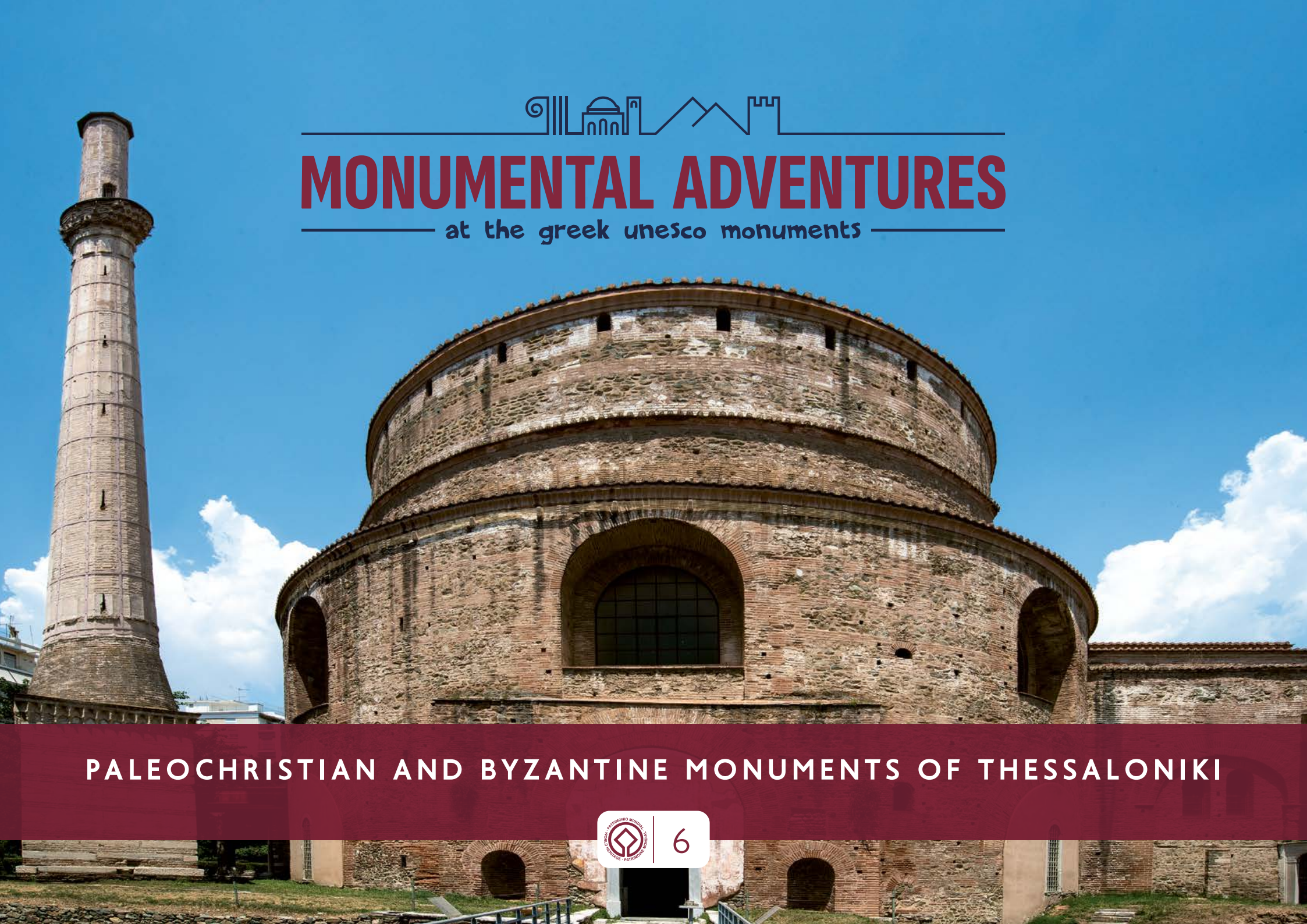
MONUMENTAL ADVENTURES

at the greek unesco monuments



PALEOCHRISTIAN AND BYZANTINE MONUMENTS OF THESSALONIKI

6

credits

GENERAL COORDINATION
Anastasia Lazaridou, Dr Archaeologist, Emeritus Director of Archaeological Museums, Exhibitions and Educational Programmes
Nikoletta Saraga, Archaeologist, Deputy Director of Archaeological Museums, Exhibitions and Educational Programmes

GENERAL EDITING
Andromachi Katselaki, Dr Archaeologist, Head of the Department of Educational Programmes and Communication

IDEA CONCEPTION
Andromachi Katselaki

PROJECT MANAGER
Nikitas Georgiopoulos, Archaeologist, Department of Educational Programmes and Communication

PROJECT COORDINATION
Athina Papadaki, Archaeologist, MSc Cultural Management, Department of Educational Programmes and Communication

GRAPHIC EDITING
Spilios Pistas, Graphic Designer, Department of Educational Programmes and Communication

EDUCATIONAL ADJUSTMENT
Eleftheria Vlachou, Archaeologist–Museologist
Athina Papadaki

GRAPHIC DESIGN
Eirini-Margarita Kalomoiri, Graphic Designer, Museologist
Vasilis Dimopoulos, Graphic Designer, DEPC, DAMEEP
Spilios Pistas, Graphic Designer, DEPC, DAMEEP
Eirini Charalampidi, Graphic Designer, DEPC, DAMEEP

SCIENTIFIC RESEARCH–AUTHORS OF TEXTS
Ioannis Vaksevanis, Archaeologist, Byzantine Post Byzantine Antiquities
Eleftheria Vlachou
Nikitas Passaris, Dr Archaeologist, Byzantine Post Byzantine Antiquities
Athina Papadaki

TEXT EDITING
Ioannis Vaksevanis,
Athina Papadaki

SCIENTIFIC REVISION
Ephorate of Antiquities of Thessaloniki City

TRANSLATION
Translix USCS IKE

PHOTOS
Radiant Technologies: Andreas Santrouzanos
Spilios Pistas, Eirini Charalampidi

PRINTING
Pressius Arvanitidis

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Stella Vasileiadou, Archaeologist, Ephorate of Antiquities of Thessaloniki City
Pelli Mastora, Archaeologist, Ephorate of Antiquities of Thessaloniki City
Konstantinos Raptis, Archaeologist, Ephorate of Antiquities of Thessaloniki City
Stavroula Tzevreni, Archaeologist, Ephorate of Antiquities of Thessaloniki City

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MONUMENTAL ADVENTURES

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Paleochristian and Byzantine Monuments of Thessaloniki

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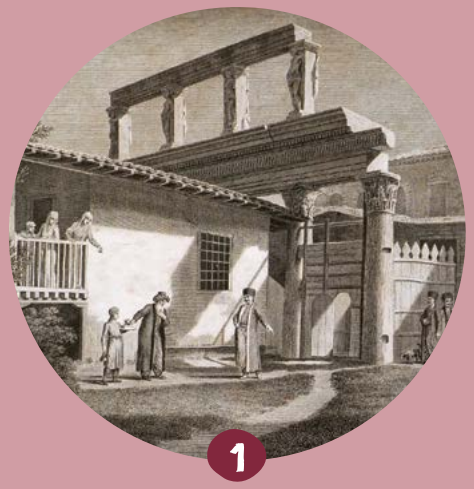
Ten steps to...



1

The lost nowadays “Portico of the Idols or the Enchanted or Las Incantadas,” was one of the most impressive monuments of the city[1].

2

Many byzantine churches survived in the city; most of them are well built and elaborately decorated.

...the monuments of Thessaloniki

3

A famous mosaic of the 5th or 6th century was covered later, probably during the iconoclastic period, with ox hide, lime and bricks.

It presents the Vision of Ezekiel and is on the wall of the Katholikon of the Monastery of Latomou, which came to light only in 1927!

4

Most of the churches in the city were converted into mosques after the Ottoman conquest in 1430.

5

Of the 180 large and small monasteries mentioned by their names in the 11th century, only 25 were preserved before the Ottoman conquest.

Of these, only the Monastery of Vlatadon operates today (14th c.).

6

The city produced important representatives of Orthodox monasticism.

Such as Osios David (c. 450–535/41), who is said to have practiced asceticism for three years at an almond tree.

7

The city's cathedral until 1524 was Saint Sophia, one of the most important Byzantine monuments of the 8th c.

The extraordinary frescoes on its walls belong to different eras.

8

The city was famous for its strong walls.

Its sea walls were founded on wooden piles embedded in the sandy soil of the coast.

9

The patron saint of the city is Saint Demetrios.

His church was erected on the place where, according to tradition, was his tomb.

10

It was founded by the King of Macedonia, Kassandros and was named after his wife and sister of Alexander the Great.

Thessaloniki, who, according to one legend, became a mermaid[2].

The Paleochristian and Byzantine Monuments of Thessaloniki...

The Co-reigning

WHAT?

- The second most important city of the Byzantine Empire after Constantinople.

WHERE?

- Metropolitan Municipality of Thessaloniki, Region of Central Macedonia.

WHEN?

- 316 BC: foundation of the city.
- 4th–6th c. AD.: construction of magnificent monuments.
- 9th–12th c. AD: great intellectual and economic growth.
- 14th c. AD: "Palaeologan Renaissance", advances in sciences and the arts.

what do the numbers say:

c. 60,000
INHABITANTS
at the end of the 18th century: 30.000 Muslims, 16.000 Greeks and 12.000 Jews

c. 10,000
HOUSES
were destroyed in the fire of 1917

c. 8,000 m
PERIMETER
of the city walls

200
WARSHIPS
2.000 barges and 12.000 soldiers, the war fleet built by Constantine the Great in Thessaloniki

1. Aerial view of the Roman market, with the Odeon.

...in the UNESCO list!

The monument was included in the UNESCO World Heritage List based on the following criteria:

BYZANTINE
POST BYZANTINE
PERIOD

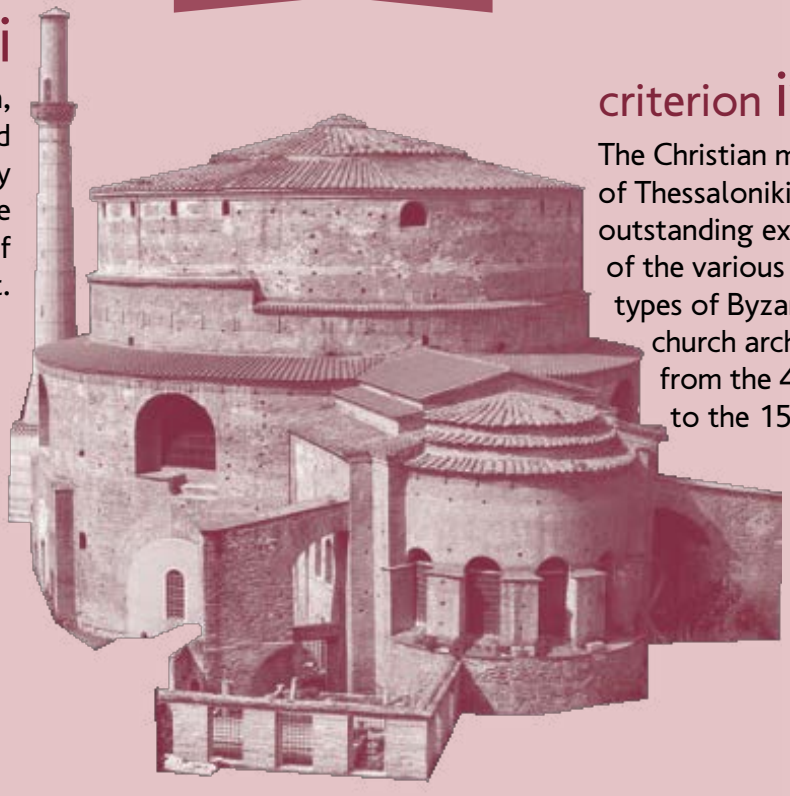
YEAR OF REGISTRATION:
1988

criterion i

The mosaics of Rotonda, Saint Demetrios and Osios David (Monastery of Latomou) are masterpieces of paleochristian art.

criterion ii

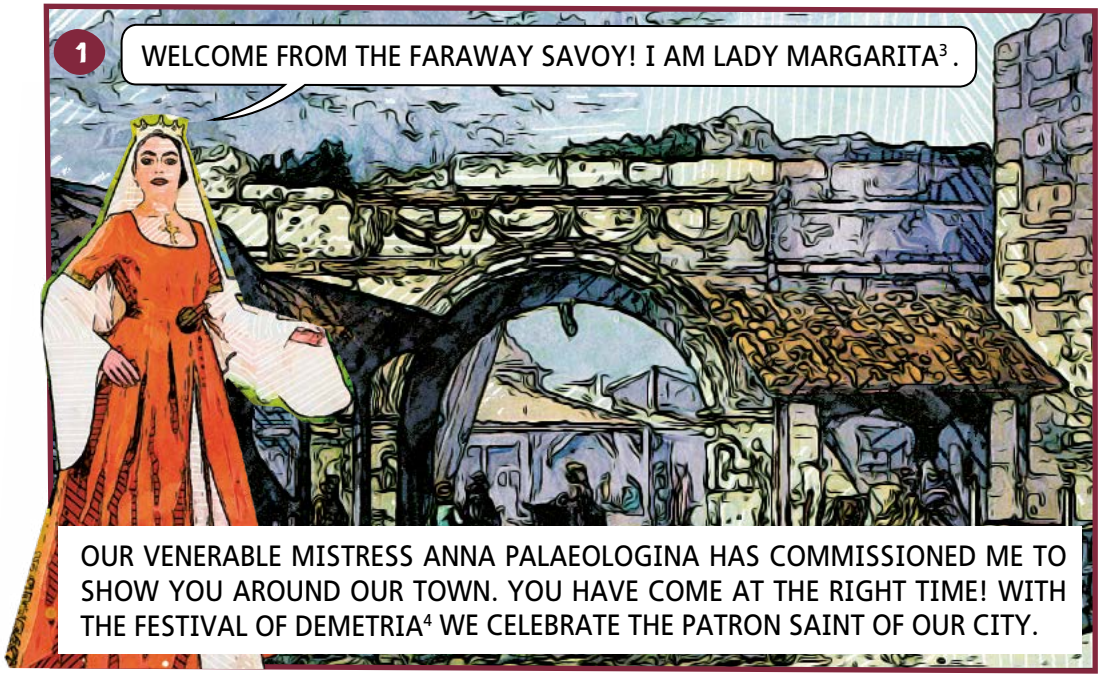
The frescoes and mosaics of the churches posed great influence in the development of monumental art in the Byzantine and Slavic culture.

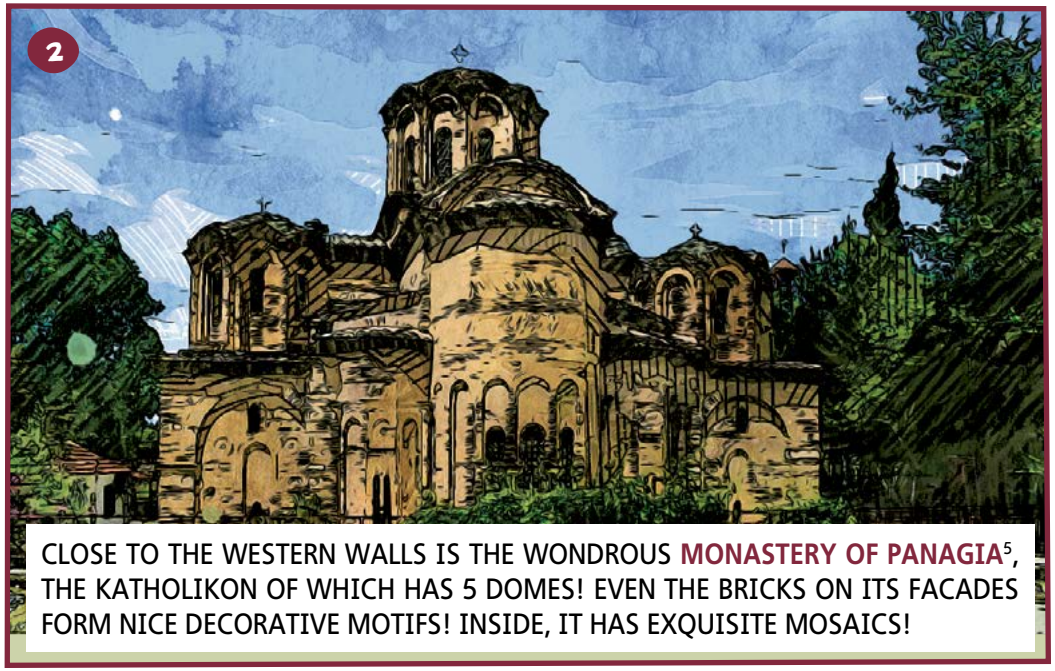


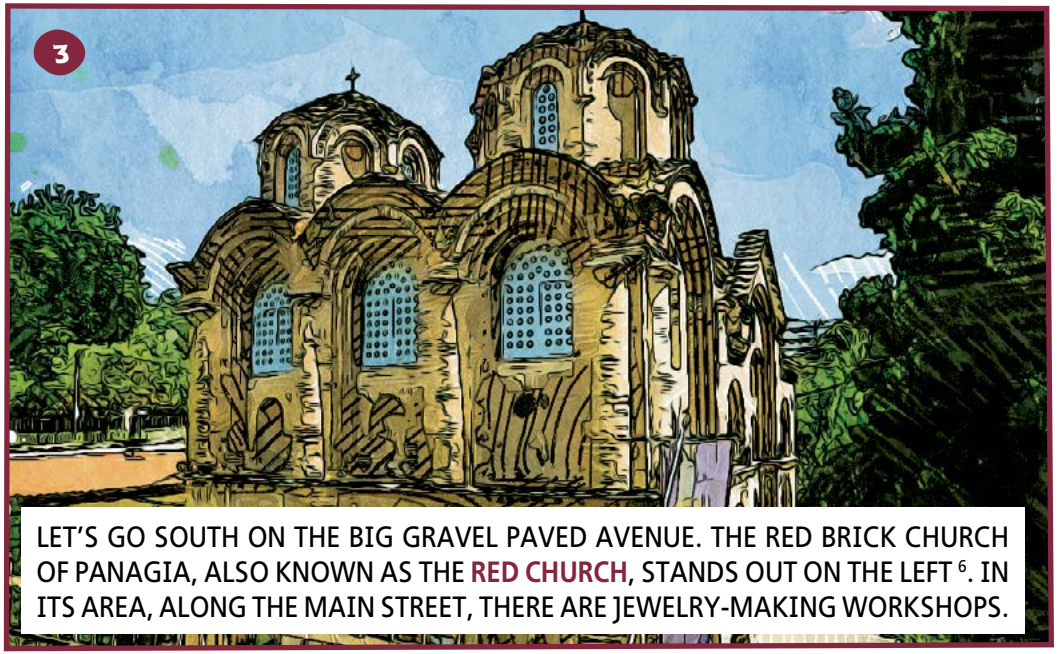
criterion iv

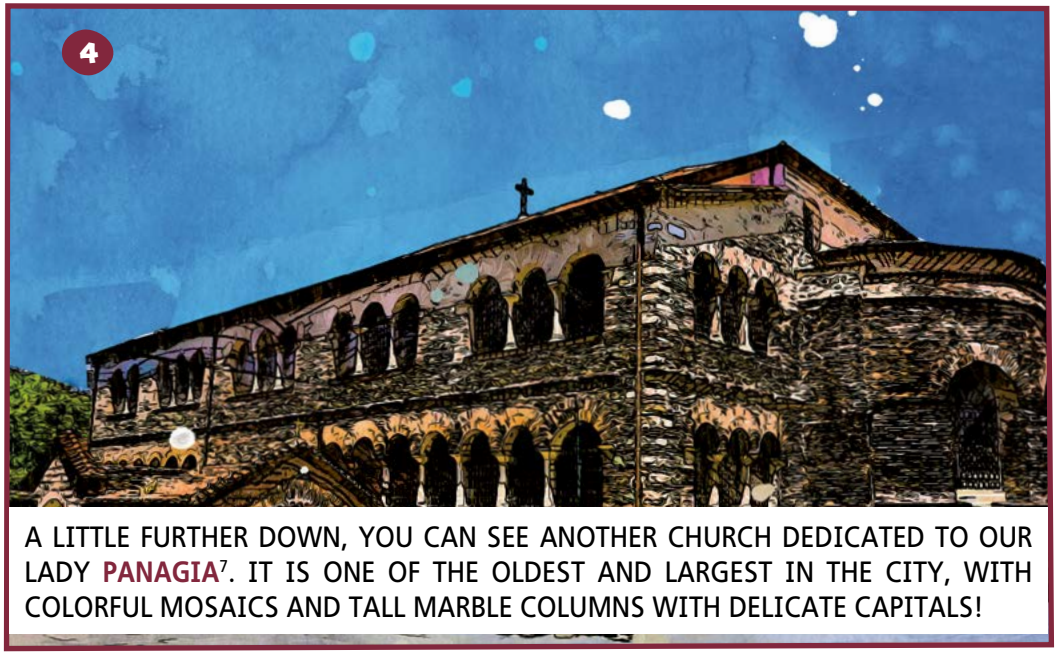
The Christian monuments of Thessaloniki are outstanding examples of the various architectural types of Byzantine church architecture from the 4th to the 15th c.

Walking around Thessaloniki...

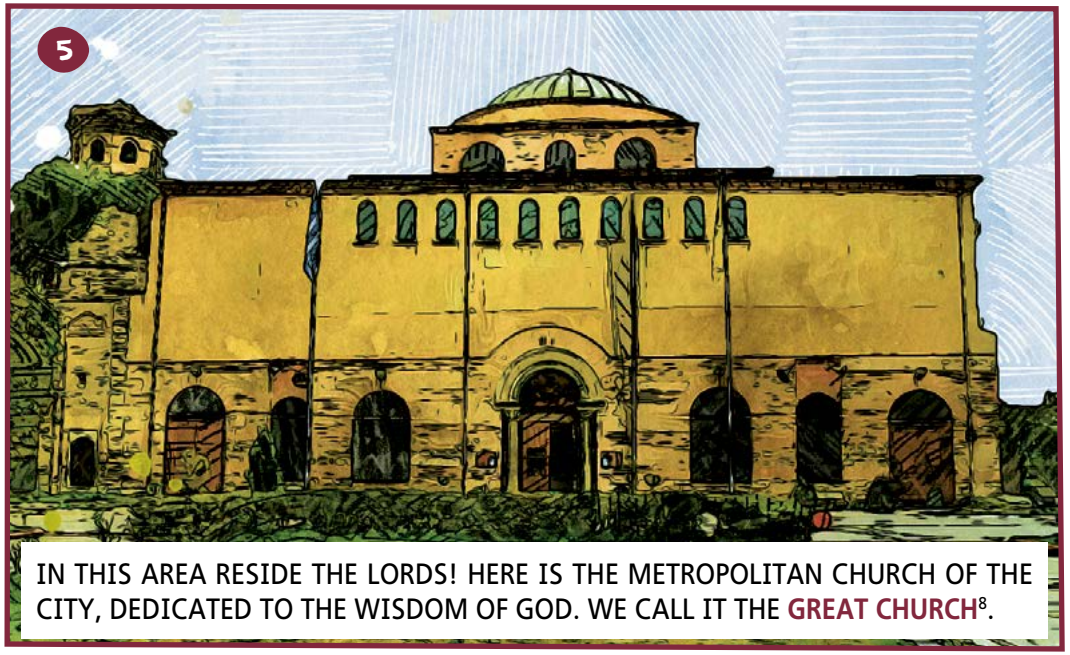


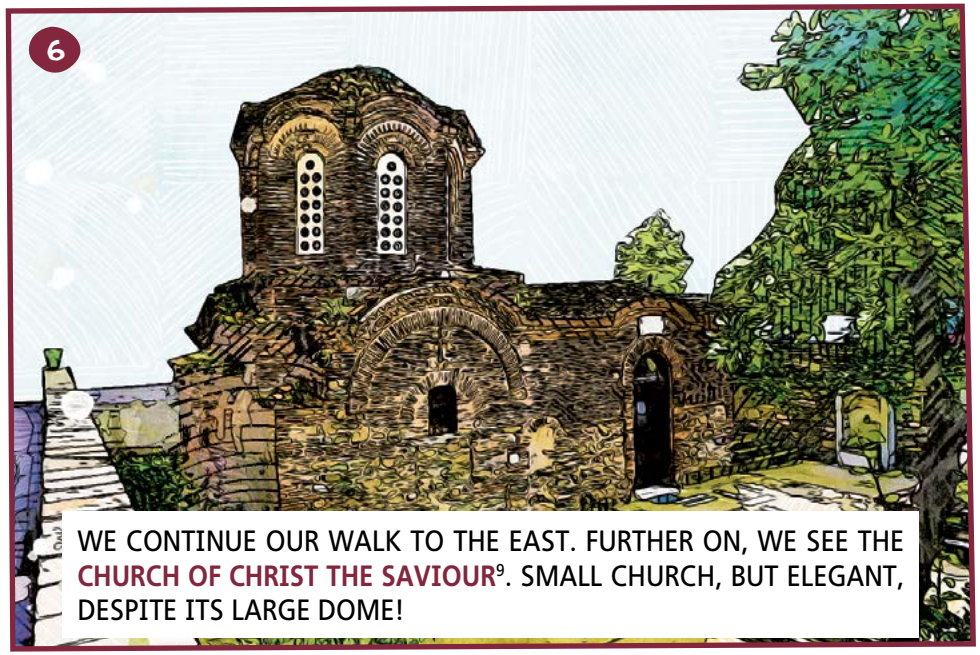


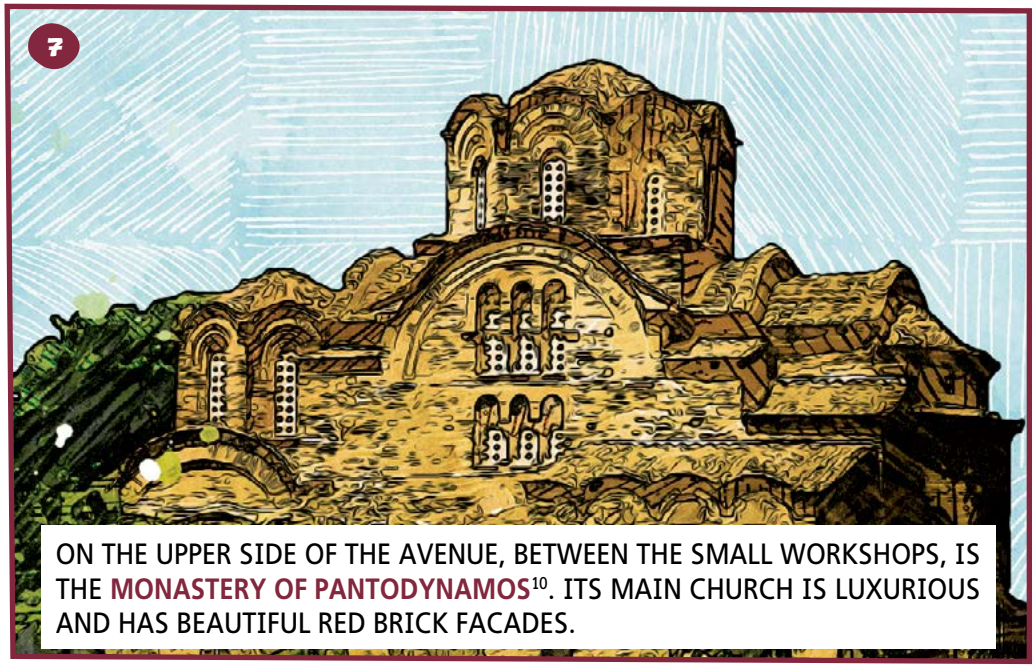


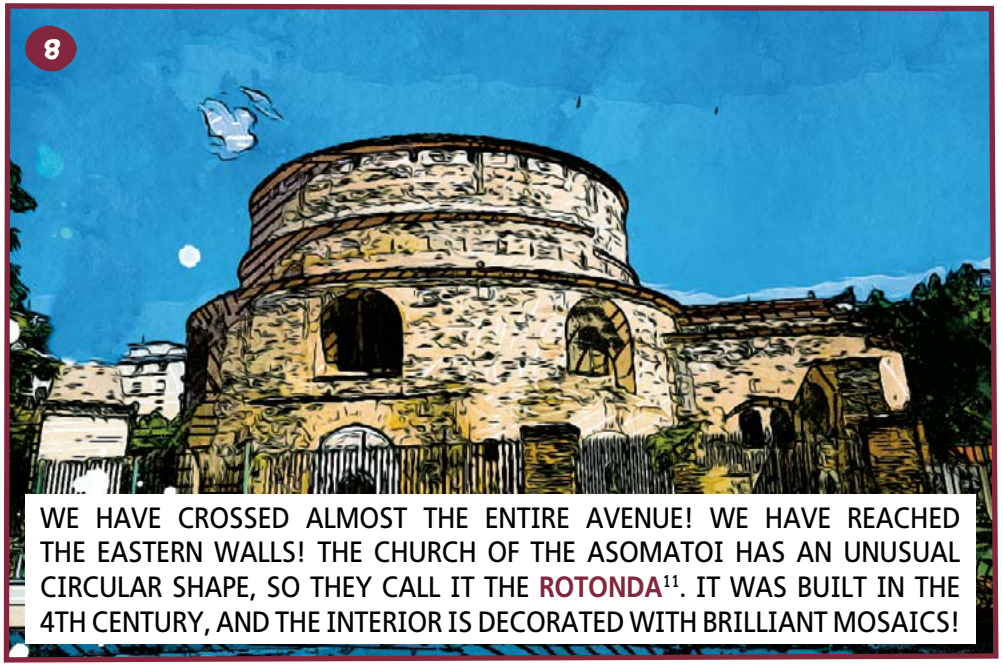


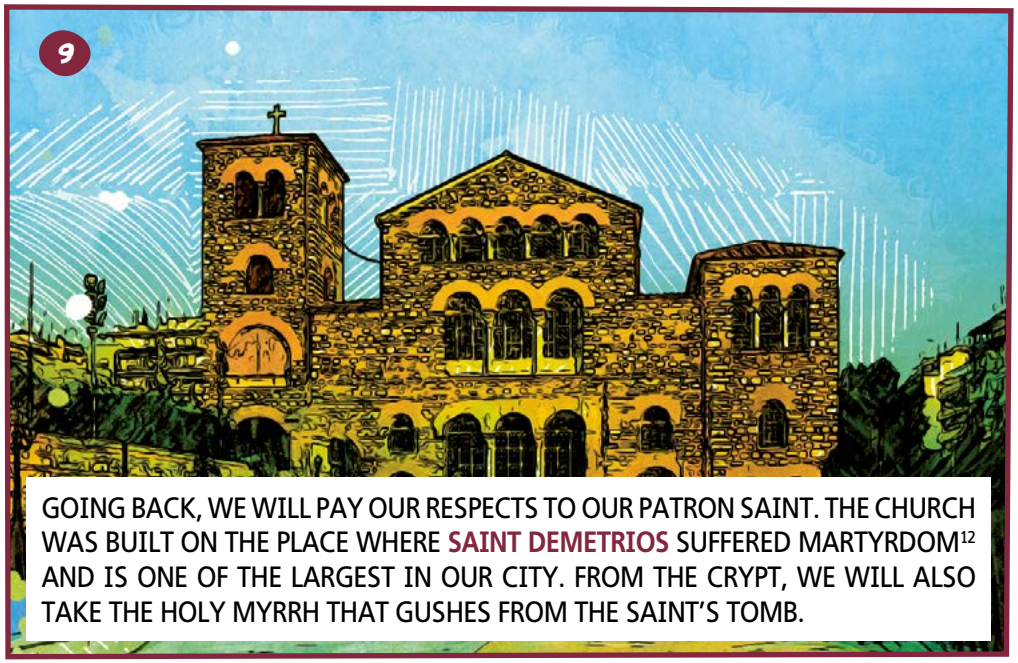
...with Lady Margarita!





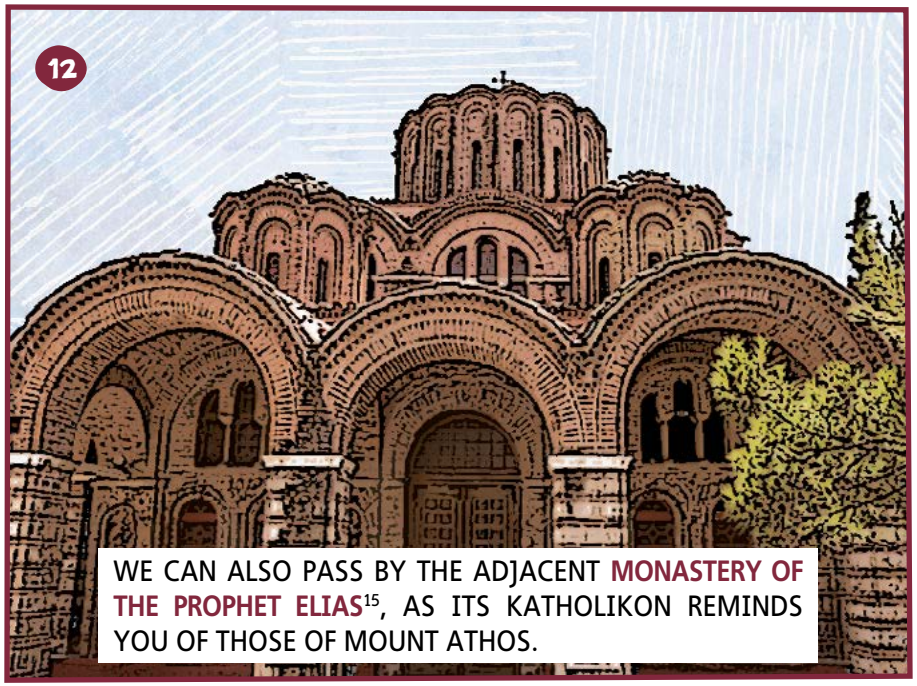


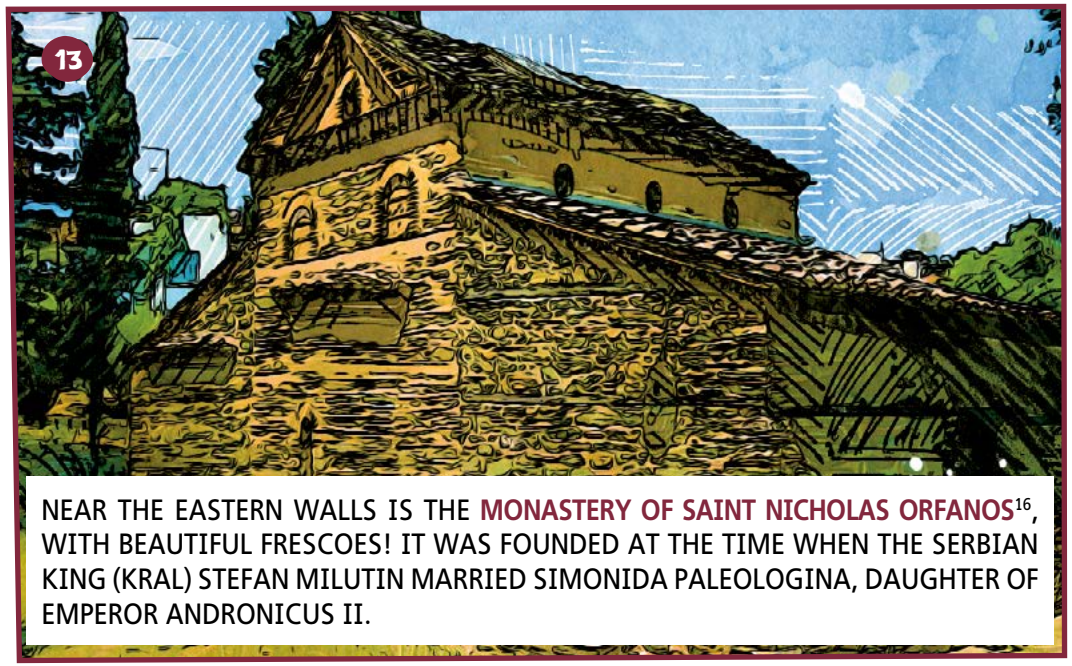


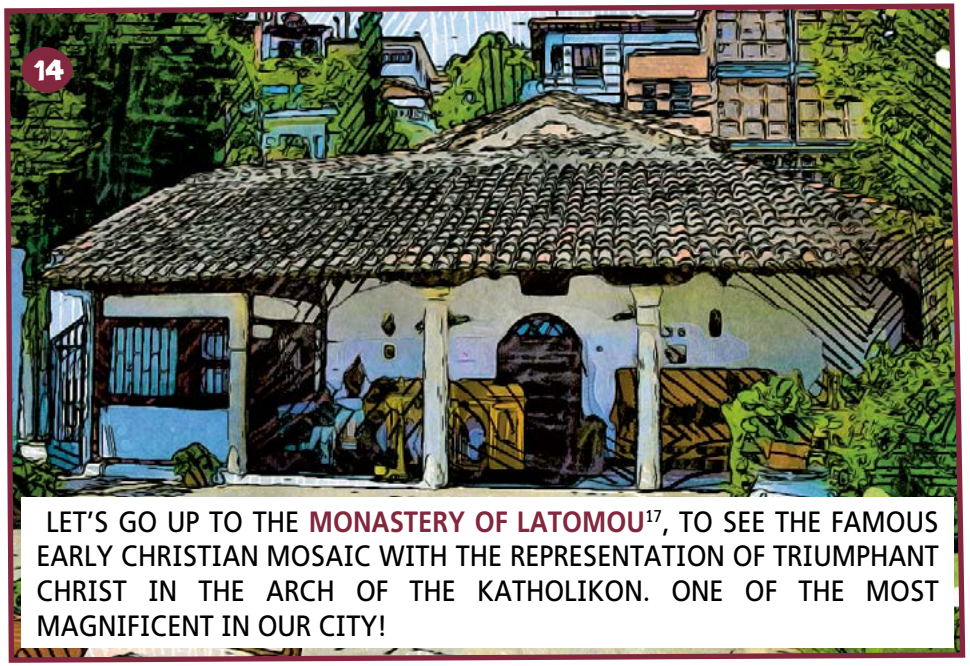

9
GOING BACK, WE WILL PAY OUR RESPECTS TO OUR PATRON SAINT. THE CHURCH WAS BUILT ON THE PLACE WHERE SAINT DEMETRIOS SUFFERED MARTYRDOM[12] AND IS ONE OF THE LARGEST IN OUR CITY. FROM THE CRYPT, WE WILL ALSO TAKE THE HOLY MYRRH THAT GUSHES FROM THE SAINT'S TOMB.

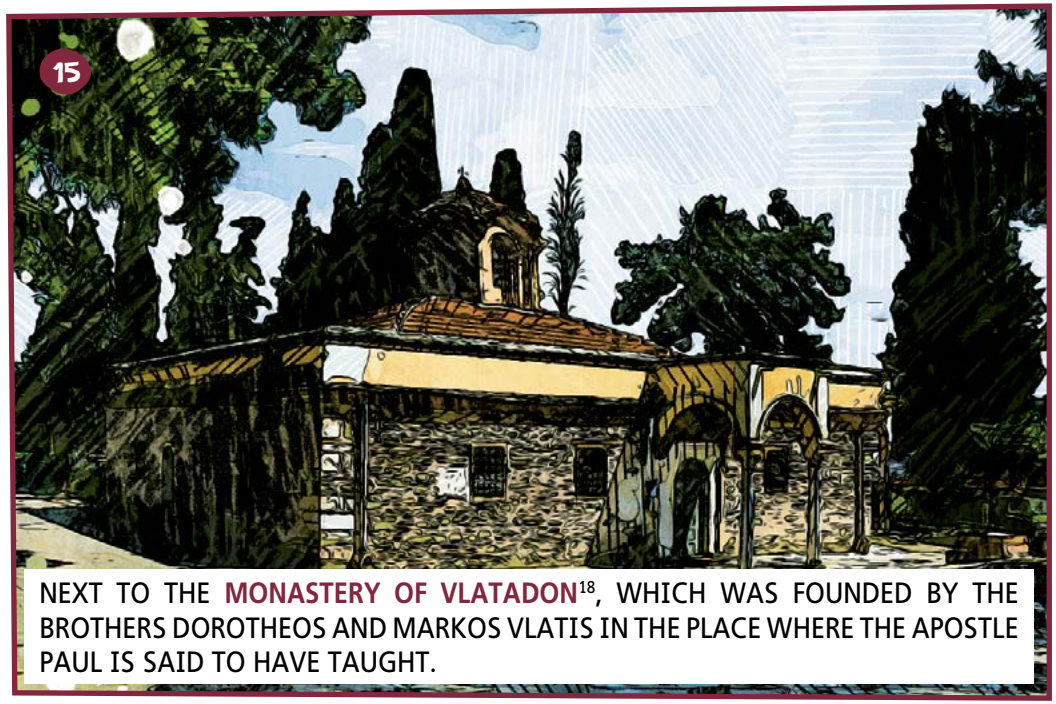
10
TIME TO REST. NEAR THE INN WHERE YOU ARE STAYING IS ONE OF THE CITY'S LARGEST BATHS[13]. TOMORROW WE WILL CONTINUE OUR TOUR IN THE UPPER TOWN.

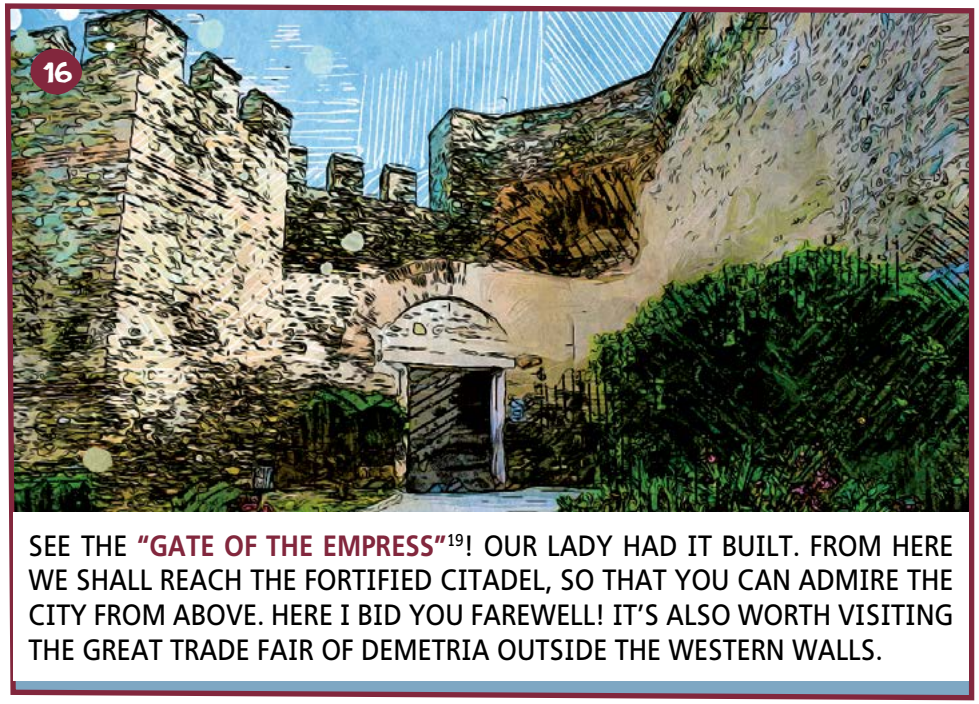
11
GOOD MORNING! HEADING UP TO THE CITADEL, WE WILL VISIT THE MOST IMPORTANT MONASTERIES OF THE CITY. THE MONASTERY'S KATHOLIKON IN THE NORTH-WESTERN PART OF THE WALLS ALREADY STANDS OUT[14]. THE CHURCH OF ST. CATHERINE HAS ELEGANT PROPORTIONS AND BEAUTIFUL FACADES.


12
WE CAN ALSO PASS BY THE ADJACENT MONASTERY OF THE PROPHET ELIAS[15], AS ITS KATHOLIKON REMINDS YOU OF THOSE OF MOUNT ATHOS.


13
NEAR THE EASTERN WALLS IS THE MONASTERY OF SAINT NICHOLAS ORFANOS[16], WITH BEAUTIFUL FRESCOES! IT WAS FOUNDED AT THE TIME WHEN THE SERBIAN KING (KRAL) STEFAN MILUTIN MARRIED SIMONIDA PALEOLOGINA, DAUGHTER OF EMPEROR ANDRONICUS II.


14
LET'S GO UP TO THE MONASTERY OF LATOMOU[17], TO SEE THE FAMOUS EARLY CHRISTIAN MOSAIC WITH THE REPRESENTATION OF TRIUMPHANT CHRIST IN THE ARCH OF THE KATHOLIKON. ONE OF THE MOST MAGNIFICENT IN OUR CITY!


15
NEXT TO THE MONASTERY OF VLATADON[18], WHICH WAS FOUNDED BY THE BROTHERS DOROTHEOS AND MARKOS VLATIS IN THE PLACE WHERE THE APOSTLE PAUL IS SAID TO HAVE TAUGHT.


16
SEE THE "GATE OF THE EMPRESS"[19]! OUR LADY HAD IT BUILT. FROM HERE WE SHALL REACH THE FORTIFIED CITADEL, SO THAT YOU CAN ADMIRE THE CITY FROM ABOVE. HERE I BID YOU FAREWELL! IT'S ALSO WORTH VISITING THE GREAT TRADE FAIR OF DEMETRIA OUTSIDE THE WESTERN WALLS.

The environment...

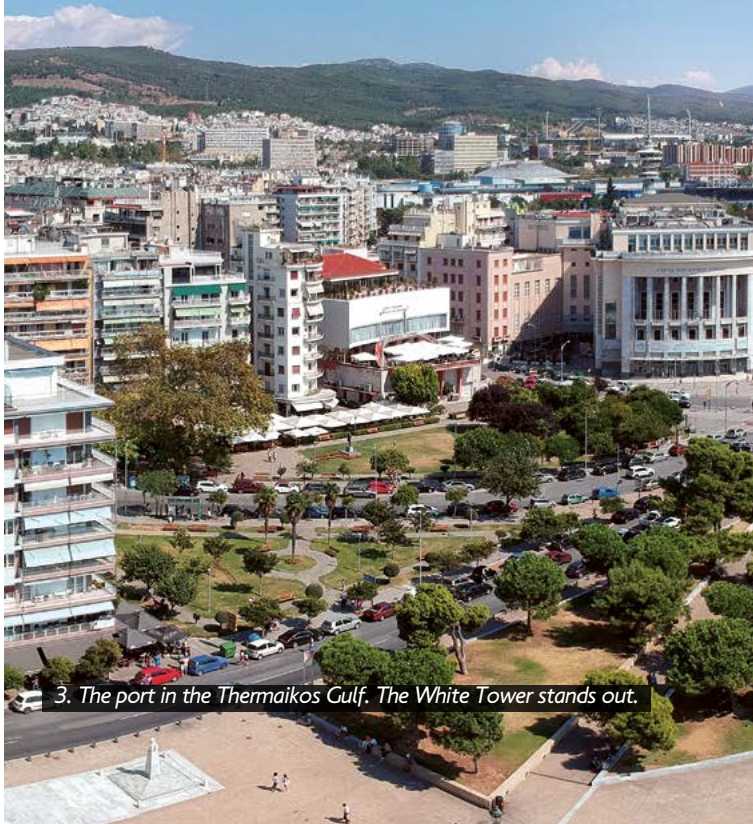
The “nymph” of Thermaikos

Thessaloniki, built on the cove of Thermaikos, the largest gulf in the Aegean Sea, has always been one of the most important Mediterranean ports. Its strategic and naturally protected location has contributed decisively to the development and emergence of the city as one of the most active commercial and economic centers of the Balkans. In addition to the port, the major roads that run through the wider area, with the main one being the Egnatia Odos, make it an important communication hub between East and West.

2. Map of the period of the World War I with the wider area of Central Macedonia.

> *Thessaloniki is truly a great city. Spreading out on the coast, it rises amphitheatrically and narrows and tightens up to the top of the mountain, where the citadel is. From there, walls descend, like legs wide open right and left, walls high, reddish, with lips wavy against the unevenness of the earth, with battlements open, with towers and turrets every now and then, worn out here by time, green there by a little grass, cracked somewhere else by a wild fig tree with deep roots wedged stubbornly.*

Andreas Karkavitsas, *Thessaloniki*, 1892, p. 62.



3. The port in the Thermaikos Gulf. The White Tower stands out.

...and the landscape

- Thessaloniki is a modern metropolis, the second largest city in the country in terms of population and size, often referred to as the "co-capital".
- In Byzantine times there were frequent references to the beauty of its natural environment, with the mountain of Kissos (Chortiatis) to the East, the surrounding forests, the lakes of Lagadas and Volvi, as well as the large rivers Axios (Vardaris), Loudia (Mavroneri) and Echedoros (Gallikos), which gave it fertile land and pastures.
- The current urban fabric of the historic center is the result of the new city planning by the architect Ernest Hébrard, following the destructive fire in 1917.

Green details

In the uniquely beautiful mosaic of the Monastery of Latomou (5th or 6th c. AD), the beardless Christ appears in a vision to the Prophet Ezekiel in a heavenly landscape. Beneath Jesus' feet rises the Mount of Heaven, from which the river of paradise flows out in the form of a bearded man. The landscape is rendered with precision and love for nature, following the tradition of ancient Greek art.

Thessaloniki through time

316/5 BC
King Kassandros of Macedonia founds Thessaloniki.

168 BC
Battle of Pydna: The Romans defeat the Macedonians, and the region of Macedonia becomes a Roman province. Thessaloniki becomes the capital of one of the four administrative regions into which Macedonia was divided.

146 BC
Thessaloniki is designated the capital of the Roman province of Macedonia.

mid-3rd century AD
Repeated Gothic attacks.

late 3rd–early 4th century AD
Caesar and then Augustus Galerius designates Thessaloniki as one of the seats of the eastern part of the Roman Empire, which he governs.

316/7–324/5 AD
Constantine the Great settles in Thessaloniki for some years.

379–380 AD
Emperor Theodosius the Great comes to Thessaloniki, where he is baptized a Christian.

390 AD
Massacre of more than 7000 rebellious civilians at the Thessaloniki racecourse.

2nd half of the 6th c.–7th c.
Continuous raids by the Avaroslavs.

904
Conquest by the Saracens.

late 9th–early 10th & late 10th–first half 11th c.
Continuous raids by the Bulgarians.

1185
Short-term occupation of Thessaloniki by the Normans.

1204–1224
After the collapse of the Byzantine Empire by the forces of the Fourth Crusade, the *Latin kingdom of Thessaloniki* was founded.

1224–1246
Theodore Komnenos Doukas recaptures the city and makes it the capital of the *Despotate of Epirus*.

1246
Thessaloniki is occupied by the emperor of Nicaea, John III Doukas Vatatzis. In 1261 the city was returned to the Byzantine Empire.

1387–1403
First conquest by the Ottomans.

1423–1430
Brief Venetian rule.

1430
Occupation of Thessaloniki by Sultan Murat II. The city is included in the *Beilerbeiliki* (administrative region) of Roumeli.

late 15th–mid 16th c.
Settlement of Jews, mainly from the Iberian and Italian peninsula. The population of the city increases.

early 18th c.
"Golden era" of commerce for the city.

1904–1908
Thessaloniki at the center of the Macedonian Struggle of the Greeks, mainly against the Bulgarians.

1912, October 26
The Greek army liberates the city. Macedonia is incorporated into the Greek Kingdom by the Treaty of Bucharest (August 10, 1913).

1915–1918
World War I: Thessaloniki becomes the military base of the Army of the East.

1917, August 18
A great fire hits the city and changes its character.

1941–1944
German occupation and extermination of the city's Jewish community.

1988
Inclusion of the monument in the UNESCO World Heritage List.

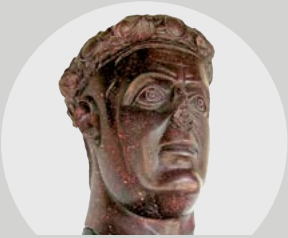
Historical figures through the ages

Many prominent personalities are associated with the history of Thessaloniki, which since its foundation, has always been a political, economic, commercial, spiritual and artistic center.

KINGS AND EMPERORS

General Kassandros
later king of Macedonia (305–297 BC)

realized the importance of the area and founded the city by joining the existing settlements. He named the city after his wife, daughter of King Philip II and half-sister of Alexander the Great.



General Gaius Galerius Valerius Maximianus Augustus

was Caesar under Diocletian in the eastern part of the Roman Empire until 305 AD and then Emperor until 311 AD. At Thessaloniki, one of his seats, he establishing, among other things, a palace complex, a racecourse and a triumphal arch after his victory against the Persians.

The emperor Constantine the Great

before moving the seat of the empire to Constantinople (324 AD), remained in Thessaloniki (316/7–324/5 AD). A major project of his was the construction of the port, which functioned for more than 1000 years and contributed decisively to the great development of the city.

The emperor Theodosius I

in May 390 AD, ordered the slaughter of 7,000 (or according to other sources 15,000) Thessalonians at the city's racecourse in retaliation for the citizens' revolt against the Goth mercenaries.

APOSTLES AND SAINTS

The "Apostle of the Nations" Paul

visited the city c. 50 AD. His two letters "to the Thessalonians" are fundamental texts of Christianity.

The monk Osios David

c. 535 AD intervened, so that the seat of Illyricum would not being moved from Thessaloniki to Nea Justiniani.

Saint Demetrios

an official of the Roman Empire, suffered martyrdom during Diocletian's persecutions in 304 AD. The crypt of the church bearing his name is thought to be the place of his martyrdom.

The brothers Saints Cyril-Constantine and Methodius

named the "Apostles of the Slavs", as they christianized them in the 9th c., created the Slavic alphabet, laying the foundations for the Slavic literature.

EYEWITNESSES

Three tragic annihilations of Thessaloniki are recorded through autobiographical narratives.

The priest historian Ioannis Kaminiatis

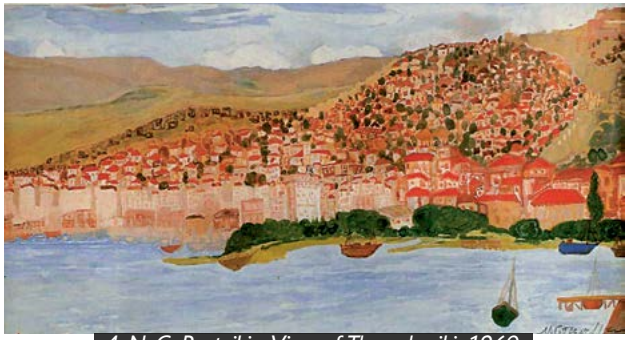
describes the siege and fall of Thessaloniki by the Saracens in 904.

Saint Eustathios

archbishop of the city, recounts the massacres and pillaging of the Normans in 1185.

The priest Ioannis Anagnostis

records scenes of horror in the streets when the Ottomans occupied the city on 29 May 1430.



4. N. G. Pentzikis, View of Thessaloniki, 1960.

POETS AND WRITERS

The painter and writer Nikos Gabriel Pentzikis

(1908–1993)

Loved his hometown και wrote, among other books, the book "Mother Thessaloniki".

The poet Dinos Christianopoulos

(1931–2020)

often recalls his hometown in his works, mainly in his autobiographical essays "Thessaloniki, thou hast established me".

A monument is born

The city of Thessaloniki has a large number of monuments from antiquity to more recent periods, which tell its long history as they constantly adapt to the signs of the times.

TRAVELERS IN THE OTTOMAN EMPIRE

5. O. Dapper, View of Thessaloniki, 1688.

Thessaloniki, one of the largest cities of the Ottoman Empire, has been a magnet for many travelers who provide valuable evidence of the city's history.

The Ottoman traveler Evliya Çelebi describes the neighbor hoods of Selanik in the mid-17th century: "So we have mahallas: Armenians, Romanians, Franks, Shirf (Serbs), Bulgarians as well as the Latin-Mileti mahala. All the dwellings of the infidels are under the Muslims in a straight line towards the city of the Kalamaria wall...".

The French antiquities dealer Pierre Lucas admired the monuments of the city in 1705: "...From there we went to Rotonda, a very beautiful church.... It is built entirely of brick...One can see there many beautiful mosaics... It almost resembled that of Rome..." [20].

TEARING DOWN THE WALLS

The Golden Gate.
Based on a drawing by E. M. Cousinéry, *Voyage dans la Macédoine*, Paris 1831.

In April 1869, the Turkish governor Sabri Pasha expanded the city, demolished the sea walls and built a new harbor and infrastructure.

In the same spirit of Europeanization of the city at the end of the 19th c., large parts of the western and eastern walls were gradually demolished.

At the same time, the study of the monuments of Thessaloniki began by British, French and Greek architects and archaeologists. The architect Walter Sykes George wrote in 1909 that he was advised to wear, while working, a sign with the bilingual inscription (Greek and Turkish) "Peace-loving architect, don't shoot!"

IN THE MAELSTROM OF WAR

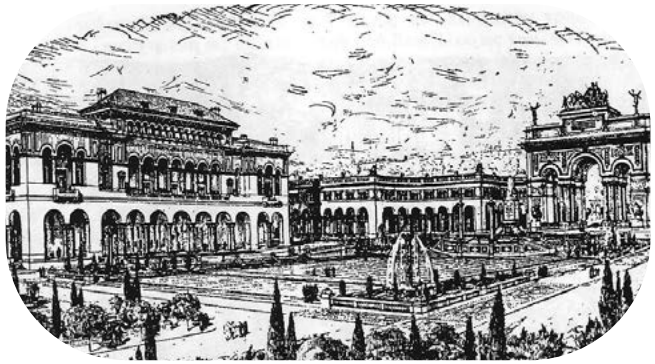
During the World War I (1914–1918) 400.000 soldiers from the five national armies of the Allied Forces of the Entente landed in Thessaloniki, turning it into a huge and multinational camp[21].

The city was transformed with new infrastructure projects, such as hospitals, railways, etc. Soldiers drew and mapped the city's monuments, while special units collected and recorded antiquities.

THE FIRE THAT CHANGED THE CITY

The devastating fire that broke out on 18 August 1917 left more than 70,000 people homeless and caused significant damage to many monuments of the city.

After the disaster, the Greek government commissioned the International Planning Commission, headed by the French architect and urban planner Ernest Hébrard, to radically redesign the city.



His vision, known as the "Hebrard Plan", was largely implemented and aimed to create a modern city, without taking away its historic character and multicultural past: the monuments of all periods were to be functionally integrated into the urban fabric of the city, with the port extended to the West, leaving the historic center to open up on the waterfront.

THE CAPITAL OF REFUGEES

After the Asia Minor catastrophe (1922), to the new inhabitants that Thessaloniki had already received after the end of the Balkan wars (1913), the great wave of refugees, mainly from Asia Minor and Eastern Thrace, was added.

Many of the refugees initially took refuge in the walls and churches of the city, especially in the church of Panagia Acheiropoietos[22].

A unique monument...

The “first next to the first”

Before it became the country’s “co-capital”, Thessaloniki was the “co-reigning”’ city of the Byzantine Empire: the second most important commercial and economic center after Constantinople, which had a leading role in the Balkan region and played a key role in the political, military and cultural developments of Byzantium.

Over the centuries the city remained a large and self-sufficient urban center, an active commercial hub and a crossroads of ideas and cultures.

6. Panoramic view of Thessaloniki from Eptapyrgion to the port.

7. Thessaloniki in a 17th c. engraving.

The “wondrous port”

The commercial traffic in the area of Thessaloniki, through which major roads, such as the Egnatia, passed, increased when Constantine the Great built between 316/7–322 AD the artificial square harbor at the south-western part of the city, a unique technical achievement for its time, with a fortified pier, three towers and a huge chain that closed its mouth.

The port served the needs of the city until the 18th century, when, due to the rising sea level, it was abandoned, and the Ladadika district was developed in its place.

> *“the rest of the buildings...,*
> *all of them of excellent workmanship,*
> *equal in size and equal in beauty...”*
>
> Nikiforos Houmnos,
> *Συμβουλευτικός προς Θεσσαλονικεῖς*,
> 1309–1310 (Kaltsogianni et.and., p. 39–40).

8. Byzantine baths, second half of 12th c.

A city under the city

Thessaloniki has been inhabited for over 2300 years and preserves many monuments, especially from the 4th century AD to the 15th century AD.

The image of the Byzantine city is completed, apart from its walls and numerous brilliant churches, by the remains of the streets, large public buildings, houses, workshops, shops, public baths and underground water tanks, which have come to light in recent excavations.

...with timeless radiance 1

"To Demetrius, the guardian of Thessaloniki and patron of the city, this is the oath of Thessalonicians that stands above all other oaths"

Georgios Akropolitis, *Χρονική Συγγραφή*, 1262.

9. The White Tower.

Strong walls

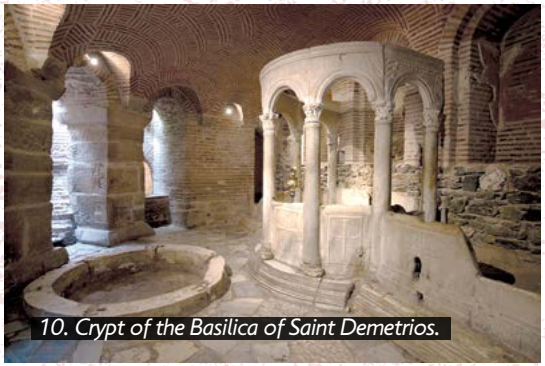
The original fortification of Kassandros underwent continuous modifications and repairs respondingto the needs of each era. The Ottomans reinforced it with major works, such as the fortress of Eptapyrgio (Genti Koule) within the citadel and the great circular Tower at the eastern end of the sea walls, known today as the White Tower, the city's landmark[23].

Today the walls remain imposing, although only a length of 4.5 km, about half of their original perimeter, have been preserved.

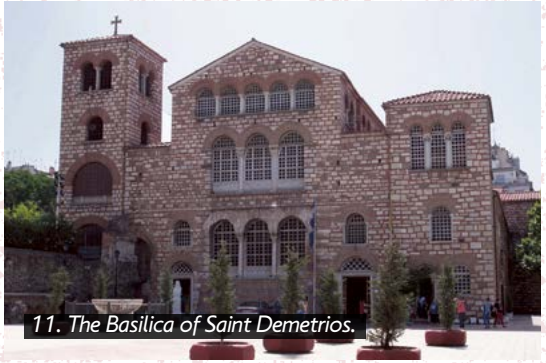
The city of the "Myrrh-streamer"

The "savior of the city," Saint Demetrios, who was born, raised and died in Thessaloniki, miraculously protects the city from raids, famine, epidemics and all kinds of danger.

The history of the city is inextricably linked to his worship and the church built in his honor has become a major pilgrimage center of Christendom since the 10th c. The myrrh from the relic of the miraculous saint has since attracted crowds of believers who come to obtain the sanctification–myrrh of the Saint, seeking his help to be healed, as he is universally considered a healing saint.



10. Crypt of the Basilica of Saint Demetrios.



11. The Basilica of Saint Demetrios.

The Demetria

In Byzantine times, feasts honoring the saint lasted for several days and included a great commercial festival.

During this period, from mid-October to the beginning of November, pilgrims and merchants from all over the Christian world flocked to the city[24].

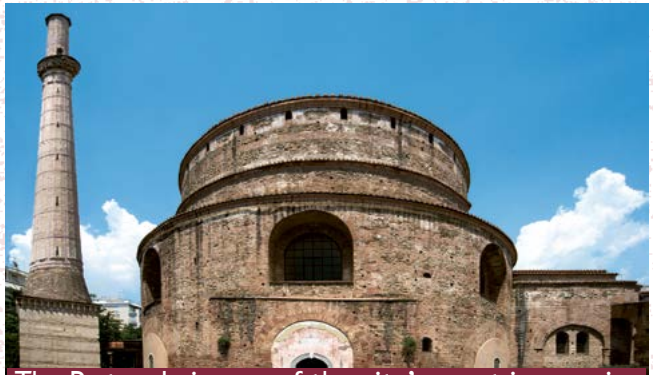
The institution was revived from 1966 onwards as a cultural festival, with exhibitions, theatre, music, dance events and various activities.

A unique monument...

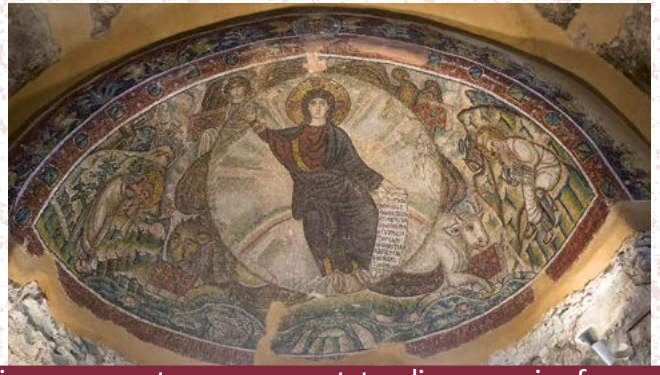
From the Roman to the Byzantine world...

Thessaloniki preserves many monuments from all periods, which reveal its timeless role as the economic and cultural center of the Balkans.

The evolution from the Roman to the Byzantine city is best observed through the fifteen typical early Christian and Byzantine monuments of the city, including 13 churches, the walls and a public bath, which have been added to the UNESCO World Heritage List. Today the city, thanks to the preservation of so many splendid monuments, is considered an open museum!



The Rotonda is one of the city's most impressive and enigmatic monuments[25].



Six monuments preserve outstanding mosaics from all the Byzantine art movements (4th–14th centuries).

12. Church of St Nicholas Orfanos: Miracle of Saint Nicholas, 1310–1320.

The 14th-century Palaeologan churches are distinguished by their elegant proportions, the rich decoration of their exteriors, their mosaics and their frescoes.

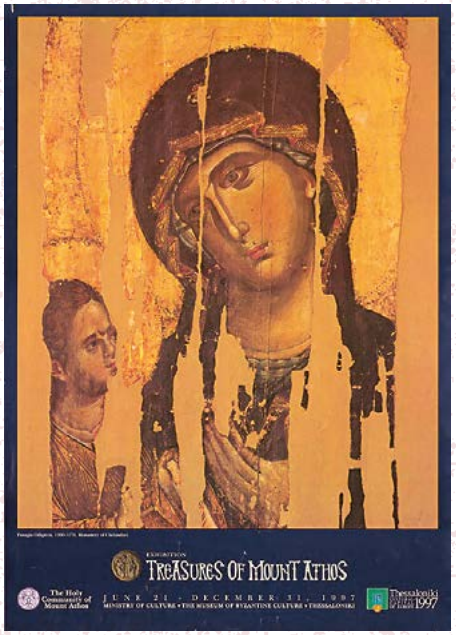
"the creation of icons"

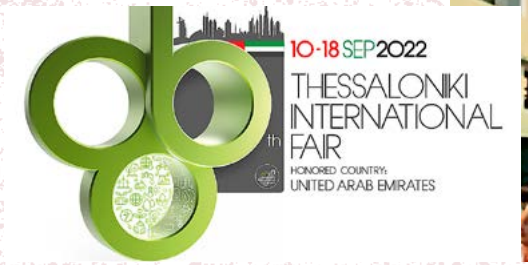
In Thessaloniki a local school of painting was created, known as "Macedonian" or "School of Thessaloniki". From this great center of painting of the 13th and 14th c. descended great painters of the period, such as the brothers Eutychios and Michael Astrapas and Georgios Kallergis, who are often invited to work outside Thessaloniki, even as far away as old Serbia.

...with timeless radiance 2

One city, many festivals

Festivals have their own special place in the cultural life of Thessaloniki. They are a dynamic tool for promoting all forms of art and for getting acquainted with the works of contemporary culture. The International Film Festival, the oldest in the Balkans, is an important cultural event every November. The Thessaloniki International Fair (TIF), the trade fair that takes place every year at the Thessaloniki International Exhibition Centre is a leading institution for promoting the Greek economy and strengthening ties between countries, mainly in the Balkans.





Capital of Culture 1997

Thessaloniki was designated by the European Union as the "European Capital of Culture" for the year 1997, when hundreds of cultural events took place, including the exhibition of paintings by Caravaggio, a concert by the band U2 and the exhibition "Treasures of Mount Athos", in which unique relics from Mount Athos were exhibited[26]!

Monumental dialogues

GREECE

Philippi

The first stop of Apostle Paul in Europe and a typical example of a city which remained prosperous from ancient to Early Christian times.

ITALY

Pantheon

In the historic center of Rome the great circular temple (rotunda), dedicated to all the Roman gods (Pantheon), stands out. It was built in the 1st c. BC, fully renovated in the 2nd c. AD and converted into a Christian church in the 7th c. AD.

GREECE

Kastoria

This city, a great commercial and artistic center from the 9th c. onwards, is today considered an open museum, known in folklore as the “city of 300 churches”.

JAPAN

Kyoto

The old capital of Japan is an important cultural center and retains many Buddhist temples, palatial buildings and gardens characteristic of Japanese culture.

A message today...

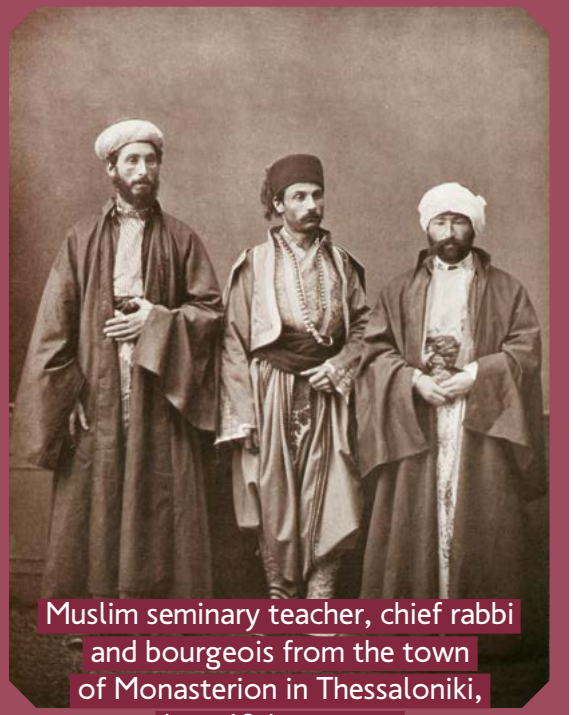
The "White Tower of Babel"[27]

Thessaloniki is distinguished for its cosmopolitan character and the integration of the different cultures that have passed through it from Greece and Asia Minor, the Balkan countries and the West.

The city's multicultural element was strengthened in Byzantine times, becoming a major commercial, cultural and religious hub.

During Ottoman rule, Armenians, Romanians, Franks, Serbs, Bulgarians and Jews lived in the quarters of the "sinful infidels". The Jews constituted an important part of the population, especially from the end of the 15th century, when they settled in the city as refugees, until their near extermination during the World War II.

Bulgarian family of Thessaloniki, postcard, late 19th c.


Muslim seminary teacher, chief rabbi and bourgeois from the town of Monasterion in Thessaloniki, late 19th century.

...for a better tomorrow!

Goals 2030 〉 **11 SUSTAINABLE CITIES AND COMMUNITIES** 〉 **Make cities inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable**

notes

1. The portico probably belonged to an imperial thermai complex of the early 3rd c. AD. The four columns, that had bilateral sculptures on the pillars above, of the two-storied colonnade were forcibly removed and transferred in 1864 to the Louvre Museum by Emmanuel Miller.

2. According to a popular medieval legend, Thessaloniki accidentally threw Alexander's "immortal water" away and inconsolable fell into the sea, where she was transformed into a mermaid and since then, she anxiously asks the sailors if her brother is still alive.

3. Our guide introduces herself as the lady of the court of Anna Palaeologina. Our story is set in the 14th c., a period of prosperity, during which a total of three –originally Roman Catholic– empresses from the West sealed the life of Thessaloniki with their activity: Yolanda (Irene) of Mompferrati, wife of Andronikos II Palaeologos, Margarita (Maria) of Cilicia, wife of Michael IX Palaeologos, and Joanna of Savoy, known as Anna Palaeologina, wife of Andronikos III Palaeologos.

4. Demetria was held from 20–27 October in honor of Saint Demetrios and was a great trade fair with visitors from all over the Christian world. See also p. 21 and note 24.

5. It is the modern Church of the Holy Apostles: the current name is not the original one, but it is based on an oral tradition of the 19th c. It was the katholikon (main church) of a monastery dedicated to Virgin Mary (Panagia) and it preserves excellent mosaics.

6. The church of Panagia of Chalkeon, known as the "Red Church", because it was built mainly with bricks, lays in the area traditionally occupied by the city's coppersmiths. According to the founder's inscription it was built by the high-ranking official Nikephoros in 1028.

7. The Basilica of Panagia Acheiropoietos in the center of the city was built in the 5th c. as a three-aisled wooden-roofed basilica with a gallery. In 1430 it was converted into the first mosque of the conquered city (Eski Camii–Old Mosque).

8. The church of Saint Sophia (late 7th or early 8th c.) is one of the most important examples of the type of a cruciform church with dome. It was the cathedral, the "Great Church" of the city, until it became a mosque (1523–1524). In the interior there are mosaics of excellent quality from the iconoclastic period (8th c.), the "Macedonian Renaissance" (late 9th c.) and from the 11th–12th c.

9. In the church of the Transfiguration of the Savior, a registered quadrangular church (mid 14th c.) there are remarkable frescoes preserved.

10. The church of Agios Panteleimon used to belong to a monastery and was located between workshops. The current dedication to St Panteleimon is not the original one, and there are various opinions about the identification of the monument. According to the oldest opinion, it is identified with the monastery of Theotokos Peribleptos, also known as the "monastery of Mr. Isaac", after the name of its founder, the former bishop of Thessaloniki Iakovos, who became a monk. Recently it is also identified with the katholikon of the monastery of Christ Pantodynamos (after mid-13th c.).

11. Rotonda–Church of St. George: Pericentre vaulted building with characteristics typical of the epinikion monuments–mausoleums of the Constantinian dynasty. According to recent research, it was founded between 316/7–324/5 during the stay of Constantine the Great in the city. From the original decoration, masterpiece wall mosaics are preserved. It was converted into a church and decorated with mosaics between the end of the 4th century and the 6th century AD. There are many suggestions for the identification of the temple. The most prevalent is the identification with the temple of the Asomatoi or of the Angel, as is recorded in documents of the 16th c. Later, it was converted into a mosque and with the city's liberation it became the church of St. George. Then it housed the Macedonian Museum and later a collection of sculptures. Today it is a monument that can be visited.

12. Church of Saint Demetrios, with a chapel of Saint Euthymius: Five-aisled basilica with a transept of the early 5th c., in which parts of an older building were incorporated, built on the site where the patron saint of Thessaloniki, Saint Demetrios, suffered martyrdom and was buried. The basilica was partially damaged by fire in 620 and was restored. Underneath the basilica is an underground building, the so-called Crypt, where during the late Byzantine period pilgrims gathered to draw myrrh from the existing phiali (water tank), which they carried in precious pots, i.e., myrrh containers. It was converted into the "Casimier Mosque" in 1493. It suffered considerable damage in the fire of 1917.

13. Public Bath: this is the only surviving public bath of Thessaloniki, although, in the 14th century, there were many public baths in the city. It has a three-part layout with a vestibule-dressing room, two two-part rooms with under the floor heating, the middle house or lukewarm bath and the warm inner dome or hot water bath and water tank. It dates back to the second half of the 12th–early 13th c.

14. The church of Saint Catherine is considered a katholikon of a monastery but does not preserve its original dedication. It has been interpreted as the katholikon of the monastery of Christ Pantodynamos, or of the monastery of Filokallis, or even as a church associated with the thermal pilgrimage of Saint Nicodemus. It was built around 1320 and converted into the "Yakup Pasha Mosque". After the liberation, it was dedicated to Saint Catherine.

15. The church of Prophet Elias was, according to the most prevailing view, the katholikon of the monastery of Akapnios and was built in the second half of the 14th c. by the monk Makarios Houmnos. It was built in the "Athonite" type of a church with three conches, which appears here for the first time outside Athos. During the Ottoman period, it was called the "Seraili Mosque" (palace mosque) due to the tradition of a Byzantine palace in the area.

16. The church of Saint Nicholas, which used to be a katholikon of a monastery, was built as a three-aisled wooden-roofed basilica which was converted into a one-room church with a peristyle. It stands out for its frescoes. The foundation or reconstruction of the church is linked in one view, not generally accepted, to the Krali Stefan II Milutin (1282–1321). During the Ottoman period it continued to function as a church.

17. The church of Osios David, in the past the katholikon of the Monastery of Christ Savior the Latomos owes its name to the area's quarries. The exceptional mosaic in the niche of the katholikon depicts the beardless Christ in glory in a heavenly landscape. The mosaic dates to the last quarter of the 5th century and is thought to depict Jesus' presentation to the prophets Ezekiel and Abbacum. Later, probably during the Iconoclasm, the mosaic was covered with oxhide and mortar and hidden. It was discovered after an earthquake by a monk. The monastery was dedicated to Osios David in the 20th century.

18. The monastery of Vlatadon was founded between 1351 and 1371 by the brothers Vlatis, Markos and Dorotheos. The latter was student of the famous Gregorios Palamas, who later became a saint. It continued functioning as a monastery during the Ottoman period but also without stop until today! The monastery's katholikon is built in a variation of the cruciform church type with a peristyle. It had an important role in the city's water supply, as closed and open pipes brought water there from springs of the river Chortiatis. Three of the water tanks (kinsternes) are still preserved today.

19. Nowadays, the city's walls preserve traces of the Hellenistic and Roman fortification, the Byzantine times and the Ottoman additions. The walls enclosed the city, while in the Ottoman period northern end of the enclosure was reinforced with the strong Fortress of Eptapyrgion. The city is divided into the Lower City, the Upper City and the Citadel. In the median wall between the Upper City and the Citadel lays the "Gate of Anna Palaeologina", that is of the empress who undertook the repair of the walls in the mid-14th century. The city was flanked horizontally by the Avenue or Mesi Odos (today's Egnatia), which started from the Golden Gate and ended at the Kassandreotiki Gate at the east. In the western walls, there was the Gate of Litaia. On the eastern walls there were the New Golden Gate, the Gate of Asomatoi and the Roma Gate.

20. Α.Χ. Γρηγορίου – Ε.Α. Χεκίμογλου, *Η Θεσσαλονίκη των περιηγητών (1430–1930), Επιλογές κειμένων και μαρτυριών*, Athens 2008, especially p. 54 –55, 58–59 and 208–209.

21. In 1915 the poet Napoleon Lapathiotis characteristically mentioned in his unfinished autobiography "My Life": "And the morning we entered the port of Thessaloniki, what a strange and unforgettable sight! The uniforms of all types and all countries, in a large and indescribable mess. Airplanes, minarets, Jewry, military golden stripes and feathers of Versailliers, Englishmen, Scotsmen, Frenchmen, Italians, Russian sailors and Senegalese, turbans, fezs, military hats –all races and all garments in a colorful, fantastical patchwork, of an operetta and of Babylonia... Such was Thessaloniki in that unforgettable and truly monumental, historical time!..."

22. Due to the First and Second Bulgarian occupation, the same church had previously housed Serbian war refugees (1916), Greeks from Eastern Macedonia and Thrace, as well as fire victims of 1917. See the relevant interview of Sakis Serrefas on 13/08/2021: "We have testimonies of how the place smelled of fried onions and fried tomatoes, because of the people from Asia Minor. Others had set up a stall inside the temple and sold vegetables. A complete microcosm". (https://www.lifo.gr/culture/vivlio/sakisserefas-den-einai-paidotopoi-oi-poleis-ntamaria-einai-ntamaria-zosas-mnimis).

23. The current form of the White Tower is that of the 15th c. which replaced the Byzantine fortification of the 12th c. It was used as a lodging for the Genitsar guard and a prison for death row inmates. Today it is considered a landmark of Thessaloniki and the museum of the city is housed in it. It has 6 floors, a height of 34 m and a perimeter of 70 m.

24. Every kind of merchandise was available at the trade fair, which spread across the plain outside the western walls: yarn, textiles, utensils and furniture, household equipment and even animals (cattle, sheep and pigs). A detailed description survives in the work "Timarion" by an anonymous 12th-century author.

25. For the Rotonda see note 11.

26. The institution, which began in 1985 on the initiative of the Minister of Culture Melina Merkouri, intends to showcase the cultural life of a European city selected each year.

27. A characterization of Thessaloniki by the poet Napoleon Lapathiotis, see Σ. Σερέφας, *Δεν υπήρξαν ήρωες εδώ... Λογοτεχνικά κείμενα και μαρτυρίες*, Thessaloniki 2015.

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