benarroya's "Labour Club") into multi-national political organisations: first the "Thessaloniki Labour Union" and, in the spring of 1909, the "Socialist Federation of Thessaloniki", better known under the Spanish-Sefardic name of "Federación".

These convergent tendencies, however, were unable to resist the pressure of the new or newly revived nationalist ideologies. Indeed, Thessaloniki is closely associated with the emergence of one of the main rival movements in the area, that of Turkish nationalism. It is not fortuitous that some of the most important exponents of Turkish nationalism around the turn of the century and until 1912 published their ideas in Thessaloniki, nor that the city should have become the ideological centre of the Young Turk movement. The phenomenon is the product of a number of factors, first among which was the city's reasonably liberal and modernist climate, which meant that its Muslim population (and here the Dönmes played a leading role) could pursue its social and cultural activities in relative freedom, untrammelled by the indirect censorship and the suffocating oppression of the Ottoman capital under Abdul Hamid II. In addition, the influx of Muslim refugees from the Empire's lost European territories (particularly Bosnia), who by the standards of Islamic society were considerably more progressive in their ideas, bolstered the development of a more western mentality and western political ideologies.

The modernization and renovation of the Muslim school system in the context of the Tanzimat reforms, with the building (particularly in the 1880s) of numerous primary and secondary schools, kindergartens, girls' schools, and commercial schools, as well as vocational and administrative secondary and post-secondary institutions (military college, police academy, technical, administrative, and law schools), paved the way for an early (in comparison with other Ottoman cities) westernisation of much of the Muslim population of the city.

The combination of all these factors, plus the circulation in Thessaloniki of numerous (although occasionally short-lived) Turkish newspapers and periodicals (mostly published by the Dönmes) contributed to the development of a substantial intelligentsia, which played a

major role in shaping at least the initial tendencies (and counter-tendencies) of Turkish nationalism, from neo-Ottomanism and young-Turkism to pan-Turanism and pan-Turkism.

Despite the latent economic antagonism between certain professional circles within the Jewish and Christian communities in Thessaloniki, the two groups never reached the point of direct or (more importantly) prolonged commercial rivalry. On the contrary, in many sectors the interests of Jewish and Christian merchants and labourers coincided, which helped avoid open conflict between the two communities. When, for example, in 1909, during the final crisis of the Cretan Question, the Young Turks decided to boycott Greek vessels in the Port of Thessaloniki, it was the city's Jewish lightermen and traders who demanded that the decision be repealed. Thessaloniki's Jewish community also maintained good relations with the Bulgarians, especially in their union activities. This explains why the Jewish community was so careful to keep well out of the Helleno-Bulgarian confrontation. On the other hand, the historically comfortable relations between the Ottoman Jewry and the imperial regime throughout the Empire, the dependence of the great Jewish commercial and industrial houses on the preservation of that Empire, especially its European provinces, and the absence of any clear prospects for the creation of a national Jewish homeland, all worked together to favour a convergence with the Muslims, and especially with the Young Turks. This convergence was further facilitated by both sides' links with the Masonic temples and the contacts of the Dönmes with the leaders of the Young Turk Committee of "Union and Progress". Another factor that had an impact on the final choices and the over-optimistic aspirations of a section at least of the city's Jewish population were the Young Turks' proclamations announcing the transformation of the Ottoman Empire into a liberal state, with its multi-ethnic and decentralised character constitutionally guaranteed. Despite all this, Judeo-Turkish collaboration was in the end stopped by two factors: the rise of the Zionist movement and the domination of the Committee leadership from 1911 on by extremist Turkish nationalist elements.

The Greeks of Thessaloniki were not faced with the dilemmas that harried their Jewish fellow-citizens. Imbued with the irredentist vision of the "Great Idea", they mistrusted the multi-ethnic and constitutional solutions proposed by the Neo-Ottomans and the Young Turks for the salvation of the crumbling Empire: on the contrary, they saw the solution of their national problem in the expansion of the Hellenic State to include Macedonia. But the nationalist prospects of the Greeks of Thessaloniki also need to be seen in the light of the

multi-lateral rivalries that were being played out in Macedonia at that time and which, far from being limited to the ancient historical confrontation with the Turks, included all the other Christian peoples in the Balkans. Following the dramatic events of 1903 (with the Bulgarian terrorist activity in Thessaloniki and the “Ilinden Uprising” in north-western Macedonia), the Greek community began to co-operate with the Greek Consulate and Athanassios Souliotis-Nikolaidis' secret “Organisation of Thessaloniki”. It was not terrorist activity in the city that this collaboration was engineered to cope with, for thanks to its numerical, economic, and social supremacy the Greek element was not seriously threatened by the limited strength of the Bulgarian community, the diminutive number of the Serbs and the handful of the Romanians. Rather, the political initiatives of Thessaloniki's Greek community were aimed at strengthening Hellenism in the Macedonian countryside, which was the stage for the absolute and implacable struggle for the supremacy of the pro-Greek Patriarchists against the pro-Bulgarian Exarchists. Their efforts were channelled essentially into the provision of moral and material support for the Greek guerrilla groups and into manning the Greek churches, schools, cultural organisations and secret societies of all sorts.

It was not a belated blossoming of nationalist consciousness that prompted the mobilisation of Thessaloniki's Greek population in support of Hellenism in the Macedonian Struggle; rather it was the fruit of an ideological preparation that had begun before the Revolution of 1821. The final phase of this process is characterised by the tightening of relations between the Greeks of Thessaloniki and the national centre, especially after the critical decade of 1870 and, even more so, once the neighbouring province of Thessaly had been incorporated into the free Hellenic state. These ties were related to vital sectors of the ideological machinery, and were crystal clear in such areas as the harmonisation of school programmes and the educational activities of the Greek community with the general policy of the Hellenic Ministry of Education and the initiatives of the Athenian “Society for the Dissemination of Greek Letters”; in the insistence of the members of the community on sending their children to Athens rather than to Constantinople for their higher education; in the staff appointments to its schools and welfare institutions; and in the character and long term goals of the Greek- language newspapers and publications. Even the adoption of Greek architectural styles for the Greek community's monumental public buildings (schools, hospitals, orphanages, etc.), as well as of a number of private houses, was more an indirect expression of an ideology than a simple aesthetic choice. Finally, it was no accident that by the eve of the Liberation in 1912 some



5,000 members of the Greek community in Thessaloniki had already become citizens of the Kingdom of Greece.

The nationalist aspirations of Thessaloniki's Greek population became reality far sooner than even the most optimistic among them could have hoped. The liberation of Macedonia was achieved with a rapidity nothing short of astounding for the period. Between October 5 (o.s.), when the Greek forces crossed the border of northern Thessaly, to October 26, when they accepted the surrender of Thessaloniki, they had occupied virtually all of historical western and central Macedonia. And while in London the peace treaty was still being discussed, the Balkans erupted in the Second Balkan War, which within the space of a single month was to seal the fate of all the Macedonian territories. In the end, the signature of the Treaty of Bucharest (July 28/August 10, 1913) ratifying Greece's sovereignty over the territory of the historical Macedonia, confirmed Thessaloniki's incorporation into the Greek state.

The liberation of Thessaloniki heralded the dawn of a new period in the city's long history, a period during which many of the terms of its progress across the ages were definitively changed. The significance of these changes becomes more evident if one bears in mind the general historical context within which they occurred. During the years between 1912 and the end of World War II (1939-1945) and the Civil War immediately following it (1946-1949), Thessaloniki was caught up in the brief but bloody Second Balkan War (1913), the National Defence Movement and the initial stages of the long-lived "National Schism" (1916-1917), and new confrontations in the Balkans, especially those pitting Greece against Bulgaria and Turkey (1915-1923). Later, the city together with the rest of Greece suffered not only the effects of the 1929 Great Crash and the bankruptcy of 1932, but also the tremendous social revolution of the inter-war period. During the period of German Occupation (1941-44), Thessaloniki experienced the worst expressions of Nazi brutality, culminating with the extermination of virtually its entire Jewish population. Finally, the end of World War II ushered in the traumatic drama of the Greek Civil War, which in Thessaloniki was associated with some of the most devastating effects of the Cold War anywhere in Greece. This, in short, was on both the regional and the international levels an exceptionally difficult historical period.

The first and most important change brought about by the termination of Ottoman sovereignty was the restoration, after nearly five centuries of demographic upheaval, of Thessaloniki's historic Hellenic continuity. The change was relatively rapid, and affected a considerable number of areas. Particularly striking was the swiftness of this ethnic

metamorphosis. We have already noted that the first systematic census of the city's population, held almost immediately after the Liberation (April 1913), showed the Greek community as the third largest, with 39,965 inhabitants out of a total of 157,889 (25.3%), as compared to 61,439 Jews (38.9%), 45,867 Muslims (29%), 6,263 Bulgarians (3.9%) and 4,364 (2.7%) "others". Within three years (1916), however, the Greek community had become the largest, with 68,205 out of a total population of 165,704 (41.33%), compared to 61,400 Jews (37%) and about 30,000 Muslims (18%). This distribution remained fairly stable until 1920, as did the size of the city, with a total population in that year of 169,123.

Over the course of the next few years, however, both the overall size of the city's population and its ethnico-religious proportions were transformed. The radical change in the demographic and ethnic map of Thessaloniki (and Macedonia as a whole) was brought about almost entirely by the exchange of populations between Greece, on the one hand, and Bulgaria and Turkey, on the other. Under the terms of this exchange (1919-1926), the most massive ever to have been carried out in the history of southeastern Europe and the eastern Mediterranean, tens of thousands of people whose religion and ethnic origin were other than Greek left their homes in Hellenic Macedonia and Western Thrace. This exodus resulted in a drastic fall in the Bulgarian population of Macedonia generally (from 9.9% in 1912 to 1.1% in 1926) and in Thessaloniki in particular, where the Bulgarian fraction of the population dropped from 3.9% in 1913 to 0.2% in 1925, and in the virtual disappearance of the city's Muslim community (from 39.4% to 0.1%). The other side of the coin was the massive influx of Greeks from Eastern Thrace, Asia Minor, and the Black Sea provinces, some 674,000 in all. During this same period, the same or similar causes drove large numbers of Greek people from the neighbouring Balkan states and the southern provinces of the former Russian Empire to seek refuge and a new life in Greece: 33,000 from Bulgaria, 5,000 from Serbia, 3,000 from Albania, and another 61,000 from (mainly) Bessarabia, the Ukraine, the Crimea, and the Caucasus. With the arrival in Northern Greece of a total of 776,000 immigrants, the Greek proportion of the population of Macedonia shot up in the space of fifteen years from 42.6% in 1912 to 88.3 % in 1926 (80% in Thessaloniki and its environs).

But despite the predominance of the Greek element in its population, the Macedonian capital was still in this immediate post-liberation period a multi-ethnic and a multi-cultural city. During the period of the Macedonian Front, for example, Thessaloniki for three years served as the headquarters and staging-post of the large and multi-national "Army of the East".

Starting in October 1915, and particularly during the period from January 1916 to the autumn of 1918, the passage through and stationing in the city of hundreds of thousands of French, British, Serb, Italian, Russian, Asian, and African soldiers turned it into a highly cosmopolitan Babel. And even after this passing metamorphosis, Thessaloniki for many years preserved at least a part of its ancient diversity. According to the 1923 census, before the implementation of the exchange of populations with Turkey, Thessaloniki and its environs had 96,410 Greeks, approximately 70,000 Jews, 26,466 Muslims, 4,000 Slav-speakers and 3,846 foreign nationals, including 1,775 Serbs. Even as late as 1925, at a time that is when the exchange was nearly complete, the population of Thessaloniki included, in addition to its Greeks (108,000 native-born and 180,000 refugees) and Jews (60,000), about 1,600 Muslim Albanians, who were excepted from the compulsory exchange, 1,000 “former schismatics”, more than 1,000 Russian, White Russian and Ukrainian émigrés, 13,000 Armenian refugees, and several other smaller ethnic groups. The Greek refugees, too, had brought with them not only their ancient Greek heritage but considerable cultural baggage from the traditions of the countries which for centuries had been their homes.

Beyond its ethnic impact and the resulting cultural osmosis, the exchange of populations also effected tremendous quantitative changes, swelling the total population of the entire Macedonian region and, of course, its capital city. The 1923 census, taken before the exchange was complete, showed that the population of Thessaloniki and its environs had climbed to about 201,000. This same census, however, also shows that to this number must be added the 57,821 Christian refugees who had found temporary shelter in the city and another 31,164 who had been dispersed to nearby suburbs old and new: this means that the total population of Thessaloniki at that time was actually 290,000. A reliable count taken two years later, at the beginning of 1925, shows that this number had swollen to 371,000 persons. But this spectacular increase in the population of the city and its environs in the wake of its incorporation into the Hellenic territorial jurisdiction and the mass wave of refugee immigration into Macedonia did not affect the historic demographic relation between the “co-capital” and the capital. Thessaloniki's population growth in the inter-war period was not only markedly slower than that of Athens, but as we shall see tended to stagnate or even decline. One indication of this is the fact that while in 1920 the population of metropolitan Athens was 2.5 times that of Thessaloniki, by 1928 it was more than 3 times greater and by 1940 more than 4 times greater. This trend not only kept Thessaloniki in its traditional, second, place but,

with the transition to the post-war period, resulted in the hypertrophic explosion of the population of the national capital and its concomitant gigantism and administrative and economic hydrocephalism.

One of the obstacles to a corresponding growth of the population of Thessaloniki (apart from the losses we shall be noting later) was the fact that size of Northern Greece's refugee population tended to vary: for example, while the 1926 census showed a total population (for Macedonia) of 1,511,000, the 1928 census recorded only 1,412,477. In any case, by 1928, when the shifting refugee population had to some extent settled down, one sixth of the entire population of Macedonia was living in Thessaloniki. Of these (still according to the same census), 92,598 were refugees. Another 539,986 had settled in the environs of the city. In the following decades the population of Thessaloniki not only did not grow, but in fact started to shrink: in 1940 the city's metropolitan area had a total population of 226,147 (191,847 in the municipality of Thessaloniki itself). This fall in numbers was mainly the result of the emigration of many of its Jewish and Armenian citizens, the former to Palestine and Western Europe and the latter to the Soviet Union. The refugee population had also shrunk, for their mortality rate, after years of living in the wretched conditions of the shantytowns that had sprung up to house them, was the highest of any group in the city. Further, the lack of employment opportunities resulting from the industrial crisis and the lack of investment drove a considerable proportion of the city's labour force either to emigrate or to move to other Greek cities, principally of course Athens.

The break with its Ottoman past followed hard upon Thessaloniki's incorporation into the state of Greece. It was particularly marked in the administrative sector, with the establishment of new state services and the abolition of others, as well as in the harmonisation of Macedonia's economic, judicial, and educational machinery with that of the rest of the country. Despite the initial difficulties, especially those resulting from Greece's international obligations and the fluidity of the issue of sovereignty in the region, Thessaloniki managed to shed most of the anachronistic social structures inherited from its Ottoman past within a very short space of time.

In Thessaloniki the passage from the old to the new is particularly marked in its urban renewal. The changes in the face of the city were one of the primary goals of the new Greek administration, which rapidly had modern plans prepared for the city's urban redesign. But as it turned out the effective agent in the transformation of the city was the Great Fire of August

5/18, 1917, which left 120 hectares in ashes and destroyed the oriental character of much of the city centre and, to a certain extent, its overall traditional structure. The Greek government hastened to take advantage of the catastrophe to get around the problems inherent in the peculiar property system bequeathed upon it by the Turkish regime and at the same time to modernise the urban, social, and economic structure of the city. To this end it set up an International Design Committee under French architect E. Hébrard. The new plan for Thessaloniki, which was drawn up in the spirit of the concepts of urban architecture current at that time, called for a restoration of the classical lay-out of the city (with its vertical arteries intersected by diagonal avenues, the geometric homogeneity of its city blocks, the nuclear function of its public buildings and monuments, etc.) and for the elimination of the irregular and labyrinthine neighbourhoods of the Ottoman period.

The urban vision of the International Committee was undermined from the outset both by property interests and by post-war building violations and construction irregularities. But in spite of these, the face of Thessaloniki did change radically in the years 1917-1933, under the impact of another external factor: the influx of refugees. The pressure for housing forced construction activity both in the historic centre and in the old and new suburbs. The preservation of so much of the older housing in the Upper Town is probably due to the fact that this area, which during the centuries of Ottoman rule was (as we have seen) a Muslim district, was largely resettled by “exchangeable” refugee families. Indeed, as late as 1950 89% of the population of the Upper Town (Ano Polis) were either refugees or descendants of refugees.

The subsequent historic evolution of Thessaloniki was of course affected by a number of other factors as well. The collapse of the Ottoman Empire and the division of its European territories among the Balkan states inevitably contracted the geographical space which had for five whole centuries been the arena of Thessaloniki's economic activities. Thus, the city's large industrial and commercial concerns lost the extensive territory formerly constituted by the essentially single Balkan market and established inter-Balkan economic activities. This loss is evident in problems which, with the city's incorporation into the constricted Hellenic territory, began to affect the flourishing textile industry that had grown up under the demand for both its raw materials and its finished products. This crisis was not surmounted until the post-war period, and even then only in part.

The Greek administration of course tried, during the inter-war period and afterwards, to overcome some of the more acute problems affecting Thessaloniki's economic development from the fact of the contraction of its once extensive geographic hinterland, working to this end on both the economic and the political level. Some of the more important initiatives in the economic and commercial sector included the establishment in 1926 of the International Trade Fair (which after the war became the most spectacular and significant regular economic and commercial event in the entire country) and the transformation of the port from a regional to an international institution. The discussions initiated with Belgrade and Sofia (in the period after 1922) for the creation of free zones in the Port of Thessaloniki were also designed to stimulate trade. In the end, only the negotiations with Yugoslavia prospered, leading in March 1929 and after much oscillation to the conclusion of a special treaty. In the political sector, successive Greek governments (Alexandros Papanastasiou leading the way) worked to rekindle the Balkan co-operation which would have restored to the Macedonian capital at least some of its former geo-political and geo-economic advantages. But the series of Balkan conferences held for this purpose (Athens 1930, Istanbul 1931, Bucharest 1932 and Thessaloniki 1933) proved fruitless. The principal cause of the failure of these talks was probably the ethnic rivalry and associated territorial revendications among the Balkan states, especially on the part of Albania and Bulgaria against Yugoslavia. These conflicts were aggravated by World War II, when the national borders and the ethnic settlements established during the inter-war years were once again called into question. It was therefore obvious that it was not only the political fragmentation of the Balkans and the inevitable tariff barriers thrown up around its separate states that were undermining the bridges that had once united the interdependent markets of southeastern Europe, but also the perennial fanning of the flames of nationalism.

In this historical conjuncture, the problems Thessaloniki faced during the first forty years after its liberation were both numerous and difficult of solution. The loss, for example, of both house and job suffered by so many as a result of the Great Fire of 1917, and the successive tidal waves of refugees between 1914 and 1926, in conjunction with the economic debility of a country exhausted by the demands of decades of war, effectively prevented Thessaloniki from developing either economically or socially. Despite the impressive initial economic activity of the 1917-1933 period, which absorbed some of the surplus labour, unemployment remained high in Thessaloniki throughout the inter-war period, and subject to constant upward

pressures. It has been estimated that core unemployment remained fixed at 10,000 throughout this period, which meant one unemployed person in every five families. The situation worsened as the effects of the global depression began to make themselves felt in Greece. The slump in Macedonia was underlined by the drop in industrial production, which from 18.4% of the national total in 1927 had by 1938 fallen to 15%.

Moreover, in the Thessaloniki of the inter-war period, industrialisation and economic activity in general, although based as we have seen on the exploitation of cheap labour, did not bring about analogous social equilibria, which led to the impoverishment of a large proportion of the city's population. In 1930 there were 70,000 people registered as unemployed, while public soup kitchens kept 25,000 of the city's people from starvation. This not only explains the frequent violent outbursts of social unrest, but also the spread of union activism and the emergence of an extremely pugnacious Communist Party. It was not long before the social problem converged with the major political and state issues of the day, especially after the fall of Eleutherios Venizelos (1932) and the restoration of the monarchy (1935). This development was evident in the mass labour demonstrations all over the country in the spring of 1936. Finally, the violence and bloodshed that took place in Thessaloniki during the course of the tobacco workers' strike in May of that year afforded the anti-democratic forces a pretext for the suspension of parliamentary institutions and the proclamation of the August 4th dictatorship. The situation deteriorated further with the outbreak of the war between Greece and Italy (October 28, 1940). In 1940 the number of people on the public breadlines in Thessaloniki was 80,000: in other words, one in three of the city's inhabitants depended for his daily sustenance on public or private charity.

But despite all its manifold problems, Thessaloniki even in the inter-war period managed to post a number of signs presaging economic growth. Within twenty years, the expansion of the acreage under cultivation, the land reclamation and irrigation projects and the mechanisation of agriculture had increased agricultural production throughout Macedonia and particularly in the plain of Thessaloniki. This, in conjunction with the cheap and abundant labour force provided by the mass of refugees and the high tariff walls erected to protect a whole range of industrial products, favoured the emergence of numerous small industries and marked the dawn of a new industrial era for the city. The spectacular rise in cotton production, for example, which grew by a factor of nine in the five-year period 1932-37, largely contributed to the revival of the city's traditional textile sector. For a certain period, and thanks to the skills of the refugee

community, the city also had a flourishing carpet industry. Another important sector which also played a part in the city's economic recovery in this inter-war period was the commercial processing of export-grade tobacco. On the eve of World War II, and with only 6% of the total industrial production of tobacco products, Thessaloniki had nearly a hundred commercial firms and agencies handling 29% of the volume of commercial tobacco processing.

Thessaloniki's incorporation into the Greek state changed more than the direction of its demographic and economic evolution: it also changed the quantitative and qualitative basis of its subsequent cultural physiognomy. This of course was largely dependent upon education. Despite the relative incompatibility of the educational context in the two periods, we may assert that, in general terms, primary and secondary education grew steadily in Thessaloniki during the first half century after its liberation. The number of schoolchildren as a percentage of the total population rose from 8.8% in 1912 to 15.4% in 1961 and 24.8% in 1992. But the change is more evident in other figures: at the turn of the century Thessaloniki had 86 schools with a total of 13-14,000 students, while in the 1992-93 school year the metropolitan Thessaloniki area had 785 schools, with a total student body of at least 181,000. And these last figures do not include either the city's post-secondary public and private schools and colleges (mainly technical and vocational institutions) with their thousands of students, or the Aristotle University (whose student body has multiplied from 65 at its founding in 1926 to 60,000 today) and the recently established University of Macedonia.

Nor were the changes in the education sector merely quantitative: they displayed other characteristics as well. At the turn of the century Thessaloniki had schools operated by 8 religious and 13 ethnic communities, the largest being the Muslim, followed by the Greek and the Jewish communities respectively. Today, while the single remaining small Jewish primary school and the few remaining old or more recently founded private schools are indisputably part of the city's educational reality, they are no more than tiny islands (although of very high quality) in the sea of Greek education. The transformation therefore of the ethnic map of Thessaloniki which, as we have seen, took place during the inter-war years, had an equivalent effect on the city's education system. The diversity which marked at least the final centuries of the city's Ottoman period has been replaced by an absolute homogeneity.

Qualitative change, however, was not restricted to the education sector: within two decades of its liberation the city's overall cultural aspect had begun to alter. Greek intellectual and cultural activity, however, did not arise out of nothing with the incorporation of Thessaloniki



into the Greek state: it began to display its dynamism in about the middle of the 19th century, catalysed by the founding of the Greek publishing houses and the publication of the first Greek newspapers and periodicals. Recent research has established that by 1912 a total of 18 Greek print-shops and 5 publishing houses had been established in Thessaloniki, 16 Greek-language (and several bilingual) newspapers and 3 periodicals had appeared, and about 200 books had been published, including collections of poetry, works of prose and drama, and translations of foreign prose and theatrical works. By the turn of the century Thessaloniki's Greek-language literary activity was converging more and more with the currents prevailing in Greek circles in Constantinople and elsewhere, and most important of all with the artistic and literary currents ruling in Athens. This, then, was the climate in which certain of the city's (Greek) cultural societies (Orpheas, the Friends of the Muses and the Amateur Society) were inspired to promote and encourage musical activity in Thessaloniki, and which saw two very important events: the founding, in 1909, of the Philharmonic of the Papapheion Orphanage, and the founding two years later, by Sotirios Graikos, a student of the fine Macedonian composer Dimitrios Lalas (1844-1911), of the first Conservatory in the city's modern history.

During this same period, Thessaloniki's two other main ethno-religious communities, the Jewish and the Muslim, were playing their own role in at least some sectors of the city's intellectual and cultural life. But within barely fifteen years after 1912, their role had been drastically curtailed, tending to disappear entirely in the case of the Muslim and gradually shrinking in the case of the Jewish community. This meant that, with the exchange of populations and the gradual integration of virtually the entire population with the dominant Greek social environment, the diversity of the Ottoman period was slowly replaced in Thessaloniki's cultural life too by a virtually absolute Hellenic hegemony and, at the same time, by the steady convergence of "local" intellectual and artistic activity with the intellectual and artistic activity of the rest of the country.

This convergence, however, meant neither total identification nor even less the provincial transformation of Athenian prototypes. The world of arts and letters in inter-war Thessaloniki was not only the agent of its own cultural tradition; it was also the recipient of a unique blend of influences. This is why the city's artists and intelligentsia had, beyond the general currents, their own personal preferences. Moreover, many of the influences acting on the cultural and intellectual circles of the Macedonian capital were the result of local rather than nation-wide "challenges". The Thessaloniki State Conservatory, for example, which was founded in 1915

(and which, let it be noted, is still the only state conservatory in the country) and staffed by eminent musical figures from the Greek Diaspora (Riadis, Kazantzis, Margaritis et al.), gave musical education in the city its own particular character. The three-year presence in Thessaloniki of the “Army of the East” (1915-18) was a veritable historical challenge in the city's cultural life: this multi-ethnic and multi-cultural interlude offered Thessaloniki a vast range of experience in a variety of cultural sectors theatre, music, painting, photography, cinema, daily and periodical press, philology and literature, etc. At the same time, the transformation of the city (by the agency of the National Defence Movement) into the interim seat of government (1916-17) and the centre of political developments, made the city an arena for interesting and by the standards of the period, bold initiatives in social, educational, and cultural matters.

The return of Venizelos and Greece's involvement in the latter stages of World War I resulted in the suspension of these endeavours; but after the end of the War, some of the initiatives from the period of the National Defence government found their way to the forefront again, and this time succeeding in creating some of the mechanisms responsible for an educational renaissance in the city. The most important of these was the founding, in 1926, of the Aristotle University of Thessaloniki. For many years, of course, the new concepts urged by the University, and particularly by the most radical of its faculties, the Faculty of Arts, met with less than the hoped-for response from the citizen body. Nevertheless, if one considers the cultural life of the city over the past fifty years, it is impossible to ignore the active role of the University in the creation of a fairly liberal (compared to Athens) intellectual and artistic climate, both on the plane of language (Northern Greece played a leading role in the imposition of the demotic tongue) and on that of ideas. Further, it was the University that provided from the corpus of its alumni, often in collaboration with the teaching staff, the people who in the final analysis were responsible for the shaping of the city's post-war cultural landscape. However, the economic underdevelopment and the social compression that continued to afflict Thessaloniki throughout the difficult years of the inter-war period prevented the city from developing its own cultural physiognomy, at least for the time being.

World War II and the triple Occupation set back life in Thessaloniki in almost every single sector. While the onset of that catastrophic period was signalled by the Italian air raids in the autumn of 1940, the city's real woes began with the arrival of the German troops on April 9, 1941. For the next three years the Germans ruled over Thessaloniki by fire and the sword,

turning the city into the strategic headquarters for the entire occupied Balkan region and a major hub on their communications and supply lines to central and southern Greece and North Africa. The Greek administrative presence steadily declined, both in the city and in the rest of Northern Greece, especially after the Germans consigned the control of Western Macedonia to the Italians and of the area east of the Strymon to the Bulgarians.

The devastation of Thessaloniki began with the dislocation of public transport and the interruption of communications with the interior and with southern Greece, the disruption of its industrial sector (especially those units producing basic necessities), the cessation of imports, and the substitution of a black market for normal trade. The agricultural production of the Macedonian hinterland, most of which went to the Thessaloniki market, was requisitioned for the needs of the occupation forces. Greece's economic relations with its neighbours were interrupted (until 1943) by the Allied blockade of occupied countries. The demolition of the city's economy was crowned by the Allied bombings of industrial sites, and most serious of all, its port facilities. The inevitable sequel was the disappearance of food supplies, soaring prices, plunging standards of living, starvation, and a soaring death rate (the death rate tripled in the course of a single year, although it never reached the dreadful level it did in Athens). The problem was exacerbated by arrival in the city of 60,000 refugees from Eastern Macedonia and Thrace during periods of Bulgarian persecution (1941, 1943-44). A substantial proportion of the populace was kept alive by the popular soup kitchens that were organised in the city. During the exceptionally harsh winter of 1941-42, some 130,000 people were fed by these soup kitchens, set up by the Church, charitable and union organisations, municipal welfare institutions and the Independent Provisioning Service of Macedonia.

With the installation of the occupying army, nearly all the city's newspapers suspended publication. The gap was filled by the large number of illegal broadsheets and proclamations and, of course, the dynamic underground press. Recent research has shown that more than 40 underground publications, most of them in mimeograph, circulated in Thessaloniki during the two and a half years of the German occupation (from mid-1941 until the city was liberated). The Germans, of course, did their best to muzzle both public information and the cultural life of the city via censorship, publication of a pro-Nazi newspaper (*Nea Evropi*) and direct intervention in the University and in cultural activities. But their efforts did not always produce the desired results: the collaborationist *Nea Evropi* remained a marginal publication, with no substantial effect. Within six months of the arrival of the occupying forces, the University had

became a centre which both fed a steady stream of people into the resistance organisations and sustained the free spirit of the city's youth (through lectures, literary and art events, etc.). It might in fact be argued that in the end German intervention in the cultural sector made itself felt only in those areas which by nature were inappropriate vehicles for political propaganda, e.g. music, with the organisation of concerts and official support for the municipal symphony orchestra.

But the darkest aspect of these dreadful years was indisputably the merciless persecution and decimation of the city's population by the occupying forces. More than 1,500 patriots were executed in Thessaloniki itself (for the most part in the "Pavlos Melas" barracks), apart from the mass murders carried out in surrounding areas (such as the horrendous massacre of 170 defenceless villagers in the ovens of the village of Hortiatis on September 2, 1944). But even these hecatombs pale before the almost total extermination of the city's Jewish community. In March 1943, some 40,000 Jews (all those who had survived the forced labour camps or who had been unable to escape to the mountains or find refuge with Christian neighbours) were herded onto cattle trucks and shipped to the death camps at Auschwitz and Birkenau: of these, barely 2,000 survived. And the historical record of this community was destroyed along with its people: libraries, synagogues, and ancient treasures of the Israelite community, things that had survived the ravages of time and natural catastrophe, were lost in the space of just a few hours.

The hasty departure of the Nazi forces from Greece in October 1944 marked the end of the nightmare of the German Occupation. But almost before the material damage could be assessed, new wounds began to appear, wounds which were to prove even deeper and much harder to heal. Throughout the period from the end of the Occupation until the final phase of the Civil War, political uncertainty, social insecurity, inflation, profiteering, and poverty continued to hold at bay for another five years at least the reconstruction of Greece's productive and social forces. Thessaloniki indeed took longer to get over the consequences of this new tragedy and show any signs of economic and social recuperation. A large segment of the population of Thessaloniki, which as we have seen had been cut off from its hinterland by the destruction of the roads and railways, once again faced starvation; and without foreign food aid, especially through the good offices of United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Agency (UNRRA), the situation would have been desperate indeed. In addition, the spread of the Civil War sent another flood of refugees into the city from the surrounding countryside,

thus multiplying the food and housing problems that had remained unresolved since the arrival of the first waves of refugees a generation earlier. The escalation of hostilities across the Macedonian countryside and the transformation of Thessaloniki (because of the Balkan dimension of the war) into one of the focal points of the Cold War, further delayed the restoration of political normality. Popular anxiety was heightened by the political assassinations that shook the city in 1946-47: victims included the Deputy Chief of Police, a Communist Party leader and American journalist George Polk. Throughout this period, in other words, Greece's second city was a place whose daily reality was one of political uncertainty, economic stagnation, and social incoherence.

While the curtain eventually fell on the Civil War, the lights did not immediately go up on a new era of hope: the ideological legacy of this civil conflict would continue to overshadow the political and ideological climate of the entire country for many years to come. In the case of Thessaloniki, indeed, the aftermath of the civil war was to yield a harvest of particularly tragic events, culminating in the assassination of left-wing MP Grigoris Lambrakis in the centre of the city in May 1963. A number of factors contributed to the perpetuation of this situation, and most of them were external. Until the end of the Cold War Greece was caught up in the maelstrom of two worlds in opposition, especially in the sensitive area of the Balkans. Her northern provinces in particular continued to be affected by these chronic crises in Greece's relations with its neighbours to the north. This is why some of the major public works programmes carried out in Northern Greece in the decade immediately following the civil war (largely with American money) were designed more in accordance with military and political priorities rather than purely economic needs: this was the case, for example, with the extension of the "military" highways in the Greek provinces, the establishment of better communications between the mountain villages and the major urban centres, the construction of new port facilities and of a new airport in Thessaloniki, etc.

Regardless of the initial purpose of these works and the source of the money used to build them, the fact remains that during the 1950s Thessaloniki renewed its productive relations with the Macedonian hinterland and recovered the role of metropolis of Northern Greece that it had lost in the 1940s. Moreover, the gradual improvement of Athens' relations with Belgrade led, starting in the early 1950s, not only to a slackening of the tension between the two countries but also to the restoration of overland transport and communications. This of course fostered the economic and commercial ties between Northern Greece and Central and Eastern Europe

that were so vital to Thessaloniki. Another positive factor in this development was the re-organisation of the city's port and the establishment (in 1953) of the “Free Zone and Port of Thessaloniki”, renamed in 1970 the “Thessaloniki Port Authority”.

This period also saw an agricultural renaissance. From the 1950s on the rural districts of Macedonia, like many other parts of Northern Greece, undertook a drastic restructuring of their agricultural production. The soaring yields of fruit, vegetables, and industrial crops like cotton, tobacco, and sugar beet first restored rural Macedonia's productive relations with its urban centres and subsequently boosted the country's export trade, particularly with Central and Western Europe. The next step was the establishment of new industries in and around Thessaloniki, which absorbed the products of the immediate environs and of the Northern Greek countryside in general, raised rural incomes, and provided new jobs both in the cities and in the rural areas.

Despite all this, the wounds inflicted on Macedonia generally and Thessaloniki in particular by the catastrophes of the previous decade were slow in healing. This is apparent in the low industrial production indicators, in comparison with both its pre-war levels and with the figures for the country as a whole. For example, while in 1927, in spite of all the problems noted in the relevant section of this introduction, Macedonia accounted for 18.4% of the country's total industrial production, this had slipped to 15% in 1938 and by 1959 had slumped to only 8.2%. Industrial growth was also slower in Macedonia (and particularly in Thessaloniki) than in the rest of the country in this initial post-war period: taking 1938 as the basis (= 100), industrial production in Macedonia in the period 1954-1960 grew by 35.5 units, compared to a nation-wide average of 55.

The city's demographic recovery was equally slow. The 1951 census recorded a population of 217,049 for the Municipality of Thessaloniki, 302,635 for the Metropolitan Thessaloniki area and 459,956 for the Prefecture of Thessaloniki. Given that the figures for 1940 were 191,847, 226,147 and 449,229 respectively, this means that the total net growth for the entire Prefecture in ten years was only 10,727 persons. But this was a decade in which tens of thousands of people had flooded into Thessaloniki, initially fugitives from Bulgarian persecution in Eastern Macedonia and Thrace and later internal migrants and victims of guerrilla warfare (“ανταρτόπληκτοι”) from various parts of Macedonia. Many of these newcomers settled permanently in the city. The 1951 census figures, therefore, actually reveal a drastic drop in the city's population. This differential is accounted for first and foremost by the

extermination of the city's Jewish community, coupled with other wartime losses. Thessaloniki's Armenian community, for example, dwindled considerably when 4,600 Armenians were “repatriated” to Soviet Armenia in 1946-47.

With the arrival of the 1960s, a decade characterised by a marked acceleration in development across the entire country, Thessaloniki's population curve finally began to climb. This is evident in the census figures for this thirty- year period:

Year	City	Metropolitan `region	Prefecture region
1961	250,920	380,648	544,394
1971	345,799	557,360	710,352
1981	406,413	706,180	871,580
1991	383,967	749,048	946,864

The census figures show that in the period 1961-1971 the population of the Prefecture and the Metropolitan Region of Thessaloniki grew by 30.4% and 46.6% respectively. This rise was linked to two principal factors, one positive and one negative: these were the rise in industrial employment and in total jobs, and the unprecedented (for Greece) population drain which literally emptied the Greek countryside, especially in the northern provinces: Northern Greece as a whole lost 45-50% of its population in the 1960s, the province of Macedonia 30-35%. The bulk of this exodus was directed towards Western Europe, particularly West Germany. In the following period, however, from 1971 to 1991 (the most recent year for which we have figures), the populations of the Prefecture and the Metropolitan Region of Thessaloniki once again rose sharply, by about 33-34%. But by 1981 the curve had flattened, with the rate of population increase in the Metropolitan Region dropping from 26.7% in 1971-1981 to 6% in 1981-1991 (compared to national rates of 11.08% and 5.38% respectively). It would appear that for the past fifteen years or so the rates of demographic change in the Thessaloniki region have been gentler, more stable, and closer to the national average (+5%). In the Metropolitan Athens region and in the Prefecture of Attica population growth has followed a similar curve: respectively, 3,038,245 and 3,369,424 in 1981, and 3,072,922 and 3,523,407 in 1991.

As we have seen, these population shifts were associated with changing conditions in the economic and employment sectors, which after 1960 enabled Thessaloniki to recover some of the basic parameters of its economic and social life: the city's industrial sector, in fact,

recovered to such an extent that during the decade 1963-1973 it registered the fastest growth in industrial employment in the country and established Thessaloniki as the country's second largest industrial area (after Attica). In the period 1981-88 Thessaloniki's industrial growth rate was more than twice the national average (1.4% as compared to 0.6%). Today, the Sindos Industrial Zone is Greece's largest organised industrial park (950 hectares), with a considerable number of heavy industries. Other industrial zones have been created in satellite areas around Thessaloniki: Nea Anchialos, Kalohori, Diavata, Thermi, Oraiakastro, Nea Santa, etc. An indication of the trend prevailing in the greater Thessaloniki area is given by the general development index for the Prefecture of Thessaloniki, which stands at 117.5%, compared to 126.7% for Attica (taking 100% as national average).

Despite all this, in comparison to Attica Thessaloniki's demographic and economic growth was no more than moderate. The explanation for this difference probably lies in the migration of an extraordinarily large percentage of the population of Greece's rural districts (including the northern provinces) to Athens and its environs. By way of example, the population of the Metropolitan Athens area rose by 85% within a single twenty-year period, from 1,378,586 in 1951 to 2,548,065 in 1971. The basic cause of this population explosion was the post-war concentration in this area of most of the country's major industries and growth sectors. The economic centralisation, often deliberately encouraged as a matter of government policy, multiplied jobs and employment opportunities in the capital and thus continually attracted new migration from every part of Greece. This explains the further spectacular increase in the population of the Metropolitan Athens area and the Attic basin, which jumped 20% in ten years, from 2,548,065 and 2,797,849 respectively in 1971 to 3,038,245 and 3,369,424 in 1981. The consequences of this phenomenon were not of course restricted to the demographic and economic sector: they had a negative impact on the country's administrative organisation, not only inflating services and bureaucracy but also distorting the growth of capitalism and promoting a disequilibrium in cultural development throughout the country, while inflicting on Attica all the social and environmental side-effects consequent on this hydrocephalism.

The social developments that took place in Thessaloniki in this post-war period, however, were arguably even more important. During this period the city completed the transformation of its social fabric into a fairly uniformly integrated amalgam of older and more recent arrivals, thus eliminating the discrimination between native-born and refugees (pre-war or post-war), with all the concomitant ideological stereotypes. This development was evident even in the



city's urban physiognomy: the old refugees hutments were largely a thing of the past, and the urban landscape was no longer marred by blatant exemplifications of the old social oppositions. The exceptions consisted mainly of occasional outbreaks of unauthorised construction which by the 1980s, however, appeared to be diminishing, or at least absorbed into the planning of the areas affected (mainly the north-western suburbs and a few newly-built satellite towns).

The gradual amelioration of living standards and the growth of the middle classes drastically limited the social agitation which had marked Thessaloniki's inter-war period, as well as the political and ideological polarisations of the Civil War and post-Civil-War periods. These developments, of course, which became more pronounced after 1974, were true of the country in its entirety and of the society which evolved after the conclusion of the unfortunate interlude of the military junta (1967-1974) and particularly after the consolidation of the post-dictatorship democracy in the decade immediately following. In Thessaloniki, however, the social climate remained remarkably peaceful, especially in comparison with its troubled past. This serenity, frequently attributed to an innate inertia in the city's population or to its cosmopolitan traditions, should however probably be associated with a third factor: the fact that, owing to both their distance from the capital and the structure of the modern Hellenic state, the citizen body of the "co-capital" had remained aloof from the tensions raised in the capital by the competition between different social groups (economic, party political, intellectual, etc.) for a share of power.

The distancing of a substantial segment of the population of the Macedonian metropolis from the forces and contexts of the establishment which were inevitably inherent in the national capital had a further impact on the final shaping of its social and political physiognomy. First of all, it safeguarded the city against some of the negative factors of urban growth. Thessaloniki's populace did not of course entirely reject all the characteristics of a provincial conservatism. The city, however, aided by some of the historical factors discussed earlier, managed to preserve its own rhythms in the processes which affected its social and cultural development. In a word, one might say that this includes the propensity of Thessaloniki's citizens to preserve a relative autonomy in the face of attitudes exported from the capital.

These tendencies, which occasionally degenerate into excessive or unjustified self-complacency, have certainly had an impact on the creation of a climate which has from time to time encouraged Thessaloniki to renew its social models and its cultural orientations.

Since the end of the 1980s, new and weighty factors have been developing that will inevitably affect the subsequent historical evolution of the city of Thessaloniki. In the wake of the socio-political changes in the neighbouring Balkan states, the rest of Eastern Europe and the Black Sea countries, Greece and her northern provinces in particular are summoned to play a role or rather to renew their ancient role in a vast geographical area. This means that the horizons now opening for Greek entrepreneurial, commercial, maritime, and banking activities in this territory are greater than at any time in the past century at least. Indeed, Greece is very favourably placed to develop economic relations with this area, given that apart from its traditional flair for transport trade and its long familiarity with the world of this new geo-political and geo-economic entity, it is the only country in southeastern Europe that is already associated with the European Union and other Western economic and political organisations. It is obvious that a significant part of this extended territory could once again become the economic hinterland of Northern Greece and with it, Thessaloniki.

Thessaloniki's recovery of this function, however, which (as we have seen) it has filled whenever historic conjuncture has permitted, presupposes a number of conditions (political, economic, technological, etc.), both on the international and on the national and regional level. One of these fundamental conditions is the preservation of peace, as was illustrated by the tragedy of Yugoslavia: the fragmentation of this formerly unified state threw Greece back into a context which dramatically slashed Thessaloniki's potential contact with central and eastern Europe. In fact, communications between Northern Greece and its new economic hinterland now require the expansion of existing transport routes and the construction of new, more modern north-south arteries (road, rail, river, and maritime) in order to serve Thessaloniki's links with the Eastern European and Black Sea region more effectively. At the same time, it also requires the construction in Thessaloniki as well as in the rest of Northern Greece of appropriate mechanisms capable of meeting the organisational needs of an increasingly international economic activity. This is one of the objectives of the newly founded Bank for the Organisation of Economic Co-operation in the Black Sea Region, whose headquarters are in Thessaloniki.

Today of course, the Macedonian metropolis no longer displays the cosmopolitan, international and multi-cultural characteristics that were a feature of its earlier history. But it does have other, and very positive, properties. Free of the conflicts that once marked its society, Thessaloniki now presents a powerful front, uniting an organically cohesive human potential that has, in the final analysis, achieved better (or perhaps simply more auspicious) indicators of material, social, and cultural development and, in consequence, more propitious conditions for the future of this city.