

# THE ECONOMIC FATE OF URBAN SETTLEMENTS IN RHOMANIAN BOEOTIA, THESSALY, AND WESTERN MACEDONIA (783-1204)

by

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## ABSTRACT

Although there are enough studies on the economic history of late 8<sup>th</sup>-early 13<sup>th</sup> century Rhomanian Greece (for my use of the term 'Rhomanian' rather than 'Byzantine', see the end of section I) to warrant years of intensive reading, few of them are regional or multi-regional in their scope. Large-scale interpretations have been correspondingly few. The most noteworthy one – with regard to the regions that I am studying – is that Boeotia was home to one of the finest silk industries in the Empire in the late 11<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup> centuries. Using all available sources of information (ecclesiastical, hagiographical, geographic monographs, court chronicles, weather station statistics, archaeological monuments and artifacts, and so on), I examined urban settlements based on five main criteria: the quality and pervasiveness of ceramic material, the distribution of currency, the presence of a Jewish population, the incidence of sigillographic data, the magnitude, quality, and frequency of architectural projects, and the size and number of settlements. I found that there is ample evidence for growth in the domains of demography, silk production (whose quantitative element still hangs in the balance, however), exports to Constantinople, religious construction projects, coin use, and high-quality production imports/production. These trends are then probed for natural and human explanations, and used to discuss the relationship between my regions of study and Rhomania as a whole.

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## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The focus and structure of this thesis are very different from what I set out in my last thesis proposal and my first outline, almost four years ago. I had intended that my project should encompass all of mainland Greece. The settlements in my regions of study were arbitrarily and sketchily selected – I had essentially chosen all towns known to have existed at some during the years of Rhomanian domination over Greece. I had hoped that relevant numismatic, sigillographic, and pottery finds would number in the thousands. My level of research competency was equally very different at the beginning of my doctorate, in that I had no experience of reading Modern Greek (nor did I think the language would be of real importance). It thus came as a shock to learn that the majority of the archaeological reports I needed to read were only available in Greek. Some of these problems I overcame naturally. As I worked to convert my ideas into reality, as I got my hand dirty, I gradually had to settle for much more prosaic results. Two of them – the thematic and linguistic ones – either gave me enormous trouble or could have cost me many months of pointless labour. If I dealt with them successfully, it is largely thanks to the patience, pragmatism, persistence, and disciplinary awareness of my supervisor, Archie Dunn. I should also acknowledge the help that he provided in several other crucial aspects, such as identifying physical geography sources and Greek archaeological reports (notably the *Archaialogikon Deltion*) bringing the quality of my presentation to a satisfying standard, and crafting a thoughtful and effective concluding chapter. Equally valuable has been the generous support given by friends, Greek scholars, the staff members of the British School of Athens and French School of Athens libraries, and the University of Birmingham's Main Library staff. In particular, I would like to thank my co-supervisor Ken Wardle, who impressed upon me the need for geographic illustrations, Andrew Blacker (who, among other things, showed me the equipment required to carry out independent field study), Nikolaos Moutsopoulos (whose reports on Prespa were of immense value to me), Antonio Petkos (who provided me with the 11<sup>th</sup> Ephorate of Byzantine Antiquities' final report on Servia), the Ephorate of Boeotia, and the Ephorate of Larissa. The latter two organisations gave me access to their published pottery and numismatic assemblages, respectively. Last but not least, I wish to express my deepest gratitude to my parents. Without their unconditional and ceaseless financial aid, I would have struggled to keep sight of my thesis' overall goal, and my enterprise would almost certainly have been stillborn.



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# Chapter 1

## Background, state of research, benchmarks, and methodology of my project

### I. The main question

This introduction consists of five parts. Part I explains how I chose my topic, Part II presents the historiography, Part III discusses the secondary themes that I will engage with, and Part IV lays out the criteria that I employ in examining urban settlements. Lastly, Part V summarizes my research methods and highlights the importance of looking at the wider context of towns.

With this mind, we can move on to Part I. In the early 7<sup>th</sup> century, Rhomania entered a time of greatly intensified poverty, military conflict, instability, and demographic decline. This era is commonly known as the Transition Period, or more traditionally, the Dark Ages. It gradually gave way to political and socio-economic recovery, at least in Asia Minor and the Balkans. It is not the purpose of my thesis to linger on the political resurgence. Suffice it to say that the latter trend arguably began in the late 8<sup>th</sup> century <sup>1</sup>, and saw the slow territorial shrinkage that had characterized the past hundred years or so reversed. By the time of Basil II's death, in 1025, Eastern Anatolia, Bulgaria, Crete, Cyprus, much of Syria and most of Armenia were once more under direct or indirect imperial control, while Romanian territory in southern Italy had doubled. What I am interested in is the socio-economic process. How extensive was the process, and what aspects (such as trade, numismatic circulation, demography, and architectural projects) did it involve? If we are to believe Treadgold, the population increased from 7 million in the 780s to 10 million in 1143, and that the state's annual income rose from approximately 3.1 million *nomismata* in 830 to approximately 5.9 million *nomismata* in 1025. <sup>2</sup> The author provides no justification for his figures. Nevertheless, there is good evidence for a population increase, thanks to an agricultural production-driven food surplus. And one of the beneficiaries of this surplus – the one that will take centre stage in this thesis of – was urban communities. As hundreds of fieldwork projects have shown, urban sites in many parts of Western Anatolia and the Southern Balkans were being resettled or expanded. <sup>3</sup> Hence Pergamon, which had been virtually abandoned in the 600s, began to be repopulated in the latter part of the 11<sup>th</sup> century. Amorium, despite the savage sack of 838, was reoccupied and rebuilt as early as the 860s. Adrianople, already the military and administrative hub of its theme, became a commercial center. By the reign of Alexios I Venetians traders were active in the Eastern Thracian capital.

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<sup>1</sup> W. Treadgold, 1988, pp.1-27.

<sup>2</sup> Treadgold, 1997, p.576, Treadgold, 1982, pp.54-55.

<sup>3</sup> P. Frankopan, 2009, A. Laiou and C. Morrison, 2007, A. Harvey, 1989, pp.40-70, Rheidt, 2002, p.625, C.S. Lightfoot and E.A. Ivison, 2012, p.66, Madden, 2002, pp.23-41, Frankopan, 2004, pp.135-160.

But we lack a work of synthesis on the evolution of urban settlements. I originally sought to create such a work – one which would encompass Western Turkey and Greece. However, I ultimately decided to focus on assessing settlements in Greece. There were five reasons behind my decision. First, I needed to choose regions controlled by the Rhomanian state more or less continuously between the end of the-8<sup>th</sup> century and the Fourth Crusade. Excluding islands, this definition narrowed down my choice to modern-day Greece and Western Turkey. Second, the local archaeological authorities in Turkey were reluctant to accommodate fieldwork by doctoral students, and Attica, Aetolia-Akarnania, and the Peloponnese were minutiously studied in recent theses (so I cannot focus on them).<sup>4</sup> Third, on a practical level, the Greek urban sites known to us are vastly outnumbered by their rural counterparts. As such, I cannot do justice to the latter in 80,000 words. Four, Rhomanian military topics have always held my interest, and I would argue that they are vital to understanding the evolution of a settlement's economic fabric and health. Towns were more heavily implicated in military activities than rural sites<sup>5</sup>, in that they had to deal with sieges, siege-preparation, and assaults, more often. This state of affairs can be useful when examining destruction layers and objects/structures/bodies bear signs of a violent event (such as scorch-marks, hoard material, and skull fractures).

Fifth, vast numbers of historical/archaeological works on the contemporary Greek economy exist. But most of them are not on a multi-regional scale. The one that comes closest is probably Alan Harvey's *Economic Expansion in the Byzantine Empire: 900-1200*.<sup>6</sup> Harvey suggests that urban revival in Greece began in the 9<sup>th</sup> century (using Corinth, Patras, Sparta, Athens, Thebes, Larissa, Demetrias, and Almyros as case studies). The trend gained momentum in the late 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> centuries, in some measure thanks to the appearance of the silk industry (in Corinth and Thebes) and the ease of exporting oil (in Patras, Corinth, and Sparta). Throughout Greece, it may have reflected the increasing activeness of the Venetians in commerce, or been fuelled by the Venetians (I will return to this issue in the concluding chapter). But while Harvey covers an extensive number of relevant urban settlements, he also excludes a significant number of them, notably Livadia, Farsala, Zitounion, Veroia, Servia, and Kastoria (in part, I think, because most of the aforementioned settlements had not been studied at the time of the writing of *Economic Expansion in the Byzantine Empire*). Moreover, the author does not really draw conclusions at the regional level and neglects to put the settlements in their political or geographic context.

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4 Tzavella, 2013, Veikou, 2012, Papadaki, 2014.

5 Except forts, which I do not have enough space to examine.

6 Harvey, 1989, pp.214-224. Also worth mentioning are *Byzantine Epirus: A Topography of Transformation. Settlements of the Seventh-Twelfth Centuries in Southern Epirus and Aetoloacarnania, Greece, Heaven and Earth. Cities and Countryside in Byzantine Greece*, and *The Edinburgh History of the Greeks, c. 500 to 1050*. Veikou, 2012, Albani and Chalkia, 2013, Curta, 2011.



Using as many of the existing regional and site-based studies as possible, my thesis examines the character and pace of the contemporary economic resurgence in Greece, as well as the accuracy of Harvey's interpretation.

With all this in mind, I confined myself to urban sites in the territories encompassing Central and North-Western Greece. For the sake of convenience, I will use the main contemporary administrative divisions: Boeotia, Thessaly, and Western Macedonia. Two important provisos need to be made here: I have treated Phokis and Phthiotis/Lokris as part of Boeotia and Thessaly (respectively), and have extended the scope of Western Macedonia from Mount Vermion/the Pierian Mountains/the Olympus Mountains to the Axios River.<sup>7</sup> Phokis, Phthiotis, and Lokris are too poorly documented to justify individual chapters, while the Western Plain of Thessaloniki deserves to be synthesized as much as the land west of the mountains. For the Middle Rhomanian era, the boundaries of my chosen regions fall within the Themes of Hellas, Thessalonica, Veroia, Moglena, Kastoria, and Servia. As readers will doubtless have noticed, most of my chosen provinces are not entirely geographically coherent – nor were they coherent in the 8<sup>th</sup>-13<sup>th</sup> centuries. Inevitably, this means that most of the provinces' residents diverged somewhat in terms of occupations, diet, and clothing. But the Rhomaioi ones shared the same religion, emperor, and system of government. Since to a large extent the inhabitants formed a homogenous ethnic body, I think it justifiable to treat their homes as a single unit.

I explained that I would focus on urban settlements, but we know that the latter entities did not exist in a vacuum. They heavily depended on rural communities – and vice-versa – for a smooth existence. While the relationship between the two 'categories' of settlements should not be oversimplified, the inhabitants of Greek villages, hamlets, monasteries, and agricultural estates did supply nearby towns with foodstuffs.<sup>8</sup> In return, they could expect towns to offer goods and services which were uneconomical to produce in the countryside. That is why, where feasible, I will examine country communities whose evolutions can be related to the destiny of neighbouring towns. The chronology of my project spans the period 783 to 1204, from the probable resurgence of Rhomanian civilization in Hellas (either the Theme or the geographic space) to the Crusader sack of Constantinople. These boundaries coincide roughly with what many scholars called the "Middle Byzantine" Period.

This leads me to an important point. During the last months of writing my thesis I made the decision to refer to the Empire as *Rhomania*, and to its people as *Rhomaioi* (as opposed to Byzantium and the Byzantines). Where it is necessary to talk about the Middle Byzantine Period I will use the term 'Middle

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7 Henceforth, I will refer to the space between the Voras-Vermion-Pierian mountains and the Axios River as the Western Plain of Thessaloniki. Approximate north-south extent of Mount Vermion: the Greek-FYROM border to Pigadia. Approximate north-south extent of Pierian/Olympus Mountains: Pigadia to the Vale of Tempe.

8 M. Veikou, 2009, Nasturel and Belducianu, 1978, pp.269-285, Ashburner, 1910.

Rhomanian.’ I realize that the label ‘Byzantine’ has become ingrained in our psyche, but it is a fabrication. So far as I am aware, was not used to refer to the subjects of the emperor in Constantinople (except for residents of the Great City) until the mid-16<sup>th</sup> century. The most recurrent designation – by the interested parties – was *Rhomanian* (the Medieval Greek word for Roman).<sup>9</sup> This choice makes sense, considering that there was a marked degree of continuity between the Eastern Roman Empire of the 5<sup>th</sup> century and that of the late 8<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup> centuries. In both eras, the Empire was an autocracy, one underpinned by a complex bureaucracy, whose leader considered himself God’s vice-regent, and which was the centre of the civilized world (according to the court and the bureaucrats). The predominant religion was Orthodox Christianity, one of the leading languages (or the leading one) was Medieval Greek,<sup>10</sup> and agriculture was largely sedentary. Therefore, *Rhomanian* is the designation I will use throughout my thesis.

## II. The recent state of research

There are several sub-questions to the main question of my thesis. First, how should urban settlements be defined. How did towns and cities differ from large villages? Second, what was the social status and commercial availability of high-quality pottery. This is a subject that we cannot afford to ignore: not only was pottery ubiquitous in Rhomaioi households and nuanced in terms of design, function, and decoration, but it is very resistant to the forces that usually destroy artifacts on ancient sites (such as rot, cold, insects, and microorganisms). In answering these questions, it is appropriate to review some of the most noteworthy scholarly contributions: what they have accomplished, what they have not accomplished, and how I intend to help fill the gap.

Let us begin with the urban settlement question. The task is a complex one. For one thing, Byzantine sources had little interest in being consistent with each other. For instance, Larissa is variously designated by Skylitzes, Tzetzes and the Acts of Lavra as a *phrourion*, *polis*, and *kastron*.<sup>11</sup> Sometimes the sources are at odds with each other. This was the case for an 11<sup>th</sup>-century patriarchal financial document which referred to both Thessaloniki and Pangaeon as *kastra*.<sup>12</sup> Another 11<sup>th</sup>-century source, Kekaumenos, refers to Demetrias as both a *polis* and a *kastron*.<sup>13</sup>

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9 Niketas Khoniates, 1975, p.652, John Kinnamos, 1976, pp.218-220, John Tzetzes, 1972, no.18.31-32, John Skylitzes, 1973, p.420, Anna Komnene, 1937-1976, book 1, p.13, Constantine Porphyrogenetos, 1967, pp.49-51.

10 Some distinctions need to be made: the Vlachs, Coumans, Pechenegs, Jews and Italians of 12th century may not have spoken Greek commonly. Also, the Vlachs may not have been Orthodox Christian, and the Jews and Italians were definitely not.

11 Skylitzes, 2010, p.313, Tzetzes, 1963, p.372, Actes de Lavra 1 (1099), p.258, l.4.

12 Pangaeon was a community on Leros which contained five houses. Müller and Miklosich, 1860-1862, VI, 36.1-3, 40-41, Zakythinos, 1957, p.99.

13 Kekaumenos, 1998, pp.108, 122, 124.

Nonetheless, Haldon, Harvey, and Veikou make prominent efforts to address the challenge. Haldon explains that the terms used to refer to urban settlements underwent some major changes beginning the 4<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>14</sup> The terms *kōmopolis* and *kastron* came into use, the former supposedly referring to villages which were quasi-urban but lacked city rights, and the latter to fortified settlements which possessed military and administrative functions. But at the same time, somewhat confusingly, a number of sites which possessed features normally associated with *kastron* were referred to as *poleis*. Additionally, from the 7<sup>th</sup> century onward, *kastron* was used with increasing regularity to denote both urban settlements and fortresses. The latter development was the result of a shift in cultural consciousness: as the civic identity of the Roman world was replaced by a preoccupation with imperial patronage, its accompanying vocabulary faded away.

Harvey contends that the line between town and village was heavily blurred. Many places that could readily be described as towns exhibited traits which we customarily associate with the countryside, such as grazing cattle, pastures, vineyards, and fruit trees.<sup>15</sup> Additionally, he regards fortifications as an un-useful benchmark, because villages were apparently provided with them too. Harvey draws attention to a 1044 Athonite fiscal document in which the *anagrapheus* of Boleron, Strymon and Thessaloniki was ordered to impose the land-tax on all the *kastra* (which were usually fortified) and *choria* which were not paying it.<sup>16</sup> Since both types of communities were subject to the same fiscal procedure, the reasoning goes, they must have been of roughly equivalent economic value. The argument strikes me as unpersuasive. Even if the *kastra* and *choria* in the anagrapheus were all fortified, it is unwise to generalise on the basis of a single case study. On the other hand, I think Harvey is absolutely right to caution against using agriculture as an identification benchmark. Indeed, no less than a dozen Middle Rhomaioi communities [that could otherwise qualify as towns] are described by contemporary geographers and chroniclers as having a heavily agricultural character. They included Larissa, Trikala, Philippi, Nis, Janina, Athens, Serres, Adrianople, Antioch, and Constantinople, where Odo de Deuil commented that “there were gardens and free lands cultivated...within the walls.”<sup>17</sup>

Veikou distances herself from the urban-rural classification scheme, which she believes to be excessively rigid, and employed in an excessively rigid manner. She makes a spirited case for the existence of an “in between” form of settlement in the form of the island-city. In this kind of settlement, exemplified by the modern Aegean islands, ships replace road transport, the population fluctuates drastically between seasons, and the distribution pattern of buildings is completely fragmented. She also asserts

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<sup>14</sup> Haldon, 1999.

<sup>15</sup> Harvey, 1989, p.198.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid., p.201.

<sup>17</sup> Tivchev, 1962, Odo de Deuil, 1948, p.64. See also Nikolaos Mesarites, 1957, p.898. Most of Tivchev’s evidence comes from Idrisi. For further information on Larissa, see Chapter 3.IV.1.

that text-mentioned places names do not always correspond to single archaeological sites (e.g. the place could originally have consisted of multiple habitational clumps).<sup>18</sup> As for Kazhdan, he draws attention to Michael Akominatos' definition, which consists of fortifications, an entrance bridge, a large population, and men of upstanding moral character.<sup>19</sup>

I agree with Haldon that the word *kastron* seems to have had more than one meaning.<sup>20</sup> But his discussion of terminology could have been more in-depth. For one thing, he does not discuss all the terms that were used to describe towns and cities – such as *polisma*, *polichnion*, and *kōmopolis* – preferring to focus on *kastron* and *polis* (perhaps because these were more commonly used). Also, he argues that the designation for an episcopal see – a potential urban defining criteria – was based on administrative rather than economic considerations.<sup>21</sup> I am not sure what he means. I suspect that the most significant criterion for the designation of episcopal see was the settlement's socio-economic condition (see section III for a detailed explanation of this viewpoint).

Moving on, I am not entirely persuaded by Veikou's argument that the rural-urban approach is flawed and overly simplistic. It is certainly difficult to deny that Southern Epirus and Aetolia-Akarnania consisted almost exclusively of dispersed urban settlements between the late 8<sup>th</sup>-early 13<sup>th</sup> centuries. A recent archaeological study conducted by the University of Athens revealed more than a hundred sites dating to the 7<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup> centuries.<sup>22</sup> With two exceptions, all of them were widely scattered. Yet only sixteen towns for the period 783-1204 – at most – are attested by the historical evidence. The question is, was this trend an Epirotean peculiarity or something more? To my knowledge, the only non-Epirotan settlement which could be classified as 'in-between' was Laodikeia. In 1172-1174, Laodikeia – a major administrative and ecclesiastical centre – was described by Niketas Khoniates as being "not fortified by well-fenced walls" and "spread out in villages."<sup>23</sup> Thus, Laodikeia had the functions of a town, but it lacked an important urban trapping (walls) and its constituent parts were apparently identical to villages. I do not have any intermediate candidates in my regions of study. But I will be on the lookout for some in later chapters.

Regarding high-quality pottery, at least one interpretation implies that that glazed vessels had several forms, which varied significantly in terms of sophistication. Only the less sophisticated types were available to ordinary people, while the rest were reserved for the elite. Oikonomides, who has industriously studied textual references to Medieval Rhomaioi houses from the 11<sup>th</sup> century, concludes that tableware in poor households was in short supply. This is partly attributable to the fact that

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18 Veikou, 2012, p. 244.

19 A. Kazhdan, 1997, p.44, Michael Akominatos, 1880, II, p.258.

20 Examples of forts that were referred to as *kastra* include Amaseia, Koloneia, Kybistra, Charsianon, Akroinon, and Dazimon.

21 Haldon, 1999, pp.13-14.

22 Veikou, 2009, p.44.

23 Korobeinikov, 2015, p.56, Niketas Khoniates, 1975, p.124.

tableware was predominantly copper rather than earthenware. Still, it is striking to note that some poor households had no large serving plates. The ones that did could count on 1-3 plates. The same was true for individual plates and cups: there were at most 2-3 items of each appliance per household.<sup>24</sup>

That said, there is evidence that glazed vessels enjoyed a surge of popularity from the 12<sup>th</sup> century onward, on a limited level. In *Piecing together the past*, Vroom asserts that beginning in the 1100s Boeotian potters took much more trouble to cover the insides of their vessels with glaze, and to decorate the surfaces with abstract and figural designs.<sup>25</sup> Vroom does not provide statistics, but Guy Sanders does for his Corinth excavations. In Corinth, the richest Middle Rhomanian ceramic site outside Constantinople, the maximum proportion of glazed wares before 1204 is about 10 %. Before the 11<sup>th</sup> century, the maximum proportion does not exceed 0.7 %.<sup>26</sup>

Conversely, V. François and J.M. Spieser contend that glazed vessels were commonly used by ordinary people. According to them, the material evidence suggests that most glazed vessels were widely available to the lower classes, despite being qualitatively superior to unglazed specimens.<sup>27</sup> Thus, we are told, glazed ceramic cannot be considered a luxury item intended for an elite clientele, with the notable exception of Constantinopolitan White Ware. The only exception concerned some types of painted polychrome wares. The authors are right to point out that unglazed vessels, though they might not be as elegant as glazed pottery, could be high-quality items in their own right. For example, they might be porous to keep water fresh and heterogeneous to provide them with resistance against cooking temperatures. But their overall viewpoint is problematic, in light of Oikonomides', Sanders', and Vroom's findings. Perhaps more importantly – and this point concerns Sanders' work too – I think it unwise to define pottery as a luxury item on the basis of a single criterion (glazing). To do equates to presuming that the Romans were unconcerned with other aspects of their vessels – such as shape, paintings, handles, and ridges. In the next section I propose some qualitative defining criterion of my own. Using these, I will then discuss all the excavation and survey pottery that time and the Ephorates have allowed me to study (see, in particular, chapter 3, 1.A.D. and 11).

It was initially my intention to investigate the evolution of climate in the Later-middle Roman period, to examine the impact climate may have had on crop yields, demography, diseases, and the distribution of urban settlements. It is generally acknowledged that Northern Europe and Greenland experienced a 'Medieval Warm period' between ca. 900 and ca. 1300. The period coincided with a significant expansion of wheat and vine cultivation in northern Europe, especially in England and southern Germany. What if the trend affected the southern Balkans and the Mediterranean basin?

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24 Oikonomides, 1990, p.212, Papadopoulos-Kerameus, 1898, vol. 5, p.315, Papadopoulos-Kerameus, 1905, pp.3-4.

25 Vroom, 2000, p.256.

26 Sanders, 2003, p.394. These statistics were obtained using weight rather than sherd numbers.

27 François and Spieser, 2002, p.599.

My method would have been to consult all Middle Rhomaioi sources who report on meteorological phenomena from the late 8<sup>th</sup> to the early 13<sup>th</sup> century. I realized early on, however, that I. Telelis had done just that more than a decade ago, with meagre results.<sup>28</sup> Telelis has found a significant number of pertinent primary sources (about two dozen). But they do not provide any meteorological numbers, and they rarely state how long the phenomena that they describe lasted or the specific district that it covered. As an example, Skylitzes, commenting on the winter of 927, writes: “the same month an intolerable winter suddenly set in, so that the ground was frozen for one hundred and twenty days. A cruel famine followed the winter, worse than any previous famine, and so many people died from the famine that the living were insufficient to bury the dead.”<sup>29</sup> For all we know he could be talking about Lycia, Macedonia, the Pontus, or the whole Empire. Consequently, the sources are exceedingly limited in value. Telelis acknowledges as much: in his conclusion, he states that we cannot hope to form a framework of climatological evolution in the the Middle Rhomanian period solely on the basis of the literary sources. So what prospects do we have for advancing the state of research? I will address the question in Chapter 5.

### **III. Historical and archaeological criteria for identifying the Middle Rhomanian town**

In investigating the settlements in my chosen regions, I will make use of six archaeological and historical criteria of prosperity. It should be stressed that I will seldom apply all them at the same time. Some have proven much more valuable than others. I will now list the benchmarks, in decreasing order of value.

First, whether a settlement was a bishopric or an archbishopric, using the *Notitiae Episcopatum* and seals. In section II, I defended the notion that one the qualifications for bishopric/archepiscopal status was exceptional economic power. Second, the frequency and quality of architectural projects. Third, the demography of settlements, both on a statistical and spatial level. The latter component involves not just verifying whether the place expanded or shrank, but also whether any areas within the limits of the community were abandoned.

Fourth, the existence of a Jewish community in a settlement. Wherever they lived in the Empire, the Jews were skilled doctors, traders, or artisans (particularly in the fields of tanning, silk, glassmaking, and

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<sup>28</sup> Telelis, 2004.

<sup>29</sup> Skylitzes, 2011, p.218.

wool fabrics<sup>30</sup>). This is not the place to discuss how the Jews ended up in these professions<sup>31</sup>). But they were clearly valuable members of society. And even if their Rhomaioi neighbours did not directly benefit from their production of wool garments or glass vessels, every *folles* of income they made meant more taxation revenue to the state. In theory, the latter outcome allowed the state to invest more heavily in the maintenance of roads and ports and in the protection of urban settlements from foreign aggressors.

The fifth criterion is the quantity of coinage identified at each settlement. That said, I am realistic about the information I can get from coinage. For starters, I will not bother looking for *nomismata*, since they remained largely outside the sphere of monetary circulation. And unfortunately the same problem applied to *milliaresia*, which constitute a tiny proportion of the Middle Rhomanian archaeological record. The excavations at Corinth in the late 1930s provide a case in point. Of Corinth's 17,796 Rhomanian coins recovered between 1936 and 1939, less than 80 were made of silver.<sup>32</sup> There is little sense in attempting to consider the coins' value in relation to *nomismata*: for the overwhelming majority of imperial reigns, the information does not exist. In extrapolating information from *folles*, I will assess the accuracy of my sources as much as possible, using vol.4 of the Dumbarton Oaks numismatic catalogue and Wroth's *Western and Provincial Byzantine Coins in the British Museum*.<sup>33</sup> As such, it is worth mentioning the various problems involved in using Roman currency. For instance, since Rhomanian mint authorities had no interest in indicating when coins were struck, it is virtually impossible to know exactly when within a reign a coin was struck. Moreover, although both silver and copper coins displayed imperial figures from the reign of Michael I onwards, they were frequently unrealistic. Archaeologists are therefore obliged to settle for broad dates, which can be identified by a coin's inscriptions, titles, and decorative style. Thus I shall concentrate all my attention on the design of copper *folles* and its successors. But, even when a coin's broad striking date is known, it can be difficult to know when it was lost or discarded. True, the chance that a coin was lost is directly related to the number of years during which its denomination remained in use.<sup>34</sup> But this is a feeble clue, and it does not help identify discarded coins. Examining the design and decoration of adjacent pottery is a possible solution, but one not always available. More problematically, we have no clearly-defined guidelines for distinguishing lost coins from discarded coins. This can be a serious issue if we are dealing with coins found from a building which had a long life-span. For example, if the coins were scrap metal intended for recycling, then they clearly had lost all monetary value at the

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30 J. Starr, 1939, E. Kohen, 2007, Sharf, 1971, J. Holo, 2009, p.20.

31 One explanation was the Jews' exceptionally high rate of literacy, bearing in mind that Judaism made primary education mandatory for males. Bottini and Eckstein, 2002, p.11.

32 Harris, 1941, pp.144, 155.

33 Wroth, 1911.

34 Metcalf, 1973, p.185.

time of their deposition. In such cases, it is vital to have good knowledge of the building's context (assuming there is a context).

The sixth criterion is the quality and availability of excavated ceramic ware. Here the sites I have chosen for study are based on two standards: the quality of material provided by excavations (that is to say, relatively intact objects), and reliable dates. A great deal hinges on the function of the site. After all, if a ceramic plate was found in a silk workshop, then it was surely being used by the place's workers. But if it was recovered just outside the workshop, they could have belonged either to the workers or to the general public. It would depend on the purpose of the finds' terrain. If an assemblage of pottery is unearthed from a trench containing multiple stratigraphic layers, the layer in which it was found must be recorded. Otherwise, the assemblage has no dating value. When I began my project, I soon realized that there was no official qualitative classification system for pottery. To describe my specimens, I relied on a combination of my own fieldwork and Vroom's typology scheme.<sup>35</sup> Using these descriptions, I then created some qualitative benchmarks. I divided my ceramic sherds/vessels into high-quality, imitation, medium-quality, low-quality, and utilitarian. High-quality specimens featured paintings or incisions, possessed two or more non-essential components (a flared base, a handle, or a lip, for example) and were covered in a continuous layer of slip or glaze. They were used in the dining room. Imitations specimens were poorly-made replicas of high-quality products. They had paintings or incisions, but their glazing or slip was very thin or incomplete (e.g. the outside of the vessel was left bare, or there were holes in the ornamentation), they were porous, and they only had one non-essential components (or none at all). Two examples of this category were imitation Fine Sgraffito-Ware and 'Green and Brown Painted ware.' Vroom, who has found these wares in profuse quantities on rural Boeotian sites, describes them as porous, with very thin walls.<sup>36</sup> Medium-quality wares were identical to imitation ones, except that they were not designed to ape a superior specimen. Low-quality specimens were similar to the two previous ones, except that they lacked any paintings/incisions and non-essential components. All three of the above categories were meant for the dining table. Finally, utilitarian vessels were used for storage or cooking purposes.

In Section II I reviewed several of the existing characterizations of Rhomanian urban settlements. Presently I will offer my own. I found finding a suitable definition difficult, inasmuch as the definitions scholars employ differ significantly.<sup>37</sup> For example, Haldon argues that the essential distinguishing element between towns and villages was the presence of a bishop. Kazhdan refers us to part of the classification of Michael Akominatos (a large population, fortifications, and an entrance bridge), while

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<sup>35</sup> Vroom, 2003.

<sup>36</sup> Ibid, pp.201-202.

<sup>37</sup> Haldon, 1999, p.13, Kazhdan, 1997, p.3, Harvey, 1989, p.198.



Harvey claims that an economic definition would stress occupational specialization in crafts and industry. To further complicate matters, as Harvey rightly observes, the line between town and village was heavily blurred. Nonetheless, certain socio-economic parameters do recur frequently in Medieval Roman literature that deals with authors' perceptions of urban settlements.<sup>38</sup> While most are not mentioned simultaneously, but they allow us to tentatively propose five defining criteria. Of these, two are based on parameters which crop up twice or more in Rhomaioi authorship dealing with perceptions of cities: population size and stone fortifications. The other three are either recurrently found in places exhibiting the first two criteria, are logical offshoots of the latter, or are of my making. They are administrative and ecclesiastical activity, the presence of an *archon*, and the existence of a certain kind of market.

First, regarding administrative and ecclesiastical activity, urban communities were consistently the seats of Themes or bishoprics.<sup>39</sup> It is my contention that such a status was already a sign of exceptionally economic robustness. This is because, first, a bishop needed a well-educated staff to help him carry out his duties – overseeing the collection of the *kanonikon* tax, hearing complaints, officiating weddings, training his parish clergymen, ensuring that church laws were being observed in his community, putting his decisions on parchment, sending messages to his parishes, supervising the local hospitals and orphanages, and so on. Thus, the Metropolitan Archbishop Michael Akominatos was assisted by an *oikonomos*, *sakellarios*, *skeuophylax*, *chartophylax*, *protekdikos*, *hypomnematographos*, and *repherenadarios* (and this entry is not exhaustive). The staff of a bishop may have been smaller. That of Euthymianos apparently numbered only three people. Looking outside the Church's manpower, the episcopal basilica would have required constant upkeep, both from wear and tear and minor earthquakes. The bishop or archbishop's presence would therefore have stimulated artisanery, particularly with respect to masons, tailors, carpenters, and parchment-makers. All these people – plus the episcopal staff – would have needed to be fed. This would in turn have attracted farmers and food merchants to the town, or its vicinity. Of course, parishes would also have needed logistical support, but to a lower degree. And it is pertinent to note that the order in which bishops were listed in the *Notitiae Episcopatum* dictated their placement in liturgical and imperial ceremonies. Clearly a higher listing in the *Notitiae* reinforced a bishop's prestige and power. So I think we can reasonably argue that socio-economic contribution was a prime consideration in the process of promoting a parish to a diocese. And there is some evidence that Thematic capitals also needed to be economically robust. Secular

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38 John Tzetzes, 1972, pp.81-82, Skylitzes, 1973, 450.93, Rhalles and Potles, vol.3, pp.245-246 (with the primary source being Theodore Balsamon), Brandes, 1989, pp.35-39 (with the primary sources being Patriarch Nikephoros and Theophanes the Confessor), Kekaumenos, 1972, p.32, Michael Akominatos, 1880, 1, pp.354-55, Syrianus Magister, 1990, pp.209-224, George Pachymeres, 2000, pp.637-639. See also the *Vita* of George of Amastris, whose author (writing about an event ca. 797), takes it for granted that *polises* were fortified while *choria* were not. George d'Amastris, 1893, pp. 52-53.

39 See Patriarch Nikephoros and Theophanes (in Brandes, 1989, pp.38-39), who explicitly refer to *polises* as bishoprics.

administrative capitals served as centers for the collection of taxes and (in the case of Thematic headquarters) had law courts in residence. What is more, at the end of the 12<sup>th</sup> century, Michael Akominatos describes the *praitor's* residence (in Thebes) as a scaled-down version of the emperor's court. Catering to the *praitor*<sup>40</sup> represented a great burden, one that Akominatos' hometown of Athens could not possibly bear (for in recent years Athens had repeatedly been threatened with the possibility of visits by the *praitor*).<sup>41</sup> To be sure, Akominatos has a reputation among modern scholars for exaggerating his grievances. But it is unlikely that he would have made this particular complaint if it were pure fiction. Before moving on to the next urban criterion, there is good evidence that by the middle of the 9<sup>th</sup> century Themes divided into *tourmai*, which were in turn subdivided into *banda*.<sup>42</sup> But I have not found proof that any of the urban settlements I describe in my main chapters were the nerve centres of *tourmai* or *banda*.

Second, a town had stone fortifications and (one presumes) a garrison to man them. Constantine Porphyrogenetos' *De Administrando* lists the number of fortified places (both forts and civilian communities) in each Anatolian theme. Now, in the 10<sup>th</sup> century the Themes of *Cappadocia* and *Anatolikon* together roughly constituted the traditional region of Cappadocia. And it has been proposed by E. Cooper and M. Decker that pre-industrial Cappadocia had a maximum capacity (in terms of agricultural resources) of one million.<sup>43</sup> Next, the treatise *De Administrando* (ca. 950) indicates that there were nineteen fortified places in *Cappadocia* and thirty-four in *Anatolikon*. This gives us fifty-three sites in total. If each site was as large as ca. 800 Thebes (roughly 3,000 inhabitants), and if they were the only communities in the region, that would give contemporary Cappadocia a population of 159,000. Considering that this number is well below one million, and that Cappadocia had attained a high measure of tranquility and agricultural productivity by 950, it seems reasonable to conclude that *De Administrando* mentions only the larger settlements of *Cappadocia* and *Anatolikon*, and that fortifications were a mark of importance. In addition, the manual *De Re Strategica*, which has been dated to the end-of-the-9<sup>th</sup>-11<sup>th</sup> century, explicitly implies that walls were an integral part of *polises*.<sup>44</sup>

Third, urban markets were inter-regional or regional in scale. I make this contention based on the fact that various settlements which qualified as towns in at least one other respect – including Chonai, Sofia, Myra, Trebizond, Adrianople, Philadelphia, Sparta, Thessaloniki, Corinth, Trikala, Almyros, and Demetrias<sup>45</sup> – were reputed for having regional or inter-regional markets. To give a partial idea of a

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40 Who was the *strategos's* second-in-command.

41 Michael Akominatos, 1880, 2, no. 50, 58, 60, 64, 65. Perhaps the chrysobull was granted to Athens because the *praitor* was a rapacious man (which he was, according to Akominatos). But he does not seem to have had a track record of visiting Athens and imposing abusive requisitions.

42 Constantine Porphyrogenetos, 1993, 50.91-110, Haldon and Brubaker, 2011, p.766.

43 The authors rely on Ottoman census data. Cooper and Decker, 2012, p.47.

44 For the text, see Syrianus Magister, 1990, p.209 (by Zuckerman) and Veikou, 2012, pp.554-555. For the date, see Rance, 2008.

45 For Trebizond, Chonai, and Myra, see Mango, 2002. For Adrianople, see Skylitzes, 1973, p.346. For Sparta, see Dimopoulos, 2009,

regional market's magnitude, the part of Corinth's Lechaion Road which was lined with shops extended for at least 50 m. from north to south. And there were almost certainly other commercial quarters in the harbour area and Corinth itself.<sup>46</sup>

Fourth, a town was the home of an *archon*. The term could refer either to a powerful individual (in this context, it was synonymous with *dynatos* or *megistanos*), or a certain class of magistrates. By the 9<sup>th</sup> century, these magistrates were serving as governors of some of the peripheral provinces, notably Crete, Dalmatia, and Cyprus. They were also in charge of naval bases and trade stations and Slavic-inhabited areas under Rhomanian sovereignty.<sup>47</sup> If we move forward to the 10<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup> centuries, we find *archons* acting as *de facto* town councilors in settlements that qualify (with respect to the other criteria I have set out) as urban.

The last criterion concerns demography. It is my contention that the population of urban centres significantly surpassed that of villages. On what evidence? For one thing, the largest Chalkidikian villages (prior to the demographic crisis of the mid-1300s) hovered between 500 and 800 in number.<sup>48</sup> Regarding urban centres, we can be confident that the population of Thebes in the 12<sup>th</sup> century was at least 4,000, since it was home to 2,000 Jews.<sup>49</sup> And *The History of the Patriarchs of the Egyptian Church* (which spans the whole 11<sup>th</sup> century) puts the population of Edessa-in-Mesopotamia in 1071 at 35,000.<sup>50</sup> Athens and Amorium (in 12<sup>th</sup> century and 838, respectively) probably hovered somewhere between the above two figures. Spon and Wheeler, who visited Athens in the 1670s (when it was not yet industrialized), estimates its population to have been at 9,000. The chronicler Al-Mas'udi puts the number of deaths during the Arab sack of Amorium (838) at 30,000.<sup>51</sup> Based on these numbers, I would cautiously propose that Middle Rhomanian towns dwarfed even the largest villages.<sup>52</sup> Nevertheless, despite the importance of

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p.185 and Thiriet, 1959, pp.44, 47-48. For Thessaloniki, see the *Timarion* (Romano, 1974, pp.54-55). For Demetrias, Almyros, and Trikala, see Chapter 3.III, 2.A, 6, and 10.

46 It is disputed whether the shops along the Lechaion Road had ceased to exist by the 11<sup>th</sup> century. Crawford believes this to be the case, while Scranton suggests the market was still extant in the 12<sup>th</sup> century. The agora certainly played host to a market in the 12<sup>th</sup> century. Crawford, 1990, p.116, Scranton, 1957, pp.60, 77, Robinson and Weinberg, 1959, pp.227-230.

47 Kazhdan, 1991a, Ferluga, 1982, pp.254-266.

48 Laiou, 2005, p.44.

49 According to Benjamin of Tudela. See Chapter 2.III.12. It is extremely unlikely that Byzantine authorities would have allowed a non-Christian population to outnumber its Christian counterpart. Some may object that, for much of my period of study, Thebes was an archbishopric and a production centre for silk. But this does not necessarily mean that towns which were only bishoprics and did not export silk to Constantinople were significantly less peopled.

50 Mawhūb ibn Manṣūr ibn Mufarrij, 1959, p.305. Mufarrij's figure is loosely confirmed by the 10<sup>th</sup> century geographer Ibn Hawkal, who estimates that Edessa possessed more than 300 churches. Le Strange, 1905, p.103.

51 Al-Mas'udi, 1989, p.119. The town's population may have been swollen by refugees, but this circumstance may have been counterbalanced by the evacuation of non-combatants. Theophanes Continuatus reports that 70,000 people were killed, but he is notoriously biased against the Amorion dynasty. Theophanes Continuatus, 1838, p.130.

52 For contemporaneous population estimates on Erzerum, Nicaea, and Bursa, see Charanis, 1972, p.8.

demography, I will not be assessing its spatial component – whether settlements contracted during the Transition period. This is because about half of them were only founded after 783. For the other half, we do not know what their perimeters were during the ‘Middle period.’

#### IV. Research methods

The research method I used for this project can be easily be summarized. I made heavy use of excavation reports, of which there were hundreds. For my primary sources, I relied chiefly on Byzantine hagiographies, chronicles, imperial bulls and manuals, the “Praktikon of Athens”, and the “Cadaster of Thebes.” I consulted the major state manuals of the Macedonian era – such as the *Farmer’s Law*, the *Book of the Eparch*, and *De Administrando Imperio* – but found they had little direct information on provincial urban communities. I conducted three research trips to Greece. My objectives were three-fold.

First, to study all coins and pottery vessels that the Ephorates were willing to let me access, both published and unpublished. To a large extent, I was able to fulfill this goal in Boeotia. My work there was facilitated both by the distribution of archaeological material in the region (practically everything was stored in Thebes), and by the goodwill of the Byzantine Ephorate of Boeotia, which made available its published numismatic material. I had less success in Thessaly. Partly because storage of Thessalian artifacts is far less centralized, which meant that accessing all of the regions’ relevant artifacts was a more time-consuming affair, I had to be content with examining coins and pottery from Larissa. There were archaeological museums in Volos and Lamia, but for whatever reason they overlooked the Romanian era. In Western Macedonia, due to lack of connections, I came away largely empty-handed, save at Veroia’s Byzantine Museum. The place featured some marble *templons* and primary source citations that provided valuable clues on dating comparable regional *templons* and Veroia’s economic evolution.

The second objective was to visit those among my chosen sites which contain some visible remains and are reachable by public transportation. This allowed me to form a better impression of what living conditions were like for Medieval inhabitants and to photograph and describe the masonry of all surviving buildings (which consisted mainly of fortifications, though I did find the occasional basilica, bathhouse, or unclassifiable building). The more out-of-the-way sites were generally better preserved, with Davlia being a notable exception. Thirdly, there were countless crucial secondary works, essays, and articles that were only available in the public libraries of Athens, namely the National Library of Greece, the French School of Athens, and the British School of Athens. Despite being hindered by unpredictable schedules and the impending relocation of the National Library, I was able consult the great majority of the sources I had set out to obtain.

I should also talk about the breadth of my thematic focus. Rhoanian towns did not exist in a vacuum. So, although I could not give equal emphasis to villages, I built up a framework of the geographical and communication systems of the wider regions: mineral resources, topography, climate, agriculture, geology, wildlife, rivers, and roads. Topography could have a major influence on local temperatures, inasmuch as lakes often create a microclimate in their surroundings (a good example being Lake Copais, as we will see in Chapter 2.I). It was also a key factor in determining a settlement's ease of construction, ease of entrance, and accessibility (both on an internal level and to the outside world).

Regarding man-made land communications, they would have been instrumental in allowing trading vehicles – namely wagons and carts – to connect towns with each other and their hinterlands. In addition, they surely made it safer and less consuming for secular and ecclesiastical officials to move around their *thema*, *tourmai*, *banda* and bishopric (not to mention reporting to their superiors at the archdiocesan level and in Constantinople). That being said, the importance of accessibility should not be overstated. In the Thessaly of the 1880s, the most densely populated rural sectors were found not on the lowlands, but on the slopes of Mount Pelion, the Pindus Mountains, and the Olympus Range.<sup>53</sup> Climate dictated what crops people could grow and – to a very large extent – the vulnerability of crops to natural disasters. Beyond that, the temperatures, precipitation, winds, and humidity of a climate have served as a standard of comfort throughout human history. They give us a powerful motive to stay put in a certain place or to relocate. And climate can have a profound impact on our conclusions regarding the level of sophistication of residences. Thatch, for example, has better insulation value than clay tiles. In that sense, it would have been more useful than clay in a cold climate.<sup>54</sup> Lastly, the character of an environment's geomorphology, fauna, and vegetation determined to what extent locals had access to drinking water, wood (and by extension heating and carpentry material), mulberry trees (on whose importance see chapter 2.III.9), clothes, and food.

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53 Sivignon, 1975, pp.94-95.

54 McCormick, 2013, pp.86-87.

## Chapter 2. Boeotia: Thebes, the Livadian problem, silk, and a few settlements on the fringes

### I. Topography, climate, agriculture, and infrastructure

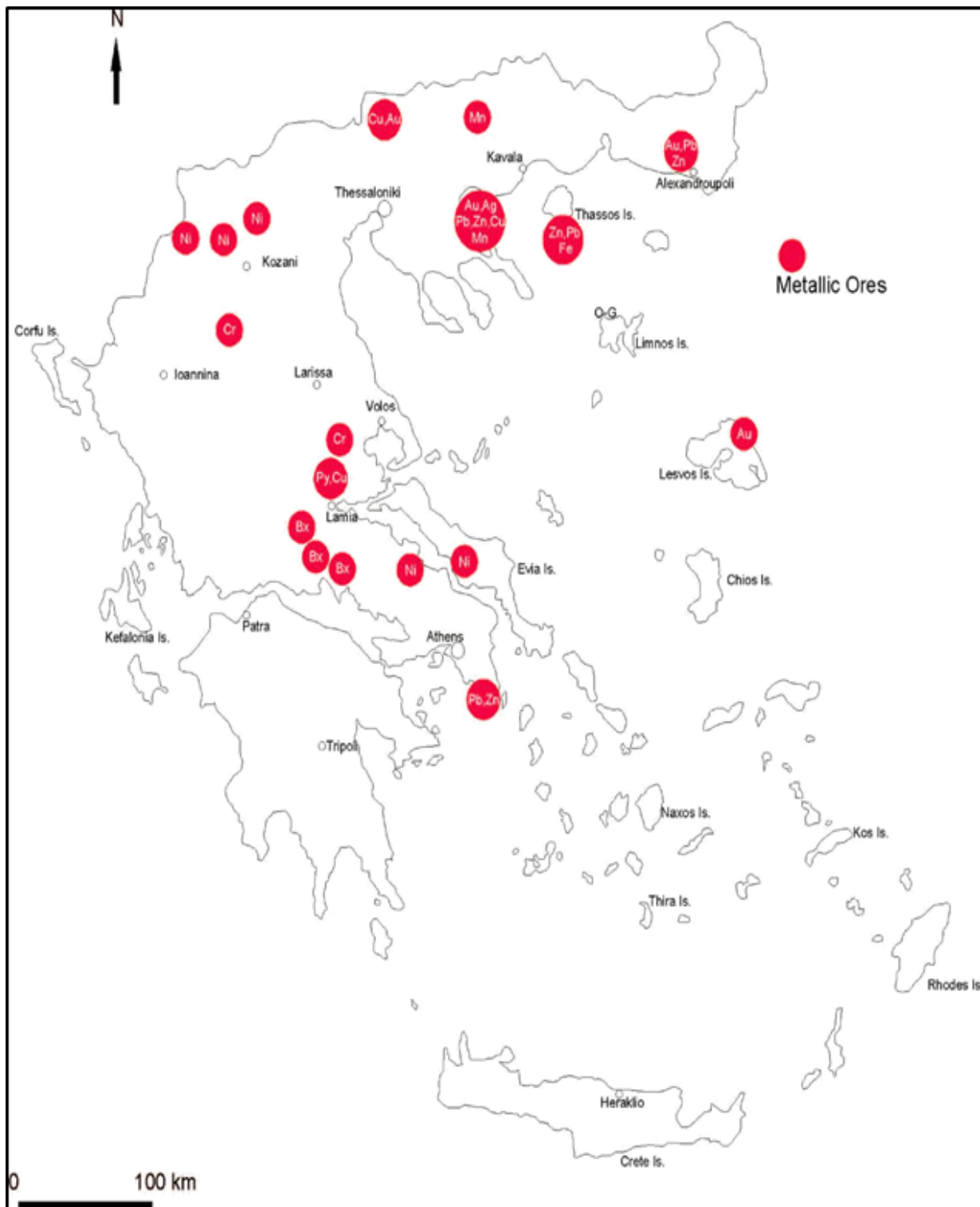
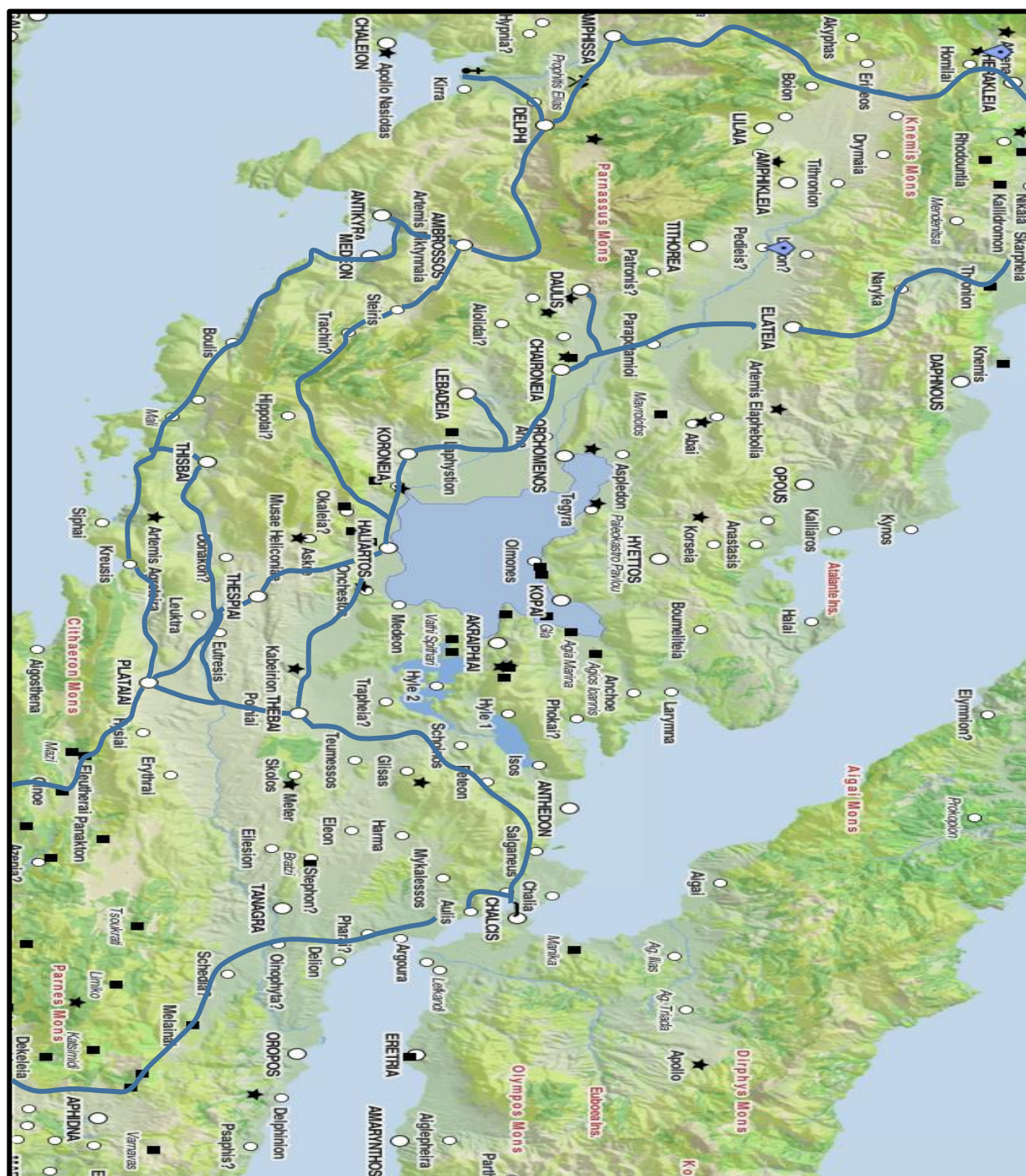


Figure 1. Metallic mineral resources of Greece. Filippidis and Tsirambides, 2012.



**Figure 2.** Possible road and path network in Boeotia during the period 783-1204. The human geography is from Antiquity. Åhlfeldt, 2015. The perimeter of Lake Copais was determined using Knauss, 1987, Farinetti, 2011, and topographical data provided by the Greek company Ktimatologio AS.

use for people absorbed in the urban economic aspects of Boeotia's physical geography, as is my case. The author is interested primarily in mountains: about the rocks they are made of, their height, their morphology, and their location relative to settlements, streams, and other mountains (though not about mountain passes, unfortunately). But if one is methodical and patient, Philippson does make the occasional point about crops and climate – notably in/around the Plain of Kifissos, Lake Copais, the hinterland of Anthedon, the Asopos Valley, and the Drosia Peninsula. Frazer's applicable observations in *Pausanias' description of Greece* are similar in breadth of range and content, although the majority do not seem to correspond to any observations made by Pausanias.

The majority of Boeotia's surface is covered by mountain chains. The main ones are as follows: Mount Parnassos in the northwest, Mount Helicon in the southwest, and Mount Chlomon, Mount Hedylium, Mount Ptoon, and Mount Messapion (also known as Xtipas) in the east. The ranges of Mount Kithairon extends across most of Boeotia's southern approaches. Together with the segment of the Asopos between Asopia and the Aegean, it forms the border between Boeotia and Attica. Except for the Valley of Domvraina, the vast majority of the flat territory is on a northwest-southeast axis. In this category we can include the Asopos Plain, the Teneric Plain, the Plain of Tanagra, the Valley of Domvraina, and the Plain of Kifissos (more commonly known as the Plain of Chaeronea). All these areas are deep inland and encased by mountains. The latter plain was formerly divided by Lake Copais (surface area: 112 km.), on which I shall say a little more in the following paragraphs. There are two further lakes east of the Kifissos Plain and southwest of Anthedon – Iliki and Paralimni. They are ringed by Mount Ptoon, which is probably the main reason why very few settlements have ever developed on the lakes' shores (though the slopes of the mountains surrounding Lake Paralimni are sporadically covered with Kermes Oaks and Pistachio trees.<sup>55</sup> Today, the only inhabited zones are Paralimni's southwest shore and Iliki's northeast corner, in the vicinity of the Plain of Mouriki. In the Valley of Domvraina, two pockets of land are particularly prone to flooding, because they are denuded of sinkholes and lie at the same altitude as their water table.<sup>56</sup> I discuss the consequences of this phenomenon in some detail in Appendix A.2.A.

Boeotia's only significant mineral resource is marble (not shown on fig.1). The rock is quarried today in the vicinity of Livadia, and was quarried in Rhomanian times at Kakoniskiri.<sup>57</sup> The climate falls into the Hot-Summer Mediterranean category for the lowlands (see Appendix D, fig.1). Mean temperatures hover around 15.5 °C in April, 27 °C in July, 14°C in November, and 9 °C in January.<sup>58</sup> The annual rainfall totals 390 mm., of which 75 % is concentrated in the period from October to March. Places high up in the

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<sup>55</sup> Or at least they were in Philippson's days. Philippson, 1951, pp.495-496.

<sup>56</sup> See Knauss, 1992, p.37.

<sup>57</sup> See Prikryl, 2004, p.69, and III.1.A.

<sup>58</sup> Eliassen, 2007. To paraphrase Rackham, I quote these figures for what they are worth. Rackham, 2001, p.121. Greek weather stations are all urban, resulting in an 'urban heat island' effect.



mountains have an intermediary climate between Continental and Mediterranean, known as Alpine Mediterranean. Summers are warm with abundant warm abundant precipitation (including thunderstorms), while winters are harsh, snowy, and long-lasting. There are major variations of precipitation at the foot of the mountain ranges. The mountains result in a downward flow of cold air, with one of the results being that Livadia (shadowed by Mount Helicon) regularly receives snow in January and February. Interestingly, no website (that I know of) displaying weather statistics for Livadia gives the town sub-zero temperatures in the winter. I strongly suspect this is because websites take their data from Boeotia's weather station, which is located in Tanagra – more than 60 km. away from Helicon.

There is cause to believe a microclimate existed around Lake Copais. Theophrastus (c. 371 – c. 287 B.C.) remarked on how there were fewer occurrence of frost-bitten trees in Boeotia when the “Orchomenian lake” was higher. In the same vein, Philippon believes the draining of Copais caused the winters of its basin to become colder. This would explain how he was able to observe a bout of moderately severe frost on the plains in the winter of 1927-1928. Another such bout, which caused the death of all the olive trees ringing the Teneric Plain, was recorded by Rackham in the winter of 1980-1981. Farinetti asserted in 2008 that the Copaic Basin's winter temperatures were actually below average, because the lake produced fog which prevented sunlight from getting through. But she expressed a contrary view in a subsequent publication.<sup>59</sup>

A multitude of rivers and streams, distributed more or less evenly across the plains, provide the latter with abundant sustenance. Foremost among the waterways are the Asopos, the Kifissos, the Melas, the Erkyne, the Thespius (modern Kanavari), and the Oeroe (modern Stavropotamos). Because the soil under the Asopos is karstic, there is a vast aquifer beneath the river, extending as far north as Thebes.<sup>60</sup> Historically, the combination of climate and water abundance made the lowlands well suited to the cultivation of cereal on the Teneric Plain, the Kifissos Valley (particularly the outskirts of Livadia), the bulge-shaped plain south of Anthedon, and the Valley of Domvraina. Hence, Pausanias notes that in the summer the whole of the Teneric Plain as far as Thebes was “for the most part one continuous cereal-field.”<sup>61</sup> Leake, Dodwell, and Philippon echo his words.

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59 Farinetti, 2008, p.122, Farinetti, 2011, p.111, Theophrastus, 1990, 12.3, Philippon, 1951, p.473, Rackham, 1983, p.296. Presumably, Philippon compared the Copaic Basin's pre-drainage and post-drainage temperatures during his travels before 1890, when the drainage took place. Note too, that, Theophrastus reports that in the land around Larissa there used to be a lake, which made the country warmer. Theophrastus, 1990, 14.2. In modern times, the existence of a microclimate around a lake is certainly not unheard of. What tends to happen is that the evaporate moisture from the lake functions as a greenhouse gas. It captures the heat energy from the sun (that would otherwise escape back into space at night) and radiates it back to the surface.

60 Koumantakis, 1980, p.117.

61 Frazer, 1913, p.138.

Less historically attested than cereals are the vine and cotton. In the days of Frazer and Philippson the slopes of Parnassos (between Arachova and Delphi), the Valley of Domvrainia (to the south of Thisvi), and the Plain of Kifissos were largely covered in vineyards, while the same plain was home to many cotton fields.<sup>62</sup> Additionally, the Asopos Valley, the northwestern part of the Drosia peninsula, and the bottom of the valley between Arachova and Delphi were noted by Frazer and Philippson to be fruitful in wine.<sup>63</sup> For its part, Lake Copais was a double-edged sword. On one hand, as far back the Mycenaean era the rivers that fed it had to be constantly diverted by means of canals and dams. When the works were neglected Copais would eventually overflow into its periphery, via caves beneath the lake's bottom. The periphery would become marshland, and – eventually – a breeding ground for malaria.<sup>64</sup> On the other hand, the lake was a major source of fish in Antiquity and (as mentioned on the previous page) possibly the source of an advantageous microclimate.<sup>65</sup> Its marshland favoured the cultivation of melons and giant canes (a valuable type of reed). Lastly, the outskirts of Arachova (on the slopes of Parnassos) are covered in grassland, as is Paliovouna Mountain at 1,200 m. Palynological research has confirmed this pattern. In contrast to Attica, there are no currently no olive trees in Boeotia, except in the Valley of Domvrainia, and (to a limited extent) the Valley of the Muses.<sup>66</sup> The tree may have been more extensive in Medieval times: the Monastery of Osios Meletios received annual offerings of olive oil from local peasants, and the powerful Venetian merchant Romano Mairano resided in Thebes from 1165 to 1171. His business there was oil exporting, meaning there must have been olive trees within Thebes' mountain perimeter.<sup>67</sup> What of Boeotia's general wood flora situation? If it was comparable to its 19<sup>th</sup> century equivalent, as Rackham

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62 Frazer, 1913, p.160, pp.232-233, Philippson, *ibid.* The exceptional diversity of the Kifissan Plain can be attributed in part to its soil. The latter consists of loam, which is reputed for its agricultural suitability.

63 The Drosia peninsula overlooks the Euripos Strait from the west. Frazer, 1913, p.233, Philippson, 1951, p.499, p.502. Close to Drosia, there used to be a river called Ritsona, from which the village of Ritsona draws its name. It flowed into the Gulf of Evia, and its delta was rich in grape vines, olives, and cereals. A little further south, in the part of the Asopos Valley between Agios Thomas and the Gulf of the Evia, the plains was once dotted with wild pear trees. Philippson, *ibid.*, p.516.

64 The problem of malaria was younger than Copais. The first definite references to the disease in Greece date to the 5th century B.C. It may have been introduced via contact with the Carthaginians, who traded extensively with malaria-ridden lands (namely the coast of West Africa). Simoons, 1998, p.245. In any case, it was partly to eliminate the problem of malaria that Copais was drained in the 1890s. Dodwell, 1819, p.212, Fiedler, 1841, p.106.

65 Farinetti, 2008, pp.122, 130, Agatharchides, 1843, p.192.

66 Philippson, 1948, p.i, Philippson, 1951, p.499, Frazer, 1913, pp.80, 160, p.233, Rackham, 1983, pp.313, 328. There were olive trees in the Lower Asopos valley in Antiquity, on the coast southwest of Thisvi in the early 19th century (according to Leake), and in Arachova in the generations of Frazer and Philippson. Leake, 1835a, p.2228. In addition, things seem to have changed since then. Currently, the lowest temperatures in Arachova during the December-February period frequently fall below - 4.00 °C – cold enough to kill young olive trees. Vossen, 2007, p.4, Meteoblue, 2006. Dicaearchus, 1589, 'Tanagra.' I myself recently travelled by car between Arachova and Zemenos Arachova (a hamlet approximately 3 km. away). I distinguished no olive tree, although the car was moving at a slow speed. Rackham contends that moderately steep hills are used to grow olives, but he does not specify where. Rackham, *ibid.*, p.295.

67 Morozzo and Lombardo, 1940, nos.193-198, 201, 203, 207, Tzavella, 2011, p.224, Nikolaos Methones, 1949, p.66.

and Dunn essentially contend <sup>68</sup>, then about the third of the region's lowlands were covered by scrubs and bushes. This postulation is not unreasonable, in light of the several crop parallels between Antiquity and the Late Modern period. Moreover, as of the 1970s scrubland (particularly the Kermes oak, on whose significance see III.9) was omnipresent in the gaps between the cultivated fields. Such an environment would have provided residents of urban communities with a vast (but not necessarily complimentary) supply of wood for fuel and heating. If they wanted carpentry/tanning/dyeing/extracts material, on the other hand, urbanites would likely have had to venture into the mountains. <sup>69</sup> The latter are (currently) the only part of Boeotia to be thickly covered in woodland. For instance, the north slope of Kithairon above 800 m. is covered by Greek fir. The same tree covers the north and south sides of Helicon (above 900 m. and 800 m., respectively) and Parnassos between 1,100 m. and 1,900 m. In addition, pine occurs extensively in the mountains surrounding Ritsona and Livadostro. <sup>70</sup>

Informative though they are on Boeotia's pre-Modern agricultural/fishing/fuel/building potential, the above three pages' information do not prove the region was as productive in the Middle Rhomanian period as it is today. Some valuable evidence is provided by the Leiden-Ljubljana Project and the "Praktikon of Athens." <sup>71</sup> The Project's findings show that eight Rhomanian hamlets and villages – covered with surface ceramics dated to the 11<sup>th</sup>-14<sup>th</sup> centuries – existed in the region of Tanagra (dimensions: roughly 20 hectares). The presence of eight settlements – in a space only marginally larger than the Kadmeia (dimensions: roughly 18 hectares) – surely constitutes evidence of a highly productive soil. The Praktikon of Athens indicates that in the three registered villages of the Asopos Valley, a remarkable 95 % of the population consisted of *zeugaratoi*, *boidatoi*, and *aktemones* – peasants who rented land and who owned one or two oxen. <sup>72</sup> If we tentatively assign each of the 14 villages a population of 650 <sup>73</sup>, it can be argued that a minimum of 8,600 people worked the land for a living in the Asopos Valley. The total sum could be even higher if the Praktikon had not come down to us mutilated. More, the Asopos Valley represents but a small fraction of Boeotia's cultivable territory. I have not spoken of the Plain of Tanagra, the Aonian Plain, the Teneric Plain, or the Kifissos Valley. Notably, too, one of the Church of Skripou's four

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68 Dunn, 1992, p.242, Rackham, 1983, p.298.

69 Regarding the cost of wood, throughout the 9th-12th centuries much of the scrubland was located on land held by the state. Dunn, 1992, p.266, Ahrweiler, 1966, pp.141-142, Hendy, 1985, pp.87-90. For a sense of the manifold exploitation possibilities that trees presented to Byzantines, see the 10th century *Geoponica*. Andrew, 2011.

70 Rackham, 1983, pp.307, 318.

71 Bintliff et al., 2004-2005, pp.577-578, Granstrem et al, 1976.

72 Dunn, 1995, p.770, Granstrem et al., 1976.

73 This estimate is based on the populations of the largest villages in Chalkidiki ca. 1300. Laiou, 2005, p.44.

founding inscriptions describes its patron as “rejoicing in possessions and in the best of livestock” <sup>74</sup>, and the Theme of Hellas provided famine relief to Constantinople in 1037. <sup>75</sup>

Turning to land communications, there were doubtless tracks and unpaved roads – which the Romans referred to as *agelodromion*, *hamaxegoi*, *xylophorikon*, *monopation*, and *plakotoi*– in every corner of Boeotia. But we are only informed about paved roads, specifically the ones which presented a region-wide or trans-regional character. These were generally known as “imperial roads” (*basilikai hodoi*) or “public roads” (*demosiai hodoi*) and <sup>76</sup> were administered by the *demosios dromos* (the Antique descendant of the *cursus publicus*). Throughout the Middle Rhomanian period, it seems that provincials were responsible for performing *angareia* (providing stables, wagons, and transport animals, as well as unpaid labour) with regard to road construction and repair. <sup>77</sup>

The public roads added up to a fairly comprehensive network (fig. 2). Its spine was the main north-south public highway, which Anna Komnene refers to as the *demosia leophoros*. <sup>78</sup> The Peutinger Table and the *Geographica* <sup>79</sup> indicate that the avenue enters Boeotia via Mount Knemis. Its first two stations are Elatia and Chaeronea (the latter referred to as ‘Ceroni’ or ‘Cheroni’), after which it runs alongside the modern Livadia-Thebes highway until Aliartos. Livadia is not mentioned as a station, but at the least it must have been narrowly skirted by the *demosia*. Between Alalkomenes and Aliartos, there was a bottleneck, for the road was encased by Lake Copais and Mount Helicon. This segment would have been a choice location for armies or brigands to control. Indeed, in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century Leake reports that robbers frequently ambushed travelers at the bottleneck. <sup>80</sup> Whether it was similarly exploited during Middle Rhomanian era I do not know.

After Aliartos the *demosia* passes through the southeastern foothills of Mount Helicon and serves Episkopi (Rhomanian Zaratova <sup>81</sup>). It does not go through Thebes, instead proceeding to Plataea. Thence it leads to Attica and the Peloponnese, via the Pass of Kaza, Eleutherai, and the pass on the current site

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74 The patron was a certain Leo, *protospatharios* and *epi ton oikeiakon*. Dunn, 1995, p.770, Sotiriou, 1931, p.156.

75 In conjunction with the Theme of the Peloponnese. Skylitzes, 1973, p.384.

76 The Antique Roman equivalent of *basilikai hodoi* was *viae publicae*. Such roads contained four layers, the uppermost one of which was formed of either stone blocks or gravel. Henceforth I will also refer to them as first-class roads. Belke, 2008, p.296, Smith, 1890.

77 Our witnesses include Symeon Magistros, Michael Psellos, *angareia* exemptions in the Athonite archives, and Constantine Porphyrogennetos. See, Dunn, 1993, pp.266-268, Stauridou-Zaphraka, 1982, nos. 57, 123.30/44, 135, 138-139, Lavra, I, no. 38.36-37, no. 48.34-36, Constantine Porphyrogennetos, 1993, vol. 1, pp.673, 677.

78 Anna Komnene, 1937-1976, vol.2, p.24.

79 The Peutinger Table dates to the 4th-5th centuries. The *Geographica* is an updated edition of the ca.700 century *Ravenna Cosmography*, itself a textual version of the Peutinger Table. Both works suffer from numerous omission of places and jumbling of place names. In addition, they omit distance figures. The *Geographica* was assembled in the 12th century by an Italian geographer named Guido of Pisa. Guido of Pisa, 1860, p.537.

80 Specifically at Petra. Leake, 1835a, p.137.

81 Dunn, 1995, p.759, Bintliff and Snodgrass, 1988, pp.175-217. Zaratova is not given as a station in the Peutinger Table, but it is given in the *Geographica*. Guido of Pisa, 1860, p.537.

of Agios Sotiras.<sup>82</sup> It was probably still fully operational (e.g. from Thessaloniki) by 833, when Gregory of Dekapolis travelled overland from Thessaloniki to Corinth.<sup>83</sup> Between Aliartos and Plataea a loop road serves Thebes.<sup>84</sup> One might find it odd that the public avenue avoided the town, but this is to adopt a Medieval Romanists' perspective. The Thebes of Constantine the Great, Theodosius, and Anastasius was much less important than its late 8<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup> century counterpart, inasmuch as it did not hold any ecclesiastical or administrative responsibilities. Moreover, its region is implied by the *Expositio Totius Mundi* (a manuscript from ca. 300 A.D.) to be agriculturally poor.<sup>85</sup>

I cannot confirm whether the modern road into Attica which traverses the Passes of Pyli and Phyle (east of Kaza and Agios Sotiras<sup>86</sup>) saw use by the Rhomaioi. The possibility cannot be dismissed, since there was a strong fortress at Fili in Classical times. We have more certainty regarding the two current Athens-Euripos highways, which runs through the Pass of Tatoï, (formerly the Pass of Dekeleia), Avlona (or its northern vicinity), and Inoi. At least one route existed in Classical times.<sup>87</sup> Moreover, it would be surprising if Rhomanian Euripos and Athens were not directly connected, given their ecclesiastical, administrative, and commercial importance.<sup>88</sup> There was certainly a road between Chalkis and Thebes, which I believe followed the modern Mouriki-Loukisia-Drosia itinerary. Group 1 in the Cadaster of Thebes (composed of 11 *stichoi*<sup>89</sup>) was west of the *proasteion* Megale – presumably the terminological ancestor of the Megale Chalia peninsula<sup>90</sup>, 5 km. northwest of Chalkis – and was bordered to the north or northeast by a “tall mountain.” This mountain probably belonged to the Mesapion, which shadows Megale Chalia to the east. The group's northern or northeastern limit ran alongside a road – a *σπράταν* – coming from Megale. Confirming this information, Benjamin of Tudela implies that one can travel directly from Thebes to Euripos.<sup>91</sup>

No source mentions a Thebes-Livadostro road, but one clearly existed by the 12<sup>th</sup> century: in 1102 Livadostro's port was used by a pilgrim on his way to Palestine (see III.8). If there was no road during the

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82 Known in Antiquity as the Three Heads. Note that the *Geographica*'s first Attican stop is not Elefsina, as in the Peutinger Table, but Piraeus. Ibid. Yet the Plataea-Piraeus segment is incompatible with the following ones: Piraeus- Athens and Athens-Elefsina. This arrangement would force travelers bound for Athens and Elefsina to go to Piraeus and then double back. Therefore, the *Geographica* is surely incorrect.

83 Ignatios the Deacon, 1926, p.23.

84 According to Pausanias. He does not describe its quality. Pausanias, 1918, 9.4.4, 9.23-9.4.

85 Zoumbaki, 2012, p.77, Rouge, 1966.

86 Tzavella, 2012, p.150, Wrede, 1924, p.154.

87 Smith et al., 1890, Attica.

88 Euripos was a bishopric, a foreign customs point, the seat of an *abydikos* (an official in charge of navigation), and one of the ports listed in the Roman chrysobulls to the Venetians. Constantine Porphyrogenetos, 1829, p.657, Svoronos, 1959, p.34, Thiriet, 1959, pp.93-94. Note that in both of the above sources, Euripos is referred to as 'Chripou.'

89 Svoronos, 1959, pp.12, 47.

90 Commonly known as the Drosia Peninsula.

91 “From Thebes, it is a day's journey to Egripo.” Benjamin of Tudela, 1907, p.10.

much-earlier) existence of the Emirate of Crete, Livadostrans would have been seriously inconvenienced. In those years, with a few intermissions, travelling the Aegean without a powerful escort was an excellent way to end up on the slave markets of Kandia or Tarsus.<sup>92</sup> Thus, Livadostro would have been effectively cut off from the outside world (given that it is ringed by tall, steep mountains). There was another international port in Domvraina Bay by the 10<sup>th</sup> century (see III.3), though I suspect that Lidavostro could have handled more traffic. This is because it lies in a lowland pocket, about 600 m. wide and 1.2 km. long. Therefore, there would have been plenty of room for wharfs. By contrast, in Domvraina Bay, mountains come down steeply to the water's edge.<sup>93</sup> The Bay's handicap is partially offset by marine topography. Two of its natural harbors have been shown to be very deep, and in the 10<sup>th</sup> century it was endowed with a port called Vathys, which means "deep" in Ancient Greek (see fig. 32 and III.3). And as late as the 6<sup>th</sup> century there was a connection from Thebes to the port of Anthedon (via Mouriki), but I cannot claim it was operational during my period of interest. A German team surveyed the site in the 1960s and found some allegedly Rhomanian ceramic sherds in the waters of the ancient harbour. But they did not present their specimens in detail (see III.8).

There appear to have been two longitudinal communication infrastructures on Boeotia's western periphery. One connected the Bay of Antikyra to a population center further east (either the Plain of Kifissos or the Valley of Domvraina) via Amvrossos (modern Distomo) and the Monastery of Osios Loukas. At Amvrossos, a road branched off and ran to the Bay of Itea, via Delphi. One of the first building erected at Osios Loukas Monastery was a hostel for travelers, and Pausanias implies that a means of communication existed from Mount Tilphousion (approximately 9 km. west of Aliartos) to Delphi.<sup>94</sup> Moreover, it was on a road near Chryson<sup>95</sup> (ca. 943) that a monk on his way to Rome received a vision concerning Osios Loukas, while Niketas Khoniates tells us Roger of Sicily landed at a Chrissan port in 1147 and ventured inland: "καὶ τῷ Κρισσαίῳ λιμένι καθορισμισθεὶς τοῖς ἐν μεσογεῖῳ θαρρεῖ προσβαλεῖν..."<sup>96</sup>

Lastly, the Peutinger Table shows a road between Krefsis (Medieval Livadostro) and modern Antikyra, but it gives the distance as 19.3 km (as the crow flies), which is erroneous : the correct distance is 51.5 km.<sup>97</sup> Also, the road is absent from the *Geographica*. That said, the historical authors familiar with the coast between Thisvi and Antikyra – Pausanias, Leake, Meyer, Hammond, and Gomme – confirm that

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92 For the threat posed by pirates in the 9th-10th centuries, see Vasiliev, 1947, Da Costa-Louillet, pp.314, 322, 328, 367, Osios Loukas, 1994, p.4f.

93 Except for an 800 m. x 100 m. pocket of level land across the bay from the Church of Agios Ioannis. Gomme, 1911/1912, p.204.

94 Leake, 1835a, p.138. Note too, that there was a 10th century *metochion* of Osios Loukas at Paralia Distomou, 3 km. east of Antikyra. Stikas, 1970, pp.224-242.

95 Chryson is a few kilometers west of Delphi. Osios Loukas, 1994, p.110.

96 By "Chrissan", Khoniates refers to the Chrissan Plain, north of the Bay of Itea. Niketas Choniates, 1975, p.73.

97 See Chapter 3, fig. 13.

there was a footpath, though they emphasize its difficult topography.<sup>98</sup> West of Antikyra, and all the way to Nikopolis, there was certainly a road in the Middle Rhomanian period. It was popular with people coming from Rhomaioi-occupied Otranto, particularly during the existence of the Emirate of Crete and when the Bulgarians cut land communications between Epirus and Thessaly/Western Macedonia.<sup>99</sup> One might think that the route faded into insignificance after the Rhomaioi annexed Bulgaria and were driven out of Apulia by the Normans. But in fact, it was still in use in the 12<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>100</sup>

## II. Historical context

It has often been asserted by scholars that Slavic societies took up residence in Boeotia in huge numbers during the Transition Period. My thesis focuses chiefly on the Rhomaioi. But in order to discuss the economic destiny of the latter people, it is desirable to know how much control they had over Central/Northwestern Greece from the late 8<sup>th</sup> century onwards, and to provide some historical context. For the Slavs could be a disruptive force, being prone to acts of aggression (as shown by the siege of Thessaloniki in 677, the Sagoudatai and Belegezites' plundering of the Thessalian coast in the 680s, the siege of Patras during the reign of Nikephoros I, and a revolt by an unnamed Slavic tribe "in the neighbourhood of Thessaloniki" during the life of Gregory the Dekapolite<sup>101</sup>). Moreover, it is desirable to know to what extent the Slavs were absorbed into the local culture. The more they embraced Rhomanian values, the more justification I have to talk about them and (presumably) the more amicable they became towards the 'natives.' With that said, the eclipse of Roman political authority in the Balkans in the 7<sup>th</sup> century did not spell the end of Roman culture. There were places – dozens of square kilometers of inland Dalmatia, notably – where no large-scale Slavic/Bulgarian migrations occurred. Their residents were left unmolested, and so their dietary, clothing, residential, and linguistic customs continued more or less uninterrupted.<sup>102</sup> But whether such was the case for Boeotia, or whether its ethnic character was reconfigured by Slavic settlers, is doubtful.<sup>103</sup> The chief minister Stavrakios marched out against the Slavs

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98 Hence Leake observes: "As we proceed [from Antikyra to Thisve], the hills become very steep and terminate...in the sea, affording...an extremely rugged and difficult path along the side of them. Leake, 1835a, pp.523-524, Gomme, 1911-1912, p.205 no. 2, Meyer, 1931, p.170, Hammond, 1951, p.104, Pausanias, 1918, 10.36.7.

99 Avramea, 2002, p.73, Soustal, 1981, pp.88-96.

100 Guido of Pisa, 1860, p.539, Idrisi, 1999, p.309.

101 Dvornik, 1926, pp.35-36.

102 Milošević, 1996, p.39.

103 It is true that Bogdanos, a site about 10 km. northwest of Exarchos which has convincingly been assigned a post-864 *terminus post quem*, is named after the Slavic form of Theodoros (God-Given). But this is not enough to make a case for mass Slavic settlement in Boeotia. 103 Nor is the fact that Akamiros (an *archon* of the Velzetia tribe), took part in the 799 plot to declare one of Constantine VI's brothers emperor irrefutable evidence. Although the brother in question was residing in Athens, the Velzetia could have been based

of Hellas in 783: “Stavrakios...went to Thessalonike and Hellas, subjected them all [the Sklavinian tribes], and made them tributary to the Empire.” He then proceeded into the Peloponnese, where he enjoyed equal success. By “Hellas”, Theophanes is either referring to the Theme of Hellas, or the geographic space.<sup>104</sup> Either way, Stavrakios did not necessarily encounter any Slavs in Boeotia.

That being said, even if Boeotia remained people strictly by Rhomaioi, we ought to consider the possibility that the activities of the Slavs in neighboring regions occasionally transcended their domains. For instance, the Velegezitai provided food supplies to the populace of Thessaloniki during the Slavic siege of 677-678, despite being based in Thessaly.<sup>105</sup> One case more relevant to Boeotia, is provided by the revolt of the Melingoi and Ezeritai in 920-921.<sup>106</sup> Although the two tribes were based in the Peloponnese, Zakythinos alleges that they carried their arms into the Themes of Nikopolis and Hellas and plundered them.<sup>107</sup> He does not support his claim with a primary source. All the same, it is interesting to note that Gulf of Corinth crossings appear to have been curtailed for several years after the 920-921 revolt. When Osios Loukas attempted to cross the Gulf ca. 928 – setting sail from a Peloponnesian port – he was arrested and beaten by the harbour-master, who feared Loukas was the vanguard of a raid.<sup>108</sup> Curta implicitly identifies the feared raid as Bulgarian.<sup>109</sup> There had been one Bulgarian raid within recent memory, ca. 918 (see III.11). But it is much more likely that the harbour-master’s concerns were directed

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in Attica, Thessaly, or the Peloponnese (see Theophanes, 1997, pp.651-652). Two Bichetoi *archontes* from the Theme of Hellas are attested. They date to the 9th century (see Oikonomides and Nesbitt, 1994, p.53, Cheynet et al., 2016, p.294). But the Bichetoi could have resided in a non-Boeotian part of Hellas (Theophanes, 1997, pp. 651-652). The case for mass Slavic settlement becomes even more unlikely if we consider the conclusions of Stamatoyannopoulos et al.’s Peloponnesian investigation. In summary, the latter effort consisted of taking genetic samples of 241 individuals originating from all districts of the Peloponnese and seeing how they compared with the corresponding samples of populations of the Slavic homelands [modern-day Ukraine, Poland, Belorussia, and Russia]. It was found that the two assemblages bore very little similarity to each other (see Stamatoyannopoulos et al, 2017).

104 Theophanes, 1997, p.630. Regarding the precise extent of the Theme of Hellas, we know that its *strategos* was responsible for defending Euripos from the Saracens ca. 883 (see John Skylitzes, 2010, p.146) and that he (the *strategos*) was usually based in Thebes from the early 10th century onwards. Also, during the lifetime of Michael Akominatos, the *strategos*’ authority was reportedly recognized from the Vale of Tempe to Lakedaimonia (Sparta). Michael Akominatos, 1881, 1, p.177, 2, p.137. Hence there is a case to be made that as of the 780s, the Theme included Boeotia and Thessaly. For the inclusion of the Peloponnese, see Oikonomides and Nesbitt, 1994, p.62, Kazhdan, 1991, pp.1620–1621, and Laurent, 2016. On speculative grounds, Zakythinos and Ostrogorsky contend that the Theme probably included Thessaly, the Peloponnese, Epirus, Evia, and Central Greece, respectively. See Zakythinos, 1965, p.55, Ostrogorsky, 1952, p.64. For the limits of the geographic space of Hellas, the relevant 8th century authors indicate that Hellas encompassed all of modern-day Greece south of Thermopylae. Charanis, 1970, pp.2-4, Charanis, 1955, p.162. Note that this situation may have evolved in later centuries. In the early 900s Kaminiates speaks of Thessaloniki as being part of Hellas. Kaminiates, 2000, p.27. The 12th century author Tzetzes puts the border at the Vale of Tempe. Tzetzes, 1963, book 10, line 280.

105 Stathakopoulos, 2004, p.356.

106 Constantine Porphyrogennetos, 1993, ch. 51.

107 Zakythinos, 1945, p.52.

108 Osios Loukas, 1994, ch. 38.

109 Curta, 2011, p.201.



towards the Peloponnesian Slavs. Any Bulgarian would have come from the north shore, and Osios Loukas was sailing from the Peloponnese. To my knowledge, this is the last mention of the Slavs in Boeotia, whether possible or definite.

### III. Urban settlements, artifacts, regional economic specialties and demography

#### 1. Thebes

I will begin the chapter's main body by looking at Thebes, the Boeotian community on which we are best informed. Thebes seems to have emerged relatively unscathed from the economic and political chaos of the transition from Antiquity to the Middle Ages. This can be attributed in part to Thebes' distance from the sea, in part to its strategic position on the Gulf of Corinth-Aegean trade route, and in part to the non-negligible steepness of the Kadmeia's western and eastern slopes. These advantages help explain why it served as an archbishopric at the time of the *Notitia 2* (ca. 700-787). Still, it does seem that Thebes suffered as a result of the Transition Period. This was reflected by its loss of the rank of archbishopric position by the time of the *Notitia 3* (787-800)<sup>110</sup>, the absence of local ceramic, currency, or architectural finds dated 600-800, and the abandonment of non-Kadmeia districts in the 7<sup>th</sup> century. Consequently, there was plenty of scope for recovery during the 'Middle Byzantine' period.

Before going further, it must be stressed that scholars interested in medieval Thebes face acute difficulties. Because most of the Rhomanian strata lie under the densely populated modern municipality, excavators must nearly always be content with rescue excavations. Inevitably, this results in reports which are rushed and somewhat vague. It also means that a major portion of the Rhomanian strata have not been accessed, and that the amount of material evidence is therefore misleadingly slim. Short of permanently evacuating Thebes, there is nothing we can do to fully resolve the second problem. In going through this chapter I will bear the 'inaccessibility problem' in mind where it is pertinent to do so. But the situation is not entirely discouraging. On the contrary, the state of the evidence for Thebes has improved by leaps and bounds over the past four decades. We have a typo-chronological list of the types of pottery that the Rhomaioi routinely employed, courtesy of Vroom. Some may point out that Vroom's relevant work is based chiefly on rural finds. This is true, but I see no reason why the types of pottery used in the

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<sup>110</sup> In the *Notitia 3*, Thebes is a see of Athens, under the name Θηβαϊδος.

countryside should not have existed in towns. We know the key architectural features of towns in Greece and have reliable information on the demographic evolution of Thebes. Dozens of buildings and hundreds of coins in Thebes have entered the archaeological record. One further addendum before proceeding: I have decided to incorporate the region of Phokis into this chapter. Information on the district is too limited to justify an individual chapter, and Phokis and Boeotia formed part of the same Theme in Rromanian times.

### Part 1: Architecture and construction work

This section is divided into three categories: religious, secular, and functionally unclassifiable. The first term refers to edifices which had a strictly religious function, and the second refers to edifices which served a secular purpose.

#### A. Religious architecture

Fifteen Middle Rromanian churches or cemeteries have been brought to the light of day in Thebes. Of these, eight are so thinly documented or dated that we need not concern ourselves with them. For some of the structures are well-described, but have no proof to support their dating. The others are dated on the basis of ceramic and coins, but not described. They have merely been assumed to have a religious function. I will therefore settle for discussing the remaining seven churches, which have been convincingly dated. Two Rromanian churches are visible today outside the Kadmeia, but they too far away from it (roughly 1.5 km. to the southeast) to qualify as constructions belonging to Thebes. Nevertheless, I have described them in Appendix A.I.E.

1. On the western banks of the Khrysoroas River, a chapel was founded in the 10<sup>th</sup>-11<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>111</sup> Known to archaeologists as the Anonymous Chapel, its walls were made of carefully-worked poros blocks, and its floor covered in marble. Its spiritual character is attested by the presence of an adjacent cemetery.<sup>112</sup>
2. There was a second Anonymous Chapel on 61 Epanimondas Street.<sup>113</sup> This one shared the architectural traits of its Khrysoroas counterpart, except its poros blocks were immaculately worked and interspersed with bricks. I assume it belonged to the Church, because a secular founder would probably not have been content to remain anonymous.

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<sup>111</sup> Symeonoglou, 1985, p. 234.

<sup>112</sup> Diktio, 1997, pp.110-111.

<sup>113</sup> Oikonomides and Nesbitt, 1996. See also Kiss 2000, pp.60-63, and Warwick, 1908.

3. The third site was located during the construction of the Archaeological Museum.<sup>114</sup> It remains comprised a handful of finely carved, pyramidal capitals, and two small pillars. Both capitals and pillars were decorated with carvings of a distinctly spiritual character. For instance, one of the capitals was inscribed with a medallion surrounding monogram. Diktio sees this as evidence that the site was a church, but I do not entirely agree with him – monogram medallions often belonged to secular benefactors.<sup>115</sup> Therefore, it is possible that at least part of the church (including the capital) was founded, renovated or improved by someone unaffiliated with the Church.
4. There was a six-tomb cemetery on Osiou Klimenta Street.<sup>116</sup> Judging by the material remains, it was far more modest in design and clientele than its Greater Thebes counterpart (fig.2). The masonry of the walls was entirely rubble and bound together by mud (although the walls themselves were coated with plaster) and each grave was shared by two corpses. On a related note, the head of one of the two corpses which survived to the present-day was covered with tiles. The other corpse is that of child, whose bones were removed from a tomb at some point and cast to the foot of the southern wall. The deceased may have been wage-earners-people near the lower end of the social pyramid. The site possibly remained in use for most of the Middle period. For one thing, a coin of Leo VI the Wise (886-912) and ceramic from the late 9<sup>th</sup> century was found in tomb no. 4. For another, the morphology of tomb no. 3 was quite prevalent in 11<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup> century Thebes.
5. In the Astegoi quarters, beyond the eastern limit of the Kadmeia, the vestiges of another basilica was identified in the 1990s. Two graves were present in a destruction layer adjacent to the western wall. They contained a set of rich belongings: two crosses (one bone and the other ivory), an iron knife blade, a semi-lunate brass earring, and two buttons (one bronze and the other bone). Yet the basilica's construction period is unestablished. On one hand a pit dug in the two westernmost rooms

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114 Koilakou, 1998, p.104.

115 Kyriakakis, 1974, pp.32-72, Walter, 1976, pp.113-127.

116 Koilakou, 2001-2004, p.43.

revealed pottery from the 12<sup>th</sup> century. On the other, there are six additional graves in the nave. These incorporate much older components – quite possibly from the Late Antique Roman period.<sup>117</sup>

6. Equally worth pointing out is Agios Grigorios Theologos, a single-nave basilica founded or renovated by an imperial official.<sup>118</sup> The richness of the basilica's decoration – wall frescoes, a marble floor with geometric designs, a marble sarcophagus – was unique for Middle Byzantine Thebes. It also confirms the identity of builder/renovator, if we subscribe to idea that the diocese could scarcely have afforded lavish decorations. There is an inscription in the east wall of the basilica belonging to Vasileios, the aforementioned imperial official.<sup>119</sup> In short, it states that Vasileios restored Agios Grigorios. Based on the inscription and four coins finds of Theophilos (829-842) and Leo the Wise (886-912), Agios Grigorios has been dated to 872. At first, this conclusion seems debatable. The message of the inscription – that the basilica was restored – is not grounds for skepticism. Vasileios may have mean that he was restoring a demolished church, or one that had previously existed. But inscriptions themselves can be unreliable. If a craftsman was poorly educated – if he was partly innumerate – he may have cut the wrong numbers for the date. There is at least one case of a broadly contemporary inscription – a calendar in 9<sup>th</sup> century Naples – whose letters were full of errors.<sup>120</sup> As for numismatic evidence, it can give us a *terminus ante quem* but not a *terminus post quem*. Fortunately, we have another resource at our disposal. Agios Grigorios had a *templon* containing two double-sided closure panels. The panels are thought to have been produced by a workshop near Thebes that was active in the second half of the 9<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>121</sup> Moreover, the octagonal form of the colonnettes, the ornamentation of the post sections (vine scrolls flanked by ivy-leaves), and the decoration on one of the panels (a cross flanked by vine scrolls) have fully identical counterpart in the Church of the

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117 Examining the western's wall's masonry is not an option, as the excavation was of the rescue type.

118 Diktio, 1994, p.119.

119 Loaec, 2016.

120 Cooley, 2012, p.72. See also Shahîd, 1984, p.318, and Jackson, 1913, p.85.

121 Sotiriou, 1924, pp.1-26, Vassilaki, 2013, p.311.

Dormition at Skripou, founded in 873.<sup>122</sup> So it is likely that Agios Grigorios was indeed founded in 872. On a more tentative note, the basilica contained six interior tombs, not including the sarcophagus. It is unclear from existing field reports if any objects were discovered in the tombs. However, if such is the case, the objects might allow us to further narrow down the basilica's date.

7. At the junction of Panagioti Drakou and Kadmeou streets, 3.40 m. below the street surface, excavation work revealed a 2.70 m. long wall section. It was originally covered in a 0.55 cm. thick white coating (presumably plaster), of which only a very small fragment had survived. West of the wall, and above a clay-slab floor, were found an embossed architrave with engraved decorations. These decorations are intricate and peculiar. The architrave's bottom half is covered by three adjacent circles, ray patterns, roses, and clovers. Its upper surface, on the other hand, exhibits a jeweled crown of thorns with an ivy leaf in the middle. The artistic style of the engravings is seen on sculptures in the Dormition of Skripou. We should also note the presence of a marble stanchion a few steps away from the architrave. It too contains engravings which are stylistically datable to the 9<sup>th</sup> or 10<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>123</sup> The religious element (e.g. the spine crown) might suggest that the building belonged to the Church. But it could just as easily have been a private chapel.
8. The state of the evidence for mortuary buildings is mediocre, perhaps because most of them were eventually recycled. Certainly the reuse of cemeteries was not taboo in Rhoanian Greece. It is attested, among other places, in Nafpaktos, Drymos, Kryoneris, Thessaloniki, Olympia, and Emborio.<sup>124</sup> At any rate, Thebes' main cemeteries were on Kastellia and Astegoi until the 10<sup>th</sup> century. Symeonoglou asserts that thereafter their role was assumed by a fairly contiguous cemetery.<sup>125</sup> It was 200 m. southeast of the Kadmeia, on ground formerly occupied by the sanctuary of Apollo Ismenios. About ten tombs have been excavated here. They

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122 Megaw, 1966, pp.6, 9.

123 Sotiriou, 1924.

124 Poulou-Papadimitriou et al., 2012.

125 Symeonoglou, 1985, pp. 170, 236-23.

were accompanied by a few bronze fibulae, finger-rings, earrings, vases and lamps, and 12<sup>th</sup>-13<sup>th</sup> century coins.

9. To this funerary site I will add another, discovered after Symeonoglou published his 1985 monograph. It lies roughly 300 m. east of the citadel, on the eastern slope of Kastellia.<sup>126</sup> Its northern and western edges were carved into the hill, while its southern and eastern sides were delineated by walls made of poros blocks. In the northern section there were two burial vaults (which was empty) and two skeletons – one fully intact, one partially. Along the southern face and at a height of 1.10 m. from the floor in each case lay three rectangular blocks decorated with natural and geometric engravings. Koilakou refers to the above part of the site as a necropolis, but it would be more accurate to call it a cemetery. At the base of the western limit, two coins were found, one an anonymous *folles* dated to the first half of the 1070s and the other a *tetarteron*<sup>127</sup> of Manuel I. A tentative date for the ‘necropolis’ would thus be late 11<sup>th</sup>-late 12<sup>th</sup> century. Incidentally, the site consisted of more than a funerary chamber. Under the east wall, investigation has revealed part of a well, at least 3.50 m. deep. In the well was collected an anonymous *folles* dating to 1050-1060. A clay pipeline led from the well to a tank in an adjoining chamber (adjacent to the south wall). Interestingly, the tank’s interior was coated with hydraulic mortar, and it was perforated by several other pipeline outlets. This suggests a need for water on a silk artisanal scale.<sup>128</sup> The problem is that we do not know where the pipes leading away from the tank originated. To be sure, because of Boeotia’s arid climate every family with a modicum of common sense and resources would have procured itself a waterproof tank. Consequently, we cannot dismiss the possibility that the basin belonged to an upper-class family and that each of the pipes led to a particular room of the residence. That said, since the east wall partially rested over the well, the two constructions cannot have co-existed. Therefore, we can at least plausibly conclude that the “silk” chamber was abandoned and replaced

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126 Koilakou, 1988, pp.99-102.

127 By *tetarteron*, I am referring to the small copper coin created in Alexios I’s 1092 monetary reform.

128 For information on the water needs of silk artisans, see III.9

by a necropolis in the 1070s. The second burial space was situated at the corner of Zengini and Pelopidou streets. It functioned from the 11<sup>th</sup> to the 13<sup>th</sup> century, and each of the dead was buried with some *folis*.

10. There are two churches accounted for beyond the Kadmeia. The first one, Agia Photeini, is located about 1.5 km. to the southeast, on the road to the modern Moskopodi theatre. It combined a rectangular, cross-in-square plan with a narthex, a sanctuary and a *prothesis*. The latter chamber has a conch at its western end, and was connected to the sanctuary via a small door. Walls are preserved to a height of 0.50 m.-1.25 m. in the sanctuary and the cross's north and south arms. At this point one would expect to read about a *diakonikon*, but none has been found. Evidently there were too few books and vestments to store and no *thalassidia* to enclose<sup>129</sup>, funds contracted during construction, or the architect overran his budget. The latter two hypotheses seem more plausible to me, for two reasons. First, slabs of clay were used for the floor of the sanctuary and the *prothesis*' conch. In the rest of the building, it appears clay was used.<sup>130</sup> Second, the economical appearance of the eastern end and the clay floor's clashes sharply with the external walls' masonry. For that masonry – or what little survives of it – is among the most elaborate I have come across in my research on Boeotia. All the walls are built with large, prismatic limestone blocks recycled from older buildings. This *spolia* is separated by thin, isodomic courses of bluish-green limestone and still thinner courses of mortar and terra-cotta. The terra-cotta was laid out in regular horizontal and vertical courses. The internal masonry survives only to a height of 0.50 cm. It consists of white marble, occasionally decorated with brightly-coloured streaks. Two plaques in the conch deserve particular mention; they feature streaks of purple and blue, a style that is referred to by 10<sup>th</sup> century Ephesian epigraphy as 'σκουλτα παντη.' The type of masonry was widespread in Epirus and Thessaly between 950-1100<sup>131</sup>, though

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129 Which was the main purpose of the *diakonikon*.

130 Orlandos, 1939-1940, p.145.

131 Veikou, 2012, p.118.

there are also several Greek cases from the 12<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup> centuries.<sup>132</sup> On that basis, and the occurrence of the cross-in-square plan, I would tentatively date Agia Photeini to 950-1100.

11. The other church is adjacent to Agia Photeini.<sup>133</sup> It is unusual not just for its relatively good state of preservation, but its carefully laid foundations: the building rested entirely on a stone platform. The masonry was made up of roughly hewn rectangular blocks joined by carefully-sanded mortar and a continuous plinth base. The church's interior was fairly ornate, with the floor being made of marble and the surviving walls bedecked with frescoes and paintings. The platform had an identical counterpart in Agia Photeini, though this does not necessarily indicate a common date for the two edifices. There are few 12<sup>th</sup>-century constructions. The first one is the Church of the Virgin, built by Archbishop Kaloktenis in the late 12<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>134</sup> It is noteworthy for having harboured a sizable fresco in its narthex. The fresco offers a sensationalistic rendition of Palm Sunday. Christ is shown approaching Jerusalem on horseback, while the city is next to a high mountain and depicted as a castle. The fresco must have been the work of a skilled painter: the color palette includes no less than four distinct shades and there is a heavy emphasis on details, like the pattern of the walls' brickwork.

Of the ecclesiastical buildings discussed above, only four possessed significant marble components. Yet marble was a choice material for chapels, churches, and basilicas. A fifth one was partially made of a highly attractive substance, one which I have not encountered anywhere else in Greece – primastic limestone. Does this say anything about the Archbishopric of Thebes' economic circumstances? To find out, I will look at the costs of importing and purchasing marble. The most likely source of marble was Karystos.<sup>135</sup> Once shipped to Euripos, about 46 km. would have separated the marble from Thebes (using the *σπράταν* mentioned in Section I). Such a distance may sound trivial by our standards. But transporting goods by land could be an exceedingly costly endeavour. To wit, the price of a 550 kg. wagonload of goods

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132 Namely the Paliopanagia of Manolada, the Panagia Protothroni of Chalkis, and Agios Nikolaos of Pyli, on the shores of Lake Mikiri Prespa.

133 Koilakou, 1999, pp.132-133.

134 Koilakou, 1993, p.85, 88.

135 There were quarries at Karystos as late as the 6th century. Sodini, 2003, p.131. Marble was also quarried in the 12th century near Kakoniskiri, between Kithairon and Mount Parnes. But it was red, and in this chapter I am dealing with white marble. Tzavella, 2012, p.155.



would have increased by approximately 3.3 % (of the initial cost) for every 10 km. it was transported.<sup>136</sup> We should also ask ourselves what it might have cost to actually purchase a carved limestone or marble block. Lacking figures from the Rhomanian period, I will rely on Antique Roman prices. In 1<sup>st</sup> century A.D. Roman Africa, a 2 cubic m. marble statue base typically cost 2200 *denarii*<sup>137</sup>). According to J-A. Shelton, 70 *denarii* allowed a man to purchase 1 liter of olive oil.<sup>138</sup> Hence, 2200 *denarii* would have been enough to purchase 31 liters of olive oil. Next, let us tentatively suppose that a stone block in a Middle Rhomanian church typically measured 1/16<sup>th</sup> of 2 cubic meters.<sup>139</sup> It would therefore have cost the equivalent of 138 *denarii* (2200 divided by 16), or roughly 2 liters of oil. So, if we are willing to make the major assumption that a marble statue base had roughly the same value in the 9<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup> centuries as it did in the 1<sup>st</sup>, it becomes easier to fully appreciate the costs of purchasing and transporting quality stones. Bearing in mind that 1/16<sup>th</sup> of a cubic meter of marble weighs 175 kg, the patron of a Theban religious building would have needed to disburse the equivalent of approximately 13 liters of oil to purchase 300 blocks of marble and import them from Euripos to Thebes (I am not factoring in the Karystos-Euripos journey). Here are the calculations I have used to arrive at my ends:

1. It cost 2 liters of oil to purchase 1 block of marble.
2. It cost 12 liters of oil to purchase 6 blocks of marble.
3. It cost 600 liters of oil to purchase 300<sup>140</sup> blocks of marble.
4. 300 (blocks) x 175 = 52,500 kg. The cost of transporting 52,500 kg of goods over 46 km. would have been approximately 92 % of 600 (20 % for each 10 km.) 18 % of 600 = 552.
5. 600 + 552 = 1152.

1152 liters of oil would have been worth a small fortune.<sup>141</sup> And I have not even spoken about the cost of putting the blocks in place. To get to the point, the absence of marble in Thebes' ecclesiastical buildings suggests that the Archbishopric was neither tremendously wealthy nor destitute, but that it lay somewhere in between the two.

## B. Secular architecture

1. First, with regard to public infrastructure, Archbishop John Kaloktenis rebuilt twenty arches of Thebes' Classical aqueduct in the second half of the 12<sup>th</sup> century. The aqueduct had not seen use for more than a millennia. We do not know how well

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<sup>136</sup> Going by 4th century prices. Manning, 2002, p.592, Greene, 1986, pp.39-40.

<sup>137</sup> Duncan-Jones, 1982, p.119.

<sup>138</sup> Shelton, 1998.

<sup>139</sup> Figure based on the size of the stone blocks used in Koubelidiki, Agios Stephanos, and the Taxiarchis Metropolis, three 9th-10th century churches in Kastoria. See Chapter 4.III.12.B.

<sup>140</sup> Figure taken from the Kastorian churches, again.

<sup>141</sup> For example, the *Diataxis* of Michael Attaleiates equates the amount to approximately 48 *nomismata*. Morrison and Cheynet, 2002, p.70.

designed the reconstructed portions were. Although it probably required regular maintenance, this was a typical liability. Still, it likely reflected the population's drinking water needs – and by extension a population increase. Alternatively, it is conceivable that the existing water sources could no longer satisfy the requirements of the silk organizations. For we have reason to believe that the silk industry made up an appreciable percentage of Thebe's economy in the 11<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup> centuries, and the silk production process requires massive quantities of water. The fact that the water the aqueduct piped in was "exceedingly fine", according to Kaloktenis' biography <sup>142</sup>, does suggest it was suitable for drinking. But that was not necessarily its sole purpose.

2. On Teiresiou Street, a house has been identified, and assigned a 1030s foundation date. <sup>143</sup> The remains were comprised of a 5 m. long wall and four stratigraphic layers. The latter yielded a very large and sumptuous chafing dish, with relief decoration and green-orange glazing, along with six contemporary coins. A destruction layer from around 1100 indicates that the house suffered severe damage, possibly from an earthquake. Indeed, there was some rubble masonry in the destruction layer which came from the neighbouring wall. The residence was soon rebuilt, as indicated by the presence of twelve ceramic vessels (six storage wares, six table wares). A further destruction layer suggests that the dwelling was permanently destroyed during the Norman raid of 1147.
3. The vestiges of a house consisting of three rooms (approximately 7 m. x 5 m.) and a courtyard was uncovered just northeast of Agios Grigorios Theologos. <sup>144</sup> The walls were of semi-carved limestone, with mud binding and a great deal of terra-cotta in their joints. There were two rows of large tiles next to the south wall of the room, which presumably came from the house's roof. The northernmost room contained four intact and two partially intact amphorae dating to the 9<sup>th</sup>-10<sup>th</sup> century. The two semi-intact vessels outfitted with double handles, multiple horizontal grooves, and deep corrugated engravings on base of their neck and body. This is a striking reminder that Rhomanian amphorae were not necessarily unattractive, purely functional objects. Of the vessels' three design features, only the handles served a pragmatic need. Were the amphorae used to serve liquids

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<sup>142</sup> John Kaloktenis, 1970, p.73.

<sup>143</sup> Delvenatiokis, 1970, p.75.

<sup>144</sup> Diktio, 1994, pp.118-121

during meals? Given their unwieldy dimensions <sup>145</sup>, I would have to say no. But they might have been kept in the dining room, where they would have been easily visible to guests. After all, why else go to the trouble of buying finely-decorated amphorae? In the same layer as the amphorae was a group of four table-wares. Three of them are 'high' plates (previously referred to as fruit bowls) with green slip, while the other one is a sauce boat with a lid and yellow slip. Both types are glazed on the outside and the inside, are made of pure white clay (most likely the mineral kaolin), and – in the case of the high plates – feature a crudely painted eagle at the center of the inner surfaces. They are apparently identical to another batch of monochrome glazed vessels found in a Constantinopolitan workshop, which have been dated to 950-1035. The clues at our disposal do not shed much light on the house's owners, or on contemporary pottery buying trends. Nonetheless, it is interesting to note that the amphorae and tablewares were all found in a destruction layer, which presented traces of fire. This raises the possibility that Thebes was sacked in the 10<sup>th</sup> century, either by the Bulgarians (ca. 918 or in 996) or the Magyars (in 943). <sup>146</sup>

4. Another rectangular-shaped site was found during the construction of Thebes' Cultural Centre (fig.3).<sup>147</sup> The place was enclosed by a handful of wall sections whose masonry was set in a regular course, bonded with strong mortar, and also reveted with a smooth mortar coating. In the highest stratigraphic layer two lead seals were identified. Both of them bore monograms. Furthermore the ceramic artifacts identified – six sherds belonging to storage jars, lamps, jugs, and dishes – were of very high quality. The jug, for instance, is adorned with corrugated engravings on its body. <sup>148</sup> The three dishes are glazed, have flared bases, and are provided with intricate mythological paintings

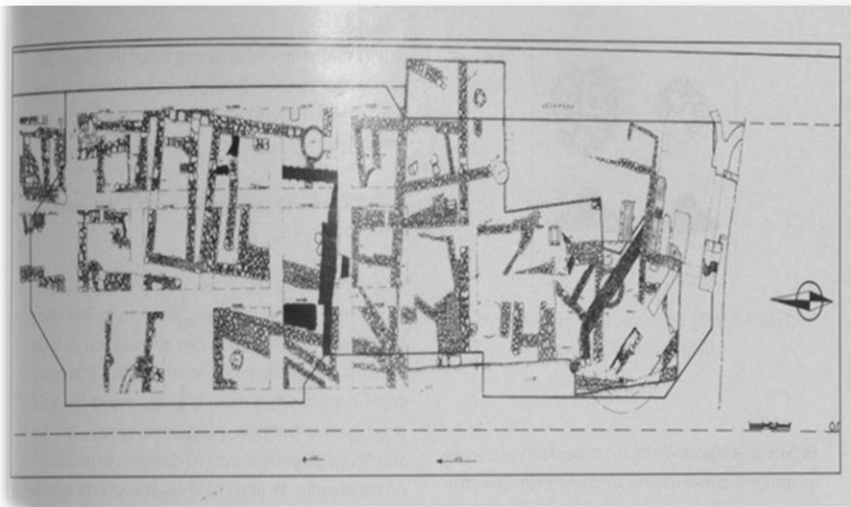
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145 Dimensions of the vessels: 70 cm. in length x 35 cm. in width for the first one, and 52 cm. in height x 43 cm. in width for the second one.

146 For the Magyar raid (943), see Costa-Louillet, 1961, p.339. For the Bulgarian raids, see III.11.

147 Koilakou, 1995, pp.79-80.

148 Based on comparisons with other Theban assemblages, the jug was manufactured in the 9th or 10th century.



**Figure 3.** The Cultural Centre site. Koilakou, 1995, p.79.

on the inside. Koilakou asserts that the site comprised two houses, which were founded in the 9<sup>th</sup> century. I concur with the dating, which is based on the artifacts, which is based on the artifacts) but not the dual house idea, since there is no wall or other edifice dividing the site in half. On the contrary, the central rooms of the 'house' are adjacent and linked by two unobstructed hallways. We may suppose that the place belonged to an important individual – perhaps an *archon* or an archbishop.

5. Southeast of the Kadmeia, on 13 Pouliopoudou Street, a large Middle Rhomanian complex was uncovered in 2003.<sup>149</sup> Its southwest corner yielded a rubbish pit containing about 50 tripod stilts and what appears to have been rejected pottery (namely unfinished pots).

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<sup>149</sup> Waksman et al., 2013, p.384.

6. One site stood on the banks of the Ismenos.<sup>150</sup> It comprised two rectangular spaces surrounded by thin walls, and a shorter wall which extended from the north-eastern corner of the second rectangular space. The area south of the second wall was covered with nails and masses of iron – most likely the remains of a vertical impeller. A vertical impeller was the rotating component of water-lifting machines. These elements, combined with the presence of a millstone in the second rectangular space, indicate that the site was a water mill. The type of masonry (rubble surrounded by untidy mounted plinth) combined with two distinctive sherds of pottery places its foundation at the end of the 9<sup>th</sup> or the start of the 10<sup>th</sup> century.
7. On 202 Vrizaki street were identified the remains of a purported residence.<sup>151</sup> The place's mobile finds were as follows: some good-quality tableware (including a mid-12<sup>th</sup> century Champlevé mug), a massive storage tank and a storage pipeline. There were also some iron arrowheads, a bronze thimble, a bronze needle-loom, and five identifiable coins: a *folles* of Nikephoros Botaneaites, a *tetarteron* of Alexios I, and three *tetartera* of Manuel I. The above information leads me to think that the site doubled as a house and workshop (one which possibly manufactured arrows and sewed clothing). Such an arrangement would not have been uncommon in a cramped urban setting.
8. A similar abundance of finds characterized excavations on the next site, across the street (although its walls were so shattered as to be useless for our purposes).<sup>152</sup>
9. The last site is approximately 100 m. west of the Kadmeia, facing the Dirki fountain.<sup>153</sup> In its newer strata were found a series of simple burials. A number of skeletons were concealed within with their limbs in an unconventional stance, indicating they met violent ends. A few other corpses were mutilated. The burials overlaid several workshops. These were built of rubble masonry with sporadic insertions of horizontally positioned terra-cotta. Their interior spaces contained trenches carved in natural limestone, which in many cases were connected by small channels to underground water pipes.

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150 Diktio, 1997, pp.116-118.

151 Koilakou, 1992, pp.72-73.

152 More than a dozen storage-ware and Champlevé sherds, animal bones and shells, an iron key, a hubcap, a brass bell, part of a musical instrument (probably a cymbal), and a bronze weight measure. These artefacts are complemented by fourteen *folles* – three from the 11th century, three of Alexios I, and eight of Manuel I. Koilakou, 1992, pp.73-73.

153 Koilakou, 1987, pp.117-118.

### C. Functionally unclassifiable sites

Ten sites cannot be assigned to the secular or the religious domain.

1. I will begin with one located in the central square of Thebes, which contained a wealth of pottery finds.<sup>154</sup> The site's principal features consisted of two wall sections and three floors. The first wall was oriented east-west. It measured approximately 0.50 m. x 4 m. The second was oriented north-south, and measured 4 m. x 4 m. Both sections were composed of rubble masonry, along with a bit of marble *spolia*. Regarding the floors, two of them are superimposed over each other. They are made up of broken tiles, small stones, and pebbles. The third floor, a few meters to the west of the east-west wall, consisted of fine gravel and sand. Five of the pottery deposits are chronologically relevant.<sup>155</sup>

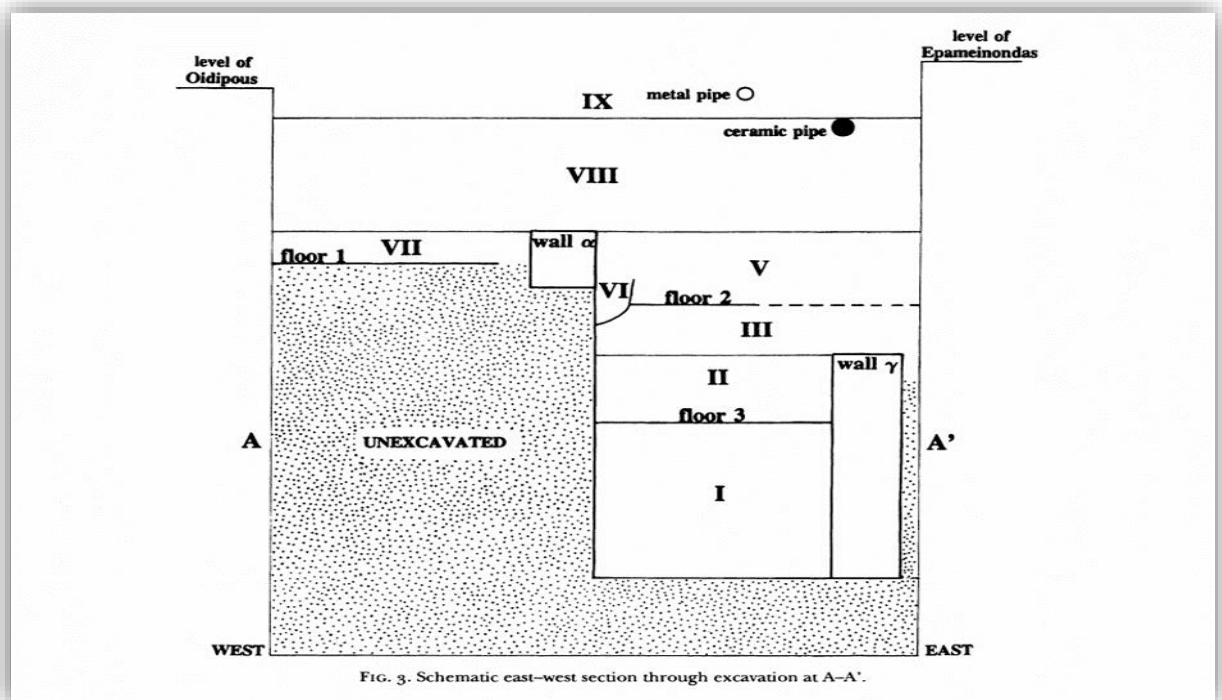


Figure 4. Plan of excavation in central square of Thebes. Armstrong, 1993, p.300.

154 By the Ephorate of Classical Antiquities of Boeotia and Armstrong. Armstrong, 1993.

155 Armstrong, 1993, pp.297-300.

<b>Deposit I</b>
This deposit has been dated to the 9 <sup>th</sup> century. It contained five unglazed table wares, twenty amphorae, and eleven cooking-pots. The cooking pots are of fairly good quality. Nos.27-28 and 30-36 are tempered with large quantities of ground schist. Schist, though it weakens the raw durability of clay, improves the object's thermal properties. For their part, sherds 29, 37, and 38 contain much less schist but possess wet-smoothed surfaces. Perhaps most importantly, sherds 29-32 are outfitted with handles, which must have made it easier to carry them.
<b>Deposit II</b>
The deposit contained 33 objects. All but 4 of them were dated between the mid-10 <sup>th</sup> and mid-11 <sup>th</sup> centuries. They consist of glazed bowls, unglazed table wares, amphorae, cooking pots, candlesticks, and wasters. A high proportion of the ceramic – 14 out of 29 object – is provided with elegant features, such as sgraffito decoration, parallel horizontal lines, slip, glazing, or various colours. One of the glazed bowls is particularly impressive: in addition to being slipped, and having a ringed foot, it is painted green on the inside and yellow on the outside. In addition, most of the vessels are glazed, which would have increased their durability. There are only three authentic White Ware articles. But that is probably because imitation white wares were more common in Thebes than the real thing.
<b>Deposit III</b>
A small, poorly glazed, 11 <sup>th</sup> -century jug.
<b>Deposit IV</b>
Two green and brown painted wares with white slip and pale yellow glaze, two sgraffito wares, one plain amphorae, and one slip painted-bright green glazed bowl. All objects were dated to the 12 <sup>th</sup> century. There were also three elaborately designed Aegean wares, which belong either to the 12 <sup>th</sup> or 13 <sup>th</sup> century.
<b>Deposit V</b>
A glazed jug with small horizontal ridge on upper neck, bands of five-toothed horizontal combing, dating to 1150-1175.
<b>DEPOSIT VI</b>

An amphora dating to 1150-1175.

The cooking vessels in Deposit 1 are of superior durability and mobility to their counterparts from Deposit 2 and 4, in that they are tempered, wet-smoothed, and outfitted with handles. However, the vessels of Deposits 2 and 4 are obviously not cooking or storage ware, and therefore had less of a need for durability and mobility. By the same token, they are considerably more ornate. It would seem that their owners had a higher purchasing power than the proprietors of Deposit 1. Admittedly, Sgraffito was still in its early stages in the 9<sup>th</sup> century, in that several important techniques had yet to be pioneered or imported. But the most basic technique – lines etched through one or two layers of slip – did exist then. Therefore, I think Deposits 2 and 4 were slightly more valuable than Deposit 1.

2. On 11 Oedipus Street, an 11 m. long wall section and two rooms of Medieval Roman times have come to light. <sup>156</sup> The wall's design was unusual: it consisted of rubble masonry covered by a layer of tiled plaster. One of the rooms contained two storage tanks and stone and clay pipes from the same era. The other contained three *follis* and a great quantity of Medieval Roman tiles and glazed sherds. The exact date of the rooms has not been specified. However, the first room may have been the workplace of some *katartarioi* or *metaxarioi* workers, then deserted and taken over by someone looking for a home. The walls could then have been outfitted with tiled plaster, to make them befitting of someone's living quarters.
3. Farther down Oedipus street was unearthed an extensive section of a wall (26 m. long) and six wooden trusses. <sup>157</sup> They apparently belonged to a monumental complex, much of which lies under the current road. The wall's mortar yielded some chronological clues in the shape of fragments of a brown-glazed sauce boat, an unpainted jar with irregular vertical grooves, and a lid kettle. There was also a coin of Leo VI the Wise (886-912). These objects do not tell us anything about the place's function. They were obviously used to fill in the wall, not to supplement the owner's tableware set. One could argue that they were deposited well after the wall's construction, in the course of some thorough repairs. But this theory holds little weight, since we do not know if we have artefacts from two different time periods. What we can say, given the north wall's dimensions, is that the place was exceptionally large – none of the Theban churches, basilicas, or necropolises I have reviewed come close to 26 m. in length.

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<sup>156</sup> Dimakopoulos, 1978, p.115.

<sup>157</sup> Koilakou, 1992, pp.81-82.



Therefore, it is conceivable that the place served as Thebes' episcopal basilica. Two non-ecclesiastical possibilities are an *archon* or a governor's house.

4. There is another site across the street from Agios Grigorios. It was characterized by two small pits, made of worked and unworked limestone. The first pit was coated internally with plaster. The diameters and depths of the two pits were 1.66 m. x 0.69 m. and 1.65 m. x 0.87 m. (respectively). The site can be assigned an end of the 10th century terminus post quem, as two anonymous folles of the 10<sup>th</sup>-early 11<sup>th</sup> century, one Komnenian *tetarteron*, an imitation Latin coin, and some glazed Medieval Roman ceramic vessels (including broken kettles) were found in the pits. The dimension of the pits and the presence of plaster points towards a water storage function. Yet what would have been the point of building a pit out of expensive, high-status material (limestone) only to cover it with plaster? The only explanation I can propose is that this site, much like the preceding one, had more than one owner during its lifetime. The first proprietor could have been the Church, who built the pits as baptismal pools. Eventually, the place was abandoned and turned into a house or a workshop.
5. I shall also mention a crypt on Varnali Street, said by Koilakou have been the sepulchre of a wealthy aristocrat, which contained storage vessels and glazed tableware. Its construction period has been narrowed down to the 12<sup>th</sup>-13<sup>th</sup> centuries.<sup>158</sup>
6. The final unclassifiable site, on Bourdouba Street, was a rectangular space divided by walls into five rooms.<sup>159</sup> It presented three adjoining artefacts of interest: a pyramidal block with embossed crosses, two fragments of a marble parapet, and part of a doorframe with highly ornate carvings (dated to the 12<sup>th</sup> century). The room to the east of these artefacts was used as a water tank. But whereas the artefacts project an image of luxury, the walls are crude, being made of rubble masonry. I suspect was a choice imposed by financial necessity, since the owner of the place cared enough about appearances to provide a lavishly designed doorframe.

#### D. Conclusions on secular and religious architecture

In terms of religious architecture: we have eleven adequately described buildings, all from Thebes. Of these, one dates to the 9<sup>th</sup> century, three to the 10<sup>th</sup> century, one to the late 11<sup>th</sup> century, two from the late 11<sup>th</sup> century-12<sup>th</sup> century, three from the 12<sup>th</sup> century, and one to the Middle Rhomanian era in general. I am not focusing on the composition and configuration of the masonrie, which are poorly known.<sup>160</sup> The decoration, construction materials, and spatial configuration of the monuments are rather

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<sup>158</sup> Diktio, 1996, pp.81-82.

<sup>159</sup> Koilakou, 2001-2004, p.38.

<sup>160</sup> This much we know, that there is one case of rubble masonry, two cases of porous stone blocks, and one case of roughly hewn

basic.<sup>161</sup> Granted, we should not put much stock in interior religious decorations (bearing in mind that only one building was decorated with mosaics or frescoes). The majority of Christian interior decorations were covered up or removed by the Turks, even when a region submitted peacefully to them (which was the case for Boeotia). But only four of the eleven buildings contained significant marble components. Yet marble was the materials of choice for religious architecture, much like ivory for domestic articles. In addition, only a single building possessed more than one dome.

Overall, one gets the impression that Thebes' clergy was in a delicate financial position. A partial explanation can be found in the heaviness of the state's fiscal impositions on Greek bishops. The diocese of Nafpaktos, for example, had to surrender much of its property to the state in return for tax exemption during Alexios' reign. During the reign of Manuel, the Bishop of Amykleion was so worn down by the tax collector's rapacity that he resigned his post to become a monk.<sup>162</sup> George Tornikes was offered the episcopal see of Corinth in 1155. His letters contain clues that the resources available to the governing bishop were meagre.<sup>163</sup> Not only was there very little competition for the appointment— no candidates seem to have come forward – but Tornikes declined it and made clear that he expected a well-rewarded position. Possibly Corinth was still recovering from the Norman sack of 1147, but this is unlikely: Idrisi described the place as large and prosperous in 1154.<sup>164</sup> Akominatos complained vehemently of the charges levied on his archbishopric by the civilian administration (see Chapter 3.VI for more detail on this problem). Eustathios of Thessalonica's annual income was reputed to be 720,000 *nomismata*, but he categorically denied the fantastic allegation. What is more, the archbishop fought off several attempts by the secular authorities to increase his flock's taxes, a battle which may have contributed to his being exiled in 1191.<sup>165</sup> Lastly, in the Cadaster of Thebes – an 11<sup>th</sup> century document which assesses the wealth of all landowners in a section of Southern Boeotia – only one clergyman appears : a certain Bishop Konstantinos.<sup>166</sup>

The financial pressures that bishops of this period faced arguably had a ripple effect: it led them to treat their priests and deacons harshly. The sources hint that parishes were struggling to pay their taxes to bishops, and were often treated like dependent peasants by their immediate superiors.<sup>167</sup> Thus, a tax register from the diocese of Stagoi indicates that in 1163 the local bishop divided up his land-holding

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rectangular blocks joined by carefully-sanded mortar.

161 My information on Middle Rhomanian religious quality benchmarks was obtained from Babinger, 1953, Setton, 1969 (pp.273-274) and Fine and Antwerp, 1991, (p.568).

162 Amykleion is 1.5 km. south of Sparta. Rhalles and Potles, 1853, pp.355-356.

163 Tornikes, 1970, nos. 9, 16, 19-21.

164 Idrisi, 1999, p.124.

165 Wirth, 2000, I, 92-93, II 42, Akominatos, 1880, 1, pp.283-306.

166 Svoronos, 1959, p.33. See also III.10.

167 Papadopoulos-Kerameus, 1909, 26.12-13.

clergymen into fiscal categories used for *paroikoi*: *zeugaratos*, *boidatos*, *aktemon*, and so on.<sup>168</sup> The same thing happened in 1199 or 1200 in Arta. The bishop of Arta excommunicated two of his deacons for failing to pay their taxes. But the deacons complained to Archbishop John Apokafkos that the bishop had reduced them to a destitute condition and had failed to provide them with their daily subsistence.<sup>169</sup> In Athens, Akominatos noted morosely that the *sakellarios* in the Parthenon Church was blind and illiterate.<sup>170</sup> He added that another of the Church's priests had cheated his brother out of his property. Admittedly Akominatos had a rather anachronistic vision of Athens, and he must have realized that writing dramatic reports would help him gain the attention of the right people. However, we can at least be confident that his claim on the *sakellarios* was accurate. For it was part of a report in which Akominatos was explaining why he had declined the *sakellarios'* request for a promotion. Making things worse for parishes was a retraction of tax exemptions between the reigns of Romanos Lekapenos and Basil II. A katepan-issued document of 999 and an imperial *sigillion* of 1020 imply that by the end of the 10<sup>th</sup> century priests were normally liable for paying *leitourgia* (extraordinary taxes) to the state and the *kanonikon*. They were also expected to perform *angareia* when required.<sup>171</sup> The problematic situation was addressed by a law of Manuel I which granted tax exemptions to priests.<sup>172</sup> It was reflected, too, by an *edikton* of Alexios I which promised monetary rewards to deacons who agreed to become priests.<sup>173</sup>

A factor that would effectively have put pressure on both bishops and their subordinate priests was the development of *kharistike*. This practice, which took hold in the 990s, involved the granting to a layman for life of the administration of a monastic property.<sup>174</sup> To the abbots who accepted it, *kharistike* must have seemed attractive. By removing them from diocesan jurisdiction, it ostensibly gave the abbots protection from arbitrary or punitive taxation. Moreover, monastic foundations were facing a vexing plight at the end of the 10<sup>th</sup> century. Nikephoros Phokas had enacted a set of laws severely curtailing outside donations to monasteries. In short, benefactors were forbidden from making grants of lands and buildings. They were allowed to contribute money, but only to those establishments which genuinely needed assistance for repairs and capital improvements.<sup>175</sup> Hence *kharistike* was ostensibly the answer abbots and monks were looking for. But to bishops, for whom monastic estates had traditionally represented a major source of income, it was unwelcome news. Ironically, *kharistike* often backfired on monasteries. According to John of Oxeia, patriarch of Antioch from 1089 to 1100, the lay patron would

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<sup>168</sup> Vranousi, 1987, pp.28-29.

<sup>169</sup> Angold, 1995, p.226.

<sup>170</sup> Michael Akominatos, 1880, I, pp.162-175.

<sup>171</sup> Von Lingenthal, 1850.

<sup>172</sup> Angold, 2009, p.242.

<sup>173</sup> Gautier, 1977, p.177.

<sup>174</sup> Angold, 1995, pp.72-73, 142, 278.

<sup>175</sup> Von Lingenthal, 1857, 3.295, Thomas, 1987.

undermine the abbot's authority, recruit lay brothers, and divert most of the monastery's income to himself.<sup>176</sup> While we should take Oxeia's criticisms with a grain of salt, the abuses associated with *kharistike* had to be curbed by Alexios I in 1096-1110.<sup>177</sup> And there is no evidence that monasteries then reverted to diocesan jurisdiction. To some extent lack of material wealth could be compensated by patronage. But patronage does not appear to have been in vogue in Central Greece.<sup>178</sup> I will leave this discussion of the 11<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup> century Rhomanian clergy's financial health here. I cannot present the subject in further detail due to lack of space, but I believe my account helps explain the relatively mediocre quality and paucity of the Church's urban construction projects in Thebes.

With regard to secular architecture, we can speak of two houses, one vineyard worker's residence, one water mill, one aqueduct, one pottery workshop, nine possible silk workshops, and two unclassifiable workshops. Three projects must have required great technical skill or resources: the two houses (which boasted good-quality walls, made of limestone and strong mortar), and the aqueduct (which ran over a narrow hill pass consisting partly of soft ground). In the house under Thebes' modern-day Cultural Centre, there was a jug with corrugated engravings on its body and dishes with glazing, flared bases, and intricate paintings. Likewise, the 11<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup> house on Vrizaki Street yielded a cymbal, a solid bronze scale, a cymbal, and six Champlevé wares. But the ceramic vessels from the 9<sup>th</sup>-10<sup>th</sup> century house near Agios Grigorios – while covered in slip – are made of soft, fragile clay and feature rudimentary paintings. Overall, and taking into account the function of the silk workshops, it is very difficult to say whether Boeotian secular buildings were inferior or superior in design to their ecclesiastical counterparts. Nor do the buildings tell us anything appreciable about the level of prosperity of the region's population.

#### E. Isolated Pottery and other artifacts

1. Of the dozens of isolated pottery deposits that have been exhumed in Thebes, only five are chronologically relevant to my work. At present, given its lack of context, they are of little use to us. But they may become valuable if future excavations reveal that the site continued on neighbouring, context-rich plots.
2. The first deposit, excavated in 2001-2004, originates from Pouliopoulou Street (southeast of the Kadmeia). It contains three specimens anterior to 1200 AD, specifically Painted Fine Sgraffito sherds. There are also twenty other sherds which date from 1150 to 1250. We can infer that a good proportion of this pottery comes from the second half of the 12<sup>th</sup> century.

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176 Gautier, 1975, pp.106-109, Rhalles and Potles, 1852-1859, 614-615.

177 In curbing *kharistike*, Alexios felt compelled to grant bishops two new sources of revenue – a share in judicial fines and another in marriage fees.

178 Mullet, 1986, pp.125-147, Maguire, 1981, pp.109-111, Angold, 1985, Walter, 1982, pp.164-249.

3. Deposits two and three – one next to the Church of Agios Nikolaos and the other at corner of Kevitos and Epaminondas streets – date to the 11<sup>th</sup> and early 12<sup>th</sup> century (respectively). Nothing is known about the vessels, other than that the first deposit was glazed. During the expansion of the Thebes Archaeological Museum, in the 1970s, the remains of an upper-storey room (5 m. in length and width) were uncovered in the bedrock. It contained six or seven storage jars, which were filled with 12<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup> century ceramic sherds. The building's inner walls were lined with coloured plaster, and there was a single storage jar 1 m. to the east.
4. Between Aphrodite and Hecate streets – east of the Kadmeia – six intact dishes were found, thickly glazed and with intricate nature-themed paintings. This description probably points to slip-painted wares and sgraffito wares. The dishes were accompanied by a bronze earring, three knife blades, and two coins: a *folles* dated 1070-1075, and a *tetarteron* of Manuel I. Fourthly, a few meters from Ismene road, some 12<sup>th</sup> century ceramic was found in a pocket in the bedrock. The ceramic in question is apparently remarkable, though my source does not elaborate on this statement.
5. The most unique pottery deposit was discovered in a plot on Teiresiou Street. In the oldest phase was concealed a frying pan made of hard red clay, which reportedly belonged to a 9<sup>th</sup> century phase.<sup>179</sup> An ulterior phase revealed five monochrome glazed bowls/cups and two semi-intact ovoid jugs with handles. Both the monochrome vessels and the jugs were dated to around 1100. They were complemented by an iron key, two bronze ornaments, two stone pestles, two loom weights, and a grey-green coloured bone handle with incised and impressed decoration. I am tempted to think that the owner of these artefacts came from the lower-class, because of the bone handle. For there are indications that bone objects were accessible to people of modest income.<sup>180</sup> Documents on bone-manufacturing techniques are far less common than their ivory counterparts – as if the former process was too humble to be recorded. And the results of excavations throughout former Middle Rhomanian lands indicate that bone was generally used for unpretentious purposes.<sup>181</sup> It was turned into objects that were either frowned upon or that few people would have seen, like cosmetic containers and gaming pieces. By contrast, ivory was the material of religious caskets, reliquaries, and brooch pins. Furthermore, the respective quantities of unearthed ivory and bone artefact strongly suggest that only bone was mass-produced. We know that Theodore the Stoudite, the founder and abbot of Stoudios Monastery, disapproved of novices bringing bone cloak buckles into the

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179 Diktio, 1996, p.76.

180 Cutler, 1994, pp.58-60.

181 Weizmann, 1972, Harrison, 1986.

monastery.<sup>182</sup> But Theodore's standards of ascetism were exceptionally rigorous. Indeed, he gained prominence for vigorously promoting a monastic lifestyle that included a vegetarian diet, manual labour (as opposed to commercial activity), and modest clothing.<sup>183</sup>

That said, with regard to the Teiresiou site, the quality of the bone handle's incision and impression has not been recorded. This presents a problem, because the process of carving and modeling bones to a high standard was complex and time-consuming.<sup>184</sup> Once we assess the quality of the handle's incision and impression we will have a better idea of the social class to which the artifacts' owner belonged.

## 2. Livadia

### A. General comments

There is more to say about Livadia than any other of my Boeotian settlements (apart from Thebes). For this reason, it is appropriate to provide a few words on the presumable quality of life of Medieval Livadians. Did nature offer them any reasons for residing here? There were a few possible incentives. Livadia is endowed with a variation of the Warm-Summer Mediterranean climate. While temperatures remain more or less the same (for example, they generally do not fall below freezing or exceed 30 °C) precipitation does not. Rainfall averages 631 mm. a year, compared with 390 mm. for most of the Boeotian lowlands. The latter phenomenon is not only more plentiful but more evenly distributed. The May-September period's share is approximately 21 %, as opposed to approximately 12 % for the rest of Boeotia. This substantial and advantageous climatic variation is attributable to Livadia's location, at the foot of the Helicon mountain range. And it is probably thanks in part to the climate that the neighbouring plains are well-suited to the cultivation of cereal, cotton, the Kermes oak (whose leaves are a staple food of the red-dye producing Kermes insect), and rice, and the raising of livestock.<sup>185</sup>

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182 Papadopoulos-Kerameus, 1904, p.141. 8-10.

183 Louth, 2007, pp.113-114.

184 Aghion et al., 1992, p.22.

185 See Section I.

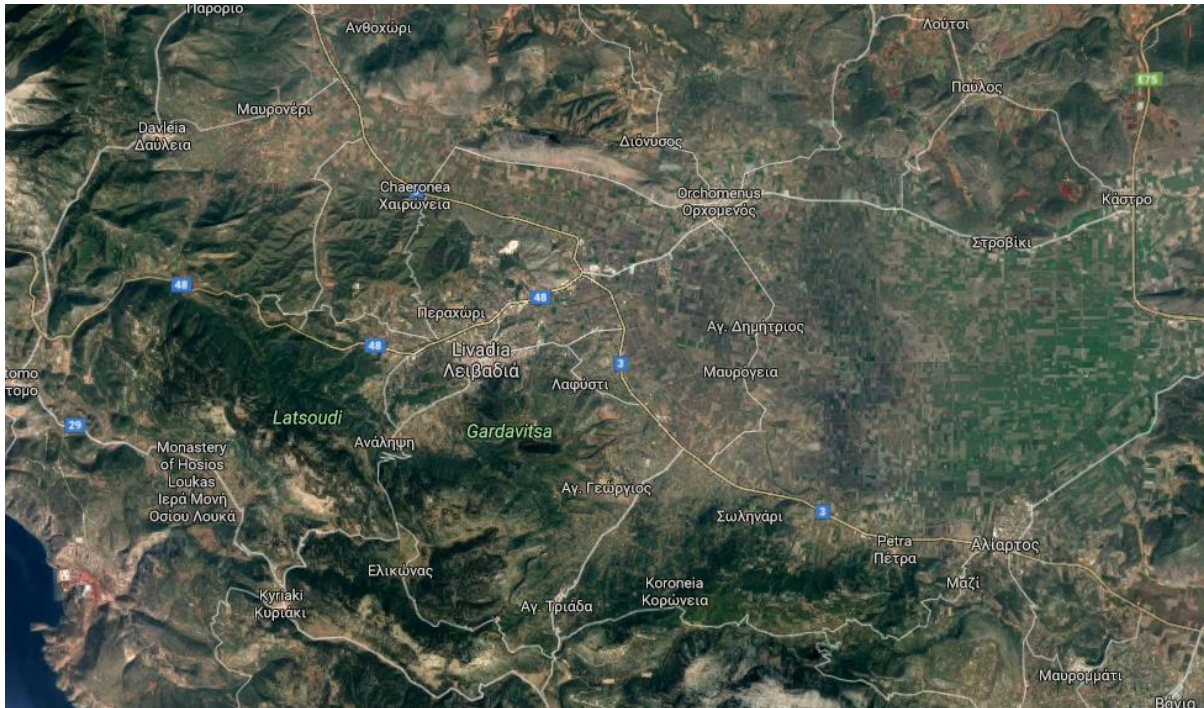


Figure 5. Modern topography of Livadia's environment. Google Maps, 2012.

In the same vein, it should be noted that the modern day settlement sits astride the Erkyne River.<sup>186</sup> The waterway, which takes its source in the Helicon Mountains, is regular, wide, and fast-flowing. It would have been of considerable benefit to Rhomanian Livadia if – as seems likely – the latter also abutted it. There is only one historically relevant local mineral of value, namely marble.<sup>187</sup> Regarding infrastructure, I have already spoken of the *demosia leophoros*, which either served Livadia or ran a few miles northeast of it.<sup>188</sup> In short, we are looking at a settlement that was well connected to the rest of Boeotia and neighbouring regions and whose location on the Plain of Kifissos gave it a highly diverse soil.

## B. History

Apart from Livadia's inclusion in the *Notitia 3* (787-800),<sup>189</sup> its only potential 783-1204 mention comes in the 10<sup>th</sup>-11<sup>th</sup> century. There exists a contemporary seal of a certain Sabas, Archbishop of 'ΛΕΒ.' The complete name is thought by Laurent to be 'Leukas' (e.g. Λέβκας) but it could also be Λεβαδειά.<sup>190</sup> The

<sup>186</sup> A similar situation held true in Antiquity. According to Pausanias, Livadia was adjacent to the Erkyne, "which separated the town from the oracle of Trophonios." Pausanias, 1918, book IX.39.

<sup>187</sup> Marble is today quarried in the mountains immediately west of Livadia, at the rate of 20,000 m<sup>3</sup> a year. Prikryl, 2004, p.69.

<sup>188</sup> See Section I.

<sup>189</sup> Darrouzes, 1981, pp.18, 32.

<sup>190</sup> Schlumberger, 1884, p.177, Laurent, 1963, no.1821.

archbishopric would have been autocephalic, but this was not an unknown practice. The Archbishopric of Thebes, autocephalous in the *Notitia 2* (ca. 700-787), only acquired sees in the 10<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>191</sup> However, Sabas' seal is the only one of its kind and Livadia does not figure in any of the post-800 *Notitiae*. This suggests that the experiment, if it happened, was not very successful. I had hoped to glean some information from a certain Boeotian inscription. It comes from the base of a pillar in one of the churches of Osios Loukas Monastery and contains the line *ιερα Λεβαδέων πόλις*.<sup>192</sup> Unfortunately the inscription is dedicated to the Roman co-emperor Constantius Chlorus, who reigned a good 500 years before my period of focus. All the inscription tells us is that the site may have been deserted at the time of Osios Loukas Monastery's construction.<sup>193</sup>

### C. Archaeology

I will move on to the archaeology of Livadia, beginning with the castle that covers the hill of Kastro (fig. 6). The castle's ramparts enclose about 3.5 hectares. There were three stepwise enclosures, although when it comes to the outer enclosure, only the north-facing battlements are accounted for. On the basis of the ample space comprised within the walls, Kontogiannis surmises that the settlement on the hill of Kastro could not have been purely military in function. Instead, it constituted all of Middle Rhomanian

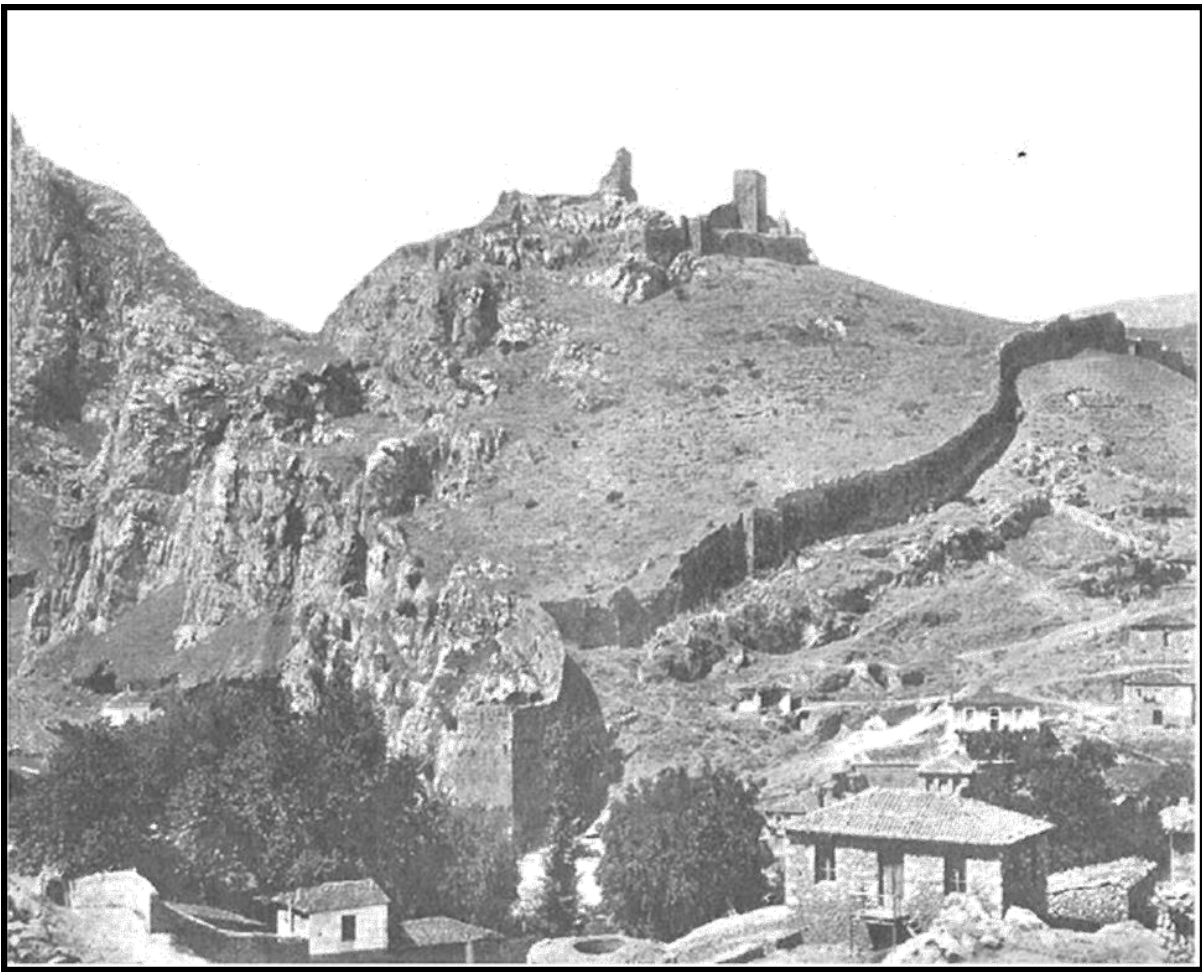
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191 Darrouzes, 1981, p.79.

192 Vatin, 1966, p.246.

193 The pioneer of research on Livadia, Bon, alleges that, not only was there demographic growth in Livadia, but that it was stimulated by the abandonment of nearby Orchomenos. I consider this theory in the Appendix. Bon, 1937, p.192.





**Figure 6.** The castle of Livadia in the early 20th century without the present vegetation (Antoni Rubió i Lluch). Mamaloukos, 2012, fig.1.

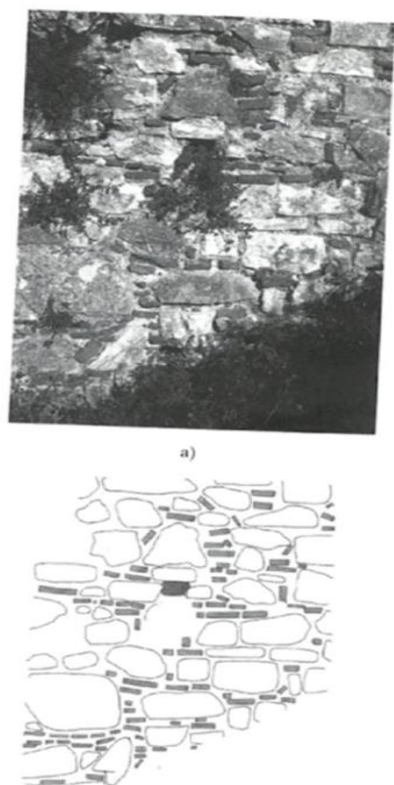
Livadia.<sup>194</sup> The first enclosure – the largest one (approximately 2 hectares) – protected the ordinary people, the second enclosure the citadel, and the third the residence of the governor. I concede that the first enclosure was unjustifiable from a purely military perspective. I shall return to this point when drawing conclusions. Both its length and the space it defended were disproportionately greater than the corresponding units for the second and third levels. Worse, because the wall runs sharply downhill for most of its length, a breakthrough halfway up the hill would have cut off all defenders below the point of penetration. A large fieldwork operation in the space enclosed by the outer enclosure is long overdue, especially since (according to Bon) there are construction remains strewn all over the abovementioned space.<sup>195</sup> Of course, this does not preclude the possibility that a settlement existed

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<sup>194</sup> Kontogiannis, 2012, p.72.

<sup>195</sup> Bon, 1937, p.199. In the course of two separate visits to the castle I have found almost nothing to corroborate Bon's words. But the first time I was travelling alone, which made it too dangerous to explore the exceptionally difficult terrain roughly east of the second enclosure's barbican. The second time, I was accompanied, but I believed that my companion's timetable did not allow us time to visit the difficult terrain.

outside the castle. After all, the practice of living on a steep, elevated landform presents obvious



**Figure 7.** 'Type A' masonry from the Castle of Rogoi.  
Veikou 2012, fig. 34.

inconveniences in terms of water supply arrangement and moving about. As mentioned on the previous page, the pre-Medieval town occupied the lowland east of the Erkyna. There is certainly a likelihood that – as a result of the chaos and instability which accompanied the Slavic migrations into Greece – Livadia's inhabitants sought refuge on Agios Ilias. But there is an equally good likelihood that they returned to the more convenient ancient zone as security improved, in the 9<sup>th</sup> century. We do have tangible – albeit very slim – proof of a post-1000 century extra-mural settlement. I will deal with it on this section's last page. But the more pressing question is: can the castle's construction phases (of which there are several) be dated with a modicum of confidence? One is tempted to answer negatively, since the line between Rhomanian and post-1204 Latin military architecture is heavily blurred.<sup>196</sup> Epigraphy could be an answer, were Livadia not entirely devoid of inscriptions. The best solution

available is to use previously studied fortifications as a standard of comparison. It must be stressed

that there are ironclad rules for military masonry, since the latter was influenced by climatological, resource, and expediency factors. Still, as Veikou argues in *Byzantine Epirus*<sup>197</sup>, certain features in Macedonian, Epirotan, Thessalian, and Thracian fortifications crop up with sufficient regularity as to warrant their being pointed out. They are as follows:

- A) 5<sup>th</sup> to 10<sup>th</sup> century (fig. 7). Rubble/gallet/terra-cotta/mortar core, randomly-shaped ashlar arranged in regular courses and set in mortar. There are many gaps, which are filled with small rubble (gallets) and terra-cotta (tiles and bricks).
- B) Mid-9<sup>th</sup> century onwards (fig. 8). Rubble masonry; blocks are randomly sized and shaped, but arranged in regular courses. Heavy use of *spolia*. Terra-cotta is

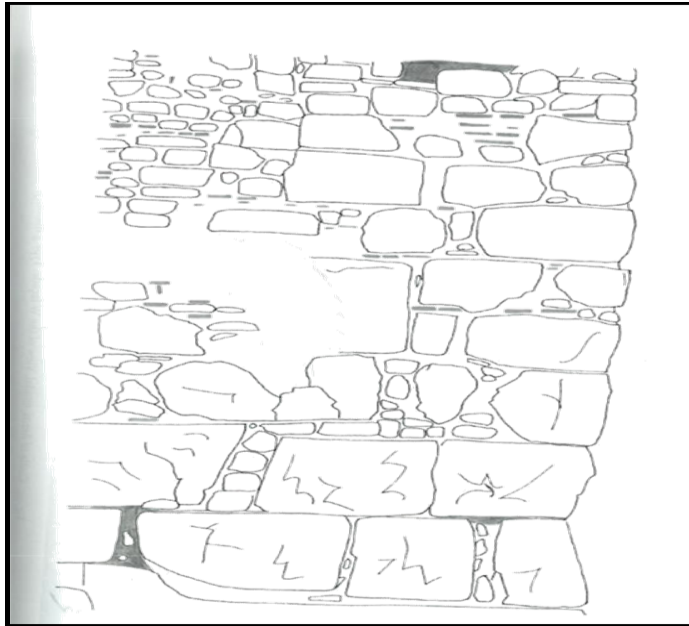
<sup>196</sup> At least in Greece. Nicolle contends that this was the result of the Latins having to rely on local masons and architects. Nicolle, 2007, p.14.

<sup>197</sup> Veikou, 2012, pp.113-130. All of the fortifications Veikou refers to have apparently been dated via pottery sherds, coins, or inscriptions.

used widely, in both horizontal and vertical joints (which sometimes results in uninterrupted courses of brickwork). The gaps are also filled with other brick-elements and (occasionally) gallets.

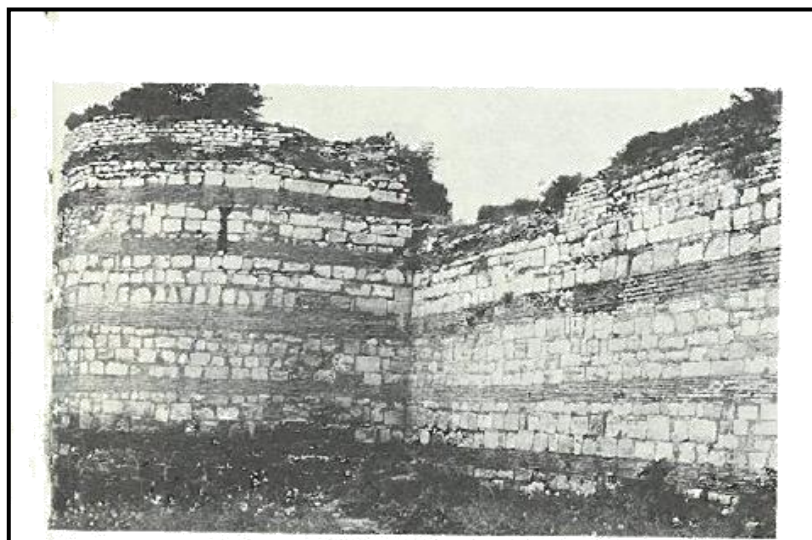
- C) Late 9<sup>th</sup> -10<sup>th</sup> century. Squared or undressed rubble arranged in courses alternating with bands of terra-cotta. In 12<sup>th</sup> century terra-cotta become more prolific (fig 2.)
- D) 9<sup>th</sup>-11<sup>th</sup> century. Rubble masonry in random order, with very poorly dressed stones usually containing pebbles or gravel. *Spolia* is fairly limited: it is used in those parts of the buildings which require more support, e.g. lower parts of walls and fortification towers. Sporadic use of terra-cotta and supporting horizontal wooden beams. The mortar entirely covers the gaps between stone blocks. Similar to type B, but features what we might call incomplete cloisonné: terra-cotta (either horizontally or vertically positioned) is sometimes found in the vertical joints.
- E) Similar to previous type, but the terra-cotta in the vertical joints is now vertically positioned. It possibly represents a slightly later phase.
- F) 10<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup> century. This type is similar to type B, but with three key differences: use of wood reinforcements, use of recessed bricks, and more random brick/stone courses. Then we have the land fortifications of Constantinople, namely the Theodosian Walls. To be sure, they were anything but typical. They received priority over all other fortifications, and so – in terms of durability, lavishness, and complexity – were very much the apex of Medieval Roman military architecture.

Nevertheless, it is conceivable that their typology trickled into the provinces in a simplified form, as was the case for numerous Constantinopolitan cultural innovations. As described by Foss and Winfield in *Byzantine Fortifications: an introduction*, the main lines on the capital's masonry evolution are as follows



**Figure 8.** Type B masonry from the castle of Nafpaktos. Veikou 2013, p.36.

- A) During the Transition Period regularly coursed *spolia* (laid so as to approximate ashlar) covered the walls and doubled as decoration. Terra-cotta was kept at to a premium,
- B) possibly because there were so many abandoned buildings available for reuse.
- C) The 9<sup>th</sup> century was marked by the large-scale re-emergence of terra-cotta, especially in the superstructures of towers. *Spolia* continued to be well-cut and to resemble ashlar.
- D) During the reigns of John I, cloisonné masonry began to be heavily used. Then, brickwork began to assume a decorative function, in the form of alternating patterns (see fig. 9). Often a coating of mortar was added to the surface, to give the illusion of a smooth wall. This last trend was continued by the Lascarid dynasty in Nicaea.



**Figure 9.** Blachernae Palace, southern part of wall built by Manuel I. Foss and Winfield, 1986, p.251.

To return to Livadia: back in the 1930s, Bon assigned practically everything on Agios Ilias to the Catalan period. For a long time his interpretation was accepted as fact, despite its speculative character. Bon thinks that the Catalans must have erected the castle, because they had excellent reasons for doing so (namely, Livadia's industrial and trading activity had soared in the 13<sup>th</sup> century<sup>198</sup>). Thankfully, in recent decades a handful of Greek scholars having poked holes in Bon's interpretation. But there is more to be said. With this in mind, I will observe the castle's configuration and endeavour to draw some conclusions about its dates and function. The first's enclosure's thickness ranges between 1.40 m. and 1.80 m. Its outside faces are characterized by small and medium-sized limestone blocks. The stones are roughly dressed but arranged in regular horizontal rows. The inside (as with all Medieval fortifications) is rubble filling. The vertical gaps are filled by abundant, horizontally-positioned terra-cotta fragments.<sup>199</sup> Fully a quarter of the enclosure – the northwestern zone – is double-layered, although the projecting wall is relatively thin (0.70 m. on average. The inner layer features a line of (now filled-up) arrow loops at regular intervals.

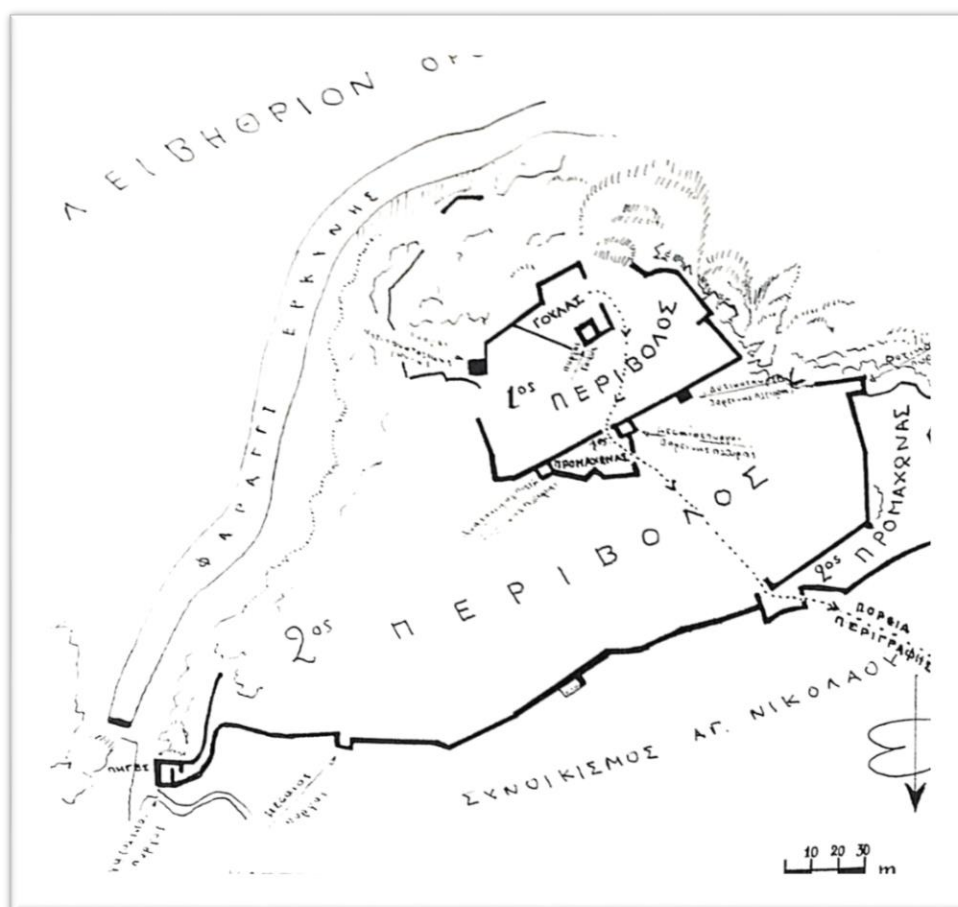


Figure 10. Plan of castle. Kordosis, 1992, p.7.

198 Bon, 1937, p.193, 206.

199 Kontogiannis, 2012, p.72.

The movable portion of the inner enclosure's gate has effectively disappeared, but traces of its main and auxiliary components (namely the crossbar recesses of a portcullis and staircases) are still visible. The gate abuts a massive tower to the west (fig. 11), which would have permitted enfilading fire. At the western extremity of the enclosure there used to be a postern, but it has been filled up. At the opposite end of the enclosure stands a massive crenelated, rectangular, two-floor keep (figs. 12 and 13). I shall refer to it hereafter as the Kryas tower (figs. 1 and 2). By far the largest tower in the complex – 8.50 m. x 15 m. – it must have played a vital role in keeping the garrison supplied with water. On its ground floor was a built staircase, which effectively served the function of a well. It extended deep below the surface, to a stream which feeds into the neighboring Erkyna. Through this arrangement the garrison could count on a steady and inconspicuous supply of water – no mean advantages in the event of a siege. Equally interesting is the keep's lower external section and its two corners (more specifically, the lower two thirds of said corners). Both components are made from massive, finely dressed blocks of stones. Only other structure in the castle shares this feature – the tower flanking the inner enclosure's gate. The terrace of the keep is crowned with crenelated parapets, although they are not the original ones.<sup>200</sup> Beneath the parapets investigators identified fragments of protruding wooden beams. Their exact dimensions are unknown, but they jutted out from the eastern, northern, and southern wall faces. Undoubtedly the beams were designed to help stabilize the tower. In at least one place<sup>201</sup> the mortar is not whitish-yellow, whitish-grey, pinkish-white, white, or pink – the standard Medieval colours in Greece – but dark grey. I assume it was added in the 1960s by the 23<sup>rd</sup> Ephorate, like the crenellations. No wall remains have been identified east of the Kryas keep. This is not particularly surprising. As fig. 8 shows, the eastern and southern approaches to Agios Ilias consist of tall, redoubtably precipitous cliffs. Without modern climbing gear, it is doubtful anyone could have gotten the better of these obstacles. There is only vestige inside the first ring, as far I know: a wall approximately 35 m. southeast of the first enclosure's gate (fig. 14). It is half-buried by the natural landscape: only 6 m. of its outer face is visible. Its masonry features regularly horizontal courses of stone, but no terra-cotta. The mortar present shows a great contrast. On the upper two thirds of the wall, it is extremely withdrawn. But on the last third, it covers practically the entire façade. This may suggest the patron tried to create a superficially monumental architectural work.

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200 The current parapets were installed by the 23<sup>rd</sup> Ephorate of Byzantine Antiquities in the 1960s.

201 Approximately 22 m. northwest of the Kryas keep.



Alternatively, the masons applied their mortar carelessly, so that binding agent spilled onto the vertical surface of the wall. The site could correspond to any number of structures: a workshop, a granary, a house, a chapel etc. It is difficult to know for sure, particularly since the wall is not connected to anything (except for a destruction layer of stone approximately 3 m. to the north). The inner and outer gates stand out from the rest of the enclosure, because their doorways are framed by poros arches (figs. 15 and 16). Although I have only identified two Medieval Roman/Latin gate framings in Greece decorated in the same manner (at Platamon and Lamia) a possible reason for the arch's existence is as follows: in the 14<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> centuries a trend developed in England, France, Spain, and Northern Italy of constructing beautiful, convenient, and comfortable but military impractical castles.<sup>202</sup> Ostensibly nonviolent values now took precedence over defensive power. The castle sometimes still looked strong, but was no longer expected to resist a serious assault. Effectively, it became a palace. The trend could simultaneously have made its way – to a very limited extent – into the Mediterranean colonies



**Figure 11.** Flanking tower of first enclosure's inner gate.

of the Catalonians and the Duchy of Florence. What would have prevented a more thorough transformation of Livadia's castle? Insufficient time and resources come to mind, but also lack of stability. A castle's owner would not have decked his gates and walls with marble sculptures or capitals if the political climate of the region was unstable. In doing so he would have risked the destruction of his decorations at the hand of a besieging rival. The political climate of Central Greece in the 14<sup>th</sup> century was very much unstable. Alternatively, some might argue that the inspiration for "dream castle" architecture was actually provided by the Komnenoi. Going back to Foss and Winfield's Constantinopolitan chronology, cloisonné masonry was heavily applied to the Theodosian Walls starting in the reign of John I.<sup>203</sup>

Bricks were significantly more vulnerable to siege

<sup>202</sup> Hay, 2016, p.67, Stokstad, 2005, pp.68-80.

<sup>203</sup> The same technique was used in two concurrent fortifications on the Nestos river: those of Gratini and Paradeissos.

indicate a clear need to reduce the impacts of missiles. But it may be that the inner gate was rebuilt after the tower's construction.



**Figure 12.** The Kryas keep and part of the first enclosure. Papathanassiou 2012.



**Figures 13.** The Kryas tower. Sawyer, 2007.





**Figure 14.** Livadia, isolated structure between first and enclosure.



Figures 15 and 16. Outer and inner gates of first enclosure. Sawyer, 2007.



Fig. 17. One of the towers abutting the second enclosure's gate. It no longer stands today. Bon, 1937, p.204.

The second enclosure generally conforms closely to the first one, with several exceptions:

- A) It lacks any arrow loops.
- B) Its entrance zone was single-layered, but the enclosure itself was endowed with three towers. By contrast, the first circuit had to make do with a single turret. The largest of the three towers abutted the gate (fig. 17). It measured 15 m. x 8.70 m., and was entered through a door lined with finely cut poros blocks. Again, the question arises as to whether this lining was an echo of the 'palatial castle' trend. The two other towers are not as imposing (width: 5.20 m. and 4.05 m.), either because their defensive value was slighter or because they were seldom seen by visitors.
- C) On the whole, the walls' breadth are narrower, ranging from either 1.20 m.-1.50 m. or 0.70 m.- 0.75 m.

On the third enclosure, which sits atop a natural platform roughly shaped like a broken triangle there is little to say. Its stonework is barely visible, being very poorly preserved. It encloses the castle's final redoubt, a rectangular donjon (fig. 17).

The edifice (dimensions: 7.5 m. x 7 m.), features regular courses of rectangular stones, though the



Figure 18. The castle's donjon.

blocks' sizes are inconsistent. The horizontal gaps are filled with terra-cotta (fig. 18). Since the donjon's walls are about 1.5 m. thick, the interior space cannot be more than 6m. x 5.5 m. The only surviving opening is a small square window on the west side. The window is approximately 2 m. above ground, so it perhaps presented the only means of entrance (with the help of a ladder). The donjon's dimensions refute, in my opinion, Kontogiannis's proposal that it served as the governor's residence. No governor would have willingly dwelt in such a cramped lodging.<sup>204</sup> We should note the presence of a further wall that extends eastward from the eastern corner of the enclosure. It terminates very close to, but quite not at,

the second enclosure. 10 m. southwest of the donjon there is a rectangular, single-room, column-less chapel known as Agia Sophia.<sup>205</sup> Its masonry consists mostly of regular horizontal stone courses, with no *spolia* or terra-cotta. The mortar is either heavily withdrawn, or at the same level as the stones. The

204 On the other hand, the presence of a ladder entrance does not disprove Kontogiannis' 'governor' theory. At least one other Frankish seigneurial dwelling in Greece, the Tower of St. Omer in Thebes, was accessed via a ladder.

205 Dimensions: 5.24 m. x 7.05 m. All scholars until now have referred to Agia Sophia as a church. But the combination of the modest dimensions and paucity of interior spaces gives me cause to believe we are dealing with a chapel.

eastern façade is an exception, having ashlar blocks with extremely thin mortar in the joints. Agia Sophia atop a former cistern, which is now a chapel dedicated to Agia Barbara.<sup>206</sup> Mamaloukos' opinion is that Agia Sophia dates to the 19<sup>th</sup> or early 20<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>207</sup> While I am not sure if we should be so precise, the complete absence of *spolia*, terra-cotta, or load-bearing columns does allow us to make a good case for a post-Medieval foundation.

The inconsistent dimensions and/or masonry of the Kryas keep, the tower adjacent to the first curtain's inner gate, and the rest of the first and second enclosures, along with the incomplete nature of the wall east of the third enclosure, make it clear that there were multiple construction phases. I believe only the two poros frames of the first curtain gates' and the poros lintel of the tower abutting the second curtain's gate are not indicative of a particular phase. Rather they were intended to impress visitors, who would surely have paid more attention to the entranceways. Stavros and Kampoli Mamaloukos submit that there were four stages.<sup>208</sup> The first one can be traced to the reign of Justinian. It concerns chiefly the base of the northeastern tower, which was constructed using *spolia* from the nearby Roman and Hellenistic/Classical buildings. The second phase was limited to the remainder of the existing northeastern tower. The next phase was a Catalan one. It was during this period that the castle assumed its present form, with two fortified enclosures, reinforcing towers and ramparts, and a tower at the hilltop. Lastly, under Ottoman occupation, the walls underwent extensive repairs, though no new structures were added.

I have two reservations on the proposals made by the Mamaloukoi. First, I would tentatively give the bulk of the first enclosure a 700-850 *terminus post quem*. For it displays most of the elements of Veikou's Type A masonry (except that its stones are not ashlar). Yet at the same time it displays three of the features associated with type B masonry. The Kryas keep and the tower abutting the first enclosure's inner gate are cases apart. They come even closer comparison to Type B, in that they make heavy use of *spolia*. I would thus assign them a mid-9<sup>th</sup> century *terminus post quem*. The above *spolia* is significant not just due to its plentifulness but its location. *Spolia* corners are discernible in numerous Medieval Roman/Latin towers, notably at Servia, Veroia, Farsala, Trikala, and Mistras. This arrangement conferred extra sturdiness to the corners, which by their shape were more liable to be damaged by missiles than flat surfaces. I would therefore argue that the *spolia* corners were added in a period of regional instability, and with the expectation that the towers to which they belonged would probably be attacked. This does not mean that the remainder of the Kryas keep and the abutting tower's masonry are contemporaneous to their corners. Some portions could have been added subsequently, as repairs.

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<sup>206</sup> Bon, 1937, pp.202-203.

<sup>207</sup> Mamaloukos, S., 2012, p.16.

<sup>208</sup> Mamaloukos, S. and Mamaloukos, K., 1999.



And it behooves us not to conclude too hastily that the *spolia* at the base of the tower was built during the reign of Justinian, since it could have been recycled much later. My conclusions on the second enclosure and the donjon are essentially the same as for the first one. I would, with great circumspection, give the latter elements a mid-9<sup>th</sup> century *terminus post quem*. Because Frankish and Catalan masonries were influenced by Medieval Roman fortifications (including the ones already built), and we lack a detailed chronological typology for the 13<sup>th</sup>-14<sup>th</sup> centuries (except with regard to Constantinople and Nicaea), I will avoid offering a *terminus ante quem* for this phase's construction. Nonetheless, there are grounds to date the second enclosure's inner gate to the periods of Catalan or Florentine occupation. The enclosure's door – namely its arched frame – bears a faint echo of the “dream castle” trend discussed earlier in the article. Whether the inspiration for the arched frame actually came from 12<sup>th</sup> century Constantinople's decorative brickwork (or that of Lascarid Nicaea) is a matter of debate. Overall, however, there is good reason to believe that the role played by the Franks and Catalans in constructing the castle was considerably smaller than previously estimated.

What do the arrow loops in the first enclosure's northwestern sector tell us? Loopholes appear on a bastion of Constantinople's sea-walls dating to Theophilos' reign and on the walls of Ankara's citadel.<sup>209</sup> And at Nicaea, a wall with four loopholes (which abuts the Yenishehir gate) is dated by inscription to 1208.<sup>210</sup> Apart from the fact that these examples are not very substantial, we must consider the



**Figure 19.** Drawing of the marble slab discovered by Lampakes. Dimakopoulos, 1984, fig.1.

possibility that arrow loops were used by the Franks, Catalans, and Florentines. Indeed, there are loops at Monemvasia and Chlemoutsi<sup>211</sup> though it is unclear if they post-date the Latin occupation. One of the two eastern outworks of Acrocorinth (as well as the northeast curtain) features loopholes that supposedly date to the early 14<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>212</sup> Furthermore, the thin apertures were already popular among the

Crusaders of the Levant in the 12<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>213</sup> Consequently, arrow loops do not help move the debate forward.

209 The citadel's walls were reconstructed in 859, as indicated by inscriptions. Foss, 1977, p.79. Likewise, the Theophilean bastion is dated by inscription. Foss and Winfield, 1986, p.54.

210 Foss and Winfield, 1986, pp.85-86.

211 Andrews, 1978, pp.201, 204.

212 According to Andrews, though he does not support his position. Andrews, 1978, p.140.

213 As shown by Tortosa, the Krak des Chevaliers, Kerak, Chastel Blanc, and Margat.

Set aside the castle, Livadia has two pertinent sites. One is a small graveyard, located in the heart of the modern town. One of the tombs (there were five tombs and five burial pits) contained the skeleton of an adult man. On the man's finger was a ring decorated with an incised bird. On the basis of comparable ornaments from Thebes and Corinth, Koilakou has dated the ring to the Later-middle Roman era.<sup>214</sup> The second site requires a little contextualizing. In 1904, the Medieval Romanist Lampakes discovered a marble slab (ostensibly belonging to a *templon*) bearing a relief decoration in the ruins of a certain church (fig. 19).

Because Lampakes neglected to record the site's location, it remained unidentified for many years. Progress was only made at some point before the early 1980s, when Dimakopoulos conceived the idea of consulting Amand von Schweiger-Lerchenfeld's writings.<sup>215</sup> This Austrian traveler, who toured Greece in 1882, left a book containing a precise illustration of the Panagia of Livadia, a former, then intact, local church. The illustration allowed us to trace the Panagia's location to a terrace overlooking the Erkyne's right bank. The church was revealed to be a cross-in-square, domed building. Surveying further showed that the masonry was of the cloisonné type and the dome was octagonal. Each side of the octagon was pierced by bilobed windows. Rather unusually, the windows were divided horizontally and not vertically. In the resulting lower level, several fragments of a column were visible.<sup>216</sup> There is a small annex on the north side of the church. The roof was gabled, and its middle portion was crowned by a bell tower apparently entirely devoid of terra-cotta (except for its window). The frame of the annex's door is lined with toothed brickwork. On the basis of the main building's cross-in-square plan, cloisonné masonry, dome windows, and the marble slab, I would suggest an 11<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup> century foundation date.

What can we surmise from the *Notitia 3*, the sigillographic material, the architecture, and the excavation finds? In my opinion, that the bulk of the castle was conceivably constructed in the 8<sup>th</sup>-9<sup>th</sup> centuries. Kontogiannis and the Mamaloukoi have done much to disprove Bon's interpretation, but the contributions of the Catalans and the Franks ought to be downplayed even further. Unfortunately, the Rhomanian interpretation, while not implausible, is currently unprovable. The location and likely date of the Panagia of Livadia – in the same general place where Pausania's Livadia stood – are promising clues. However, the Panagia is only one building. I had hoped to achieve more, to offer some definitive answers. But the latter will probably have to wait until an intensive survey is conducted in the castle's outer ring, or until such a time as rescue excavations became possible in the modern town.

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<sup>214</sup> Koilakou, 1994, pp.124-125.

<sup>215</sup> Dimakopoulos, 1984.

<sup>216</sup> Such windows are found in Agion Apostolon of Solaki, Agios Theodoros of Athens, the Taxiarchis Charoudas of Mani, and the Panagia of nearby Osios Loukas Monastery. All four of the above churches are of 11th century origin, with the Panagia in particular being dated to 1050-1100.

### 3. Kastorion

Kastorion (Antique and modern Thisvi) holds the distinction of being the best-recorded Rhomanian “urban” settlement in Boeotia, after Thebes. This is largely thanks to the efforts of A. Dunn, who between 2006 and 2012 conducted an intensive survey in the locality.<sup>217</sup> I have summarized what we know about Kastorion below. Kastorion/Thisvi’s fortunes during the Transition period are exceedingly murky. After the 6<sup>th</sup> century, the textual sources fall silent. A great deal of pottery was found in 1980s in the Lower Acropolis, but perhaps it because was not Antique material, it went unreported.<sup>218</sup>

We are better informed on the Middle Rhomanian period. In the 10<sup>th</sup> century, Osios Loukas implies that his parents fled to a harbour called Vathys before resettling at Kastorion. This Vathys is surely the unnamed port that later crops up in the saint’s *Vita*. It is used by several pilgrims bound for Rome, who (before embarking) call on Osios Loukas in his Mount Ioannitizes cave.<sup>219</sup> Whether they came from Thebes, Plataea, or another Boeotian settlement is difficult to say (see chapter 2, fig.2). But it seems fairly clear to me that by Osios Loukas’ generation, a well-established pilgrimage lane connected Boetia to Rome. This hypothesis is all the more likely given that Vathys has been used since at least the early 19<sup>th</sup> century to refer to the [natural] harbour of Ormos Agios Ioannou, a village located on the coast of the Bay of Domvraina.<sup>220</sup> Loukas does not mention Peloponnesian government officials transiting from their province to Constantinople, but they almost certainly existed. Travelling from Central Boeotia to the Peloponnese via Vathys would have offered itinerants the major advantage of avoiding the circuitous *demosia leophoros* land route (see fig.20).

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217 I exclude Livadia, whose chronology is uncertain. Also, some will object that – based on what has been found so far – Kastorion does not conform to my definition of an urban settlement. That is why, in the first sentence of this paragraph, the word urban is in quotation marks.

218 Gregory, 1986.

219 Dunn, 2006, p.44, Osios Loukas, 1989, pp.28, 47.

220 See fig. 32, on which the village is called ‘Ioannitze.’ Dunn, 2006, p.41, Leake, 1835a, p.504.



**Figure 20.** The *demosia leophoros* on the Peutinger Table. Pritchett, 1980, p.209. Though the map does not show it, the thoroughfare continued past Megara, to Corinth. See Gregory of Dekapolis (Ignatios the Deacon, 1926, p.23), Guido of Pisa, 1860, p.537, and Benjamin of Tudela, 1907, p.16.

Incidentally, in the 11<sup>th</sup> century Vathys is referred to as a *κομη*.<sup>221</sup> That label may come across as diminutive, but then the port's capacity was certainly acutely limited, since the mountains come down right to the water's edge (see section I).

On a related note, I am told by Professor Gregory that his 1986 survey has unearthed ceramic finds on Kouveli (an island approximately 1 km. southeast of Ormos Agios Ioannou) dating to the second half of the 12<sup>th</sup> century, though they are not ready for publication. Nor should we be surprised that

In the 12<sup>th</sup> century, the plain north of the Lower Acropolis (height: 160 m.) and the Lower Acropolis itself was reoccupied, while Kastorion became the seat of a bishopric. This, combined with Thebes' acquisition of bishoprics in the 10<sup>th</sup> century, constitutes proof that the population of Boeotia expanded – a notion confirmed by the increase in the number of suffragan sees (see table 7). As Dunn remarks, Kastorion's prosperity can be attributed to various factors: legitimate and illegitimate involvement in the

<sup>221</sup> Dunn, 1995, p.760. See also Table 7.



silk trade, its command of the Aegean-Gulf of Corinth land route <sup>222</sup>, and a special relationship with the relatively nearby Osios Loukas monastery. <sup>223</sup> Other assets may have been the suitability of the Valley of Domvraina for wine/cereal/olive cultivation (see section I) and the dense vegetation of the plateau just north of modern Ioannitze. In the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, said vegetation was dense enough in the winter to feed several nomadic herds. <sup>224</sup>

On the gently-sloping Lower Acropolis (fig. 20), a dye extraction site and the ruins of two churches (triple-apsed and cruciformed) and a tower are accounted for. Specifically, the site is situated on the northern escarpment of the hilltop. <sup>225</sup> It comprises a vast deposit of broken shells, measuring 65 m. x 70 m. on one axis and 30 m. on the other. The shells have not been officially dated, but given that they were found at same altitude as the Lower Acropolis residences, there is a distinct possibility the two elements were contemporaneous. Significantly, the most prevalent type of murex found in the deposit was *Hexaplex trunculus* L., which produces purple dye of the highest quality. <sup>226</sup> This confirms the notion – emitted by several primary sources – that Boeotia's silk and dye industry catered exclusively to an upper-class clientele. It is tempting to think the site was used not just for dye extraction but dye application. This the Lower Acropolis' artisans could have done by constructing a shallow cistern on the slope of the Acropolis. A hole bored in the cistern would have led into an artificial channel, and the latter would have guided any overflowing water directly into the workshop's basins. Nor have any artificial channels originating from the ridges north of Thisvi been located. A large body of natural water could have satisfied the dyers' needs, but to my knowledge the nearest existing such body was the Gulf of Corinth – approximately 5 km. distant. We can find a partial answer to my question by tapping into hydrological information. Thisvi occupies the southwest corner of the Valley of Domvraina. As mentioned in Section I, two small pockets of land in the Valley happen to lack any sinkholes and be at the same altitude as the water table (120 m.). Thisvi lies in the western pocket. Consequently, it is subject to annual inundations. <sup>227</sup> The problem is not recent. As early as the Hellenistic period, water management installations are attested in Thisvi. At least one wall, two-three miles east of Domvraina, has been identified by Leake. <sup>228</sup> Its manner of functioning is ambiguous. According to Leake, it was built in order

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222 This must have been a popular solution during the period ca. 827-961, when the waters around southern Greece was infested with Cretan pirates (unless travellers preferred the Isthmus of Corinth itinerary). On the Corinthian alternative, see McCormick, 2001, pp.69, 71.

223 Ibid, p.765. What did the relationship entail? Perhaps Kastorion supplied manpower for Osios Loukas' estates, one or more of Kastorion's religious constructions were sponsored by the monastery, or the two communities actively traded with each other.

224 Philippson, 1951, pp.460-461.

225 Dunn, 2007.

226 Dunn, 2008-2009.

227 Knauss, 1992, p.35.

228 Leake, 1835a, vol.2, pp.509-510.

to make each division of the valley cultivable every two years out of three. Given the mediocre quality of the wall's masonry – loose stones and mortar – we may doubt whether it actually served an anti-flood purpose. Another stone structure constitutes a more straightforward matter. It crossed a plain outside Thisvi on a north-southeast axis <sup>229</sup> and functioned as a dividing channel. Two openings, which pierced the stonework, gave passage to an east-west river. The openings could be closed in times of flood. This would cause one half of the plain to be inundated by the river, but the other half to be left unspoiled. Though the dyke still subsisted as of the early 1800s, no modern scholar has been able to confirm Leake's observations. <sup>230</sup> Presumably the structure has since been stripped away by *spolia* scavengers or the passage of time. So there is no doubt that floodwater is a long-running problem in Kastorion. But how long could the settlement's dye-makers have availed themselves of the flood water? One month? Three months? Gehrke, in a study of Thisvi's seasonal rainfall and its water table, helpfully informs us that on average the plain is flooded for two months per year. <sup>231</sup> Consequently, the floodwaters must have been of decidedly limited use to any dye-makers working on the escarpment of the Lower Acropolis.

The Lower Acropolis' tower, ostensibly of Middle Rhomanian origin, is located in the southwest corner of the acropolis. It possessed a fighting platform, but also a vaulted chamber – suggesting that it doubled as a chapel. Although its foundations were Hellenistic, it was not connected to the now-abandoned wall. <sup>232</sup> Entrance was [presumably] gained via a ladder. What the purpose of a freestanding tower on the Lower Acropolis was I cannot say. It would have made a mediocre lookout post, rising a mere 20-40 m. (and at soft angles) above the surrounding landscape. Perhaps the tower was meant to remain occupied in the event of an attack – to serve as a diversion or enable a delaying ploy. Alternatively, it was a private chapel or the repository of the treasure of Kastorion's *archontes*/Frankish lord.

The Upper Acropolis, has yielded two potential signs of contemporary habitation:

- a) a rectangular tower buttressed by engaged external piers and possessing characteristic Middle Rhomanian/Frankish masonry. <sup>233</sup>
- b) a Medieval chapel.

They are a few more Middle Rhomanian structures in the area between the two Acropolises (namely in the form village): three churches and two chapels. They were identified through inscriptions and *spolia* blocks in the walls of houses and churches. <sup>234</sup>

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229 Leake does not specify whether the plain was east or west of Kastorion.

230 Knauss, 1992, p.37.

231 Gehrke, 1993, p.146. On a personal note, I visited Thisvi in the month of April and did not notice any traces of above-surface water.

232 The wall's remains are polygonal, so probably Classical/Hellenistic Greek. There is no evidence it continued to be used in the Roman and Byzantine period.

233 Dunn, 2008, pp.38.

234 Gregory, 1980, p.31.

#### 4. Galaxidi

Our main source for Galaxidi is the aptly-named *Chronicle of Galaxidi*.<sup>235</sup> Because the *Chronicle* was written in 1703 (more five centuries after the events it describes), and does not identify its informants, its reliability should be regarded as dubious. But the lack of alternatives means we cannot afford to ignore it. The *Chronicle* begins by relating that “during the reign of the Emperor Constantine of Romanos” Bulgarian troops laid siege to Galaxidi.<sup>236</sup> At first the Galaxidans resisted valiantly, but they lost heart once Bulgarian troops from Amfissa (which had just fallen) joined the fight. They abandoned their home and fled to the small islands in the Bay of Itea. There the refugees founded a few villages. After remaining offshore for fifty years, they resettled Galaxidi. They did not enjoy their return to normal life for long. In 1054, a pestilential epidemic ravaged many Phokian “polities”, including Galaxidi and Amfissa.<sup>237</sup> This was

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235 Euthymios, 1962, pp.192-201. For a commentary and partial English translation of the *Chronicle*, see Rosser, 1996.

236 The Greek passage is Τον χαϊρόν τῆς βασιλείας Κωνσταντίνου Ρωμάνου. The *Chronicle*’s editor, Sathas, identifies Constantine with Constantine VIII, the son of Romanos II. Sathas, 1962, p.125. I concur with him. The alternative – that there was an emperor named Κωνσταντίνος Ρωμανός – is patently wrong. Accordingly, we can date the siege to the Bulgarian incursion in Central Greece during Tsar Samuel’s reign: in 996.

237 Euthymios, 1962, p.195. The epidemic is not named. It also struck Lidoriki.

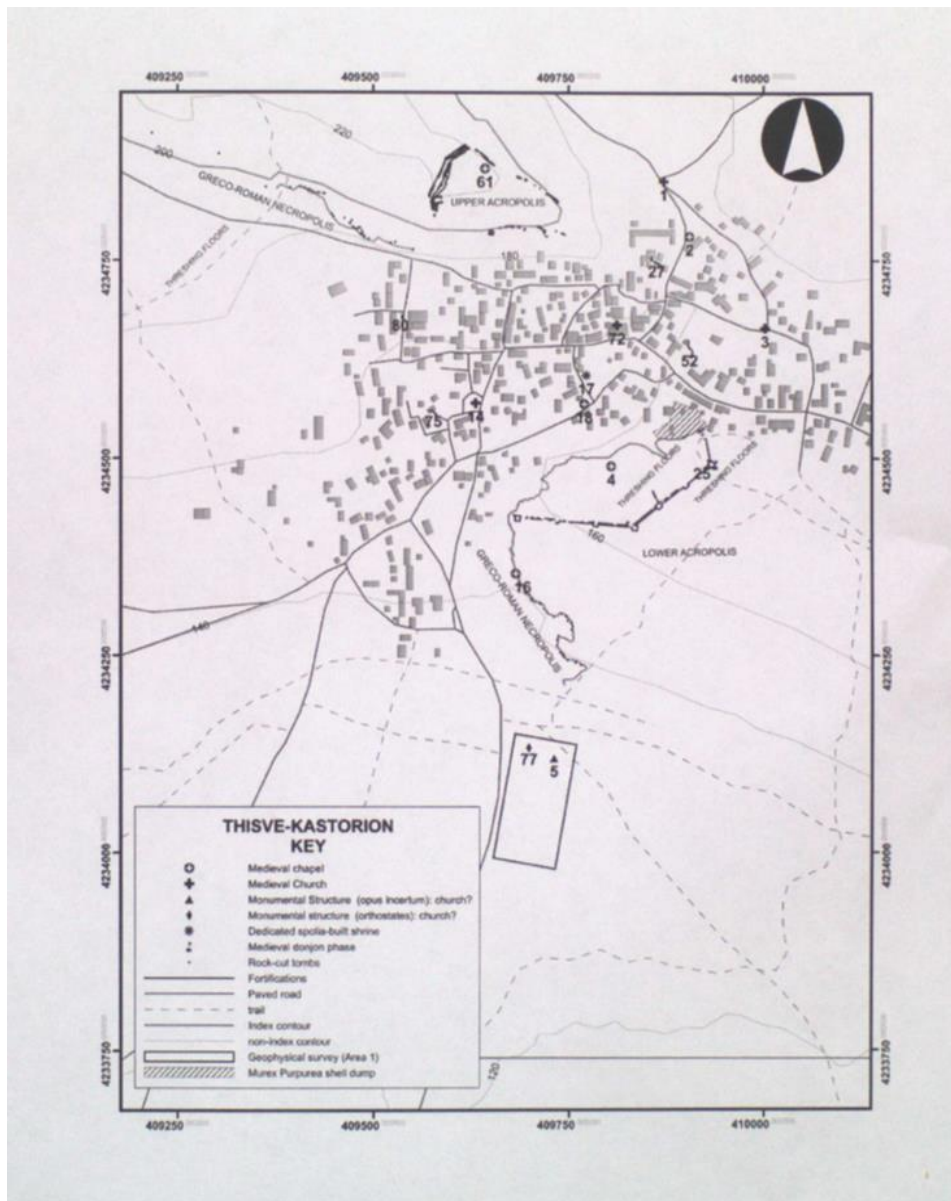


Figure 21. Kastorion, architectural character and range. Dunn, 2008, p.41.

compounded by an Uzes raid in 1064<sup>238</sup>, which compelled the inhabitants to once more seek sanctuary in the Bay of Itea (and some remote caves on the mainland).

The following events in the *Chronicle* are again of a martial nature. In 1081 and 1147, Galaxidi came under attack by the Normans.<sup>239</sup> On the first occasion the townspeople prevailed and repulsed the

238 Sathas puts the event in 1059. However, a more plausible date is 1064. That year was marked by an invasion of the Balkan provinces (including Central Greece) by the Uzes. While Euthymios calls the raiders pirates, the manner in which the Galaxidians responded to the danger would have been illogical if the aggressors were sea-borne. And the raiders' appearance and behaviour is described as bestial, a trait which would fit the Uzes more than (Muslim) pirates. Euthymios, 1962, pp.195-196.

239 The *Chronicle* may be confusing the identity of the 1081 raiders. The Normans of Southern Italy were then engaged in an all-out invasion of Rumania, and were experiencing critical difficulties securing their lines of communication across the Adriatic. It is doubtful they would have risked the fate of their invading army – unless they were hoping to create a diversion. A raid by Saracens seems equally plausible to me.

invaders. The 1147 generation was not so fortunate, and the Normans inflicted a massacre upon it. The settlements in the Bay of Itea did not vanish after the dust of the 1064 sack had settled. The islands are mentioned as being inhabited at the time of the Frankish conquest, and the *Chronicle* implies that there had been continuous occupation since 1147.<sup>240</sup> This suggests that they had become permanent settlements. Did Galaxidi fulfill some of my urban settlement criteria? There is a good chance that it did, since it clearly possessed fortifications during its siege by the Bulgarians.

## 5. Amfissa

### A. History

The history of Amfissa ((post-1204 Salona<sup>241</sup>) is similar to Galaxidi's, and in fact the two settlements are usually discussed conjointly by the *Chronicle*. It too was attacked by Bulgarian troops in the late 10<sup>th</sup> century. Owing to the betrayal of some of its citizens it was besieged and sacked. It was again sacked in 1064. Amfissa is absent from the *Chronicle's* passage on the raids of 1081 and 1147. Either it submitted immediately to the Normans, the raiders were satisfied with the booty they had collected from Galaxidi, or the locality presented nothing of interest to them. The urban settlement case is more substantial for Amfissa than Galaxidi. Not only was it fortified in the 10<sup>th</sup> century, but within several years after the Fourth Crusade it had been named a bishopric.<sup>242</sup> In the same vein, after the Fourth Crusade Amfissa quickly became the residence of Thomas d'Autremencourt, a vassal of Boniface of Montferrat.<sup>243</sup> It is unlikely that Thomas would have made the site his home had it been abandoned. What is more, Kravartogiannos' Amfissan coin catalogue (see III.8) dates to the 9<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup> centuries – which strongly suggests that Amfissa was inhabited during most of my period of study.

### B. Archaeology

Through Amfissa passes the modern road which connects the Chrissan and Kifissan Plains, via the passes of Gravia and Parnassos-Kiona. One is tempted to think that it existed during Medieval Roman

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<sup>240</sup> Euthymios, 1962, p.201. Rosser, 1996, p.144.

<sup>241</sup> According to one scholarly interpretation, defended (among others), by Archie Dunn, the term Salona was already in effect before the Fourth Crusade, courtesy of some Transition period refugees from Dalmatian Salona. For my part, I am only aware of one remotely contemporary nomenclatural source – the *Chronicle of Galaxidi* – and it uses Amfissa. However, the *Chronicle's* author may have been writing this way in a nod to Antiquity, when the settlement was called Amfissa by everyone. It is plausible that uneducated Rhomaioi Amfissans, who did not have the author's knowledge, used the term Salona.

<sup>242</sup> In 1208-1211. Lock, 2014, p.208.

<sup>243</sup> Bon, 1937, p.164.

times. For one thing, Amfissa, Delphi, and Amvrossos are all attested as being occupied by the *Notitia 3* (787-800). They could have been stopping points on the above road (see fig. 2). For another, in the early 10<sup>th</sup> century Osios Loukas mentions that the passes to Thessaly were closely controlled by soldiers. He was then residing in a cave in Mount Ioannitze (near Kastorion).<sup>244</sup> The most plausible course for such a route – in Phthiotis, Boeotia and Phokis – would have been via Amfissa (and then Delphi, Amvrossos, and the craggy coastal path mentioned at the end of Chapter 2.I). To bring the *Notitia 3* and Osios Loukas' testimony into a more specific light, I will examine the ruins of Amfissa's castle.<sup>245</sup> If there is evidence for a Later-middle Roman phase, this surely tell us that there was a strategic road nearby which needed controlling. The castle stands at the top of a redoubtably steep, rocky hill, which overlooks the town. Broadly speaking, its ruins can be divided into two sectors: an irregularly-shaped courtyard, and – perched on a ledge about 7.5 m. above it – a roughly-rectangular shaped enclosure. I have further subdivided the enclosure into the following units:

- A) The west wall (average width: 2 m.). The masonry consists of horizontal bands of Antique blocks, some of which project further outward than the others. The stones are bound by mortar and their gaps filled by pebbles and terra-cotta. In its southern part the wall is pierced by a postern (height: 2.80 m., width: 1.66 m.).
- B) The northwest wall (length roughly 48 m.) measures approximately 2 m. for its first 35 m, and 1.25 m. for its remaining 13 m. Its arrangement is staggered, while the masonry consists of Antique stonework (but with no terra-cotta or pebbles). About 16 m. before the northwest corner, the wall brushes against a powerful, though isolated, tower (diameter: 7 m., width: 2m.). The masonry here is again Antique.
- C) Southeast tower (diameter 16 m., width 1.90 m.). Located 16 m. southeast of northwest wall. It is made of rubble stonework with abundant mortar and terra-cotta.
- D) Southeast wall. Identical in width and configuration to its northwest counterpart, it also represents the northwest limit of the courtyard. On an extraneous note, much of the interior space of the enclosure is taken up by a donjon.

The courtyard has three main components:

- A) The northwest wall is of remarkable height and width (8 m. and 3.20 m., respectively). The main gate was on this side.<sup>246</sup> Its approach was defended both by a massive projecting square tower and the path's parallel arrangement (the last 60

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244 Osios Loukas, 1994, pp.165-166. Note too, that Liutprand of Cremona reached Nafpkatos by land in 968, on his return journey from Constantinople. He could either have travelled via Mount Oite, Lidoriki, and Eratini, or via Amfissa. Avramea, 2002, p.73, Liutprand of Cremona, 1930, p.271.

245 As I lacked the time to properly reconnoiter the castle, I am relying chiefly on Bon. Bon, 1937, 168-186.

246 Next to the number '1' on fig. 37. Its width was 4, 20 m.

m. of the path ran alongside the wall, meaning attackers would have been exposed to enfilading fire). The wall stops a little short of the enclosure, so that there is a 5.50 m. wide passage between the two structures. We may be looking at a gate, since the passage is covered in a heap of collapsed stones. However, this theory is questionable, since there was already a gate further southwest (shown by the number '1' on fig. 21). The masonry is chiefly rubble stonework with abundant terra-cotta, except at the wall's southern extremity.

- B) The southwest wall (width: 2 m.). The masonry is initially identical to the northwest curtain in its upper two-thirds, and Hellenistic in its lower third. However, it becomes entirely polygonal south of a certain projecting tower (located to the left of the number '2' on fig. 21). This section might be considered Cyclopean, as the blocks are often of enormous size.
- C) The southeast wall (width: 2 m.). The height of its well-preserved stretches is even greater than the northwest curtain's, exceeding 10 m. The eastern redan (to the right of the number '3' on fig. 21), is pierced by a postern which gives access to the town. However, it is of modern construction.

Three of the castle's architectural elements – the enclosure's two towers and the courtyard's southwest wall – present significant similarities to Type A and Type B masonry.<sup>247</sup> On that basis, I believe we can assign the castle – and by extension the hypothetical Itea-Kifissos road – a 7<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup> century *terminus post quem*.

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<sup>247</sup> The same thing can be said of the northwest wall. However, the latter structure's dimensions are unheard of during the 7th-12th centuries, except at Thessaloniki and Constantinople.



**Figure 22.** Plan of the castle of Amfissa. 24th Ephorate of Byzantine Antiquities (now Ephorate of Antiquities of Phokis), 2014.

## 6. Davlia

Davlia is a rare case of a Middle Rhomanian upland bishopric.<sup>248</sup> It stood on a steep hill 370 m. above the Plain of Kifissos. One of its main vestiges is a single-apsed, single-aisled basilica (fig.22). The basilica's fairly ample dimensions (20 m. x approximately 8 m.), though not its design, are suggestive of a diocesan basilica. This is confirmed by historical sources. Despite its topographical inaccessibility, Davlia was the Metropolis of Athens' ranking see in the *Notitiae* 7, 9, 10, and 13 (901-907, ca. 934-968/970, 968/970-1019/1020, and end of reign of Manuel I).<sup>249</sup> And it has existed since the Neolithic period on the same site, so there must have been compelling reasons to live there. What were those reasons? The first one that comes to mind is security. The power of Davlia's natural defenses speak for themselves, and were remarked upon in the 1<sup>st</sup> century B.C. by Titus Livy.<sup>250</sup> But the Middle Rhomaioi would have had less need for Davlia's protection as the lowlands' security situation improved, in the 9<sup>th</sup>-10<sup>th</sup> centuries. We can suppose that they had special agricultural/industrial products to offer to the outside world (given Davlia's consistently high rank in the *Notitiae*) perhaps apiculture or carpentry. These two activities do not require

<sup>248</sup> To my knowledge, the only place where such bishoprics were common was Calabria.

<sup>249</sup> The see of Davlia was an island in the Archbishopric of Thebes. Such an arrangement was not unheard off in Medieval Roman Greece. Koroneia, off the road between Livadia and Aliartos, was equally dependent of Athens. Lidoriki, Dion, and Kolindros (in Phokis and Western Macedonia, respectively) were dependents of Larissa.

<sup>250</sup> Titus Livy, 1935, 32.18.7.



water, which would probably have been in short supply. Davlia was served by the now defunct Platanias River, which flowed east to join the Kifissos.<sup>251</sup> But the Platanias dried up in the summer. When this happened, the nearest source of water would have been the Kifissos, separated from Davlia by almost 1 km. of hilly terrain (as the crow flies).<sup>252</sup> So Davlians would have had to stock up on water for the dry months, using cisterns. Frazer does record that Davlia was “embowered among gardens.” But he is writing in 1907-1913, by which point Davlians may have had access to motor vehicles.<sup>253</sup>

Although I made a visit to Davlia, I did not stay long enough to study the basilica in detail, or to describe the two other Middle Rhomanian remnants on the site (a fortification wall, reinforced by two towers). I intended to make use of a field report that Koilakou seems to have written.<sup>254</sup> Unfortunately, I have been unable to locate the report (even in the *Archaologikon Deltion*) or to make contact with Koilakou (who is now retired).



**Figure 23.** The basilica of Davlia, looking towards the sanctuary. The building is about 150 m. south of the modern settlement.

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251 Philippon, 1938, p.431, Frazer, 1913, p.230.

252 Philippon, 1938, p.431, Frazer, *ibid.*, British Naval Intelligence Division, 1944.

253 *Ibid.*, p.222.

254 Which was condensed into an online abstract. Koilakou, 2012.

## 7. Poorly known or unclassifiable settlements

There are a handful of Boeotian settlements on which so little is known that they do not merit individual sections, or which show only weak evidence of being an urban settlement. They are as follows:

- a) **Livadostro** (Antique Krefsis). 22 km. south of Thebes, it was one of Boeotia's ports in the 12<sup>th</sup> century. It was in Livadostro that the English pilgrim Saewulf, who was on his way to Palestine, disembarked in 1102. He referred to the port by the Latin epithet *Portus Hostae*, which suggests Livadostro was handling regular traffic.<sup>255</sup> We are not sure when the transition from Krefsis to Livadostro occurred, but the name *Ripa d'Ostria* is used by a portulan manual from the first half of the 13<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>256</sup> If the latter term was employed before then, we have evidence that the Later-middle Roman port was heavily involved in the collection and/or extraction of purple murex. Livadostro is a liquid metathetic equivalent of *Ripa d'Ostria*, meaning "the coast of purple [dye]".<sup>257</sup> The 'R' in Ripa is replaced by an 'L', giving us *Lira d'Ostria*.<sup>258</sup>
- b) **Aigosthena** (Antique and modern Porto Germeno). In the days of Hierocles and Stephanus of Byzantium, Aigosthena possessed an elaborately-configured basilica. Said basilica was a five-aisled building with an external apse and a rectangular baptistery. Its post-6<sup>th</sup> century existence is characteristically hazy. According to Koder and Hild there was a barbarian-induced flight of the population to the Peloponnese in the late 6<sup>th</sup> century. I suspect the exodus was at least partially reversed by the 8<sup>th</sup> century, since the *Notitia 3* (787-800) lists *Edosthinas* as a see of Athens. Of Aigosthena's Medieval religious monuments, one – the basilica of Agios Nikolas – belongs to a 13<sup>th</sup>-15<sup>th</sup> phase. The other, a small but eight-apsed church situated to the west of the Late Antique Roman basilica, has not been properly studied. However, some coins of Constantine IX and Manuel I have been found in the vicinity, which suggests an 11<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup> century *terminus post quem*.<sup>259</sup>
- c) **Larymna**. Overlooks a bay facing the Northern Evvian Gulf. It seems to have possessed a port in Justinianic times.<sup>260</sup> The proposal that Larymna was the Jabustrisa visited by

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255 Wilkinson, Hill, and Ryan, 1988, p.95.

256 Motzo, 1947, p.34.

257 Dunn, 2006, p.58.

258 The term *Ostria* could have been derived from the Ostro, a certain warm, humid southerly wind in the Mediterranean. But this seems doubtful, given that the Ostro is not unique to Livadostro. In fact, I cannot confirm that it actually occurs there.

259 Stephanus of Byzantium, 2006, p.44, Koder and Hild, 1976, p.120, Kontogeorgopoulou et al., 2011.

260 Schafer et al., 1968, pp.527-545.

Benjamin of Tudela, emitted by Koder and Hild, is interesting but unfounded.<sup>261</sup> Tudela merely describes Jabustrisa as “a city on the sea-coast” which contains about 100 Jews. He implicitly situates it between Euripos and Lamia.<sup>262</sup> This is hardly sufficient information to identify the settlement on the map. The sole tangible proof of a contemporary municipality is Agios Nikolaos, a former church 2 km. outside Larymna. It is of the Athonite variant, and on that basis has been dated to the 11<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup> centuries by Lazarides.<sup>263</sup>

- d) **Anthedon.** For millennia, as far back as Prehistoric times, Anthedon’s harbour was of major value to Thebes. But textual references cease after the 6<sup>th</sup> century, despite the proximity of the presumed Later-middle Roman Thebes-Euripos road (see Section I). Ceramic finds in the [now mostly submerged] old harbour purportedly indicate that – following a period of abandonment in the 700s – the harbour resumed functioning until ca. 1200. Unfortunately, as of 2017 only one specimen has been published, a Gunsenin 3 amphora.<sup>264</sup> A late 19<sup>th</sup> century excavation conducted by the American School of Classical Studies revealed many Medieval Roman graves on a low hill east of modern Anthedon. However, contemporary archaeology being what it was, the graves were only given a passing mention.<sup>265</sup>

It has been speculated that after the 12<sup>th</sup> century the inhabitants relocated to the inland site of Loukisia, on the northern slope of the Messapion. Orlandos pointed out and described an 11<sup>th</sup> century tetraconch chapel ten minutes east of Loukisia.<sup>266</sup> But a single chapel does not support the case that Loukisia’s foundation immediately superseded the final abandonment of Anthedon. Slightly more helpfully, one of the villages listed in the Praktikon of Athens, Ision, was located on the northern slope of the Messapion.<sup>267</sup> Yet again, this information still does not allow for definite conclusions. So the question of whether Anthedon survived beyond the 6<sup>th</sup> century hangs in the balance.

- e) **Plataea.** Situated at the foot of Kithairon, and on the *demosia leophoros*. As late as the *Notitia 3* (787-800), it was the seat of a bishop.<sup>268</sup> Thereafter, no literary evidence

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261 Koder and Hild, 1976, p.199.

262 Benjamin of Tudela, 2005, p. 68.

263 Lazarides, 1968, p.252, 1969, p.218.

264 Schlager et al., 1968, pp. 78-88, Vroom, 2003, p.79.

265 Rolfe, 1890, p.101.

266 Orlandos, 1937, pp.166-171. See also Katsekali et al., 2009.

267 Nouchakes, 1901, p.118, Grandstrem et al., 1976, pp.12, 22.

268 The *Notitia* gives the bishopric’s name as Πλατιάς.

is available, raising the possibility that Plataea was deserted. According to the 1890 excavation report of the American School of Classical Studies, its Late Antique walls (which were refurbished during Justinian's reign) experienced no modifications whatsoever in later centuries.<sup>269</sup> However, much like at Anthedon, the excavation's directors exhibit no interest in distinguishing 5<sup>th</sup>-6<sup>th</sup> century fortifications from ulterior ones. Nor do they describe most of the ten Medieval Roman churches they discovered. There is also a double-apsed church outside Plataea, on the road to Kapareli.<sup>270</sup> Some frescoes from a buried dome (which was excavated following a violent earthquake) apparently date to Medieval Roman times, though the rest of the building is of 19<sup>th</sup> century origin. Lastly, the final report of the Plataea Urban Mapping Project<sup>271</sup> presents a vast repository of historical/archaeological data from the Classical, Hellenistic, Antique Roman, and Middle Rhomanian periods. But it contains only a few scraps of pottery from Plataea's post-6<sup>th</sup> century A.D. history. This is not due to any subjectivity on the surveyors' part – there was simply nothing else to be found.

- f) **Opous.** A bishopric at the end of the 8<sup>th</sup> and in the mid-to-late 11<sup>th</sup> century, as indicated by the *Notitia* 3 and a seal.<sup>272</sup> It may correspond to Atalanti, which was a bishopric in the 13<sup>th</sup>-15<sup>th</sup> centuries.<sup>273</sup>
- g) **Crissa.** Visited by Tudela, who reports that 200 peasant Jews lived there.<sup>274</sup>
- h) **Akraiphnio.** Discussed in Appendix A.III.

## 8. The Silk Industry

The two main materials involved in the silk industry – silk and dye – were closely intertwined. Raw silk, obtained from silk moths, was processed into tapestries and clothing, and dye was applied to the fabric to produce vibrant colours –purple, red, orange-red, and yellow. Patterns were then printed onto the fabric by means of incised wooden blocks. There is plenty of cause to believe that Boeotia was heavily involved in silk and dye-making, especially its capital, Thebes. In fact, within Rhomania, Boeotia seems to have held an oligopoly in the business: in the 12<sup>th</sup> century, it was the only region that combined

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269 Washington, 1890, p.462, Dittenberger, 1903, no. 1683.

270 Koilakou, 1981, p.81.

271 Aravantinos et al., 2013.

272 Zacos, 1984-1985, no.548.

273 Koder and Hild, 1976, p.126.

274 Tudela: "They [the Jews] sow and reap on their own land." Tudela, 1907, p.10.

multiple sectors, apart from the Peloponnese, Andros, and Constantinople. According to the German bishop Otto of Freising and the *Annales Palidenses*, Athens was home to some silk workers in 1147 but no other contemporary source substantiate their testimony. The Bishop of Stagoi, in Thessaly, did own eighty-five mulberry trees in the 1160s.<sup>275</sup> However, the mention of mulberry trees by itself does not constitute evidence of silk production<sup>276</sup>, since these trees were also cultivated for their fruit. That being said, I would not go so far as to argue that the Boeotian oligopoly extended to the whole of the Mediterranean basin. Even if we concentrate on the regions which possessed multi-sector industries (the industry's sectors include sea snail fishing, silkworm cultivation, dye extraction, reeling, and weaving), we are presented with at least three potential competitors: Egypt<sup>277</sup>, the Republic of Lucca, and the Kingdom of Sicily. The appearance of Sicily may date to King Roger's raid on Greece, during which the Normans deported an unspecified number of Theban silk artisans. Apart from the raid, what textual proof do we have of the Boeotian industry's prominence?

- a) Michael Akominatos wrote in 1183-1185 that the well-to-do inhabitants of Constantinople obtained their silk garments from Thebes and Corinth.<sup>278</sup> His praise is not motivated by altruism: Akominatos is complaining that Thebes and Corinth are being taxed more lightly than Athens. Nevertheless, it is reasonable to conclude that Thebes was – at the least – playing a substantial role in the provisioning of wealthy Constantinopolitans.
- b) The author of the 12<sup>th</sup> century *Timarion*, whose protagonist is initially headed for the fair of St. Demetrius, writes : “Later coming down from the mountain I gazed at everything visible, prodigiously great in woven robes and threads...from Boeotia and the Peloponnese”.<sup>279</sup>
- c) Benjamin of Tudela, visiting Thebes ca. 1161, claims that the local Jewish tailors are “the best craftsmen in the land of the Greeks at making silk and purple garments.”<sup>280</sup> Note that “Greeks” was a common name used by Muslims and Westerners to refer to the Medieval Rhomaioi. Thus, Tudela is presumably describing the Theban Jews' merchandise as the best in all Rhomeania.

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275 Astruc, 1959, p.214. Mulberry leaves are a staple food of the silkworm.

276 As Galliker observes. Galliker,, 2014, p.43.

277 Goitein, 1967, pp. 169, 172.

278 Akominatos, I, 1880, p.83.

279 Romano, 1974, pp.54-55.

280 Benjamin of Tudela, 1907, p.13.

- d) John Tzetzes' colossal poem the *Chiliades* has this to say: "Next to their waters [of the Dirki and the Ismenos] clear and shining and also very smooth, are made woven robes in the country of Thebes." Tzetzes' words are echoed by Niketas Khoniates.<sup>281</sup>
- e) By ca. 1100, Italian merchants were using the toponym 'ostro' for the western coast of Boeotia (fig. 23).<sup>282</sup> This word is derived from ὄστρειον and ὄστρέον, which was Greek for the marine snail *Heraplex trunculus* and its purple extract. Another Italian toponym, 'ostrica', bore a close similarity to the word 'ostria', itself synonymous with 'ostro'.
- f) By ca. 1000, the noun Kastorion referred not just to the settlement in Western Boeotia (known today as Thisve), but also to "a kind of dye from mollusk." And the 1083 *Typikon* of Gregory Pakourianos refers to imperial overgarments as οξυκάστορος, with ὄξυς meaning 'bright colour'.<sup>283</sup> But I should stress that the two definitions have very limited value. This is because purple dye was also created by alchemists. According to Galliker, it is virtually impossible to tell apart textile coloured with alchemist purple dye from its artisanal counterpart (barring chemical analysis).



**Figure 24.** Some of the Later-middle Roman settlements on/near the Western Boeotian coast. Dunn, 2006, p.52. The Bay of Domvraina's two natural harbours I mentioned in Section I are found at Ioannitze and in the concave triangle just to the northwest.

281 Tzetzes, 1963, p.331, lines 382-385. For Khoniates, see Houben, 2002, p.85.

282 Dunn, 2006, p.58, Balbisti and Alessio, 1950-1957, vol.4, 'ostro', Lidell et al., 2011, ὄστρειον and ὄστρέον.

283 Adler, 1933, p.39. Thomas and Hero, 2002, pp.553 and 559, no. 48 and 50.



It has been argued by Jacoby that by the 10<sup>th</sup> century, silk manufacturing was catering to “a clientele in the lower ranks of society.” But that was only true of impure silk, as Jacoby himself acknowledges. First-rate silk remained too expensive for most people outside the land-owning and military aristocracies and the court. On the contrary, given the nature of Tudela, Tzetzes, Akominatos, and the 1074 *Typikon*’s testaments, it would seem that Boeotian merchandise was of first-rate quality. In the same vein, it is interesting to note that the Book of the Eparch forbade the sale of purple silks and cloaks worth over ten gold coins to non-Constantinopolitans. The Book gave the price of silk tunics (quality is not specified) as 6-12 *nomismata*.<sup>284</sup> Likewise, the Treaty of 944 between Rhomania and Kievan Rus stipulated that each Kievan merchant in Constantinople was entitled to buy and export silk items worth not more than 50 gold coins.<sup>285</sup> These regulations afford us some idea of the cost of a high-quality silk good.

Why would silk merchandise have been so expensive? The time required to train silk dyers and weavers – years, in the case of Jewish craftsmen in 12<sup>th</sup> century Egypt – could be one explanation.<sup>286</sup> Another was that the amount of dye secreted by snails was very small.<sup>287</sup> But perhaps the most interesting explanation concerns the working conditions of artisans. In contemporary India, where silk and dye production methods are highly traditional, workers have to endure serious health hazards. Two of the most important dangers are dermal exposure to alum (potassium aluminum sulfate, a mordant widely used in dye-making), and the reeling process, during which silkworm cocoons are boiled to release the silk yarn and allergens are released into the air. To look at a case study on the threats of allergens, a survey was carried out in the early 2000s on silk reelers in the Indian town of Siddlaghatta. It concerned 21 males and 40 females. 17 of the males and 35 of the females were revealed to have begun suffering from respiratory problems after a maximum of ten years of work.<sup>288</sup> Regarding alum, it is dissolved in water during the creation of the dye solution. Its sulphate atoms then react with water to form sulphuric acid.<sup>289</sup> And since the water must be boiled, this can result in workers being exposed to acidic fumes. Exposure can also occur during the immersion of silk into dye solutions. A Russian study that assessed the safety of alum in indoor workplaces classified it as a moderately hazardous material.<sup>290</sup> It recommended that workers whose skin came into contact with alum rinse their skin thoroughly, and that the amount of alum dust in the air not be allowed to exceed half a milligram (the equivalent of less than a teaspoon) per cubic

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284 Dujcev, 1970, Chapter 8.

285 Oikonomides, 1996, p.30.

286 Goitein, 1967, p. 169.

287 If Jacoby is to be believed, 12,000 snails produced only 1.4 gr. of pure dye. This was enough to add coloured stripes to a single garment. Jacoby, 1992, p.455.

288 Although there is a high probability that these respiratory problems were aggravated by smoking and cooking food using simple stoves and biomass fuel. Prakash and Inbanatham, 2003, p.12.

289 Alpenglow, 2015.

290 Grekhova et al., 1994.

meter. And according to a 2011 report by the IJAD (*International Journal of Alzheimer's Disease*) there is increasing evidence that the aluminum atoms in alum play a role in the onset of Alzheimer's.<sup>291</sup>

While our knowledge on the nature of the mordants employed by pre-13<sup>th</sup> century Byzantine dyers is exceedingly poor, alum was certainly undergoing significant use in 12<sup>th</sup> century Egyptian and Sicilian workshops.<sup>292</sup> And Byzantine silk-immersion methods, in all likelihood, faced the same difficulties as their present day Third World counterparts. Proper ventilation can reduce the allergen problem, but this would not have been an option in Boeotia for much of the autumn and winter months. For a workspace's temperature must be at around 15.5-21 °C during the immersion of silk into dye solutions (bearing in mind that Boeotia's modern-day mean temperatures in November, January, and March are between about 14 °C, 9 °C, and 11.7 °C).<sup>293</sup> Temperatures outside the above window tend to destabilize the dye, which negatively affects the quality of the final product.<sup>294</sup> Such working conditions would have taken their toll on the health of artisans. Therefore, I contend that even avaricious or dishonest workshop managers<sup>295</sup> would have had little choice but to pay their workers decent wages.

Did Boeotia's silk and dye fabrication exist before the second millennium? The case for the affirmative is weak. We know that in 768 the Lombard Duke of Benevento presented a local monastery with purple silk textiles "woven with the thread of Phocis."<sup>296</sup> But what geographic area did Phocis refer to? Central Greece? Modern-day Phocis? No one can say with certainty, for the designation had fallen out of use by 768.<sup>297</sup> It is true that the late 9<sup>th</sup> century *Vita Basilii* arguably attests to the existence of silk activity in the nearby Morea, as does Constantine Porphyrogennetos' *De Administrando*.<sup>298</sup> But apart from the use of the word "Kastorion" in *De Ceremoniis* no such evidence exists for Boeotia.<sup>299</sup> Perhaps most tellingly, no mulberry trees are attested in the Cadaster of Thebes, a land-tax register which has been dated to the second half of the 11<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>300</sup>

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291 Kawahara and Kato-Negishi, 2011.

292 Goitein, 1983, p.405, no.166. Lombardo and Morozzo, 1953, docs. 11, 345, 454, 455.

293 Eliassen, 2007.

294 Two common results of unstable dye are 'bleeding' –where the fabric's colour literally bleeds out of the fabric – and 'fading', where the colour fades upon contact with sunlight or oxygen.

295 I hesitate to call them 'guild-masters'. During the reign of Romanos Lekapenos, the purple-snail fishers in the Peloponnese were collectively exempted from their military obligations, owing to the importance of their trade. In others words, they were treated as a single entity. Jacoby, 1992, p.457, Constantine Porphyrogennetos, 1967, 52.10-11. But the fact that Romanos dealt with all of them at the same time does not prove that they were organized in guilds.

296 Potthast, 1896, p.1481.

297 This statement is based on negative evidence. The last allusion to 'Phokis', prior to the 18th century, occurs during the reign of Trajan.

298 Furthermore, the name 'Morea' – coined in the 9th century – is identical to the Byzantine term for the mulberry tree (ἡ μωρέα). Bekker, 1838, p.74, Constantine Porphyrogennetos, 1967, p.52.10-11.

299 Dunn, 2006, p.57.

300 See III.10.



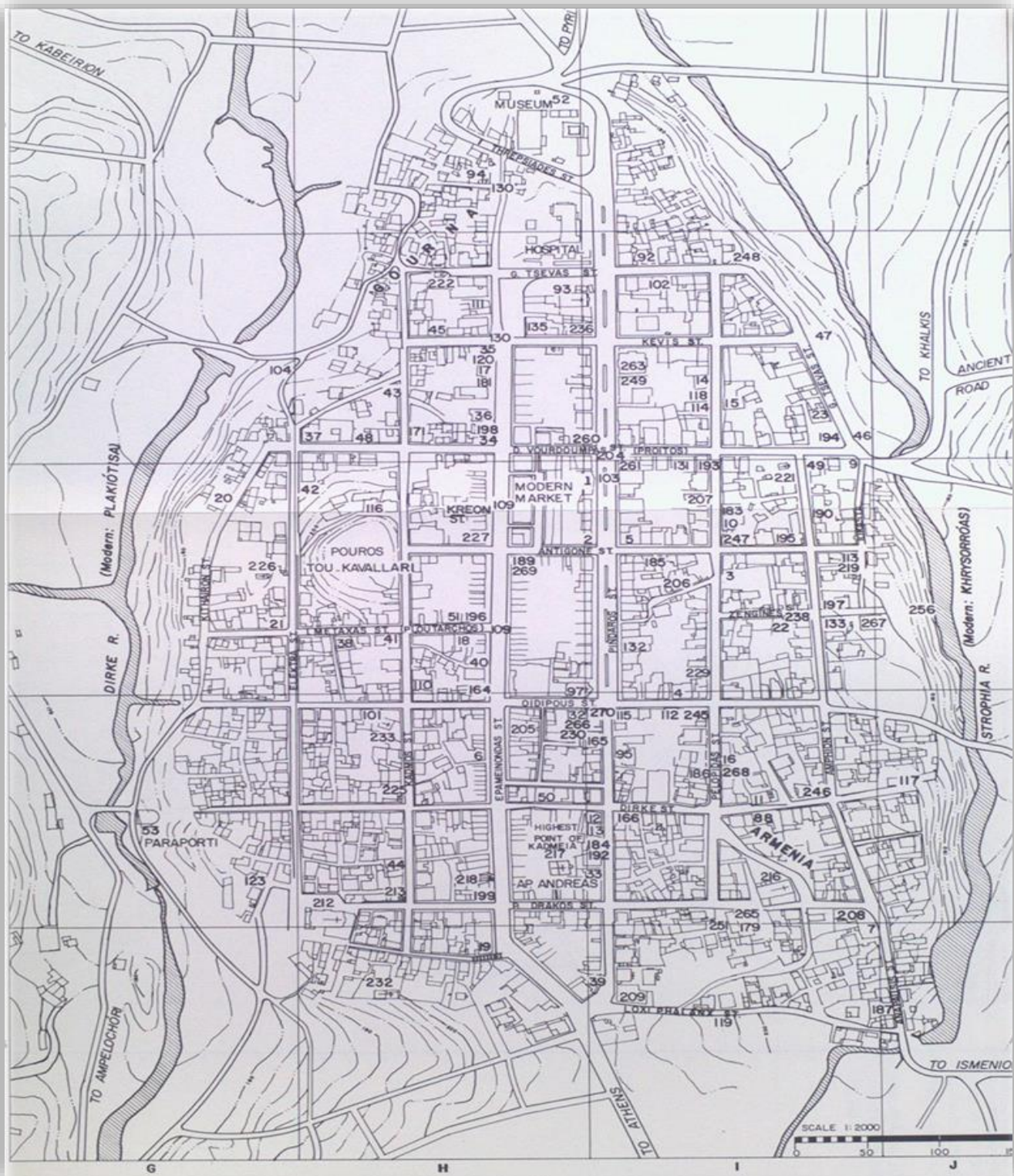


Figure 25. Plan of the Kadmeia. Symeonoglou, 1985, Map B.

I will move on to the material proof we possess. A number of potential workshops have been uncovered in Thebes since the 1970s, three quarters of them dating to the late 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> centuries. They possess features such as rock-hewn chambers, underground water pipes, fragments of tools found in the walls of

the buildings, walls made of rubble, and large pits made of water-resistant plaster. In the same vein, those buildings devoid of indoor plumbing were located near the Khrysoroas, Ismenos, and Dirki (fig. 24), I will cite one case study on which I was able to obtain more detail. There is a neighbourhood in Thebes today called Evraika (Εβραϊκά). It is northeast of the Kadmeia, where the Dirki once flowed. The name Evraika, which translates to 'Jewish area', is undoubtedly a relic of the neighbourhood's former ethnicity (there are no Jewish residents today). A little northeast of Evraika, and next to the Dirki's erstwhile bed <sup>301</sup>, a 4-year rescue excavation recently revealed one or more workshops dating to Rhomanian times. <sup>302</sup> Into the site's surface were carved more than 30 wells and circular mortar-coated basins. The basins were connected by multiple canals, surrounded by rubble walls, and several of them contained grey ash.

The pervasive influence of water is intriguing, because production of dye solutions (into which silk fabric was then immersed) is extremely water-intensive. I do not have any 12<sup>th</sup> century figures at my disposal, but one can get a sense of just how much water Thebes' silk artisans would have required by looking at present-day dye production. It takes approximately 1892 liters of water to produce enough dye to cover one sofa. <sup>303</sup> That is enough liquid to fill 8.9 standard-sized bathtubs in the U.K. The dimensions of a standard bathtub are 1700 mm. x 700 mm. x 500 mm., and its maximum capacity approximately 211 liters. <sup>304</sup> Unfortunately, the presence of water by itself is not conclusive to my argument. For, given the aridity of Boeotia's climate, every local family with a modicum of common sense (and resources) would have procured itself a plaster-coated basin. For now, I can only speak two sites where we can make a good case for silk-and dye-making (specifically, multiple basins in a single room). <sup>305</sup>

I have already mentioned the Italian toponyms in use [for the western coast of Boeotia] by the 12<sup>th</sup> century. We can therefore conclude with some confidence that the waters off Kastorion and Livadostro's coast were the scene of intense snail fishing activity, particularly given the use of *Ripa d'Ostria* by a portulan manual from the first half of the 13<sup>th</sup> century (see III.7). Still, even if every contemporary coastal settlement had an appreciable body of snail fishers, this is not sufficient to bear out the notion that a major percentage of Boeotia's population was involved in the silk industry, or that the population drew a major part of its income from silk.

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301 The river flowed into the 20th century, until a sewage system was constructed. Thereafter, it was drained and filled up. See fig. 1 for a map of Thebes.

302 Koilakou, 1991, p.23-24.

303 Kant et al., 2012, p.23. I do not know if Kant and his colleagues are referring to traditional or industrial dye production. Either way, we can be reasonably sure that industrial production is more water-efficient than its traditional counterpart.

304 The calculation for obtaining capacity is as follows: length x height x width. The result is then cubed.

305 In Louvi-Kizi's 2003 article, she refers to a further seventeen sites that might have qualified as pertinent workshops. But I was only able to locate 9 of the references. Of these, very few possessed relevant features. Louvi-Kizi, 2003, pp.633-634, figs.1a-c.

That being said, there are two partially extenuating circumstance. Because most of the Antique Roman strata in Thebes lie under the densely populated modern municipality, excavators must nearly always be content with rescue excavations. This means that, because the bulk of the Middle Rhomanian strata are unreachable, the amount of material evidence is misleadingly slim. Also, besides Livadostro, two erstwhile or existing communities on the Gulf of Corinth – Vathys and Porto Germeno – require further study (see fig. 21). Since they lay relatively close to Kastorion and the Strait of Rion they were potentially centers of sea snail fishing and dye extraction.

Even so, it behooves us not to overstate the significance of the silk industry. There is no evidence for its presence outside of Thebes and on the Gulf of Corinth. Benjamin of Tudela did state that Thebes' Jewish community (which he puts at two thousand people) were the finest manufacturers in Greece. But it does not follow that the entire community earned its livelihood through silk, although in *Η Βυζαντινή Θήβα* Savvidis reaches precisely that conclusion.<sup>306</sup>

## 9. Numismatic data

In total, I have found 243 Middle Rhomanian coin from Boeotia (see table 3). Of these, 5 come from Eftresis<sup>307</sup>, 26 from Akraifnio, and the rest from Thebes. The total figure excludes a number of *folles* which may have originated from a certain Greek mint, and which I will address next page. It also excludes Kravartogiannos' coin-series from Amfissa.<sup>308</sup> All 243 coins are copper, save the ones from Eftresis (which are bronze). The resurgence of currency in Boeotia also had a qualitative dimension, since the weight of the *folles* increased from 2.25 to approximately 8 grams during the reign of Michael II (820-829) – e.g., approximately two decades before my series begin.<sup>309</sup> The Theban evidence's initial chronological pattern (shown on Tables 4 and 5) broadly fits those of finds at Corinth, Athens, and Sparta for the 9<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup> centuries.<sup>310</sup> What does not fit is the evidence's quantity. While the latter compares closely to its equivalent at Sparta – 140 – it is vastly outnumbered by the number of coins found at Athens and Corinth (approximately 4,000 and 2,000, respectively).<sup>311</sup>

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306 Savvidis, 1988, p.51.

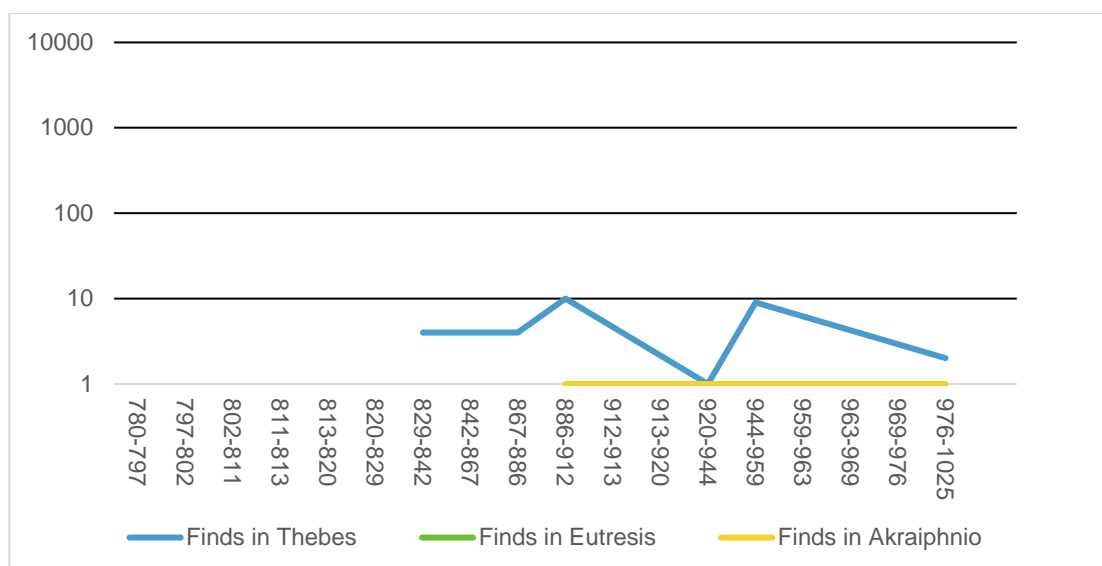
307 Goldman, 1931, p.8. In his preliminary report, Goldman mentions finding evidence of a "large Byzantine settlement" near Antique Eutresis. But being Byzantine rather than Roman or Hellenistic, the evidence is given only a passing mention.

308 My discussion excludes Kravartogiannos' Amfissan coin series, which last from the mid-9th century to the end of the 12th century (see Kravartogiannos, 1974). The author's publication is only available at the National Library of Greece. I only realized this during my last research trip to Greece, but only after the library had temporarily closed (pending its relocation to the Athenian district of Phaleron).

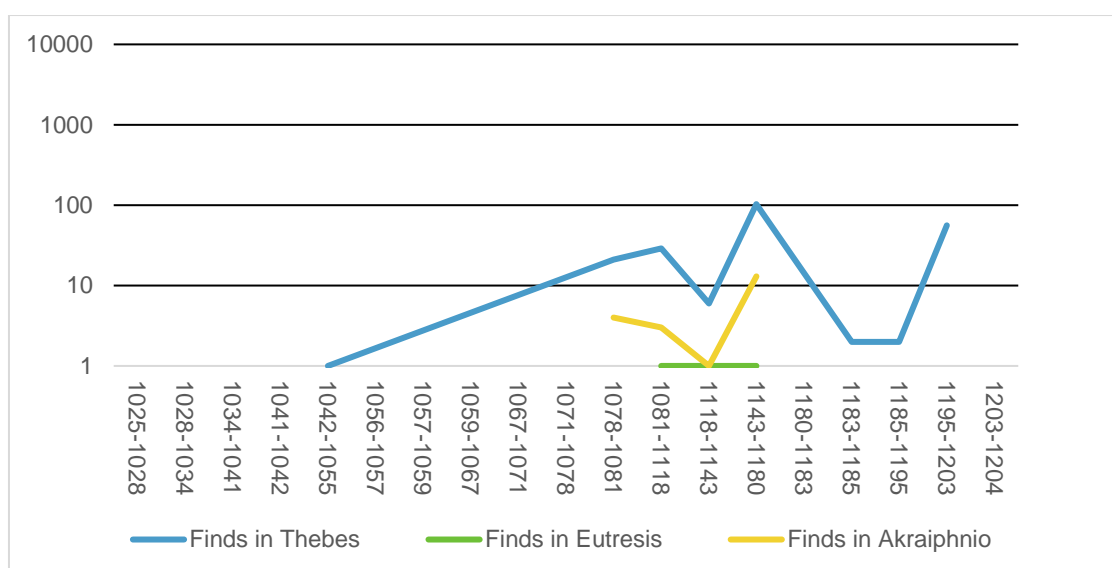
309 Grierson, 1999, p.20.

310 Metcalf, 1973, pp.181-186, Thompson, 1954, pp.4-5, 72-75, Woodward, 1924-1925, pp.157-158.

311 Harris, 1941, Thomson, *ibid*.



**Table 1.** Coin finds in Boeotia 783-1025 AD



**Table 2.** Coin finds in Boeotia 1025-1204 AD. Anonymous coins spanning more than one reign are excluded. We should not make too much of the decline in finds after 1118 and 1180, since coins issued under Alexios and Manuel almost certainly continued to circulate after their deaths.

**Table 3.** Coin finds from Boeotia. Koilakou, 1982, p.77, Koilakou, 2001-2004, p.43, Galani-Krikou, 1997, Galani-Krikou, 1998.

<b>Thebes</b>	
<b>Oik. Klironomon Neroutsou (inside Kadmeia)</b>	
<b>Denomination and quantity</b>	<b>Chronological period</b>
2 <i>folles</i>	Leo the Wise
1 anonymous <i>folles</i>	970-976
1 <i>folles</i>	Alexios I
1 <i>tetarteron</i>	Alexios I
1 <i>folles</i>	Nikephoros III
4 <i>tetarteron</i>	Manuel I
<b>Agios Grigorios Theologos (inside Kadmeia)</b>	
<b>Denomination and quantity</b>	<b>Chronological period</b>
2 <i>folles</i>	Theophilos
2 <i>folles</i>	Leo the Wise
<b>Osios Klimenta Street</b>	
<b>Denomination and quantity</b>	<b>Chronological period</b>
1	Leo the Wise
<b>Agia Triada (to the south of Kadmeia)</b>	
<b>Denomination and quantity</b>	<b>Chronological period</b>
1 <i>folles</i>	Leo the Wise
1 anonymous <i>folles</i>	1030-1035
1 anonymous <i>folles</i>	1042-1050
Anonymous <i>folles</i>	1070-1075
6 <i>folles</i>	Nikephoros III
10 <i>tetarteron</i>	Alexios I
1 <i>tetarteron</i>	John I
23 <i>tetarteron</i>	Manuel I
1 <i>tetarteron</i>	Isaac Angelos

4 <i>folles</i>	11 <sup>th</sup> century
<b>Oik. Venizelou (outside Kadmeia)</b>	
<b>Denomination and quantity</b>	<b>Chronological period</b>
1 <i>folles</i>	Basil I
1 <i>folles</i>	Leo the Wise
2 <i>folles</i>	Constantine Porphyrogennetos
1 anonymous <i>folles</i>	975-1030/1035
8 anonymous <i>folles</i>	976-1030/1035
1 anonymous <i>folles</i>	11 <sup>th</sup> century
1 anonymous <i>folles</i>	1030/1035-1042
1 anonymous <i>folles</i>	1042-1050
2 anonymous <i>folles</i>	1050-1060
2 anonymous <i>folles</i>	1070-1075
3 anonymous <i>folles</i>	1075-1080
6 <i>folles</i>	Nikephoros III
2 anonymous <i>folles</i>	1080-1085
1 anonymous <i>folles</i>	1085-1092
4 <i>tetarteron</i>	Alexios I
1 <i>tetarteron</i>	12 <sup>th</sup> century
3 <i>tetarteron</i>	Manuel
7 <i>folles</i>	Manuel I
1 <i>tetarteron</i>	Isaac Angelos
<b>Oik.Stamidi (outside Kadmeia)</b>	
<b>Denomination and quantity</b>	<b>Chronological period</b>
2 <i>folles</i>	Basil I
2 <i>folles</i>	Constantine Porphyrogennetos
Anonymous <i>folles</i>	1050-1060
1 anonymous <i>folles</i>	1075-1080
2 <i>folles</i>	Nikephoros III
1 anonymous <i>folles</i>	1085-1092

Anonymous <i>folles</i>	1090
2 <i>tetartera</i>	Alexios I
3 <i>tetartera</i>	John I
22 <i>tetartera</i>	Manuel I
<b>Oik. Lambou (outside Kadmeia)</b>	
<b>Denomination and quantity</b>	<b>Chronological period</b>
2 anonymous <i>folles</i>	End of the 10 <sup>th</sup> -beginning of 11 <sup>th</sup> century
1 <i>tetarteron</i>	Alexios I
<b>Oik. Metropoleos (outside Kadmeia)</b>	
<b>Denomination and quantity</b>	<b>Chronological period</b>
2 <i>tetartera</i>	Manuel I
<b>Moskopodi (outside Kadmeia)</b>	
<b>Denomination and quantity</b>	<b>Chronological period</b>
1 <i>folles</i>	Leo the Wise
1 anonymous <i>folles</i>	976-1030/1035
1 anonymous <i>folles</i>	Middle of the 11 <sup>th</sup> century
1 anonymous <i>folles</i>	1085-1092
3 <i>tetarteron</i>	Manuel I
1 <i>tetarteron</i>	Andronikos I
1 <i>tetarteron</i>	Alexios III Angelos
<b>Oik. Matala (outside Kadmeia)</b>	
<b>Denomination and quantity</b>	<b>Chronological period</b>
1 <i>folles</i>	950-959
1 anonymous <i>folles</i>	1059-1081
<b>Oik. F. and M. Katseli (outside Kadmeia)</b>	
<b>Denomination and quantity</b>	<b>Chronological period</b>
1 <i>tetarteron</i>	Alexios I
1 <i>tetarteron</i>	Manuel I
<b>Oik. Kokkini (outside Kadmeia)</b>	

Denomination and quantity	Chronological period
1 <i>folles</i>	Constantine Porphyrogennetos
1 <i>folles</i>	1075-180
4 <i>tetarteron</i>	Manuel I
1 <i>tetartero</i>	Andronikos Komnenos
<b>Oik. Karamagioli (outside Kadmeia)</b>	
Denomination and quantity	Denomination and quality
1 <i>folles</i>	Theophilos
1 <i>folles</i>	Leo the Wise
1 <i>tetarteron</i>	Alexios I
<b>Oik. L. Rerouskou (outside Kadmeia)</b>	
Denomination and quantity	Denomination and quality
2 <i>folles</i>	Constantine Porphyrogennetos
1 anonymous <i>folles</i>	1065-1070
1 anonymous <i>folles</i>	1070-1085
1 anonymous <i>folles</i>	1085-1092
1 <i>tetarteron</i>	Alexios I
16 <i>tetartera</i>	Manuel I
<b>Oik. Pneumatikou Kentrou (inside Kadmeia)</b>	
Denomination and quantity	Chronological period
1 <i>folles</i>	Constantine Porphyrogennetos
1 anonymous <i>folles</i>	1059-1081
1 <i>tetarteron</i>	Manuel I
<b>Oik. Goghoul (outside Kadmeia)</b>	
Denomination and quantity	Chronological period
1 <i>folles</i>	Leo the Wise
1 <i>folles</i>	Basil I
1 anonymous <i>folles</i>	970-1092
1 <i>folles</i>	Nikephoros III
2 <i>tetartera</i>	Manuel I



<b>Oik. Nikolaou (outside Kadmeia)</b>	
<b>Denomination and quantity</b>	<b>Chronological period</b>
1 anonymous <i>folles</i>	Constantine Porphyrogennetos
1 anonymous <i>folles</i>	1050-1060
1 <i>tetarteron</i>	Alexios I
1 <i>tetarteron</i>	John I
1 <i>tetarteron</i>	Manuel I
<b>Oik. Spourli (outside Kadmeia)</b>	
<b>Denomination and quantity</b>	<b>Chronological period</b>
1 <i>tetarteron</i>	Komnenian
<b>Ergolavia Pontos</b>	
1 <i>tetarteron</i>	Komnenian
1 <i>tetarteron</i>	Komnenian
<b>Dimokritou Street</b>	
<b>Denomination and quantity</b>	<b>Chronological period</b>
1 <i>folles</i>	Theophilos
<b>Diamanti Street (outside Kadmeia)</b>	
<b>Denomination and quantity</b>	<b>Chronological period</b>
1 <i>folles</i>	Nikephoros III
<b>Osios Loukas Monastery (outside Kadmeia)</b>	
2 <i>tetartera</i>	Manuel I Komnenos
<b>Courthouse excavation</b>	
<b>Denomination and quality</b>	<b>Chronological period</b>
55 coins (?)	Alexios III
<b>Akraiphnio</b>	
<b>Denomination and quantity</b>	<b>Chronological period</b>
1 <i>folles</i>	Romanos Lekapenos
1 anonymous <i>folles</i>	970-976
1 anonymous <i>folles</i>	1030/1035-1042
4 <i>folles</i>	Nikephoros III
2 anonymous <i>folles</i>	1075-1080
3 <i>tetartera</i>	Alexios I

1 <i>tetarteron</i>	John I
13 <i>tetartera</i>	Manuel I
<b>Eutresis</b>	
<b>Denomination and quantity</b>	<b>Chronological period</b>
1 <i>folles</i>	Leo the Wise
1 <i>folles</i>	Constantine Porphyrogennetos
1 <i>folles</i>	Basil II
1 <i>folles</i>	Alexios I
1 <i>folles</i>	Manuel I

This discrepancy can be attributed partly to Goldman's lack of interest in her excavation's Rhomanian finds (including the coins). In Goldman's final report, the Rhomanian finds are squeezed into the last page. They include not just coins, but storage pits, graves, potsherds, and the foundations of a church! I suspect, therefore, that Eftresis' numismatic potential has barely been tapped into, and is still waiting to be studied. Then too, it is possible that Rhomaioi households habitually hid their tax money, and did so too well (for our purposes). A third explanation, defended by Haldon and Dunn, is that Hellas' inhabitants had commuted their military obligations to monetary payments by the 900s. Indeed, there is only one Helladic *Kommerkiarios* seal dating to after the 10<sup>th</sup> century, bearing in mind that one of the *Kommerkiarioi's* main responsibilities was extracting goods from cash-poor populations to equip Thematic armies.<sup>312</sup> That said, the pattern of the finds is rather confusing at first glance. We have six pertinent seals for the 700s, zero for the 8<sup>th</sup>/9<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> centuries, then 3 for the 9<sup>th</sup>/10<sup>th</sup> century (see Chapter 3, table 4). But the brief revival might be connected to the Greek Bulgarian war of 913-927. At one point in the conflict, in 918, the Romans experienced a shortage of transport equipment and beasts so severe that the government temporarily rescinded clerics' immunity from *angareia*.<sup>313</sup> In other words, at that point goods, not cash, was what the government needed most from its subjects.

One final explanation is that coins were used exclusively in the largest towns (like Thebes), where bishops and/or senior thematic officials resided. These men must have expected to travel to Constantinople on a regular basis. There were some crises and quarrels that could not be resolved without the help of their superiors.<sup>314</sup> In Constantinople, a constant supply of coins was essential. It could

312 Dunn, 1995, pp.767-768, Dunn, 1993b, pp.7-8. The *Kommerkiarioi* should not be confused with the *Diokeitai*, whose responsibilities consisted of conducting taxation surveys and presenting taxation briefs in the provinces. Zacos and Vegler, 1972, nos. 616, 1439, 1464, 1527, 1528, 1534, 1628, 2290.

313 Nicholas Mystikos, 1973, nos.37 and 150. The shortage was the result of the crushing defeats which the Romans had suffered at Anchialos and Katarsytai, in 917.

314 For example, a *strategos* abusing his power or a town suffering from pirate raids. A well-placed friend could work wonders, but not

not be made up for by bartering goods.<sup>315</sup> The implication of my theory is that the economy of urban settlements in Boeotia was overwhelmingly based on barter. We should not view this as a strictly negative state of affairs. A semi-barter system can work smoothly, provided that:

- b) the residents of the community have reciprocal requirements.
- c) The two parties are able to communicate with each other.
- d) residents specialize in the production of the goods they are trading.

Moreover, barter offers the appeal of reducing the amount of money that one spends for cash taxes and expensive imported commodities. Since all four criteria were conceivably present in the Boeotian countryside, it is not unreasonable to think the people of Boeotia made extensive use of barter. We should also remember that in Bulgaria barter was the main method of exchange until the 1030s.<sup>316</sup> Furthermore, surviving tax statistics seem to indicate that it was standard practice – throughout the Empire – for farmers to pay their taxes partly in kind. Granted, the statistics reflect ideal conditions, and do not make clear what percentage of taxes were paid in kind.<sup>317</sup> Still, they do show that the sheer amount of taxes paid in kind was non-negligible.

But perhaps the simplest explanation behind the paucity of Boeotian numismatic material is that many pertinent coins in the Ephorate of Antiquities of Boeotia's possession are unpublished. I was therefore not allowed to study them.<sup>318</sup> It might be thought that Venetian *colleganze* allow us to circumvent the limitations of the archaeological data. They indicate the cost of several dozen Venetian Thebes-Constantinople export projects from the late 11<sup>th</sup> century onwards. The problem is that the *colleganze* do not specify the individual cost of the various things which needed to be purchased or rented for such a project: merchandise, fodder for the animals hauling the merchandise to Euripos or Anthedon, food and water for the ship journey, a ship (unless the merchant already owned a vessel), a crew, and tolls on the *demosia hodos*. It is difficult to know what percentage of the overall cost the merchandise formed.

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every public servant and ecclesiastical official had this luxury.

315 Magdalino, 2015.

316 Antwerp, 1991, p.68, Sedlar, 2011, p.34.

317 Oikonomides, 2002, pp.1000-1058, Lefort, 2002, pp.300-304.

318 Veikou, in *Byzantine Epirus*, seems to run into a similar problem. She only accounts for a few dozen coins from urban settlements.

The coin finds in Southern Epirus and Aetolia Akarnania are as follows: 34 *folles*, 7 *tetartera* and *half-tetartera*, 5 bronze issues (of unspecified type), and 5 unspecified specimens. All but three were found in mainland towns. They date to the 10th century onwards. Veikou, 2012, p.544.

If we further consider that all my coins are *folles* and *tetartera* – the smallest Rhomaioi denominations – I believe it is too early to draw conclusions on the link between the numismatic material and the prosperity of Boeotia’s inhabitants.

With that being said, there is one body of evidence that I have not yet discussed, namely the *folles* which have been identified as originating from a certain Greek mint.<sup>319</sup> Hendy has argued that some of the *folles* mentioned above belong to a certain central/southern Greek mint. His reasoning is essentially as follows: there is a stylistic rift in the *folles* from Constantine X to Alexios I; thousands were signed for the first time, while just as many continue to remain anonymous.<sup>320</sup> Concordantly, the number of signed coin finds in Corinth and Athens soars during the reign of Nikephoros III (1078-1081): from 7 to 677 in Corinth and 4 to 315 in Athens.<sup>321</sup> These figures are unmatched by any provincial town. The Greek mint in question can be narrowed down to Corinth and Thebes. Both were administrative capitals – one of the prerequisites for a mint presence, served as mints for the post-1204 Frankish regimes, and were well-positioned to benefit from the afore-mentioned increase in coin use. Athens is in the running too, owing to its status as a metropolis.

Hendy’s theory, though it has gained widespread acceptance, deserves some scrutiny. The Athenian and Corinthian finds from 1059-1078 are certainly unique. Contemporary signed *folles* occur in large quantities at other urban sites outside Greece, such as Sardis, Pergamon, and Antioch, but in each case the coins were clearly struck in Constantinople.<sup>322</sup> And the reign of Nikephoros III undeniably marks a surge in the number of signed Athenian and Corinthian *folles* finds. However, so far as I know, after 1092 copper and bronze coin finds revert to their modest, pre-1078 sums. Hendy implies that the trend is continued, albeit to a slight extent, by certain *tetartera*, whose chronological distribution is follows: 14 of Alexios I, 63 of Manuel I, 3 of Andronikos I, and 8 of Isaac Angelos. He gives the coins' place of striking as an “uncertain Greek mint,”<sup>323</sup> but this assertion strikes me as wishful thinking. In short, it appears that there was indeed a mint in Corinth, Thebes, Athens, or Thessaloniki, but only between 1078 and 1092. Given the devalued condition of Roman coinage during its mint’s presumable interval, it is likely that the mint’s creation was prompted by dire political circumstances.

## 10. The Cadaster of Thebes

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<sup>319</sup> Hendy, 1999.

<sup>320</sup> Hendy, 1969, pp.77-80.

<sup>321</sup> Grierson, 1973b, p.642.

<sup>322</sup> Grierson, 1973a, p.76.

<sup>323</sup> Hendy, 1999, p.335.

The Cadaster is a fragment of an imperial tax-register, though to date to the late 11th century. It deals with rural estates in a zone stretching approximately from the Valley of the Ismenos to Chalkis, and from Lake Iliki to Thebes.<sup>324</sup> It is very much related to my study, since we have reason to believe that Medieval Roman urban settlements were heavily dependent on agricultural supplies from the countryside (see section 11).

Thirty-eight of the Cadaster's forty-eight property-owners held court titles, namely *proedros*, *koarchontes*, *droungarios*, *kandidatos*, *komes*, and *protospatharios*.<sup>325</sup> Does this mean that the Cadastral zone was controlled almost exclusively by wealthy and powerful landowners? Probably not. For as Harvey observes<sup>326</sup>, the importance of the aforementioned titles declined sharply in the 11<sup>th</sup> century. Furthermore, the vast majority of the landowners do not surface in other contemporary literary sources. Still, we should not go too far in the other direction. Fully a third of the landowners lived in Athens, Avlona, or Chalki. This means that they would have needed to carry out frequent visits to their properties to make it was being properly looked after, which would have required ample resources. Also, the Cadaster heavily implies that there was some immigration from Southern Italy to Boeotia in the second half of the 11<sup>th</sup> century (no doubt because of the Norman advance in that country). Ten land-owners in the document are stated to have been bureaucrats or members of bureaucratic families in the Katepanate of Italy.<sup>327</sup> They could conceivably have made an appreciable contribution to the economic wellbeing of the Cadastral zone. This would have meant the creation of new jobs, the easing burden of taxation and *angareia* on established residents, and possibly an improvement to agricultural infrastructure and an increase in donations to local monasteries (which would have allowed monasteries to conduct charitable activities on a greater scale). However, I am reluctant to draw any definite conclusions on the immigrants' potential contribution, as we do not know how wealthy they were in Italy or precipitous their move to Boeotia was.

Does the Cadaster contain evidence of demographic growth? Actually, a case might be made that it contains evidence of fairly recent decline. Harvey argues that the tax-register's plots cannot have been klamastic land (land which had previously come into the possession of the state after being abandoned for thirty years). The new owner was liable to pay a tax on his property, the *libellikon demosion*. It was exacted at the rate of 1/12 of the tax that had been levied before the land had been abandoned. Eight of the Cadaster's plots – whose dimensions hovered between 20 and 30 *modioi* (2 and 3.2 hectares<sup>328</sup>) were

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324 Svoronos, 1959, pp.20-40.

325 Ibid., p.5.

326 Harvey, 1989, p.74.

327 Gay, 1904, p.557, Svoronos, 1959, pp.68-71. Particularly since five of the landowners are listed by the Cadaster as holding court or senior administrative positions.

328 Svoronos, 1959, pp.11-19, Bartusis, 2013, p.409.

imposed a tax of one *nomisma* or more. Such payments would apparently have been far too large for the *libellikon* to be in effect, given the dimensions of the plots. For a property to have been formerly abandoned – and therefore effectively be worth 12 *nomisma* (12 multiplied by 1 *nomisma*), it would have needed to be very large.<sup>329</sup> The problem is, how did the Rhomanian define small, average, large, or very large properties in the 11<sup>th</sup> century? And what were the standard tax rates to be imposed on them?<sup>330</sup> Once we can answer these questions, we should be able to tell how many of the Cadaster's plots whose dimensions are recorded (there are nineteen of them) were *klasmatic* land. If they were all *klasmatic*, this would indicate major population decline in the Cadastral zone in the three decades before the tax-register was drawn up.

## 11. Demography

Owing to Thebes' preponderance, I have found it necessary to divide this section into two halves. They will examine the demographies of the Boeotian capital and of Boeotia (respectively). What was the extent of Thebes' demographic development during the Middle Rhomanian period? Did it expand beyond the Kadmeia? During my thesis I corresponded with one of the specialists on Middle Rhomanian Thebes, Symeonoglou. He contended that Thebe's population rose from around 3,500 to approximately 5,000 inhabitants from 800 to 1200.<sup>331</sup> His arguments were that:

- a) when Benjamin of Tudela visited Thebes, in the 1160s, he found some 2,000 Jewish residents. The Christian population must have been at least as large.
- b) A Greek census of 1897 gave the population as 3,496. This was at a time when the population was confined to the Kadmeia, and most homes had not been modernized with multiple storeys (meaning they were either one or two-storied). Additionally, the Kadmeia was not at peak capacity. This gives us a good idea of what Thebes' population was like at the end of Transition period, when the extra-mural habitations had been abandoned.

I agree with Symeonoglou's population estimate for the year 800. His 12<sup>th</sup> century estimate may be slightly overstated. Our only certitudes on the matter are that the population numbered at least 4,000 – not just because of Tudela's testimony, but because Thebes had regained archbishopric status by the Council of 869-870 and had become a Thematic capital by Osios Loukas' generation.<sup>332</sup> It would be

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<sup>329</sup> Harvey, 1982-1983, pp.25-26.

<sup>330</sup> Lefort, 2002.

<sup>331</sup> Symeonoglou makes a similar case for these figures in his monograph on Thebes. Symeonoglou, 1985, pp.158, 204, 207.

<sup>332</sup> Osios Loukas' *Vita* mentions a certain Pothos, *strategos* of Hellas and resident of Thebes, we have an 11th century seal belonging to one Leo, "imperial usher of the palaces and archon of Thebes and Ellas," and a *dux* of Thebes is attested in the *Vita* of Osios Meletios the Younger. Osios Loukas, 1994, pp.90, 92, Zakythinos, 1951, p.191, Nikolaos of Methone, 1886, p.49. See also Michael Akominatos'

useful to know when the Jews began settling down in Thebes. If they were mostly absent until the 1100s (it was at this point that the silk industry came to real prominence), this would mean that Thebes' population actually shrank between the late 8<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> centuries. One solution could be studying the unpublished artifacts from Koilakou's Evraika excavation, if there are any (see III.8). Koilakou's 1991 report does not mention artifacts, but then it is a very condensed work.<sup>333</sup>

In any case, an increase from 3,500 to 4,000 is only moderately impressive. Thebes would have dwarfed large villages to an even greater extent than before, but it would probably have lagged behind Athens, Corinth, or Edessa-in-Mesopotamia.<sup>334</sup> The information on spatial demography is of a fairly positive nature. On the other, all my religious sites are all confined to the Kadmeia, except for Agia Photeini and (possibly) its neighbour. On the other hand, all my dated secular sites in Greater Thebes ostensibly originated in the late 11<sup>th</sup> century or 12<sup>th</sup> centuries. This suggests that by the late 11<sup>th</sup> century the Kadmeia had reached peak capacity. Moreover, there is good evidence that after the 10<sup>th</sup> century funerary arrangements evolved – that burials were conducted on the Ismenios site 200 m. southeast of the Kadmeia (see III.1.A.1). This suggests that the Kastellia and Astegoi cemeteries had reached maximum capacity, particularly since they were not significantly more distant from the Kadmeia than the Ismenios cemetery (meaning the presumed transfer would not have been motivated by convenience).

For Boeotia, the most noteworthy events of my period of study are the existence the decline of the number of sees by two thirds between the *Notitiae* 3 and 7 (787-800 and 901-907, respectively), the doubling of the number of sees in the 12<sup>th</sup> century, the epidemic which ostensibly ravaged Lidoriki, Amfissa, and Galaxidi (see III.4) and the four foreign raids of the 10<sup>th</sup>-11<sup>th</sup> centuries. I will comment on the *Notitia* 3 and the raids, as some detailed information is available on them.

The *Notitia* 3 represents something of a turning point.<sup>335</sup> Seven geographically relevant settlements are listed as being bishoprics of the Metropolis of Athens: Plataea, Aigosthena, Thebes, Opous, Livadia, Chaeronea, Delphi, and Amfissa.<sup>336</sup> In other words, the Metropolis' grasp extended across the Boeotian southeast-northeast lowland corridor, and possibly across the Amfissan plain. In the anterior *Notitia* 2

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testimony. Akominatos, 1881, 1, p.177, 2, p.137. For Thebes' recovered archbishopric status, see Mansi, XVI, p.174, and table 7. For my case on the exceptional populousness of episcopal and Thematic centers, see Chapter 1.II-III. It should be noted that Kekaumenos implies Larissa to be a Thematic capital in the 970s. But this was likely a temporary measure, dictated by military necessity. See Chapter 3.III.1.A.

333 Koilakou, 1991, p.23-24.

334 I would put the maximum possible populations of 12th century Athens and Corinth at approximately 11,000 and approximately 9,000, respectively. The Corinthian figure is based on Leake and Francois Pouqueville's estimates of the number of households in early-19th century Peloponnesian settlements – specifically the larger settlements. Sanders and Whitebread, 1990, p.352. For Athens, I am relying on the testimony of Spon and Wheeler, who visited the town in the 1670s. Spon and Wheeler, 1679, p.65. For Edessa, see Chapter 1.III.

335 For the dating of the *Notitia* 3, see Kountoura-Galake, 1996, pp.45-73.

336 Darrouzes, 1981, pp. 18-19, 218, Haldon and Brukaker, 2001, p.56.

(ca.700-787), only Thebes appears (although it is given as an archbishopric, indicating a fall in rank between the *Notitiae* 2 and 3). I would argue that Athens' reception of the seven sees followed on the heels of the Stavrakian campaign in Hellas and the Peloponnese (see section II). That is to say, where Stavrakios campaigned, direct Rhomanian authority was re-established. This would explain how, in the reign of Nikephoros I, it was apparently possible for the former indigenous inhabitants of the Peloponnese to return to their towns – bearing in mind that the only post-783 military operations which took place in the Peloponnese were prompted by local Slavic revolts.<sup>337</sup> I contend that a similar thing happened in Boeotia – that the re-establishment of Rhomanian authority encouraged bygone natives to migrate back to the region. Even if there were no barbarians present to stop them, they could have been held back by the fear of a Slavic raid from the Peloponnese or Thessaly.

I will move on to the acts of foreign aggression committed against Boeotia in the 10<sup>th</sup> century. We know that ca. 918, the Bulgarians raided Greece, penetrating all the way to the Peloponnese. The author of Peter of Argos' *Vita* writes that "barbarians for three years did possess the Peloponnese; they massacred many people and thoroughly devastated the whole country."<sup>338</sup> The *Vita* may be talking about the Slavic revolt which attended the first years of Romanos Lekapenos' reign, but other sources are less ambiguous. Arethas of Caesarea, who was not an eyewitness but probably had family in Patras (where he was born), expresses his fear that the Kadmeia has been destroyed: "Ὅτι Θηβαῖοι Βοιωτίδι καὶ Νέρωνος καὶ Ονεσπεσιανὸν φαύλως ὥκουντο μόνης τῆς Καδμείας συνισταμένης ὥσπερ καὶ νυν εἰ μὴ καὶ ταντην Βούλγαροι κατεστρέψαντο." Osios Loukas was forced to abandon his cave in Ioannitze (see fig. 16) and make his way to Corinth.<sup>339</sup> He claims that the Bulgarians slew people and enslaved others on Hellas' mainland. Some fortified towns reportedly resisted the invaders (at least for a time): "Ἐντεῦθεν οἱ μὲν ὡς ἐν εἰρκταῖς ἢ φρονραῖς ταῖς πόλεσι κατεκλείοντο..." But this clearly implies that other fortified towns surrendered without a fight. In doing so, the settlements concerned would probably have avoided the brutality of a sack. But considering what happened in 1040 (see the end of the paragraph) the Bulgarians may still have taken slaves, or carried out unprovoked killings.

A quarter of a century after the 918 invasion, it was the turn of the Magyars to visit Greece. Having poured south of the Danube, the barbarians reached Hellas [either the Theme or the geographic space] and plundered it. Kastorion and Vathys must have been on the receiving end of their swords and arrows, for Osios Loukas was again forced to flee (this time to an island in the Gulf of Corinth).<sup>340</sup>

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337 Except to repress Slavic revolts. Chronicle of Monemvasia, 1963, pp.10-11, Chronicle of Monemvasia, 1976, pp.12-16, Fine, 1991, p.80-83.

338 Cozza-Lugi, 1888, p.13.

339 Arethas of Caesarea, 1928, p.337, Osios Loukas, 1994, p.52.

340 Balogh, 20007, p.23, Da Costa-Louillet, 1961, pp.339.



The Bulgarians returned in 996 and in 1040. On the first occasion they penetrated all the way to Corinth, on the second they met and routed an army at Thebes (commanded by a certain Alakasseus). They crowned their victory by killing – or carrying off <sup>341</sup> – “a great number of Thebans.”

Excluding people killed as a direct result of the raids, what would their effects have been? Let us suppose the Bulgarians passed through the Theme of Hellas in June 918, and burned down 80% of the grass – but not the soil – in their path. In the Warm-Mediterranean regions of Victoria, Australia, if a fire occurs in the fall, the land’s carrying capacity (the number of animals that the land is able to support on an average year) will typically be 70 % by spring and 100 % within the next 12 months. This is assuming that the land’s slope is flat <sup>342</sup> and that the fire’s aftermath is not attended by droughts or excessive rainfall. It should be stressed that the above data was collected in the 1990s and 2000s, by which time chemical fertilizers and genetically engineered crops had become commonplace. In the more rustic environment of Medieval Boeotia, recovery would certainly have taken longer. <sup>343</sup> And even having to survive roughly a whole year with the local grazing 30 % below capacity (e.g. in similar conditions to Victoria) would have presented serious problems. Production of wool and dairy foods would have fallen by approximately the same amount. It would not have done so immediately, perhaps, but eventually livestock breeders would have been compelled to recognize the diminished largesse of their land. The shortage of the above foods could have triggered malnutrition and disease among the poor, who depended heavily on dairy for their protein and calcium intake.

I have not found any pre-Industrial accounts which provide recovery figures. <sup>344</sup> That said, the averting of a demographic crisis would have depended on numerous factors, including how much damage vegetable crops had sustained (since livestock can subsist on vegetables, not merely grass), the amount of cereal that could be imported in a timely manner from other regions (or from parts of Boeotia that had been left unspoiled by the raid), how many locals stayed put <sup>345</sup>, whether people took adequate precautions (namely keeping a private supply of grain in reserve, a supply that would not easily be found by an invading army), and the time of the year at which the land was on fire. <sup>346</sup>

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341 The verb used by our source, ἀναρπείναι, has a loose definition. Skylitzes, 1973, p.411.54-57.

342 This is significant because the possibility of soil damage increases as the slope does. Water is unable to efficiently permeate burned soil, at least in forests. Consequently, when rainwater lands on a slope, it will flow downhill and carry away with it soil particles.

343 Ward, 1995.

344 The one that comes closest is a 14th century chronicle of the life of Robert the Bruce, a Scottish king. The author tell us that in 1308, Robert burned down Buchan (a district of northeastern Scotland) from end to end, and that for a good fifty years afterwards “people bemoaned the devastation of Buchan.” But the material consequences of the burning did not necessarily last fifty years, and we are poorly informed on Medieval Buchan’s agricultural potential. John Barbour, 2007, pp.332-334.

345 Osios Loukas implies that during the Bulgarian invasion of ca. 918 many people fled to Evia and the Peloponnese. They only returned after Symeon’s death. Osios Loukas, *ibid.*, pp.52, 58, 60.

346 If a fire happens in the fall, as opposed to the spring, there will be less accumulation of grass litter. This means that the burning will be less destructive. Hopkins et al., 1948.

All this talk about the troubles of countryside agriculture is pertinent, since I believe that Medieval Rhomanian towns may have been independent from the surplus produce generated by the rural economy (though this did not stop them from purchasing the produce). In Chapter 1.II-III I drew attention to the pervasiveness of agricultural traits in towns, such as pastures, vineyards, and orchards. Were these traits were extensive to the point of rendering towns completely self-sufficient? I have researched the history of sieges of Rhomanian urban centres between the 8<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup> centuries where food autonomy was of crucial importance. They include Constantinople (717-718 and 743), Syracuse (877-878), Adrianople (924), Antioch (970-971), Larissa (ca. 976-ca. 979 and 1083), Bari (1068-1071), Gangra (ca.1136), and Klaudiopolis (1179). With one partial exception (the first mentioned siege of Constantinople), all of the settlements either capitulated due to starvation, were in danger of starvation before the siege was lifted, or had to import food from external sources. None of the settlements can be said to have avoided surrender solely through their own supplies. During the first siege of Larissa, it is even explicitly implied that the besiegers starved out the townspeople by preventing them from harvesting the crops outside the settlement (see chapter 3.IV.1.A).<sup>347</sup> During the second siege of Larissa, the town's governor warned Alexios I that he was about to surrender from starvation. Nor was the town of Adalia able to subsist entirely on its own food production when it was effectively surrounded by the Turks, during the Second Crusade.<sup>348</sup> It was forced to import its grain. It seems that the historical record is not helpful to my argument. But there is a general consideration to take into account: towns under siege may have been crowded with panicked refugees from the countryside. In such extraordinary circumstances, a town's food production capacity could easily have been overburdened. Therefore, I believe that even if Adalia or Larissa could no longer depend on its rural hinterland, they would not necessarily have been in serious trouble.

I have nothing more to say about the the Leiden-Ljubljana Project and the Praktikon of Athens, of which I spoke in section I. The date of the Project's pottery cannot be narrowed down sufficiently, while the Praktikon's usefulness is limited to the 12<sup>th</sup> century. And the testimonies of Osios Loukas, Arethas of Caesarea, and Skylitzes on foreign invasions of Greece are too vague for my purposes. Nevertheless, the information on Boeotia's demography allows us to make the case that Thebes outgrew the Kadmeia in the Middle Rhomanian Period. It also constitutes groundwork for further research on the dependence of contemporary towns on the countryside.

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347 Also, Kekaumenos implies that Larissa's food requirements were met by its "rural provinces." Kekaumenos, 1998, pp.214, 216. For further information on Larissa see. Chapter 3.IV.1.A.

348 To punish the Adalians for taking in the Crusaders, the Turks prevented them from farming Adalia's hinterland. Lilie, 1984, pp.149-153.

## 12. Ceramic material

Not including the tripod stilts from the Poulioupoulou street plot, I was able to gain access to 141 classifiable Roman sherds. On the basis of the items, I have created two tables.

On table 1, we see that high-quality wares come entirely from outside Boeotia in the 9<sup>th</sup> century. This is still the case in 950-1050, although the quantity of vessels has more than doubled. But in the next chronological bracket (late 11<sup>th</sup>/12<sup>th</sup> century), all high-quality vessels come from Boeotia (or Euripos). They are nearly twice as numerous as their 950-1050 counterparts. Finally, for the mid-12<sup>th</sup>/early 13<sup>th</sup> century, there is a step backwards. Practically all the luxury wares are replaced by medium-quality vessels, although there is no return to importing. This relative decline might seem surprising, given the influx of Roman *dynatoi* from Seljuk-occupied Anatolia into Europe. One would think that the arrivees would have triggered a major increase in market demand for Champlevé, glazed-slip painted ware, Fine sgraffito ware, and other contemporary luxury tableware. However, the *dynatoi* who immigrated to Greece, such as the Kabasilai, the Alyatai, the Radenoi, the Aaron, the Monasteriotes, and the Probatai, settled in Macedonia, Epirus, the Aegean Islands, and Corinth, not Boeotia.<sup>349</sup>

It remains to be proven whether imitation wares become common in Thebes towards the second quarter of the 12<sup>th</sup> century, as Waksman et al. and Sanders contend. For my part, I have not found any such Theban wares dating to my period of study.<sup>350</sup>

Table 2 shows that imported vessels heavily outnumber their local counterparts in the 9<sup>th</sup> and early 10<sup>th</sup> century. During the period 950-1204, the former category's share dwindles to 37 %. And the category's share for the period 1050-1204 is a disproportionately small 15 %. From this trend, one might conclude that trade between Boeotia and the Aegean basin did not gain new life after 961, despite the destruction of the Emirate of Crete that year and the consequent dramatic decline of piratical activity in the Aegean. But in my view a more plausible explanation is that by then Boeotians had gained the resources and skills to manufacture their own vessels. In this way they would not have to suffer the longer waiting times and meteorology-imposed delays that importing ceramic from Constantinople and other provinces involved.

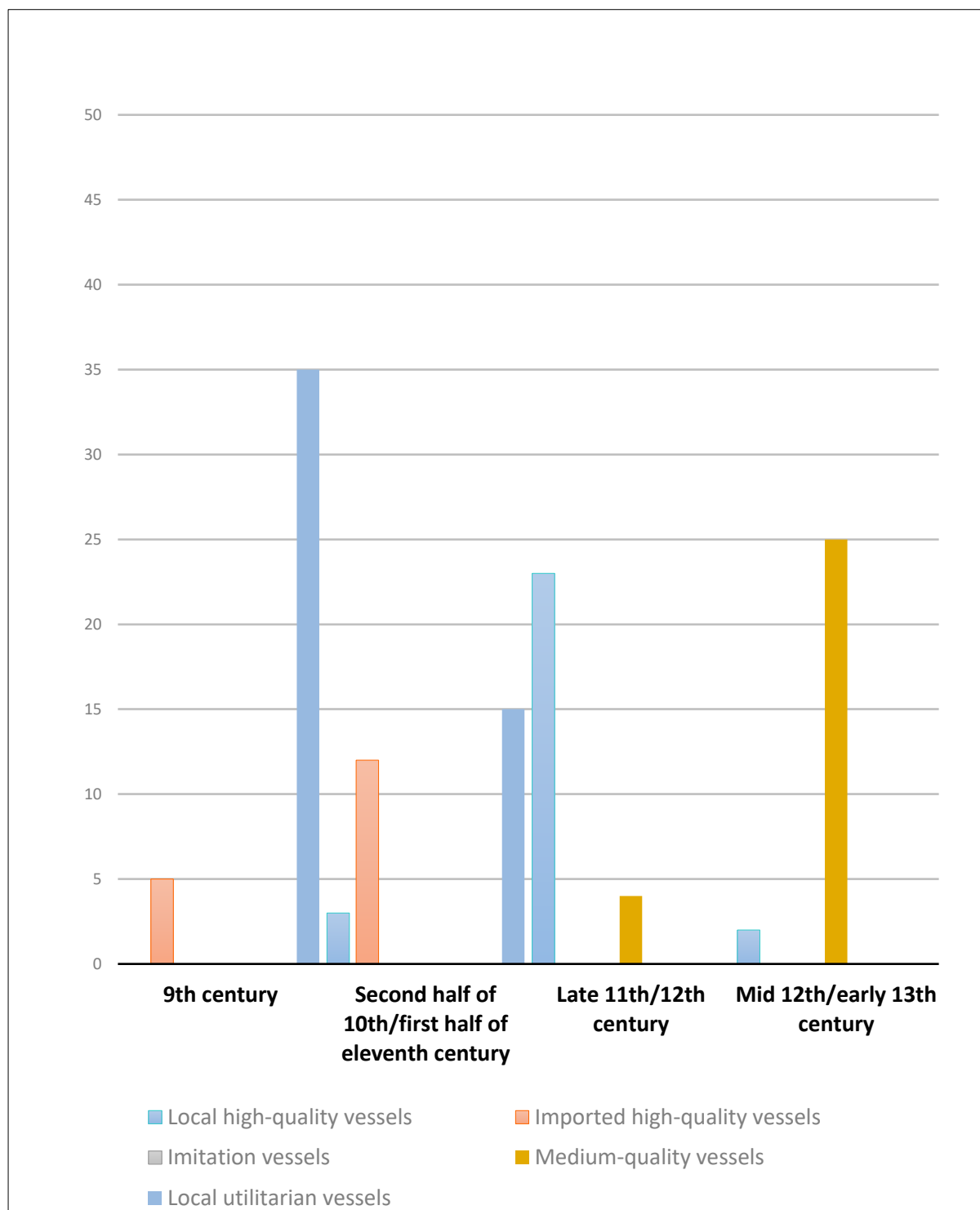
I must emphasize that the above conclusions are very much tentative and preliminary. In a region inhabited by thousands of people (over three thousand in Thebes alone) over a period of more than four hundred years, 141 artifacts does not give us a remotely comprehensive view of production, import, and export patterns. It should be noted that there are several thousand geographically and chronologically

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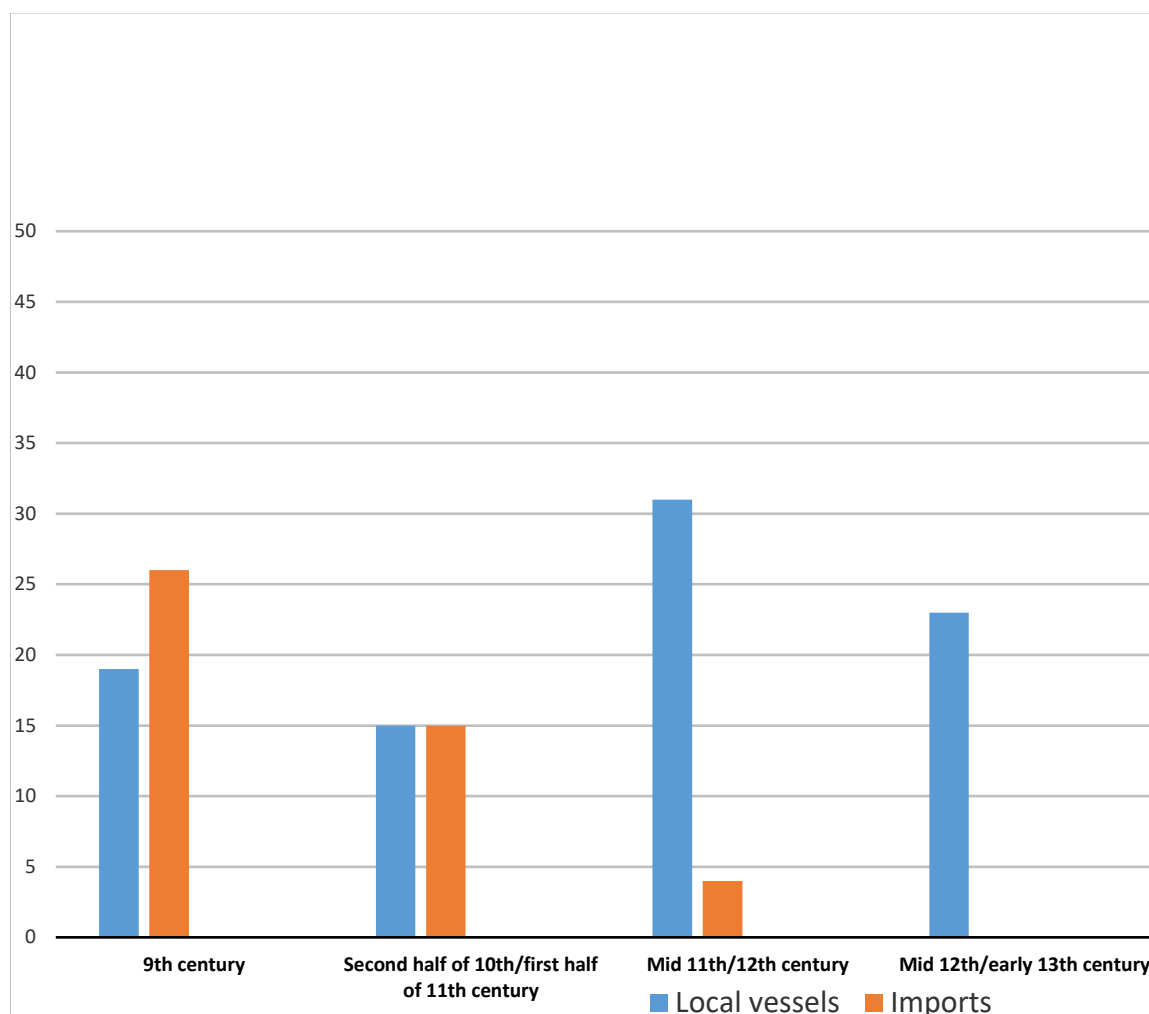
<sup>349</sup> Cheynet, 1990, p.240.

<sup>350</sup> Waksman et al., 2014, Sanders, 2003. It is true that in Corinth, production of Corinthian medium-quality pottery begins a steady rise from the late 11th century onwards.

pertinent unpublished sherds in the possession of the Ephorates of Boeotia, Larissa, Trikala, and Kardista. But as they are unpublished, it is not yet possible for outsiders to study them.



**Table 4.** Qualitative categories of local and imported vessels during the period 783-1204.



**Table 5.** Finds of local vessels and imports in Boeotia during the period 783-1204.

## IV. Conclusion

The events and material at my disposal have not allowed me to create a dense chronology. The dealings and architectural projects we know about tend to be separated in time by thirty or forty years, although they are almost all of theoretically positive nature.<sup>351</sup> Any number of natural or manmade misfortunes could happen in such a long period of time, from famine and harsh winters<sup>352</sup> to earthquakes and victimization by unscrupulous governors (in chapter 3.VII, in fact, I will examine the school of thought that the Theme of Hellas suffered from a series of unscrupulous and rapacious senior administrative officials in the quarter-century before 1204). Thus I will settle for presenting a broad timeline.

<sup>351</sup> That is to say, they are indicative of constancy or growth. But we should not assume that constancy and growth were necessarily good things.

<sup>352</sup> Of which there was at least one in Western Macedonia, in 1072. Xoplaki et al., 2016, p.11.

Economic recovery in Boeotia can be traced back to the late 8<sup>th</sup> century. The *Notitia* 3 (787-800) indicates that seven urban settlements then dotted the Teneric Plain, the Kifissos Valley, the coast of the Gulf of Corinth, and the Chrissan Plain (see table 7). A further three are accounted for in Phokis. This situation roughly coincides with a surge in secular administrative seal finds for the Theme of Hellas (see chapter 3.V), and with the submission of the Slavs of Hellas (either the Theme or the geographic space) in 783. But in the 9<sup>th</sup> century, surprisingly, seven of the aforementioned bishoprics seem to lose their ranks. The majority are not heard from again in the Middle Rhomanian period. Such a decline is hardly compensated for by the return of coin circulation (on a tiny scale) in Thebes during the reign of Theophanes, or the contemporary architectural projects (one chapel and two houses).

There was a modest flurry of settlement expansion in the 10<sup>th</sup> century. Thebes is attested as the residence of Hella's *strategos* by Osios Loukas (see III.1) and as an archbishopric by the *Notitia* 7 (901-907). The same *Notitia* gives us the first mention of Koroneia and Davlia since before the Transition period. And if Amfissa and Galaxidi qualified as towns by the late 10<sup>th</sup> century (as the *Chronicle of Galaxidi* indicates) it is possible to speak of five Boeotian urban settlements) by that time (Thebes, Koroneia, Davlia, Amfissa, and Galaxidi).<sup>353</sup> One might think that Thebes, Kastorion, and Vathys suffered from the destruction of the Emirate of Crete (961), because there was now a relatively safe, fully maritime alternative to crossing Boeotia to reach the Gulf of Corinth and the Adriatic (namely circumnavigating Attica and the Peloponnese). But the damage was assuredly limited, since the weather in the Mediterranean made sea travel very dangerous between October and April. Indeed, no less a person than the Emperor Manuel was defeated by inclement maritime meteorology when he sought to travel from Thessaloniki to Kerkyra.<sup>354</sup> So, outside the sailing season, people along the (presumable) thoroughfare from Euripos to Vathys could have continued to look forward to a steady flux of pilgrims, merchants, and government officials. How these itinerants paid for food and lodging is an interesting question, but one that I prefer to refrain from answering until more Boeotian coins have been published.<sup>355</sup>

From the late 11<sup>th</sup> century onwards, the pace of positive change accelerated. Thebes confirmed its place as the queen city of Boeotia. By 1071, Venetian merchants, eager to capture a share of the Boeotia-Constantinople export market, had set up shop in Thebes. One of their main exports was probably olive oil, judging by the later surviving shipment contracts belonging to Romano Maraino. In the process, a few gold coins (or a few dozen silver ones, or hundreds of base metal coins) must have passed into the hands of local merchants and farmers: between 40 and 50 *hyperpyra* was invested into

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353 For the *Chronicle*, See III.4-5.

354 That is to say, Manuel decided not risk the danger of the sea voyage. The episode occurred in late 1148. Kinnamos, 1976, p.79.

355 Two *colleganze* date to 1071. See Morozzo and Lombardo, 1940, docs. 12 and 13 and section I.

each of the contracts. The contracts of Vitale Voltani, who exported oil from Thebes from 1164 to 1171, mention similar figures.<sup>356</sup> I will return momentarily to the question of what the Venetians were purchasing and exporting.

To return to positive change, a silk industry of the highest repute, whose existence coincided broadly with the construction of Archbishop Kaloktennis's aqueduct, emerged in the 12<sup>th</sup> century (see III.1.1.B and III.8). While there is a discrepancy between the material and literary evidence, I believe it partly evinces Rhomanian Thebes' inaccessibility to excavators and the untapped potential of the sites on the Gulf of Corinth. I am not inclined, as Harvey is<sup>357</sup>, to associate the industry with demographic growth in Thebes in the 11<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup> centuries. That there was significant contemporary demographic growth is clear (see III.11). But I see no reason why a larger populace should have made Thebes well-suited to produce quality silk fabrics on a large scale. In fact, one could make the reverse argument : more people would have meant less water available for manufacturing silk.

For my part, I do not refute the notion that Thebes possessed attributes helpful for manufacturing silk. But the attributes were related to physical topography, not demography. Medieval Thebes was more or less sandwiched between two constantly flowing rivers, the Dirki and the Ismenos, which drew their copiousness from the Asopos aquifer (see section I). Not only could the Dirki and the Ismenos<sup>358</sup> have helped meet the silk industry's intensive demand for water (see III.8), but their contents were rich in calcium and magnesium – elements which [provided they are treated with lime or soda ash] result in better reeling performances.<sup>359</sup> In the same line of thought, it has been convincingly argued by Ochi et al. that calcium and magnesium boost a silkworm's natural ability to spin silk.<sup>360</sup> That Thebans apparently did not tap into their ecosystem's potential before the 12<sup>th</sup> century is not particularly surprising. In the 10<sup>th</sup> century, the Book of the Eparch hints that the state had a monopoly on high-quality silk. It forbids private workshops in the capital from producing and selling purple silks.<sup>361</sup> Similarly, Constantine Porphyrogenetos' ceremonial protocol book *De Ceremoniis* states that provincial Rhomaioi could buy from Constantinople any kind of silk fabrics, except the *kekolymena* (the forbidden ones).<sup>362</sup> Not until the 1080s is it implied that such restrictions were no longer in place. The chrysobull of 1082, which granted the Venetians the right "to conduct trade with all merchandise in all the regions of Romania, that is to say in great Laodicea, Mamistra,

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356 For Maraino, see Morozzo and Lombardo, 1940, docs. 193-198, 201, 203, 207. For Voltani, see docs. 166, 234, 239, 273-275, 308, 354.

357 Harvey, 1989, p.219.

358 Neither the Dirki nor the Ismenos exist today: the portion of the Asopos basin's aquifer under Thebes was exhausted through excessive demand in the mid-20th century.

359 Water is relevant here because the first stage of reeling involving unwinding filaments from a group of cocoons in a water bath.

360 Ochi et al., 2002, pp.1187-1196.

361 Jacoby, 1992, pp.493-500.

362 Constantine Porphyrogenetos, 1840, vol.2, p.690.

Adana...Thebes" do not mention any limitations on purchasing silk.<sup>363</sup> The Venetians' privilege was confirmed in 1126, then expanded in 1148, 1187, and 1198.<sup>364</sup>

Perhaps pressure from Venice caused the state to loosen its grip on the silk market. An instruction issued by Genoa's consuls to their ambassador in Constantinople (coming on the heels of the mass Venetian arrests of 1171) implies that the Venetians had enjoyed the right to purchase and export precious silks in Thebes.<sup>365</sup> Whether the Venetians had possessed an appetite for Theban silks as early as 1082 is unknown.

Thebes' persistent exceptionalism is attributable to more than silk and the preliminary nature of my ceramic and numismatic data.<sup>366</sup> I believe it reflected a pattern whereby each Medieval Rhomanian region possessed one or two settlements which were disproportionately important – Corinth in the Peloponnese, Athens in Attica, Nafpaktos in Aetolia-Akarnania, Adrianople in Thrace, Amorium in Phrygia, Trebizond in Pontus, and so on.<sup>367</sup>

Outside of Thebes, six native land owners possessed properties worth one *nomisma* or more (as seen in the Cadaster of Thebes) and by the late 12<sup>th</sup> century the number of Boeotian bishoprics exceeded its *Notitia 3* counterpart (see table 7). Despite all these indicators of rising affluence and strong demographic performance, there was no increase in living standards as far as bathhouses were concerned.<sup>368</sup> But then, negative evidence suggests that this was true in urban settlements across Rhomania, at least until the generation of Niketas Khoniates (the author implies bathhouses to be commonplace in "prosperous towns"<sup>369</sup>). While the 11<sup>th</sup> century monk Symeon the Theologian lists baths as one of the immovable assets which monasteries normally possessed, monasteries were seldom to be found within the walls of a town.<sup>370</sup>

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363 Tafel and Thomas, 1964, p.95, 113, 178, 246. It is disputed whether the Chrysobull was granted in 1082 or 1092. Pozza and Ravegnani, 1993, p.55, Madden, 2002. In this thesis I will opt for the former date. For a discussion on whether the Venetians' activities were beneficial to their Rhomaioi competitors, see chapter 3.III.6.A

364 Tafel and Thomas, 1964, p.95, 113, 178, 246. The Republic's two main rivals eventually acquired comparable trading privileges: Pisa in 1111, and Genoa in 1156.

365 Codice diplomatico, vol. 2, p.115. The *codice* is loosely confirmed by a *colleganza* for a Thebes-Constantinople shipment (dating to 1170), in which the expected profit is of 66 *hyperpyra*. Silk is the most plausible candidate for what could have netted the Venetian merchant such a large sum in one journey.

366 As noted in III.9, I only have 243 coins, 170 of which are from Thebes. Not only is the number slight, but all the specimens are low-value denominations – *folles* and *tetartera*. And it would be courageous in the extreme to claim that my 141 ceramic artifacts represent proof of a growing Theban capacity to buy better-quality wares, or of a growing availability of regional wares (see III.12).

367 Veikou, 2012, p.350, Treagold, 1997, p.405, Serjeant, 1972, pp.63, 213.

368 Even in Thebes, only one bathhouse is attested (a public one). Osios Loukas, 1994, p.192.

369 Niketas Khoniates, 1975, p.634.

370 The only exception in my area of study appears to be Kastoria. See Chapter 4.III.12. Magdalino, 1986, p.169, Symeon the New Theologian, 1963-1965, p.440, Mango, 1976. Considering that the Church frowned upon the usage of bathhouses, even for monks, this state of affairs is not surprising.





**Figure 25.** Distribution of possible and definite urban settlements in Boeotia during the period 783-1204. The whereabouts of Kanala (see Appendix D, table 7) has not been ascertained, but we have reason to think it was either on the perimeter of Lake Copais 371 or across the Evvian Bay from Aidipsos. The latter place is referred to as Kanala by a 1313 portulan chart.<sup>372</sup> There is a conspicuous absence of settlements in northern Boeotia (especially the northwest), which is only partially clarified by our ignorance of Jabustrissa's which Tudela implies to be on the coast between Euripos and Zitounion) precise location. Benjamin of Tudela, 2005, p.68. The fact

371 Dunn, 1995, p.760.

372 Pietro Vesconte, 1984, table 2.

that the road network apparently did not extend to the north might be another elucidating factor, although it did not prevent the Franks from building five tower complexes to the north, east, and northeast of Copais. See Lock, 1986, fig.1.

**Figure 26. Chronology for fig. 25**

Settlements in existence by late 8th century



Settlements in existence by late 8th century, but for which we have no solid evidence thereafter



Settlements in existence by early 10th century



Settlements in existence by mid-late 12th century



## Chapter 3. Thessaly agricultural abundance and ethnic pluralism

### I. General comments

The state of the evidence for Thessaly is marginally better than in Boeotia. True, Thessaly has garnered far more attention from contemporary sources. But for whatever reason, in about a third of my chosen settlements no fruitful fieldwork operations have taken place. On the positive side, the information on Thessalian sites is distributed more evenly, although none of the sites have been as well studied as Thebes. I will cite several ‘local specialists’ and sigillographic experts: Avramea, Karagiorgou, Gialouri, Cheynet, Zacos, and Veglery.<sup>373</sup> Special mention should go to Koder and Hild and Avramea. These authors come closest to reaching my thesis’ main objectives, with regard to Thessaly.<sup>374</sup> But their works suffer from certain methodological shortcomings. While the first issue of the *Tabula Imperi Byzantini* project has given us a near-exhaustive synthesis of relevant primary sources (along with unique atlases of Thessaly’s topography and Medieval infrastructure), it devotes a lopsided amount of attention to the political domain at the expense of economic, religious, demographic, and climatic questions. The authors also neglect to date and classify the roads on their generally remarkable map of Middle Rhomanian Central Greece.<sup>375</sup> Avramea’s discussion of Thessaly concentrates almost exclusively on mountains and rivers, and she fails to engage with the archaeological material, though she can hardly be blamed for this. She wrote her thesis in the early 1970s, at a time Greek universities were going through very difficult times.

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My procedure for this chapter will be essentially the same as in Chapter 2. I will catalogue every identified settlement which fulfills one or more of the ‘urban criteria’ I have outlined. Unlike in Chapter 2, the settlements will be looked at in clockwise order: northeast, southeast, southwest, and northwest. I will make maximum use of corroborating historical evidence when discussing the material finds (and vice-versa). Where possible, I will provide a condensed narrative of the history of the settlement in question. Ultimately, I will use the various segments to give an assessment of Thessaly’s socio-economic history in the Middle Rhomanian period. In the main body of the chapter I will be making the case that an urban revival began at the end of the 8<sup>th</sup> century. It is from that point onwards that we hear about new towns being founded and old ones being brought out of obscurity.<sup>377</sup>

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373 Avramea, 1974 Karagiorgou, 2001, Gialouri, 2013, Iannikos, 1985, Cheynet, 2003, Zacos and Veglery, 1972.

374 Koder and Hild, 1976.

375 The map includes every conceivable type of site, administrative subdivisions, topography, elevations at 100-m. intervals, and roads.

312 State funding for universities was severely limited, in part because Greek students were taking an active role in resisting the Colonel’s Regime. Avramea’s ability to travel around Thessaly and to collect material and geographical information was accordingly restricted.

377 Koder and Hild, 1976, p.61, Darrouzes, 1981, p.284.

## II. Physical geography and infrastructure

Thessaly is poorly endowed in minerals that were known to the Medieval Romans, such as lead, gold, silver, or bronze. The only potential exception concerns a section of the Othrys Mountains east of the Lamia-Domokos national road, more specifically in the vicinity of the villages of Makrolivadhi, Melitea, Neokhorio, and Limogardhi. As shown on fig.21 of Chapter 1, the district contains rich reserves of copper ores. But were they exploited in Medieval Rhomanian times? A team from the University of Bergamo surveyed the area in 1991, with the goal of looking for evidence of ancient mining and metallurgy.<sup>378</sup> Near Limogardhi the team's findings included an underground copper mining area, featuring extensive mining works, slags, remains of smelting furnaces, and sherds. It was supported by a wall of possibly Hellenistic age (if not earlier). Approximately 20 m. east of the latter structure, the remainders of a Hellenistic wall, some slag, and ore were visible. And at the Prehistorical/Classical site of Mavri, outside Neokhorio, a small iron slag was found on the surface. The only other mineral of interest to us is marble. It happens to be the building block of all the mountains running from Zarkos to Tirnavos.<sup>379</sup>

In terms of topography, the majority of Thessaly's surface is covered by four lowlands: the Plain of Karditsa, the Plain of Larissa, the Spercheios Valley, and the Plain of Almyros. Their most important modern-day crops are cereals, except in the Spercheios Valley.<sup>380</sup> That this situation has a long precedent is well acknowledged. For centuries, Thessaly has enjoyed a reputation as a breadbasket. Thus, in 1897 it produced a little over 173,000 tons of barley, wheat, and corn, despite the disruptive effect of a concurrent Greek-Turkish war.<sup>381</sup> That is enough cereal to feed about 788,000 people<sup>382</sup> – more than the population of modern Thessaly (732,762) – for an entire year. The achievement was particularly impressive given that the Plain of Almyros, the Eparchies of Farsala and Domokos, and the Southern Plain of Karditsa were being rented to transhumant shepherds.<sup>383</sup> This fact partly accounts for the fact that before 1900 only a third of the cultivable land in Thessaly was cropped each year.<sup>384</sup> While Thessaly's agriculture underwent mechanization beginning in 1881 (the year of its liberation from Turkish occupation) there are hints that the process had only made limited progress by 1897. To be sure, the punitive testimony of the American consul in Athens in 1889 is slightly too general and dated for our

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378 Tizzoni et al., 2008, pp.535-537.

379 Or more correctly, the mountains that overlook Zarkos, Tirnavos, and the settlements in between. Sivignon, 1975, pp.27-28.

380 Sivignon, 1975, pp.224-229.

381 Consular report, 1897, p.624.

382 The figure comes from consumption patterns in present-day India. Brown, 2010.

383 Sivignon, 1975, pp.115-116.

384 Petmezas, 2003, p.8, Stavrianos, 2000, pp.478-479.

purposes.<sup>385</sup> But as of 1896, land under cereal production had only increased by 9.5 % since 1881 (when Thessaly was liberated from Turkish rule). This compares with an increase of 55 % for the period 1896-1911. Meanwhile, as of 1901, the ratio of wooden plows to steel ones was 13491: 10136.<sup>386</sup> Furthermore, the Greek state did not begin investing in modernization of Thessalian landholdings until 1917.<sup>387</sup> No statistics are available for the Middle Rhomanian period, but Akominatos implies that (in his generation) Thessaly was a major exporter of wheat to Constantinople.<sup>388</sup> And Idrisi and Kekaumenos infer (the latter explicitly so) that Larissa's hinterland generated a food surplus (see III.I).

Thessaly's second most important crop was arguably the olive tree. In the 1950s-1970s, the latter could be found all over the Aegean littoral and in multiple small pockets (including the Titarisios valley, the basin of Elassona, the basin of Vlachoyianni, Morfovouni, Messenikola, and the Amiros basin). The Karditsan and Larissan plains are separated by a handful of discontinuous hills, known as the Revenia. These hills are not a waste of space, however, inasmuch as they are suitable for the cultivation of wheat, vegetables, lucerne, and orchards.<sup>389</sup> Each plain is watered by one or more of the following major rivers: the Pinios, the Spercheios, the Titarisios, the Pamisos, the Enipeas, and the Lithaios (all three of the latter being tributaries of the Pinios). The plains are ringed by soaring, formidably rugged mountains – the Khasia and Cambunian ranges to the north, Mount Othrys and Mount Oite to the south, the Pindos range to the west, the Olympus range to the northeast, and the Kissavos massif and Pelion ranges to the southeast. Again, one should not assume that the mountains have no cultivation potential. To the contrary, the slopes of Kissavos and Mount Pelion are highly suitable for the growing of grape vine, olive trees, chestnut trees, and the Kermes oak.<sup>390</sup>

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385 The consul, describing the condition of agriculture in Greece, reports: "agriculture is here in the most undeveloped condition. Fields are plowed up or scratched over, and crops replanted season after season, until the exhausted soil will bear no more. Fertilizers are not used to any appreciable extent, and the farm implements are of the very rudest description. Irrigation is in use in some districts, and, as far as I can ascertain, the methods in use can be readily learned by a study of the practices of the ancient Egyptians."

386 There were practically no steel plows at the time of the liberation from Turkish rule, in 1881. Sivignon, 1975, pp.131-132, Petmezas, *ibid.*

387 Clogg, 1986, p.91, Damianakos, 2013, p.77.

388 Michael Akominatos, 1880, I, p.83. Note too that the Late Roman *Expositio Totius Mundi* presents Thessaly as a rich grain-producing region. Zoumbaki, 2012, p.77.

389 Sivignon, 1975, pp.90.

390 Here is a little more detail. The slopes of Mount Pelion support the olive tree from an altitude of 100 to 550 m. Sivignon, 1975, pp.75, 81. Chestnut trees are abundant on the range's seaward side, from an altitude of 450 m. to about 1075 m. The western and southwestern slopes of the Kissavos Massif are thickly covered with brush, notably the Kermes oak. This plant figures prominently in the vegetation layer above 600 m. It flourishes, too, on Kissavo's north, north-east, eastern slopes, though in what altitude bracket I do not know. The north, north-east, and eastern slopes of Kissavos support chestnut tree cultivation between 250 and 500 m. Sivignon, 1975, pp. 79- 80. In the massif's northeast corner, trees reach as close as 20-30 m. above sea level. Sivignon, 1975, p.76. The slopes of the Pindos Mountains to an altitude of 700 m. are highly suitable for the cultivation of grape vine and the olive tree. Sivignon, 1975, p.84. From 700 to about 900 m., the mountain slopes also support chestnut tree culture. Lastly, the chestnut tree is prevalent in the Agra Mountains – the southernmost unit of the Pindus range – and the land just south of the village of Livadi



The predominant lowland climate is a variant of Warm Summer Mediterranean for which I have not found an official designation. Summer temperatures are warmer than Boeotia's – the mean for July in Trikala and Larissa is 27.9 °C <sup>391</sup> – and precipitation is more evenly distributed throughout the year, though it is highly inconsistent on a year-to-year basis. For example, the Ministry for the Environment registered 343 mm. in Larissa in 1961-1962 and 807 mm. the following year. <sup>392</sup> In Volos, during the same periods, the Ministry registered 247 mm. and 880 mm. (respectively). On a year with no extremes, a resident of Larissa can expect to receive 507 mm. One would think that this kind of unpredictability is uncondusive to demographic growth. But the problem could have been remedied through extra sowing after a bad harvest year, judging by the history of agriculture in the 1960s. <sup>393</sup> The Warm Summer Mediterranean variant extends to the mountains' foothills, with two notable exceptions. The land between the Pindus' foothills and Trikala, from the north of Thessaly to its south, benefits from heavier rainfall. <sup>394</sup> And on the coast of the Pagasetic Gulf, atmospheric humidity is much higher than in Larissa, Farsala, or Trikala, though the summer dryness is prolonged by about a month. <sup>395</sup> The mountains' regime is Alpine Mediterranean, as one would expect. It seems that communities at the foot of mountains are highly susceptible to the download flow of cold air phenomenon (noted in Chapter 2.I), at least in the Spercheios Valley. <sup>396</sup>

Hydrologically speaking, there are multiple clusters of highly karstic ground (either of the bedrock or surface variety) strewn across the Larissan and Karditsan lowlands (figs. 1-2). The largest cluster sits astride the Pinios, extending from the slopes of the Chasian Mountains to the confines of Argyropoli. The overwhelming remainder of the two units do not possess permeable bedrock or stone surfaces, but have very fine – and therefore permeable – soil. The economic implications of this situation is that each karstic parcel of the lowlands is provided with an abundant water table. This allows vegetation to survive without

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(approximately 15 km. southwest of the Pass of Petra) was abundant in fruit trees, vineyards, and grazing land in the early 20th century. See Philippson, 1951, p.76. Struck testifies that the grazing land was used for farming by the neighbouring villages of Golemo and Malko Livadi, which possessed 50,000 sheep and 15,000 goats (respectively). Struck, 1908, p.80. I should stress that the material in this passage is taken mainly from Sivignon's monograph, which was written between the 1950s and the 1970s. It thus predates the advent of genetically engineered crops, which suits my purposes well.

391 Sivignon, 1975, fig.15, Sivignon, 1965, p.106. Outside the summer months, Thessaly's interior lowland temperatures either slightly cooler or slightly hotter than in Boeotia. Mean figures in January, April, and October are 5 °C, 13 °C and 16 °C. This compares with corresponding figures of 9 °C, 15.5°C, and 18 °C in Thebes. Maximum annual precipitation is 480 mm., of which almost 40 % occurs between April and September.

392 Sivignon, 1975, p.40.

393 Ibid., p.227.

394 752 mm. per year, Sivignon, 1965, p.103.

395 Sivignon, 19975, p.49. I hesitate to define the littoral's predominant climate as Humid Subtropical. Although Humid Subtropical is usually recognized as involving high relative humidity, there is no formal agreement on what 'high' mean.

396 British Naval Intelligence Division, 1945, p.67.

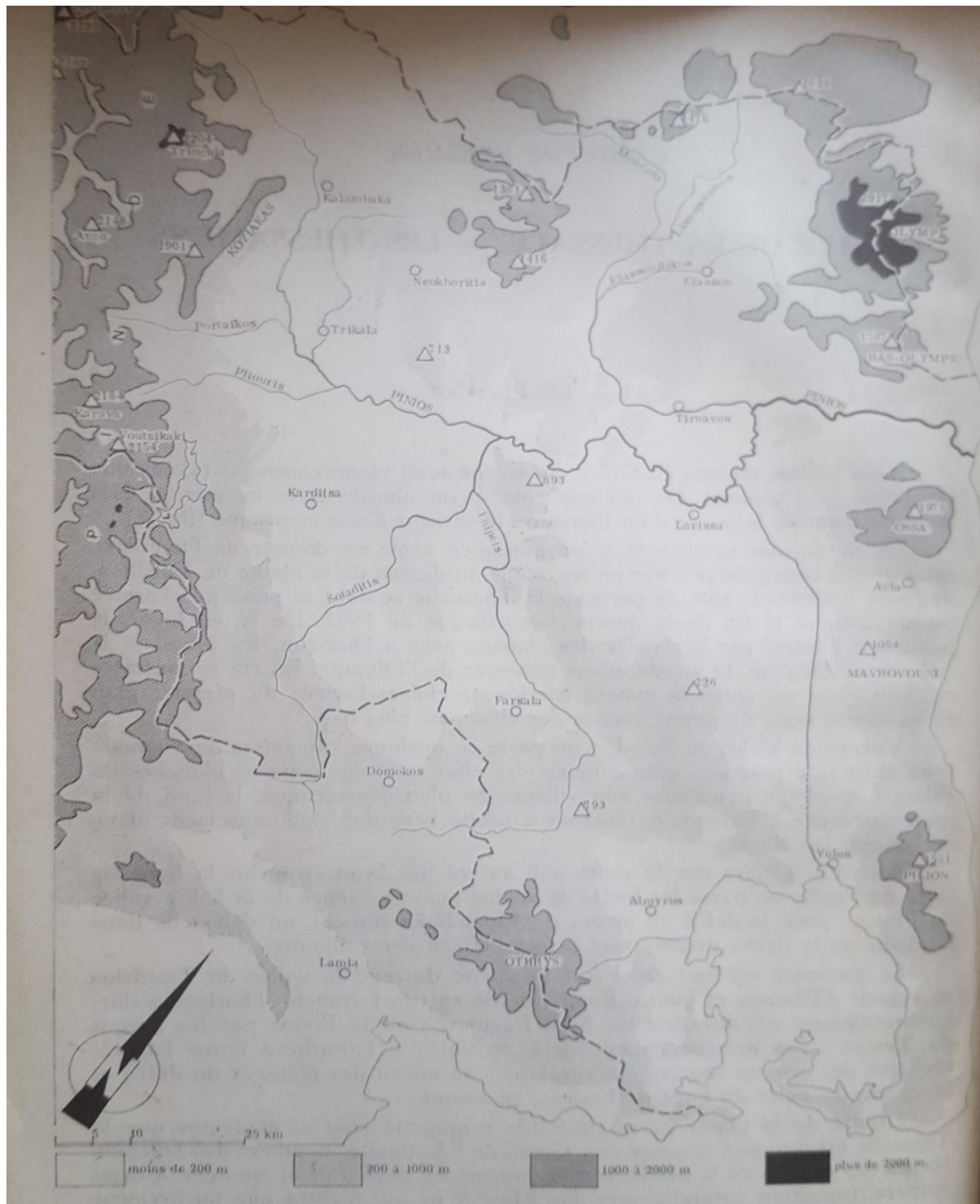
rainfall for longer than it would otherwise. The lucerne provides a good illustration, as Sivignon notes.<sup>397</sup> This plant, a source of grazing food for livestock, requires irrigation every 26 to 40 days during the summer months. By contrast, in the Hot Summer Mediterranean zones of Victoria, Australia, it must be irrigated every 10-12 days during the hottest months.<sup>398</sup> The downside of the aforementioned karstic prevalence is that causes the Pinios and Lithaios to routinely run dry in the summer.<sup>399</sup> The water in the rivers' beds easily sinks down into the water table, and there are too few artesian wells to lift it back to the surface. But this problem is compensated for by the benefits of Thessaly's hydrology. And the Pinios and Lithaios are not navigable (at least today), so their drying up would not have hindered trade.

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397 Sivignon, 1975, p.92.

398 Kelly and Lawson, 2011.

399 Sivignon, 1975, p.61.



**Figure 1.** The topography of Thessaly, excluding northeast and southeast corners. Sivignon, 1975, fig.1.



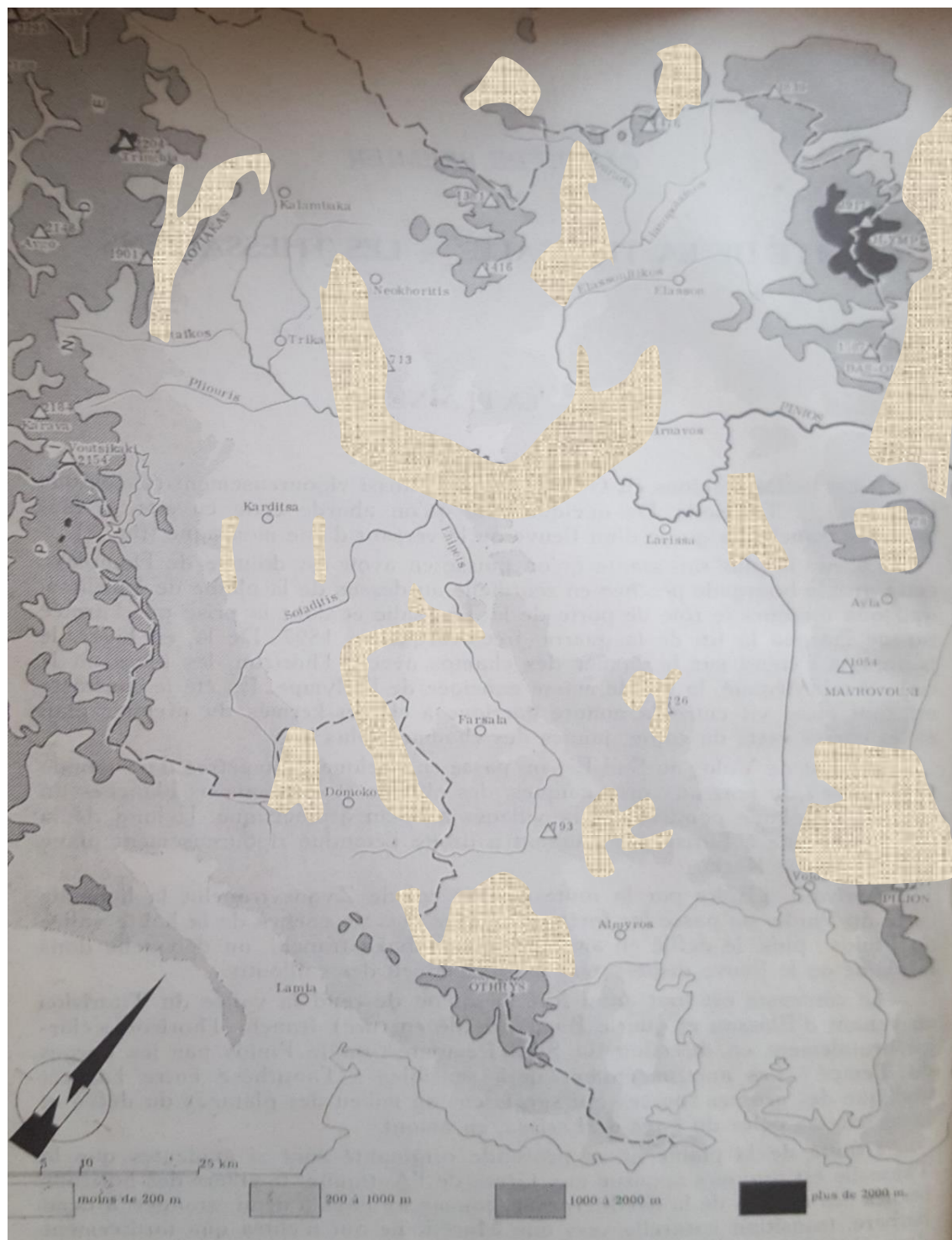


Figure 2. Karstic deposits in Thessaly. Sivignon, 1975, fig.9.

Let us now briefly inspect Thessaly's communication channels (figs. 3-4). Perhaps the eldest of them was the *demosia leophoros*, already attested in the Peutinger Table. Entering Thessaly through the Vale of Tempe, it passed through Larissa, Farsala, Tapedon (a station thought to have been located approximately 6 km north of Thermopylae), and Thermopylae.<sup>400</sup> From Larissa other roads branched out

400 Prontera, 2003, Pritchett, 1980, pp.216-222. Farsala does not appear in the Peutinger Table, but it does in the 12th century *Geographica*. Parthey and Pinder, 1860, p.537.

to Trikala, the Pass of Petra, Almyros (probably via Demetrias), and the Amiros River Valley.<sup>401</sup> At least two of them – Larissa-Trikala and Larissa-Almyros – are given precise distances by Idrisi. This tells us that they almost certainly possessed regular distance markers, and that therefore they too were public avenues. If for whatever reason the Vale of Tempe was impassable, travellers had the option of circuiting the Kissavos Massif's southern and eastern slopes. Anna Komnene writes that on his way to Trikala in 1082, her father "went over Mount Kellion, bypassing Mount Kissabos."<sup>402</sup> Mount Kellion lies at the eastern edge of Kissavos, 1.5 km. southeast of Stomio. Alexios must have turned aside from the coastal pathway at modern Velika or Agiokampios, debouching into the Amiros Valley via Melivoia or the banks of the Amiros. In Western Thessaly, a road probably linked Farsala to the Pamisos. Kekaumenos records that during the Vlach rebellion of 1066, the rebels went out to Farsala and the Pliri: "Ἐξόρμησε λουπὸν ἀπὸ το σπίτι του πρὸς τα Φάρσλα καὶ τὸν Πλήρη."<sup>403</sup> It is evident that they proceeded first to Farsala, then the Pliri, since the two geographic points are more than 50 km. apart. For those who had business in Serbia or further north, two alternatives to the circuitous *demasia leophoros*-Via Egnatia itinerary existed. One passed through Stagoi; it was employed by Basil II in 1018.<sup>404</sup> The other seems to have run through modern Elassona and the Valley of the Titarisios. We know that Bohemund was attacked at the fortress of Domenikon – roughly midway through the Valley – by Rhomaioi mercenaries as he made his way from Larissa to Kastoria.<sup>405</sup>

Two routes connected Thessaly to Epirus. The first went through the Pass of Pyli, having Preveza as its terminus; the second traversed the Metsovo Pass and ended at Dyrrachium.<sup>406</sup> At least one of them almost certainly reaches back to the 9<sup>th</sup>/late 9<sup>th</sup> century, since three contemporary *kommerkiarioi* were assigned to the Themes of Nikopolis and Thessaloniki. This implies the officials regularly commuted between the two regions.<sup>407</sup> Finally, it was apparently possible to travel from Thessaly to the vicinity of Mount Ioannitze and Livadostro, albeit under very difficult conditions<sup>408</sup>

It will be noticed that I have only spoken about roads presenting a trans-regional or inter-regional character. That is because, as in Chapter 2.I, we are uninformed about Thessaly's lower-category roads (namely the ones made of dirt).

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401 Kekaumenos, 1998, p.226, Idrisi, 1999, pp.406, 409.

402 Anna Komnene, 2009, pp.154.20-155.29.

403 Kekaumenos, 1998, p.226.

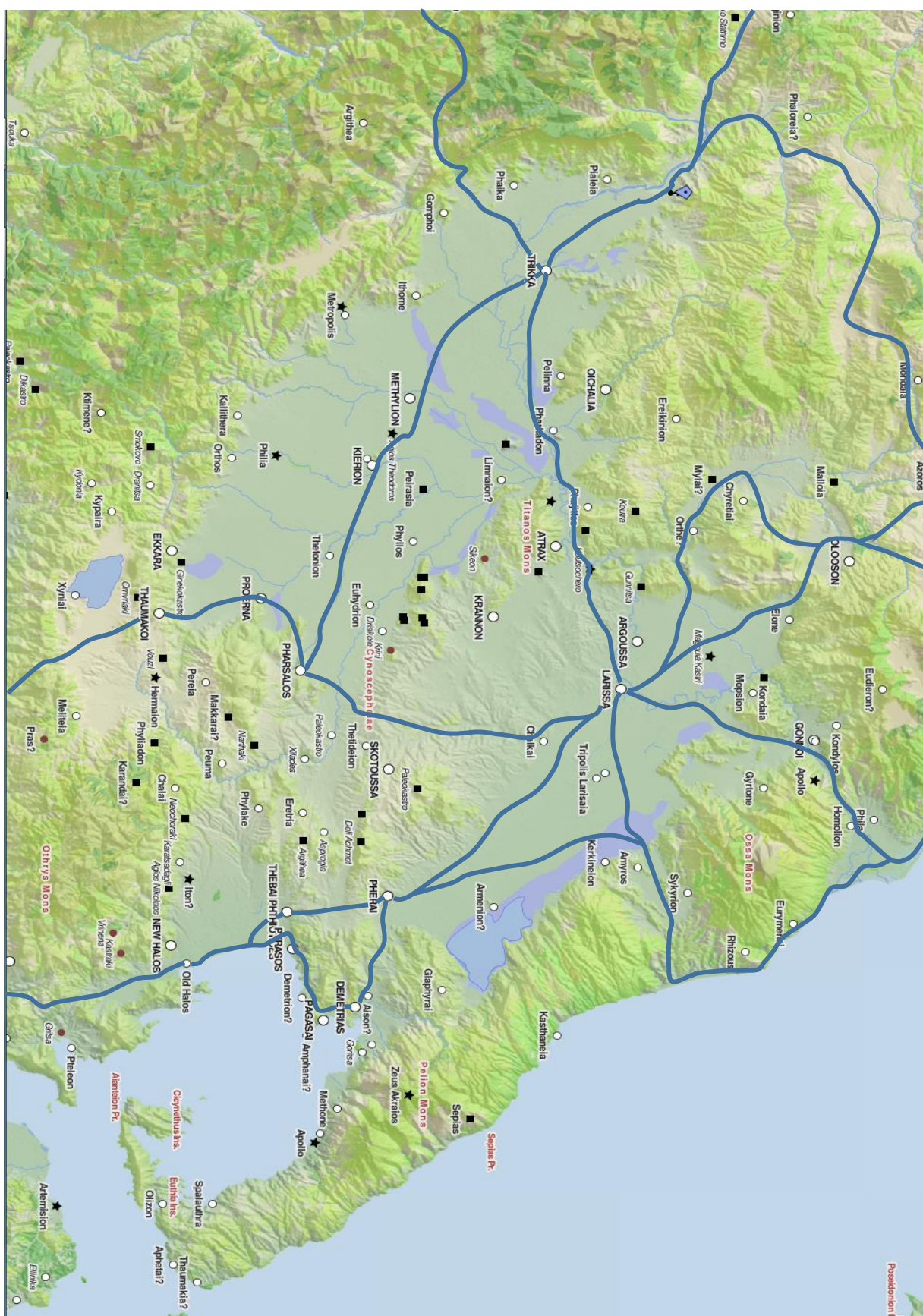
404 Skylitzes, 2010, p.344 and fig. 6. Skylitzes implies that Basil proceeded directly from Serbia to Stagoi.

405 In 1083. William of Tyre, 1961, p.329.

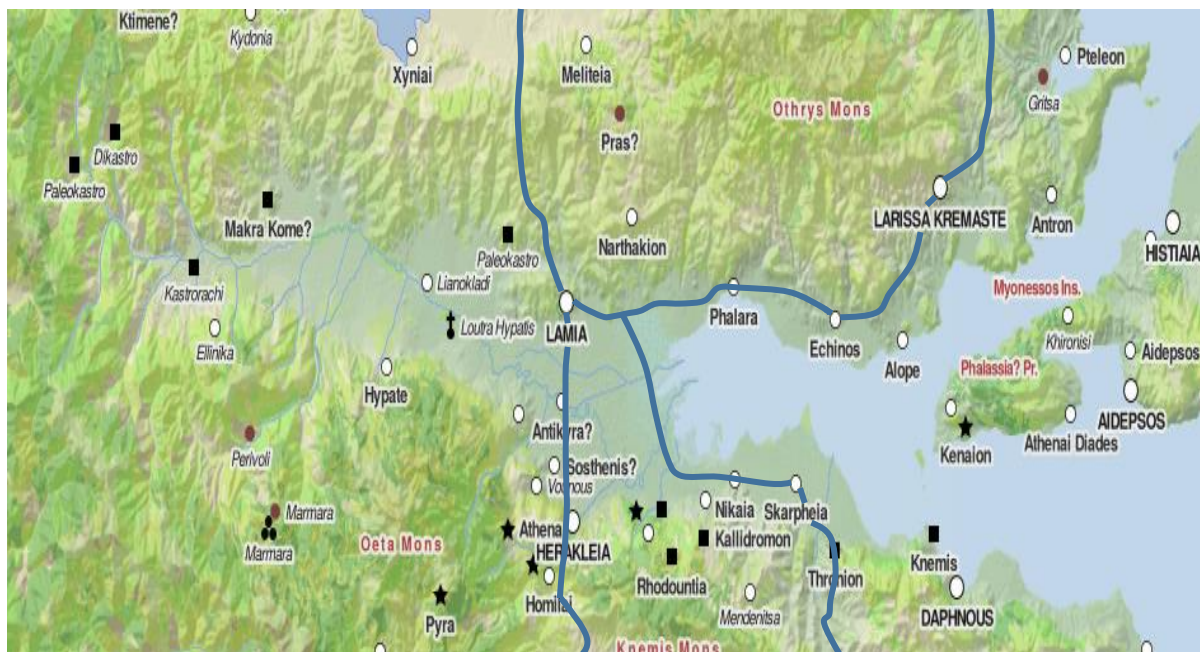
406 Hill, 1962, book 1, pp.7-8, Idrisi, 1999, p.292.

407 I am relying on sigillographic evidence provided by Veikou. Veikou, 2012, p.244.

408 See chapter 2.I, III.5.







Figures 3-4. Possible road network in Thessaly during the period 783-1204. Åhlfeldt, 2015. For evidence of the road directly south of Lamia, see Chapter 2.III.5.B.

### III. Historical context

A few words are in order on the interaction between Slavs and the Rhomaioi, for the same reasons that I gave in Chapter 2.II. When it comes to Slavic migration in Thessaly, we are slightly better informed on the final destinations that the newcomers chose (for my reason for discussing the Slavs, see Chapter 2.I). Six settlements across Thessaly either experience Slavic name changes or are cited as harboring “Sklavinian” populations: Velestinos, Gardiki, Ezeros (modern Xiniae), Ezeros-in-Olympos, Stagoi (possibly), and Thessalian Thebes. The presence of the Velegezitai tribe in Thessalian Thebes (as well as in Demetrias) is explicitly attested by the *Miracles of St. Demetrius*. Also worth mentioning is the town of Polythea (Trikala prefecture), known as Dragovista until 1926.<sup>409</sup> ‘Dragovista’ brings to mind the Drogouvitai tribe, whose concurrent presence in Western Macedonia is clearly attested (see Chapter 4.II). Unfortunately for the Velegezetai and their Slavic brethren in Thessaly, they were at the mercy of an imperial government desiring a safe and credibility-boosting military victory. A single campaign in 783 was enough to reduce them to tributary status (see chapter 2.I). It is likely, though not certain, that the campaign had far-reaching consequences on local urban life. While Stavrakios made a triumphant return

409 The Velegezitai are also known as the Velezetia. Lemerle, 1979-1981, pp.116, 1325, 1351. ‘Gardiki’ and ‘Ezeros’ are Slavic for “small town” and “marsh or lake” ‘Velestinis’ is derived from the god Veles. For Stagoi, see III.14, for Dragovista, see Vasmer, 1941, p.89. # The fact that all the settlements were influenced by the Slavs indicates that they survived the Transition Period.

to Constantinople, as early as 798-799 the chief of the Velegezetai felt bold enough to conspire against the Emperor. Moreover, though the barbarians' cultural legacy proved limited, one cannot help but wonder if they had an influence on the distribution of Thessalian settlements. Seven of the eight urban communities in existence (and which have been put on the map) by the early 10<sup>th</sup> century were found at the foothills or the slopes of a mountain range (See appendix E, figure 20). Could the residents have been looking for an environment which offered elevated ground – something which would have provided security in the event of a Slavic raid? The question deserves further consideration.

## IV. Main body

### 1. Larissa

#### A. History

Larissa had been an archbishopric in the 6<sup>th</sup> century. After apparently losing its rank during the Transition period, it regained it in the *Notitia* 3 (787-800) and maintained it in the *Notitiae* 5 and 6, (ca. 814 and 805/814-827/828, respectively).<sup>410</sup> By the time of the *Notitia* 7 (901-907), Larissa had been elevated to a metropolis.<sup>411</sup> That it preserved this standing throughout most of the 10<sup>th</sup> century is heavily inferred by the testimonies of Niketas Magistros and Kekaumenos. Magistros (whose last name comes from the court title he held) notes in 945-946: "it [Larissa] produces very fertile and nurturing soil...horses and well-fed cattle..."<sup>412</sup> Kekaumenos, speaking about life in the 970s (when the governorship of Hellas was held by his paternal grandfather), proudly observes that crops were sowed in abundance around Larissa and the people survived through self-sufficiency.<sup>413</sup> These testaments tie in with the idea I emitted in Chapter 1.III, that the logistical requirements of episcopal seats would have acted like a magnet on farmers. Beyond that, it is likely that Larissa was serving as a provisional Thematic capital. For the date of Kekaumenos' testimony coincides with a Bulgarian descent on Thessaly.

The Bulgarians appear to have encountered almost no opposition, largely thanks to the Roman leadership troubles which attended the death of John Tzimiskes. Kekaumenos' grandfather was compelled to pay tribute to them, although in a letter to Basil II he justified his action as a pretend

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<sup>410</sup> Predrag, 2013, pp.204-205,211, Darrouzes, 1981, pp. 265, p.268.

<sup>411</sup> Patriarch Nicholas Mystikos wrote a letter to a provincial Thessalian bishop ca.918 to replace the archbishop of Larissa, who had been slain during Symeon's invasion of Greece. Nicholas Mystikos, 1973, p.21. It is possible that Larissa started out as an autocephalous metropolis, since it is not listed as having any sees until the *Notitia* 7. See Darrouzes, 1981, p.272.

<sup>412</sup> Niketas Magistros, 1973, p.113.

<sup>413</sup> Kekaumenos, 1998, pp.214, 216.

submission.<sup>414</sup> Unfortunately the *strategos* was then transferred to another command, and his successor reneged on the agreement. The newly appeared Tsar Samuel responded by laying siege to Larissa, ca. 976.<sup>415</sup> He withdrew at the end of the campaigning season, but not before destroying the crops outside the metropolis. Samuel repeated his manoeuvre the next year, and the year after that. It was a shrewd tactic, if an unhurried one. After three years, having consumed all of their food stores and been reduced to eating dogs and donkeys, the townspeople capitulated. Depending on whether we believe Kekaumenos or Skylitzes, the surrender was either a peaceful affair or it involved a sack and the deporting of entire families to Bulgaria).<sup>416</sup> Since Skylitzes tends to overstate the magnitude of politico-military events and Kekaumenos had the benefit of information passed down by his grandfather, Larissa was more than likely not completely emptied. It was certainly populous enough to be a Thematic capital as of 1006/1007.<sup>417</sup> In the same vein, Alexios I chose it – over all other towns in Thessaly – as the repository of his campaign treasury in 1082.<sup>418</sup>

The Bulgarian sack must have been a distant memory by the time of Idrisi, who describes Larissa as “a considerable town, surrounded by plantations of fig trees, vineyards, and cereal cultivations.” His use of the word ‘town’ is significant, for although he was not of Rhomanian upbringing Medieval Muslim geographers had a very specific terminology for villages and towns.<sup>419</sup> Ecclesiastically speaking, we cannot say whether Larissa lost its supremacy after 979, but it had regained by the *Notitia 3* (end of the reign of Manuel I).

Practically nothing is known about Larissa’s conquest by the Franks, suggesting that it was peaceful. The silence holds true for Thessaly as a whole; the closest thing to a battle was Leo Sgouros’ abortive stand at Thermopylae. It is possible that the Thessalians expected the Franks to be no worse masters than the *strategoi* and *praitores* of Alexios Angelos (for more information on the subject, see section VII) or Leo Sgouros, who was perfectly willing to use violence on Greek Rhomaioi to further his ambitions.<sup>420</sup>

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414 Ibid.

415 Skylitzes indicates that the siege took place during Bardas Skleros’ first rebellion (976-979). Skylitzes, 1973, p.330.

416 Kekaumenos, 1998, p.216.

417 A contemporary inscription in a church in Tao is dedicated to the *patrikios* Gregory, “strategos of Larissa and Macedonia.” Koder, 2000, pp.12-18.

418 Avramea, 1974, p.128, William of Tyre, 1961, V, lines 1-79.

419 At least in the 9th and 10th centuries. Haldon, 1997, p.112, Idrisi, 1999, p.406. Note that there were certainly tree plantations in the town in the 12th century, since John Apokafkos (in a letter to Michael Akominatos dating to 1190) states that the current year had been marked by a drought in Larissa, which had killed many trees.” John Apokafkos, 2000, p.289.

420 Thus, in 1203-1204 Sgouros burnt Lower Athens and stormed Thebes. Niketas Khoniates, 1975, pp. 609-610.

## B. Archaeology

Larissa's most extensive vestige, situated on its acropolis, is the Basilica of Agios Achillios (Appendix E, fig. 20).<sup>421</sup> The three-aisled building's dimensions and decorations clearly reflected its function. It measured 29.10 x 17.80 m., and its narthex was covered in mosaics. In addition to the tomb of St. Achillios, at the eastern end of the north aisle (fig. 5), two similar tombs and several cists were excavated in and around the church. They do not seem to have been used in the 9<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup> centuries, however. The basilica has been assigned two construction phases by the Ephorate of Antiquities of Larissa<sup>422</sup> – one in the mid-6<sup>th</sup> century and the other in the 9<sup>th</sup>. The Ephorate does not elaborate on its reasoning. In my view a 9<sup>th</sup>-10<sup>th</sup> century foundation phase is more plausible, since Agios Achillios' cult gained popularity from the 9<sup>th</sup> century onward and the saint's remains were transferred to Prespa in the 970s.<sup>423</sup>



**Figure 5.** The vault formerly containing the tomb of Agios Achillios. Gialouri, 2013, p.19.

## 2. Demetrias

421 Gialouri, 2013. Not to be confused with the basilica of the same name in Prespa.

422 Formerly the 7th Ephorate of Byzantine Antiquities.

423 Skylitzes, 1973, p.436. See also Chapter 4.III.14.

### A. History

Demetrias was initially the great port of Thessaly during the Middle Rhomaioi period. Around 897, Saracen pirates “took booty from part of Demetrias.”<sup>424</sup> Four or five years later, the Saracens returned and captured the town. This time, their aggression was attended by a general massacre, according to Kaminiates.<sup>425</sup> Since Demetrias is the first see of Larissa in the broadly contemporary *Notitia* 7 (901-907), Kaminiates may well be indulging in hyperbole. Nothing is known about the port’s fate during Tsar Symeon’s raid of Greece, but it was sacked by the Bulgarians six generations later (I shall address the event momentarily). Lastly, in the 1070s<sup>426</sup>, a motley Arab fleet attacked Demetrias and occupied the city by trickery. Despite these misfortunes, Blasios of Amorium, Kaminiates, and Kekaumenos paint a positive economic picture. Blasios, who paid a visit to Demetrias ca. 900, records that the boatswain who conveyed him was headed to the town “because of commerce which is its livelihood.”<sup>427</sup> Kaminiates portrays Demetrias as populated and thriving, “full of inhabitants and raising itself beyond the nearest large cities which are vaunting themselves.”<sup>428</sup> Kekaumenos implies that there was a market in operation when the Arabs arrived, and describes their aforementioned trickery as pretending to have goods to trade. These testimonies are reinforced by Demetrias’ episcopal status, which dates at least as far back as the *Notitia* 3 (787-800).

Was Demetrias’ portuary role eventually assumed by Almyros, given that the latter became an international emporium in the 12<sup>th</sup> century (see III.6)? Only partially, I think. While no primary source after Kekaumenos explicitly refers to Demetrias’ commercial activity, the port figured in the chrysobulls of 1082, 1126, 1147, 1187, and 1198.<sup>429</sup> In addition, it is described by Idrisi as “small, but of urban character.”<sup>430</sup>

### A. Archaeology of Magoula Pefkakia

75 m. east of the Paleochristian basilica of Demetrias (on the peninsula of Magoula Pefkakia) and sandwiched between multiple earlier and later phases, a Later-middle Roman layer was exhumed in the 1960s.<sup>431</sup> It contained forty-five pottery vessels, a fragment of a small gold sheet, a clay figurine of

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<sup>424</sup> Blasios of Amorium, 1925, p.666.

<sup>425</sup> Kaminiates, 1973, p.27, Leon Grammaticus, 1842, p.247.

<sup>426</sup> Kekaumenos, 1998, pp.122, 124, Lemerle, 1960, pp.69-70. The misfortune is said by Kekaumenos to have occurred “recently.” Since Kekaumenos wrote the *Strategikon* in the 1070s, Demetrias must have been sacked while the treatise was being written.

<sup>427</sup> Gregoire, 1929-1930, p.394.

<sup>428</sup> Kaminiates, 1973, p.27.

<sup>429</sup> Dölger, 1977, no. 1081, Tafel and Thomas, 1964, pp.113, 179, 265, Zepos J., and Zepos, P., p.469. Note too that Demetrias was a bishopric at the time of the *Notitiae* 10 and 13 (968/970-1019/1020 and end of reign of Manuel I, respectively).

<sup>430</sup> Idrisi is also our source for the existence of the Demetrias-Almyros road. Idrisi, 1999, p.409.

<sup>431</sup> Karamessini-Oikonomidou, 1966, p.249.



Athena, further pieces of clay figurines (including one of a doll), some seals and loomweights, and an earthenware table with a horse engraved in it. All these objects were accompanied by approximately fifty coins from the reigns of Justinian, Nikephoros III, Alexios I, and Manuel I. As of 2016, the coins were still being catalogued by the Ephorate of Antiquities of Magnesia.

The Athena figurine is particularly interesting. Some might question its presence in an 11<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup> century assemblage. Athena was an iconic symbol of paganism. Surely it would have been out of a place in a conservative, Christian society. But we should remember that the Medieval Romans did not systemically target pagan symbols for destruction.<sup>432</sup> Indeed, religious authorities were not fundamentally opposed to the continued existence of pagan temples. Such destructions as occurred were almost always the work of overzealous local bishops and monks or newly converted Christians seeking to prove their piety.<sup>433</sup> Moreover, public pagan statues remained a common sight in Constantinople throughout the history of the empire. They were regarded with a good deal of fear and suspicion, but also of fascination. Likewise, in the 7<sup>th</sup> century pagan statues were used to decorate the outer faces of many town walls in Anatolia.<sup>434</sup> So it is plausible that the figurine was either a piece of artwork or a toy for a child (like the accompanying doll).

## B. Finding Demetrias

Demetrias was gradually abandoned beginning in the 14<sup>th</sup> century, and its location has not been ascertained. The Hellenistic/Roman settlement, on Magoula Pefkakia, is the obvious candidate (fig. 7). But Medieval finds in that area have been meagre, save for the aforementioned Paleochristian basilica. Of the ancient sources, only Kekaumenos is helpful. He describes Demetrias as being “secured by the sea and the swamps that surround it”.<sup>435</sup> Based on his testimony, Demetrias’ location is almost certainly Pefkakia, which is west of the sea and south and east of the swamp of Bourboulethra and Alykes. But this is not the end of the story. Rescue excavations on the hill of Iolkos (fig. 6) have uncovered the remains of two baths, a basilica, fortification walls, graves, and architecture of a domestic character.<sup>436</sup>

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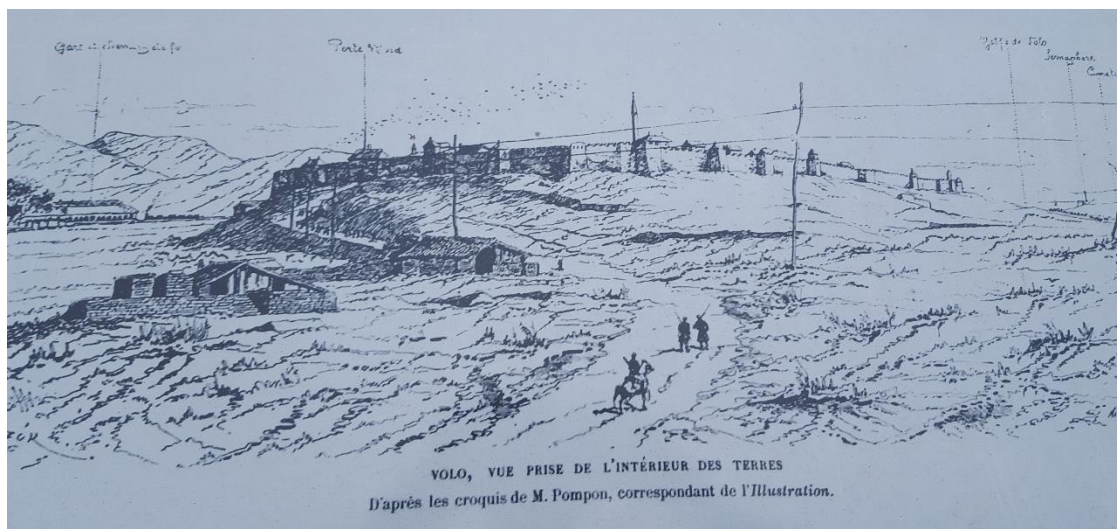
432 James, 1996, Bassett, 2004.

433 Saradi-Mendelovici, 1990.

434 It should also be noted that in Trikala, the Asclepian cult survived through the Byzantine period – and in fact endures to this day. Vallas, 1981, p.168.

435 Kekaumenos, 1998, pp.108-109.

436 The hill is located in the Palia neighbourhood of modern Volos. See fig.9 and fig.4. Today, including the walls, it stands only approximately 12 m. tall. But it stood at approximately 30 m.’s height until the early 20th century, when large quantities of its soil were removed in order to bank up Volos’ harbour. Karagiorgou, 2001, pp. 205-206, 210.



**Figure 6.** Iolkos in 1881, prior to the hill being reduced to bank up Volos' harbour. Pompon, 1881.

Most of these vestiges are apparently of late-antique date, but the graves cannot be accurately dated and the domestic remains are still being analyzed. It is therefore quite possible that both components date to the Middle Rhomanian period, the more so since Iolkos has been continuously inhabited from the Mycenaean period onward. Iolkos would have offered the appeal of being already in place in the 9<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>437</sup> Even more importantly, excavators have found a hoard of 250 copper *folles* of Alexios I on the hill, and the fortification walls were formerly part of a citadel. The latter existed as early as the reign of Justinian, but it exhibits two phases dating to the 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> centuries (respectively). Kekaumenos gives us reason to believe the layer originated in 1040, during the Bulgarian revolt of Peter Delyan. He writes that the Bulgarians, under the leadership of a veteran named Litovoes, occupied Demetrias and installed a garrison there.<sup>438</sup> In turn, Litovoes allowed himself to be surprised and overpowered by Rhomaioi reinforcements sent from Thessaloniki. Kekaumenos' words raise the possibility that Demetrias was damaged by the Bulgarians or Rhomaioi. And they are more or less corroborated by Skylitzes. According to that chronicler, the Bulgarians met the army of Hellas' *strategos* near Thebes<sup>439</sup> and gained

<sup>437</sup> Albeit perhaps in a degraded condition.

<sup>438</sup> Kekaumenos, 1998, p.108. Kekaumenos adds that Litovoes made repairs to the citadel's walls, which were in a ruinous state.

<sup>439</sup> Skylitzes, 1973, 411.54-57. Lemerle speculates that Kedrenos [whose account of the 11th century is copied word for word from Skylitzes] may be referring to Thessalian Thebes. The latter settlement is much closer to Demetrias than Boeotian Thebes. Lemerle, 1960, p.66. Lemerle's proposal strikes me as improbable. Although Thessalian Thebes had been referred to as "Thebes" since the 7th century, the Bulgarian troops who defeated the *strategos* were led by a certain Anthimos. By contrast, the soldiers who seized Demetrias were led by Litovoes. Both commanders received their positions before entering Hellas.

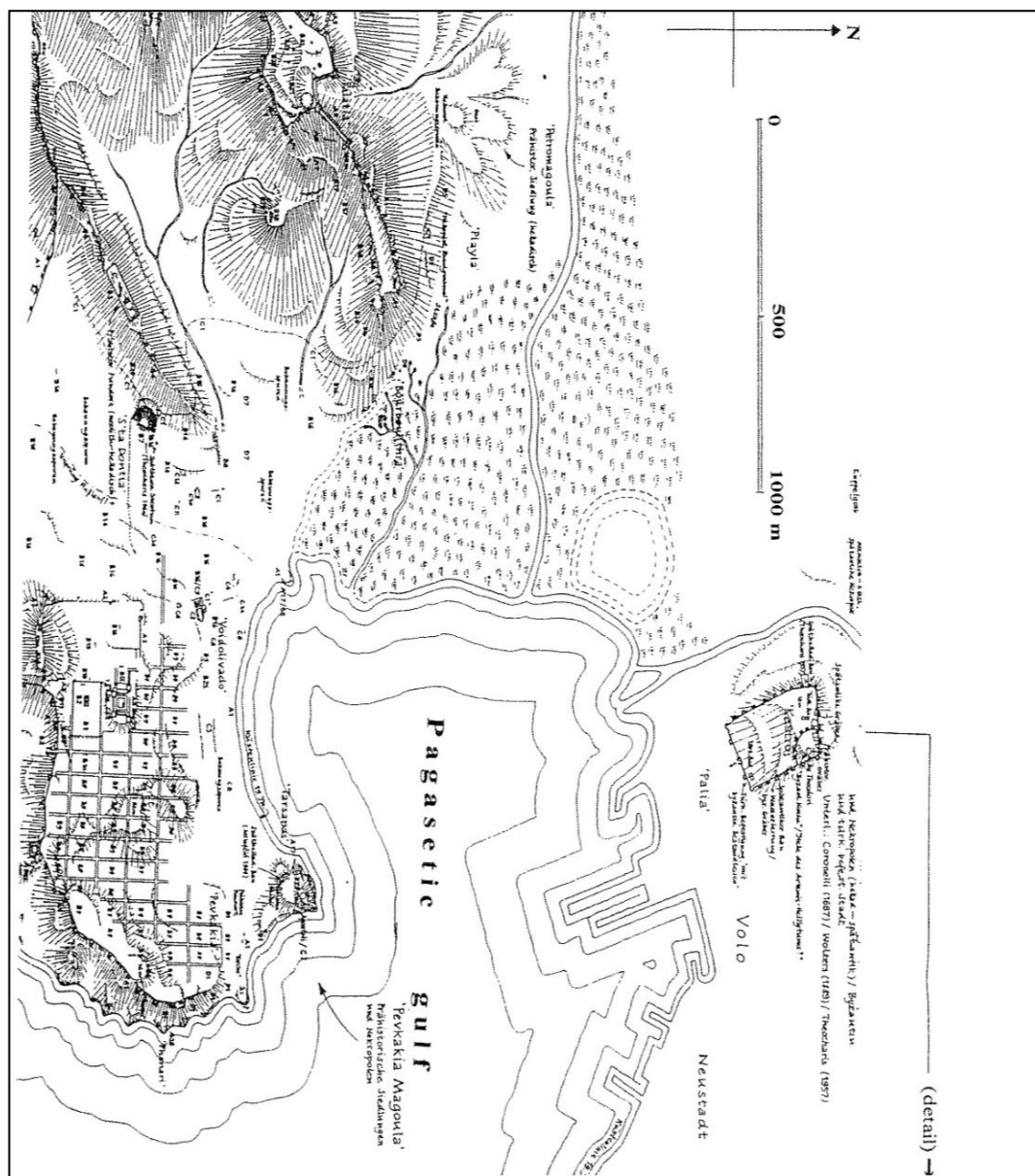


Figure 7. Reconstruction of Byzantine Demetrias and its environs. Karagiorgou, 2001, p.204. The swamp of Alykes lies outside the map to the south, at modern Nees Pagases.

a complete victory over it. Furthermore, since Kekaumenos was full-grown by 1040<sup>440</sup>, it is possible he served in the *strategos* of Hellas' army and wished to give that year's campaign its 'proper' share of attention.

Based on Skylitzes and Kekaumenos' testimonies and the finds on Iolkos, some scholars have advanced that Medieval Demetrias was split into two parts: one on Magoula Pefkakia, the other on Iolkos. The lowland site was occupied when life was peaceful, and the hilltop site served as a refuge in times of danger. While the interpretation has merit – there at least two known cases of a hilltop citadel and a

440 Kekaumenos, 1998, p.72.

lowland town coexisting <sup>441</sup> – the feasibility of crisis-prompted evacuations at Demetrias deserves scrutiny. The land route between Pefkakia and Iolkos could not exactly have been covered at a moment's notice. <sup>442</sup> It was 3.5 km. long (using the centre of Magoula Pefkakia as our departure point) and would have involved crossing Bourboulethra and the Anavros River (which has now been drained, but whose former bed is 20 m. wide southwest of Volos). Assuming a walking speed of 3.62 km/h for the elderly <sup>443</sup> and the time required for families to assemble, I would tentatively suggest that the trek from Pefkakia to Iolkos would have taken at least an hour and a half. This estimation charitably assumes the existence of functional bridges or causeways over Bourboulethra and the Anavros. Meanwhile, the maximum distance at which a ship can be spotted at sea level by the human eye, on a clear day, is roughly 4.6 km. <sup>444</sup> From a watchtower 30 m. above ground the distance rises to 24.4 km. <sup>445</sup> And the maximum speed of Medieval galleys was 2-2.5 knots (3.7-4.6 km/h) in unfavorable winds. <sup>446</sup> Thus we can gauge that in the event of a maritime attack, the townspeople would have had in excess of six hours to reach the citadel by land. To that extent, the above evacuation plan was feasible. Yet there are two other major difficulties to consider. First, the system would have been useless in the event of poor visibility, for example at night. One could object that poor visibility would have equally hindered an enemy party. But the townspeople would have been hard-pressed to resolve the second impediment: identifying enemy ships in time. Nor do I think it conceivable that they would have trusted to the natural defensibility of Magoula Pefkakia. A good half of the peninsula's shoreline is fully level and devoid of obstacles.

In light of the above reflections, I propose Iolkos was occupied throughout the Later-middle Roman period. Pefkakia, however, was abandoned in the early 9<sup>th</sup> century, until the elimination of the Emirate of Crete. Thereafter, the townspeople relocated to Pefkakia, and Iolkos was reduced strictly to a place of refuge. This would explain why Kekaumenos' description of Demetrias' geographic context corresponds to Pefkakia, and why he describes the citadel as being in disrepair. The latter area had not been intensively used in nearly eight decades, since the plummeting of piratical activity in the Aegean. Kekaumenos does remark that at the time of the ca. 1070 sack, the marketplace and some of the houses adjoined the citadel (“την πρᾶσιν σύγκολλα τοῦ τείχους” and “διὰ τῶν σύγκολλα τοῦ τείχους οἰκιῶν” <sup>447</sup>). But it is conceivable that Demetrias' population had not psychologically recovered from the sack of 1040, especially if their

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441 Both date to the 7th century. Karagiorgou, 2001, p.209.

442 I will not bother discussing the possibility of maritime evacuation, which would have presented incredible difficulties.

443 Tse, 2011.

444 Young, 2012.

445 30 m. was the former approximate height of Iolkos, which would have been the obvious place to station lookouts. International Hydrographic Bureau, 2014, A-18.

446 These figures are based on Antique Greek and Antique Roman performances, but trireme technology had hardly advanced by the Early Middle Ages. Casson, 1951.

447 Kekaumenos, 1998, pp.125, 127.

Bulgarian conquerors had proven as ruthless as they did at Thebes (see Chapter 2.III.11). In this case, the residents would understandably have been loath to return to Pefkakia.

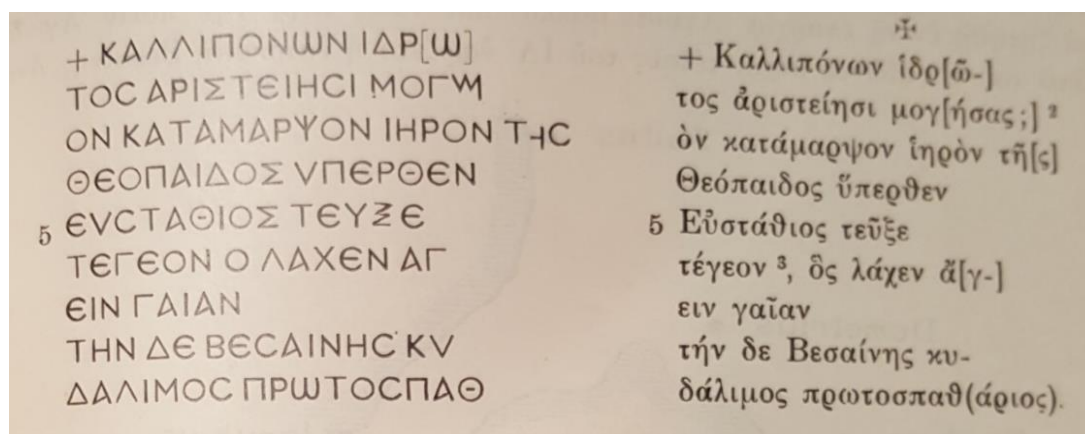
### 3. Vesaina

#### A. History

Vesaina (modern Aetolofos, Desiani in the 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries) is 28 km. northeast of Larissa. Founded in the late 10<sup>th</sup> century <sup>448</sup>, it eventually became a commercial center for the Venetians, the home of 100 Jews, and a bishopric. <sup>449</sup> It probably commanded the road leading through the Kissavos pass (see section I), since Tudela's journey from Corinth to Thessaloniki took him from Almyros to Karitsa via Vesaina. <sup>450</sup> The geographer noted that Vesaina was a day's trek from Almyros – about 60 km. away as the crow flies. If by 'trek' Tudela meant 'using a fast horse', then the trip would certainly have been doable in one day.

#### B. Archaeology

The only surviving ecclesiastical building – the Basilica of the Assumption – was the diocesan seat, as proven by the finding of a *synthronon* in the nave. In addition, in the 1930s a white marble column was found in the courtyard of a school in nearby Agias. <sup>451</sup> On one of its faces the relic bore a nine-line epigraph (fig. 8). The appearance of the engraving's letters and the morphology are somewhat



**Figure 8.** The inscription on the marble column from Agias. To the left: capital writing. To the right: lower-case writing. Giannopoulos, 1935, p.201.

<sup>448</sup> According to the Diachronic Museum of Larissa. In the 10th century it was sometimes referred to as 'Visanais.' Giannopoulos, 1933, pp.199-200.

<sup>449</sup> It is mentioned in the chrysobulls of 1082 and 1198. Pozza and Ravegnani, 1993, p.55, Zepos, J., and Zepos, P., p.469. For evidence of a bishopric, see Part B.

<sup>450</sup> Between Platamon and Katerini.

<sup>451</sup> Germanos, 1933, pp.212-214. Agias is roughly 5 km. northeast of Aetolofos.

contradictory. On one hand, the letters are entirely capitalized, which would have been aesthetically unappealing. On the other, the epigraph has a poetic character, being written in iambic pentameter. It is likely that the inconsistency reflected the rudimentary literacy level of local residents, and that capitalized words would have been easier to read than lower-case ones. The fourth and fifth lines tell us that the founder was a *protospatharios* from Vesaina named Eusthatios. We are not told what it was that Eusthatios had founded. The inscription's dating is a matter of dispute. Giannopoulos<sup>452</sup> observes that it bears similarities to an epigraph framing a relief work of the Theotokos, in the Church of the Panagia of Makrinitza (Makrinitza is approximately 5 km. northeast of Volos). The latter epigraph also follows the iambic pentametric structure, and the work it frames has been dated to the 13<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>453</sup> Conversely, Zakythinos argues for an 11<sup>th</sup> century foundation, because the prevalence of *protospatharioi* declined sharply around that time.<sup>454</sup> Zakythinos' interpretation strikes me as the more convincing of the two. For one thing, the decline of *protospatharioi* in the late 11<sup>th</sup>-early 12<sup>th</sup> century is irrefutable.<sup>455</sup> After the above interval, the title occurs only once, in the *Pseudo-Kodinos* (1347-1368). Moreover, it is preferable to avoid dating a monument on the basis of a single comparative example. This is all the truer here, since we do not know the precise nature of the marble column's erstwhile building.

Vesaina figures in the *Notitiae* 10 and 13 (968/970-1019/1020 and end of reign of Manuel I). In between the compilation of the two lists it experienced a spectacular ascension, moving from thirteenth to fourth place. Vesaina achieved this despite being rather poorly served by geology. The soil in its district suffers from a high concentration of PTE (Potentially Toxic Elements), specifically chromium. The concentration of the elements in Aetolofos hovers around 1920 (fig. 9). Chromium levels are lower in the area immediately surrounding Aetolofos, but they still number approximately 1006 mg/kg. This concentration is far in excess of the action level values set by the internationally employed Dutch List: 380 mg/kg. 'Action level values', as the name implies, require some form of corrective measures. They indicate that the functional properties of the soil for humans, plant and animal life are seriously impaired or threatened.<sup>456</sup> We can get some insight on the perils of this kind of exposure to chromium by consulting a public health statement released by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. The

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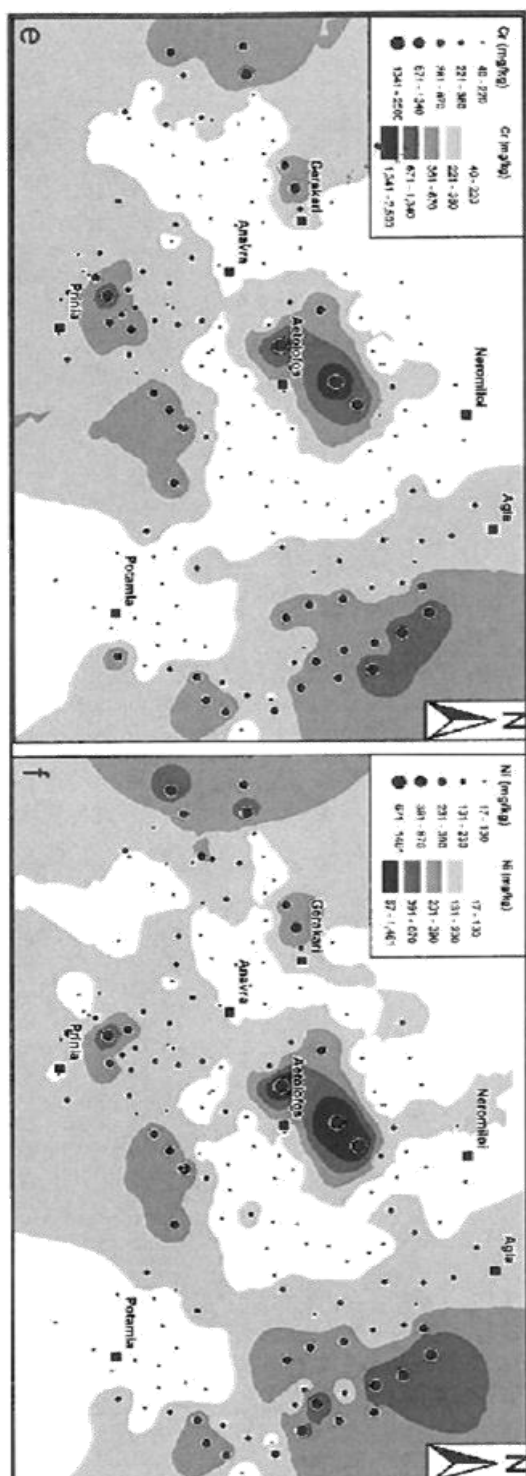
452 Giannopoulos, 1935, pp.201-202.

453 Giannopoulos, 1924, pp.237-240.

454 Zakythinos, 1951, pp.47-48.

455 Guillard, 1967, pp.99-131.

456 Lijzen et al, 2000, p.2.



**Figure 9.** Geological map showing modern concentrations of Chromium and Nickel in the Aetolofofos district. Skordas et al,

Department's research suggests that an intermediate-to-chronic-occupational exposure to chromium substantially increases risk of death due to non-cancer respiratory diseases. For example, a study of 1,212 male chromate workers [who were employed for at least 3 months in chromate plants in the United States] during the years 1937-1960 generated an O/E (Observed/Expected) mortality ratio of 2.42/1.<sup>457</sup> In other words, the observed number of deaths among the 1,212 workers was more than twice as high as the expected number of deaths (based on the age and gender-specific rates in a general population and the age and gender distribution of the study population). Equally importantly, the toxic concentrations in Vesaina's district are attributable to natural causes – e.g. to rocks that are naturally rich in chromium content.<sup>458</sup> So we can be reasonably confident that the soil was equally toxic in the Middle Byzantine period (hence why I consider fig. 9 to be relevant). One could argue that the district's soil must have been clean to attract the interest of the *protospatharios* Eustathios. But this reasoning assumes that the patron actually owned land. Besides, as noted earlier on the page, the *protospatharios* position may have been in decline during Eustathios' lifetime. So, we cannot make much of its mention. With all that said, one might find it strange that the levels of toxicity in Aetolofofos reported by the Skordas project should not

457 Wilbur et al., 2012, 3.2.1.2.

458 Skordas et al., 2010.

have attracted more attention. A meticulous search on my part through the regional newspaper *Eleutheria's* 2014-2016 articles revealed nothing amiss. I suspect that, after generations of exposure to chromium, the people of Aetolofos developed a genetic tolerance to it. After all, the case of the Argentinian village of San Antonio de los Cobres proves that it is possible to develop a genetic tolerance to arsenic. In the same vein, there is genetic evidence for high-altitude adaptation in Tibet.<sup>459</sup>

## 4. Velestinos

### A. General comments

The communication situation of Velestinos (modern Velestina, 10 km. west of Volos, Pherai on fig.3) was something of an oddity. Its geographic position indicates that it was almost certainly a stopping point on the Larissa-Almyros and the Almyros-Vesaina roads. Did the former road pass through Demetrias? Both theories are plausible, since there is a direct connection between Demetrias and Larissa (via Pherai) in *the Antonine Itinerary*<sup>460</sup> and a Papal letter of 1208 gives Thessalian Thebes as the terminus of a road originating in Velestinos.<sup>461</sup> Moreover, a 1150-1200 seal attests to the existence of a bishop of “Velestino”<sup>462</sup>, while Velestinos figures as a bishopric in the *Notitia 13* (end of reign of Manuel I).

### B. Archaeology

The remnants of an ancient road from Demetrias to Larissa have been located near Velestinos by the locals.<sup>463</sup> A lookout post on a hill outside the town reportedly belonged to the Rhomanian period, and the Temple of Pherai has yielded some Christian graves.<sup>464</sup>

## 5. Farsala

### A. History

Farsala (Pharsalon on fig.3) is mentioned in the *Notitia 3*, *7*, and *10* (787-800, 901-907, ca. 934-968/970, and 968/970-1019/1020), as well on the attendance list of the Council of 869-870.<sup>465</sup> Its fate

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<sup>459</sup> Schlebusch et al., 2013, Simonson et al., 2010, pp.72-75.

<sup>460</sup> For Pherai's status as a crossroads, see also Morgan, 2003, pp.94-95.

<sup>461</sup> Migne, 1466, No. 151.

<sup>462</sup> Cheynet and Pothitou-Campagnolo, 2012, p.330, Darrouzes, 1981, p.305. ‘Velestinos’ is derived from Veles, a major Slavic god. Vasmer, 1941, p.108.

<sup>463</sup> Avramea, 1974, p.112.

<sup>464</sup> Koder and Hild, 1976, p.133, Kirsten, 1940, p.984ff.

<sup>465</sup> Mansi, XVI, p.174.



thereafter is ambiguous: it is absent from the *Notitia 13* (end of reign of Manuel I) but is implied to have a flourishing, permanent market by the Chrysobull of 1198. Additionally, it was a stopping point on the *demosia leophoros* as of the early 12<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>466</sup>

## B. Archaeology

South of the modern town, on a lofty ridge (fig. 10), is an ancient, single-enclosure fort. Its walls, which are comparatively well preserved, feature multiple masonry designs:

- a) A mixture of rubble stonework and approximate horizontal courses (fig. 11). In both cases, we are looking at very inconsistently sized and shaped stones. There are significant inclusions of older stones and *spolia*, particularly at ground level, but no terra cotta. The gaps between the stone blocks are almost completely filled by mortar. Seen in the stretch of wall east of the north gate, on the outer face.
- b) Same as above, but with polygonal stones at the base. Seen on wall immediately west of north gate, on outer face.
- c) Rubble masonry, with stones protruding far out of the mortar. Substantial occurrences of terra-cotta. Some older stones and *spolia* in the lower level. Seen on the upper half of south gate (except for the *spolia*) and interior face of the walls segment east of north gate.
- D) Cyclopean (with a few stretches or blocks being poorly cut or widely separated from neighbouring stones, which suggests reuse). Seen on and around the lower half of south gate.
- E) Approximate ashlar courses with stones of varying shape and size. No terra-cotta. Seen on interior face of collapsed tower east of north gate.
- F) Horizontal courses of roughly dressed stones. No terra-cotta or mortar. Stones are more or less evenly shaped and sized, and protrude far out of mortar. Seen throughout much of northern and southern walls.
- G) Opus Quadratum. Seen on middle segment of southern wall and much of the wall west of the north gate.
- H) Ashlar courses, some of them incomplete. Some inclusions of rubble masonry in the upper half. Seen in the northwest corner of the fort, east of the outer enclosure.

Gialouri and Katakouta argue for the existence of two Medieval Roman phases, one in the 6<sup>th</sup> century and the other in the 13<sup>th</sup>-14<sup>th</sup>. I concur with the 6<sup>th</sup> century date, given the characteristics of the wall in

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466 Zepos, J. and Zepos, P., p.469. Guido of Pisa, 1860, p.538. See also Kekavmenos' implication that a road connected Larissa to Farsala, in Section II. Incidentally, the *Geographica* puts Pharsala after Falera. This is manifestly a mistake, since Falera has been identified with Stylida or Emirbey (in the Spercheios Valley). Pritchett, 1980, p.219.

the fort's northwest corner. However, the rubble stonework on the south gate and the wall east of the north gate compares closely to Type B masonry (see Chapter 1.II.2). It can therefore be given a mid-9<sup>th</sup> century *terminus post quem*. Also, the stretch of wall east of the north gate presents certain similarities to Type D masonry (the only major exception is that the wall is entirely devoid of terra-cotta). I would cautiously assign it a 9<sup>th</sup> century *terminus post quem*.



**Figure 10.** The hill of Farsala's citadel. Gialouri and Katakouta, 2014, p.7.



**Figure 11.** Farsala's citadel: masonry of the wall just east of the north gate, outer face.

## 6. Almyros

### A. The impact of the Italian presence

Medieval Almyros (not shown on fig.3) enters history in the 12<sup>th</sup> century. It served as one of Thessaly's main (if not only) port, and there are signs that it was a mighty, multiethnic emporium. Idrisi writes that the town was well populated, endowed with a considerable territory, and home to Christian merchants.<sup>467</sup> Benjamin of Tudela speaks of "a large maritime city", which was home to four hundred Jews.<sup>468</sup> Many of the Christian merchants mentioned by Idrisi were Italian. Set aside Tudela's *Itinerary*, which reports the presence of Venetians, Genoans, and Pisans, a series of transaction documents attests to the presence of a Venetian colony in Almyros from 1112 onward.<sup>469</sup> At least three of the documents – dating to 1150-1151 – were signed outside the Republic's colony, raising the possibility that the Venetians owned property throughout the city.<sup>470</sup> We have less information on the activities of the Genoans in Almyros. The only helpful sources are Genoa's diplomatic archives, according to which the youngest and foremost members of the colony helped defend Almyros against the Venetian retaliatory campaign of 1171. The Genoese lost a ship in the attack, for which they requested compensation from Manuel.<sup>471</sup> There was a Pisan colony too by 1153. That year, the Pope took two Pisan churches in Almyros under his protection.<sup>472</sup> And the Venetian-Pisan treaty of 1180 applied to the Thessalian town, where it was agreed that the two parties' steeples and houses should be exactly the same height.<sup>473</sup>

What made Almyros so attractive to Italian merchants? For one thing, wood for ships and certain artisanal implements.<sup>474</sup> In addition, agricultural produce is a strong possibility, given that Velestinos allegedly became the centre of a *kouratoria* ca. 1200<sup>475</sup> and there was a public road connecting Almyros to the Thessalian hinterland (see (chapter 2.I) In addition, it should be noted that Romano Mairano, the oil exporter from Thebes (see chapter 2.I) resided in Almyros in 1153-1154, Vach cheese was appreciated in 12<sup>th</sup> century Constantinople (see III.9), and there is today an iron and steel industry

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467 Idrisi, 1999, p.409.

468 Benjamin of Tudela, 1907, p.107.

469 Morozzo della Rocca and Lombardo, 1940, p.37, Lanfranchi, 1968, pp.463-470, Andreadou, 1939, p.612.

470 This situation was not unique to Almyros. Kinnamos and Choniates lament that the Venetians were introducing themselves into Roman houses and families all over the Empire, and Caffaro, describing the Pisan attack on Genoa's Constantinopolitan quarter (1162), effectively places the Greeks and Venetians on the same level. He refers to "the multitude of Venetians and Greeks living in Constantinople." Caffaro, 1890, p.67.

471 Imperiale, 1936-1942, Codex 2, p.215.

472 Müller, 1879, doc.3.

473 Müller, 1879, doc.18, p.20.

474 Sanguineti and Bertolotto, 1896-1898, no.21, Michael Akominatos, 1880, 2, p.69.

475 See Avramea, 1986, p.4. I have been not able to access to consult Avramea's work, and so cannot confirm its veracity.

at the foothills of the Pelion Mountains, (which extracts and refines 2,800 tons of metal per year). Hence, three specific attraction possibilities are Vlach cheese, oil, and iron/steel.<sup>476</sup>

Many times in the past, scholars have contended that the Italians took advantage of their trading privileges to gradually assume control over trade in Rhomania, thereby dealing the establishing players a crippling blow.<sup>477</sup> Supposedly, as a result of Alexios' short-sighted concessions to the Italian commercial republics, the latter were able to replace all the Greek merchants involved in the province-Constantinople export market and (during the 1180-1204 period) to prey on Rhomaioi shipping. The interpretation has potentially far-reaching implications for me. Throughout my main chapters I interpret the Italians' presence in a town as a benchmark of prosperity. But if the Italians sucked the wealth out of Rhomaioi merchants wherever they went, then my interpretation is largely invalid. To shed some clarity on the matter, I will draw attention to the Greek-Italian incidents which are known to have occurred in Almyros in the 12<sup>th</sup> century. I will scrutinize the activities of the Venetians, but also of the Genoans and Pisans.

The first incident was provoked by the mass arrests ordered by Manuel in 1171. In retaliation, the Venetians launched a military campaign in the Aegean, which included an attack on Almyros.<sup>478</sup> It is unknown whether Almyran civilians helped carry out the arrests (which also took place locally, although they were apparently botched). But I doubt they actively opposed them.<sup>479</sup> To defy the men implementing the order (presumably the *tzakones*<sup>480</sup>) would have entailed grave risks for the citizens in question and very little perceptible reward.

The second exception is more complicated. In September 1197 the Pisan ambassador in Constantinople was instructed to restore a certain number of the Republic's Almyran churches, hospitals, and arcades, as well as to obtain reparations from the Emperor for damage inflicted.<sup>481</sup> What was the cause of the damage? The theory of a mass confiscation, emitted by Lilie, does not carry much conviction.<sup>482</sup> If the Pisan properties had been confiscated, why would they have required significant repairs in 1197? Another possibility is that the Latin Massacre of 1182 spilled over into Almyros. But even if this theory were confirmed, even if the Pisan churches and hospitals were allowed

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476 Inc. Ibp, 2015, p.214. If the Rhomaioi were aware of the existence of the Pelion deposits, they could theoretically have produced hundreds of thousands of metal objects every year (such as the light swords of Thematic soldiers, which are estimated to have weighed 1 kg.). Haldon, 1999, Appendix: p.2.

477 McLachlan, 2004, p.117, Nicol, 1988, Herrin, 2013, pp., 114-115, Hrebk, 1988, p.18, Runciman, 1987, p.146, Laiou and Morrison, 2007, p.146.

478 Scriba et al., 1935, p.119.

479 Harris, 2009, p.125.

480 The term *tzakon* denoted, among other things, the closest Rhomanian equivalent to a police force.

481 Presumably on said churches, hospitals, and arcades. Müller, 1879, doc.64.

482 Lilie, 1984, p.189.

to wallow in disrepair for fifteen years, we should be careful of drawing economic conclusions. The perpetrator of the Latin Massacre – the Constantinopolitan mob – was not motivated solely by financial hardship. What appears to have angered it was the Westerners' perceived boorishness, greed, and arrogance, along with their infiltration of the court and the upper echelons of the army and administration.<sup>483</sup> The mob would have been more inclined to embrace these grievances than provincial people, given Constantinople's position as a centre of political power and home of Maria of Antioch. Nor is there any indisputable evidence that John and Manuel's attempts to terminate Venetian privileges (in 1122 and 1171, respectively) were motivated by concern for the welfare of Rhomaioi merchants. While it is true that the Italians competed with native merchants for the lucrative Greece-Constantinople market, the fact is that we never hear any accounts about them driving their competitors into bankruptcy, even from Khoniates (who has no love for the Latins).<sup>484</sup> Kinnamos claims that the Venetians had held the Empire in an economic vice grip since Alexios I's initial treaty with them. But he does so in an attempt to justify the mass arrests of 1171, and does not specify whether he is talking about the state, the private sector, or both.<sup>485</sup> Laiou and Morrison make the point that the Italians had the advantage of not paying the *kommerkion*. Indeed, by the 1150s the Venetians, Genoans, and Pisans were each partially or entirely exempt from the commercial tax.<sup>486</sup> This gave them a significant advantage over their native competitors, because they could afford to purchase produce from their suppliers at higher prices and could invest the 'released' money into other important expenses. Yet it does not follow that the Italians' privilege had crippling consequences on the Rhomaioi merchants, as Laiou and Morrison argue, or that native merchants would have become unnecessary. And it should be remembered that the Italians represented a great opportunity for Rhomaioi farmers and local merchants. The latter must have logically have been able to increase prices (as I noted above), production, or both. This may have given them more wealth for purchasing artisanal commodities (which in turn would have profited artisans).

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483 Niketas Khoniates, 1975, pp.204-205, William of Tyre, 1943, 22.10, Eustathios, 2000, pp.3-16. These issues were exacerbated by the Frankish regent Maria of Antioch (1180-1182), who is said to have channeled state revenues into her own purse and who – during the revolt of Maria Komnene – was willing to turn the porch of Agia Sofia into a battlefield. Khoniates, 1984, pp.133-135.

484 Khoniates, 1975, pp.97-98, p.113.

485 Kinnamos, 1976, pp.210-211.

486 Laiou and Morrison, 2007, p.146. Venice had been fully exempt since 1082. Pisa and Genoa obtained a reduction to 4 % in 1111 and 1155, respectively. Müller, 1879, doc.1, Caffaro, 1890, p.42.

To get to the point, it is unclear through what circumstances the Pisan properties in Almyros had come to experience damage by 1197. But the theory of the Latin Massacre spilling over can be safely dismissed. Furthermore, I would tentatively posit that the Almyrans' relationship with the Pisans deteriorated in the 1180s or 1190s, and that their relationship with the Genoans and Venetians was generally amicable. The Genoan and Venetian ambassadors never sought reparations for damage inflicted by the Rhomaioi, and the mass arrests of 1171 were initiated by Constantinople.

## B. Archaeology

A geographic point that should be addressed is the matter of the 'twin cities' of Almyros. The *Partitio Romaniae* and the chrysobull of 1198 refer to Almyros as "the two Almyroi."<sup>487</sup> Where might the twin settlements have been located? Giannopoulos put the location of one of them near present-day Nea Anchialos.<sup>488</sup> However, in the 1920s, the Nea Anchialos site was revealed by Sotiriou to be Thessalian Thebes.<sup>489</sup> Sotiriou himself concluded that part of the answer lay in a fortified hilltop site roughly 1 km. west of Hellenistic Halos (see fig.3 and the 'kastro' on fig. 13). Within the 'fort' – surface area approximately 4.75 hectares – the remains of sixteen buildings have been found.<sup>490</sup> They were scattered about the stronghold in a random manner. The enclosure was fortified at regular intervals by triangular towers. There were also six rectangular towers, chiefly on the western and eastern sections. One of the buildings was partially cleaned and had a trial trench dug in it, which yielded some green-glazed sherds.<sup>491</sup> We do not know the date of the fort. Our only real clues are the glazed sherds. The fact that the towers are triangular or pentagonal is not much help. Construction and repairs of triangular towers appears to have lasted from the 5<sup>th</sup> century all the way to the 14<sup>th</sup>, if not later. The same thing is true of pentagonal towers, albeit to a much more sporadic extent.<sup>492</sup> The biggest problem with Sotiriou's theory is that the fort is distant from Tsingeli – at least 10 km. southwest. It is difficult to see why it should have merited the name 'Almyros', considering there were a multitude of settlements on the Almyros and Sourpi plains) closer to the 'first' Almyros. For his part, Giannopoulos proposes two 'Almyros' candidates. One is the site of Karagats, approximately 1 km. northwest of the village of Chorostasi. At the very beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, many ruins of houses and areas of tile debris lay in Karagats, as did some

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<sup>487</sup> Carile, 1965, p.284.

<sup>488</sup> Giannopoulos, 1904, p.29

<sup>489</sup> Sotiriou, 1927-1929.

<sup>490</sup> All but two buildings consisted of only one room. The others had two or three rooms. Reinders, 1988, p.176.

<sup>491</sup> Ibid., p.177.

<sup>492</sup> For triangular towers, see Bakirtzis, N., 2010, p.361, Madgearu, 2010, p.60, Ivison, 2007, p.49, Purton, 2009, p.23. For pentagonal towers, see Foss and Winfield, 1986, pp.95-96, 165, Foss, 1979, p.113, Purton, 2009, pp.50, 67.



marble sculptures and (on the property of a N. Koroni) a 10 m. long wall. All vestiges were classified as Middle Rhomaioi by Giannopoulos.<sup>493</sup> The second contender is Tsingeli, approximately 500 m. south of the hamlet of Paralia Almirou. On this site have been identified some wharfs, houses, churches and pottery debris, two allegedly Medieval Roman walls (which concealed a 1.40 m. long breastwork made of large white blocks of marble) and the remains of a square tower. As of 2015, most of the features identified by Giannopoulos have been swallowed up by agricultural development or picked clean by *spolia* scavengers. Nevertheless, the tower is still standing (fig. 12). It appears to be very similar to Type B masonry, which dates to the 9<sup>th</sup>-11<sup>th</sup> century (see Chapter 2.III.2).



**Figure 12.** The square tower at Tsingeli. Photo given by Reinders, 2017.

Also accounted for – at least partially – are Karagats and Tsingeli's ceramic sherds. During the 1990s and early 2000s, R. Reinders located and collected more than 10,000 Antique-Medieval Roman sherds in the context of his 'Prehistoric sites at the Almiros and Sourpi plains' project.<sup>494</sup> Cataloguing and analysis of the material is in progress. Once the process is complete, we should possess a firmer idea of where the two Almyroi were located.

493 Giannopoulos, 1904, p.25.

494 Reinders, 2004. Despite its name, the project is investigating the history of the Almiros and Sourpi Plains from the Palaeolithic period to the 20th century.



Figure 13. Middle and Late Byzantine settlements on the Almyros and Sourpi Plains. Reinders, 2006, p.54.

## 7. Zitounion

### A. General comments

References and allusions to Zitounion (Lamia until ca. 800 and after 1926) are sporadic. Its bishop attended the Council of 869, Benjamin of Tudela sojourned there, and it was probably a station on the *demosia leophoros*.<sup>495</sup> Beyond that, it features in the *Notitiae* 3, 7, 9, 10, and 13, maintaining a consistently high rank (see table 1).

<sup>495</sup> Mansi, XVI, p.174, Benjamin of Tudela, 2005, p.68. Tudela refers to Zitounion as Sinon Potamo, and records that 50 Jews lived there.

Regarding the *demosia leophoros*, it crossed the Spercheios, which flows just a few kilometers south of Zitounion. In addition, the



At some point in the 900s, according to the journal *Νέος Ελληνομνημών*, the local Church of the Transfiguration was embellished with reliefs.<sup>496</sup> The church (whose construction date is unknown) is no longer visible. In 1963, a monastery was erected over its ruins.

#### A. The citadel

The castle, located in the northeast zone of modern Lamia, has a roughly triangular plan (fig. 16). For the outer wall, the north and south sections are founded on the bedrock, while the east, southeast, and west sides stand on steep slopes. The southeast section feature crenelations. There are two gates, one on the southeast and one on the northeast. They led to the lower city and Mount Othrys, respectively. The southeast gate (fig. 14), which constituted the main entrance, was framed by a semi-circular poros lintel and surrounded by relieving<sup>497</sup> brick arch. The northeast gate also has a brick arch. The most powerfully fortified element is the donjon (fig. 15). It too is crenelated and endowed with a curved poros lintel in its gate. Apart from the donjon's southern enclosure, only two intra-mural walls survive, both of them isolated.

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distance between two stations north and south of Zitounion – Farsala and Tapedon – corresponds perfectly to an itinerary which crossed the Othrys Mountains north of Zitounion. Guido of Pisa, 1860, p.537.

496 Avramea, 1974, p.143.

497 The relieving function is confirmed by the presence another brick arch on the gate's interior. See fig.7.



**Figure 15.** The donjon of Zitounion's castle. Papakonstantinou, 1994, p.23



**Figure 14.** Southeast gate of Zitounion's castle. Papakonstantinou, 1994, p.16.



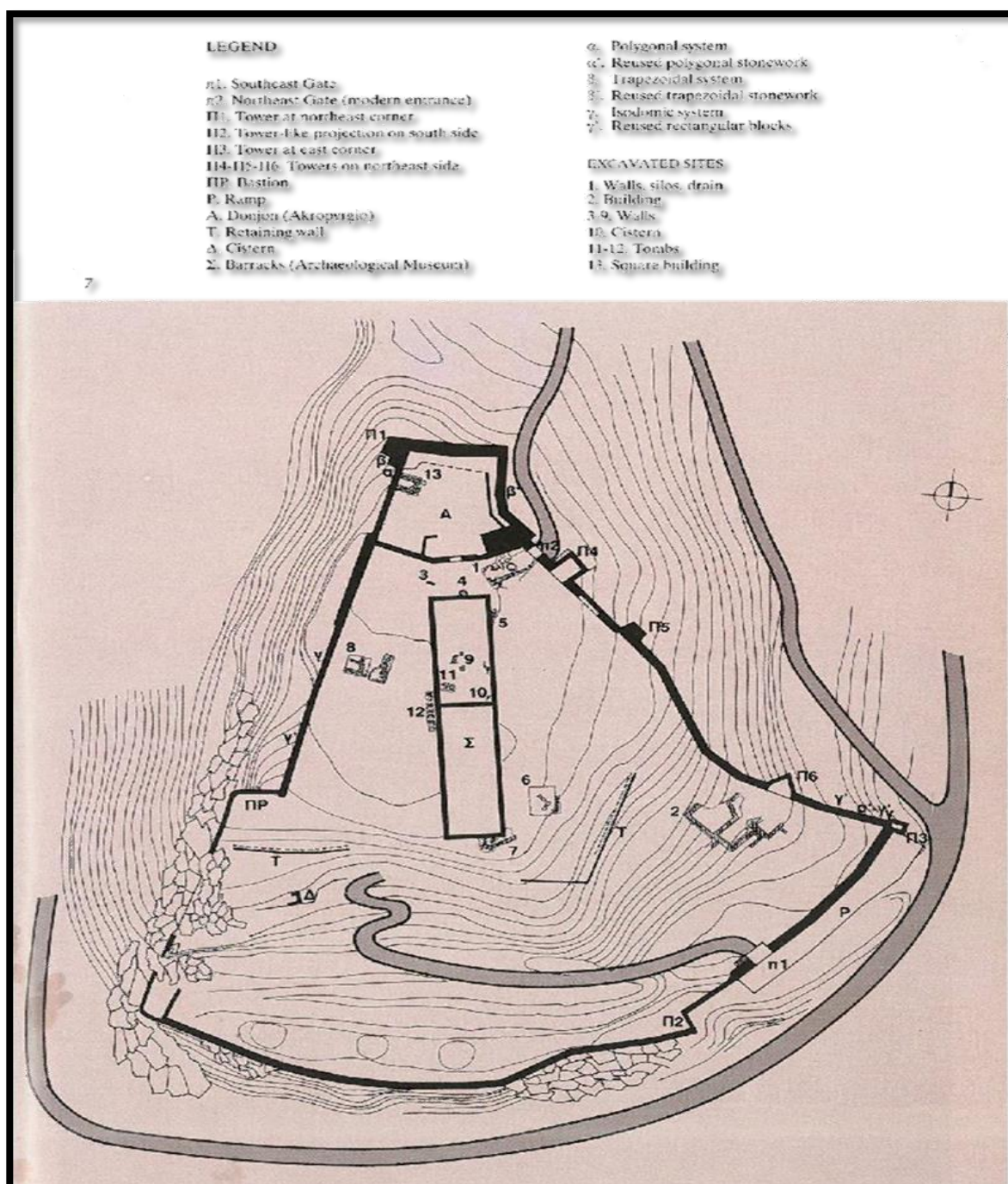
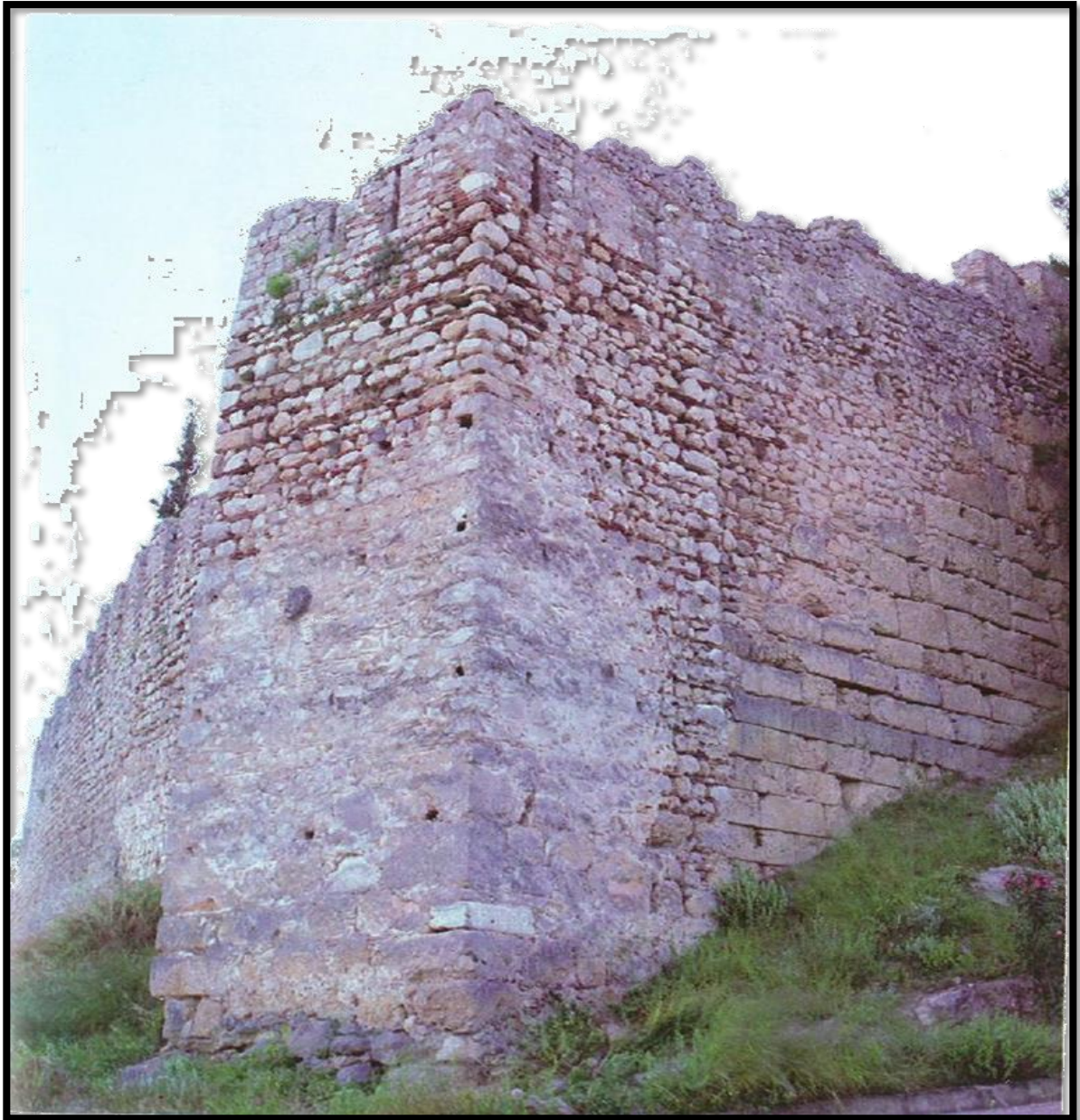


Figure 16. Probable plan of Zitounion's castle (not all elements are accounted for). Papakonstantinou, 1994, p.23.





**Figure 17.** The southeast tower of Lamia's castle. Papakonstantinou, 1994, p.23.

The preserved sections of the walls present, broadly speaking, five phases:

- a) The first, in the northwest corner of the west side, is modelled on the polygonal system.
- b) A stretch of isodomic trapezoidal masonry, at the base of the northwest tower.
- c) Trapezoidal *spolia* at the base and horizontal courses of moderately well-dressed stones courses further up. Perhaps a third of the upper courses are coated with mortar. Seen on the whole of the southeast tower (fig. 20).
- d) Courses of small, roughly-dressed stones, with tiles, bricks, and plaster in the joints. In many areas, the stonework toes the line between poorly aligned courses and rubble masonry, or crosses that line altogether. This phase is found throughout the enclosure.

In the donjon, there is at least one stretch where the terra-cotta is arranged in dividing horizontal courses.

- e) The intra-mural barracks (the archaeological museum), the outer wall of the donjon, and the eastern curtain, the latter two which possess a width of 4-5 m. By contrast, the rest of the walls are 1.35 m. thick on average.

Using Papakonstantinou's and Veikou's typologies as templates <sup>498</sup>, I arrived at the following chronological assessment: Phase A-B belonged to the 5<sup>th</sup> century B.C. Phase C is similar to Type C masonry, despite the presence of a heavy mortar coating and many rectangular-shaped stones. It therefore ought to be given a late 9<sup>th</sup>-10<sup>th</sup> century *terminus post quem*. Phase D could be seen as an early version of Type C masonry, since (for the most part) it appears to lack terra-cotta courses. Phase E is assignable to the Turkish Period. I would add that the southeast gate and the donjon's poros lintels – like the framing of the gates of Livadia and Platamon – were probably built in the 14<sup>th</sup> century.

## 8. Xiniae

Xiniae (Ezeros <sup>499</sup> after the Transition period and until 1926) is 21 km. northwest of Lamia. Its current name is derived from the former Lake Xynias, which lay 1 km. north and was drained in 1936-1942. There is no hard evidence that Xiniae constituted an urban settlement in the late 8<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup> centuries, but the fact that it was named a Frankish bishopric in 1210 points in that direction. <sup>500</sup> Koder and Hild assert there was a local Venetian presence in 1198 <sup>501</sup>, but I think they are confusing the settlement with Ezeros-on-Olympos.

## 9. Thavmakos

Thavmakos (modern Domokos, Thaumakon on fig.3) appears in the *Notitiae* 3 and 7 (787-800 and 901-907, respectively) as the fourth see of Larissa. <sup>502</sup> It more or less retains this rank in the *Notitia* 9, 10, and 13 (ca. 934-968/970, 968/970-1019/1020, and end of reign of Manuel I). This consistency is more than a little impressive, given that the number of Thessalian bishoprics practically doubles between the *Notitiae* 7 and 10. No doubt Thaumakos was assisted in this regard by commanding the *demosia leophoros*.

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<sup>498</sup> See Papakonstantinou, 1994, pp.18-20 and Chapter 2.II.2.

<sup>499</sup> Which is Slavic for 'lake.'

<sup>500</sup> Gerland, 1966, p.208.

<sup>501</sup> Koder and Hilder, 1976, p.158.

<sup>502</sup> Darrouzes, 1981, p.284.



Another possible advantageous factor has to do with the Vlachs. According to Benjamin of Tudela, there was a mountainous region in Thessaly called Wallachia, where the Vlachs had formed a completely independent state. They put fear into the hearts of the inhabitants of Zitounion, which was situated at the foot of Wallachia. From their home the Vlachs regularly descended – unchecked and unchallenged – into the plains to commit robberies and take booty.<sup>503</sup> They were also settled partly on the Thessalian lowlands by the late 11<sup>th</sup> century, since Kekaumenos states that “the Pliris...flows across the land of the Wallachians, dividing it into two” and that the Vlachs’ winter pastures lay on either side of the Pliris. The *Strategikon*’s author further mentions the presence of Vlachs in the area of Trikala.<sup>504</sup>

The immediate point I want to make is that one of Thauvmakos’ assets in the 11<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup> centuries may have been *katiki*, a type of cheese. The product is a specialty of the contemporary settlement, enjoying PDO (Protected Designation of Origin) status. And in we know that in the 12<sup>th</sup> century Vlach Cheese was appreciated by residents of Constantinople’s affluent monasteries.<sup>505</sup> Perhaps most importantly, Thauvmakos was barely 40 km. away from Zitounion<sup>506</sup>, whose proximity to “Wallachia” has been noted above.

## 10. Trikala

### A. History

Trikala, one of Middle Rhomanian Thessaly’s major crossroads (fig. 6), is ranked 12<sup>th</sup> out Larissa’s 18 sees in the *Notitia 3* (787-800). It rises to 8<sup>th</sup> place in the *Notitia 7* (901-907), and more or less maintains that rank in the *Notitiae 9, 10, and 13* (see Appendix E, Table 6). Since it lay at the doorstep of the territory of the Vlachs (see III.9), Trikala was almost certainly an outlet for that people’s pastoral produce. Idrisi heavily implies as much when he writes: “It [Trikala] is an important agrarian center.”<sup>507</sup>

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503 Benjamin of Tudela, 2005, p.68. Similarly, Niketas Khoniates states that in 1204 a Thessalian magnate held “the highland parts of Thessaly, which are now called Great Vlachia.” Arbel et al., 2012, p.96.

504 Kekaumenos, 1998, pp.32, 227. Note, too, that Vlach was still widely spoken on the north bank of the Pliris in the 1970s. Sivignon, 1975, p.324.

505 Harvey, 1989, p.172, Hesseling and Pernot, 1910, p.53, line 109-10.

506 Perhaps an 8 hour journey by horse, not taking into account the mountains that divide Domokos from Lamia. Rautman, 2006, p.147.

507 Avramea, 1974, p.134, Idrisi, 1999, pp.215-216. Note that Trikala was a market for the pastoral produce of the Pindos in the 1940s. British Intelligence Naval Division, 1945, p.84. Incidentally, Idrisi adds that Trikala contained abundant vineyards and gardens”, which confirms the prominent agricultural side of Middle Byzantine urban settlements (Chapter 1.III).

## B. Archaeology

In 1985 excavation work revealed the so-called Sanctuary of Asklepios in Trikala.<sup>508</sup> Although the sanctuary was originally a pagan monument, it was converted into a Christian building at some point. At its eastern end investigators located three semi-circular apses above a sanctuary. In the northern corner of the structure, there was apparently a double set of walls. Both were pierced by niches and connected by a pair of ceiling arches. Under the arches a large amount of debris was collected: stone blocks, pottery, and copper utensils. Chronologically, they have been divided into three phases: Late Roman, Rhomanian, and post-Rhomanian. On the basis of the debris, one might be tempted to conclude that the basilica was founded in post-Rhomanian times. But on the other hand, the three-apse arrangement was more characteristic of Middle Rhomanian architecture.<sup>509</sup> We will need to wait until the copper utensils and the pottery's dates have been narrowed down drawing any definite conclusions. Both of the arches – and all of the building's walls – were bound with lime mortar. This construction technique was used sparingly during the Middle Ages, as it had been in Antiquity.<sup>510</sup> Its presence could point to a private chapel, like Agios Grigorios Theologos of Thebes (see Chapter 2.III.1.A.1), or a generously patronized church or basilica. It is unclear whether the sanctuary was the seat of Trikala's bishop, or whether that distinction belonged to the Church of the Archangel Michael (which was probably founded by Michael III).<sup>511</sup>

# 11. Stagoi

## A. History

Stagoi (shown by a blue oval sign at the top-left corner of fig.3), was known in Antiquity as Aiginion.<sup>512</sup> It is uncertain when the Medieval name-change came into being; we first come across the designation 'Stagoi' in the *Notitia* 7 (901-907). It is equally uncertain from which language "Stagoi" derived.<sup>513</sup> The Greek noun *σταγων* (drop, one of liquid) is a plausible candidate, but so is the Slavic noun "staja" (shed or building).

Stagoi was close to the Rhomanian-Bulgarian borderland. In fact, it is described as a fortress by

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<sup>508</sup> Ioannikos, 1985, p.210.

<sup>509</sup> Krautheimer and Curcic, 1992, p.314.

<sup>510</sup> Tomlinson, 2002, p.15.

<sup>511</sup> An inscription in the diptychs of the church indicates that it was named in honor of the emperor. Ioannikos, 1985, p.211.

<sup>512</sup> Its modern name is Kalabaka.

<sup>513</sup> Vasmer, 1941, p.107.



Skylitzes, in the context of Basil II's visit (in 1018), and was under the Patriarchate of Ohrid's jurisdiction prior to Basil II's second 1020 *sigillion* (meaning that Stagoi had been captured by the Bulgarians between at some point between 976 and 1018).<sup>514</sup> After the conquest of Bulgaria Stagoi's military significance must have dwindled, though in overall economic terms I do not think this was necessarily a bad thing (see chapter 4.V).

## B. The Basilica of the Dormition

### 1. General description and exterior

The sole chronologically relevant monument in Stagoi is the Church of the Dormition of the Virgin. It is a fully intact, triple-aisled, triple-apsed construction (30 m. x 13 m.), containing a main body, a narthex, and an exonarthex. I shall look both at the exterior and the interior. Excluding the narthex and exonarthex, the roof consists of three sections (one for each aisle) which the middle section looms over its counterparts.<sup>515</sup> The southern wall incorporates numerous pieces of *spolia*, including three Late Antique cornice fragments. They are decorated with undulating vine scrolls, and one of them bears a Latin cross within its scrolls. All three pieces find parallels in *spolia* sculptures from the Church of Skripou and the *katholikon* of Lavra.<sup>516</sup>

### 2. Interior

The interior of the building is of a thoroughly heterogeneous character. It has been subjected to multiple enhancements throughout its history, during which decorative elements of all kinds – *templon* colonettes, staircases, marble icon frames, mural paintings, cornices – were added. The question is which elements can be attributed to the Middle Rhomanian period.

*Diakonikon*. The frescoes situated on the northern wall of the *diakonikon* are as good a place as any to start.<sup>517</sup> Eight saints are displayed here, including Gregory the Dialogos, Blasios, Polikarpos Smirni and Phokas. They are surrounded by patterns of intricate jewellery, a technique that was common in manuscripts, mosaics and murals of the 11<sup>th</sup>-14<sup>th</sup> centuries.<sup>518</sup> All but two of the figures are wearing the *epitrachelion* and *phelonion*, and holding gospels. The remaining two instead wear the *chlamys*. In several ways the seven figures bear an uncanny likeness to the saints in the Monastery of Daphni (which has

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<sup>514</sup> Skylitzes, 2010, p.344., Gelzer, 1893, pp.42-46. As late as the *Notitia* 9 (934-968/970), Stagoi was a Rhomanian possession.

<sup>515</sup> Sotiriou, having noticed that eastern half of the *diakonikon* was overhung by a cross-groin vault, contended that the building was originally covered with barrel vaults. But even if the side vaults did not obstruct the nave's windows, the walls are too thin (0,70 m. at most) to support vaulted roofs. Sotiriou, 1929, p.296.

<sup>516</sup> Grabar, 1963, pp.3-4.

<sup>517</sup> All the other frescoes are dated by a 16th century inscription. Sotiriou, 1929, p.305, Voyadjis and Sythiakakis-Kritsimallis, 2011, p.201.

<sup>518</sup> Sotiriou, 1929, p.304.

been dated to the last quarter of the 11<sup>th</sup> century): they have short beards, moderately proportioned eyes, and often gentle gazes.<sup>519</sup> There is a crypt within the *diakonikon*, and hidden by a north-south wall. As mentioned on the previous page, it is covered by a vault, which happens to be considerably lower than the southern aisle's roof. In the resulting space, a 12<sup>th</sup> century medallion was found during the one of the basilica's most recent restorations (fig. 18).



**Figure 18.** The 12th century medallion in the Church of the Dormition's diaconical crypt. Voyadjis and Sythiakakis-Kritsimallis, 2011, fig.18.

*Sanctuary.* 0.10 m. below the surface of the sanctuary lies another floor, covered with mosaics arranged in a geometric style. Ever since the publication of Sotiriou's pioneer work on the basilica, the general consensus has been that the floor dates to the Early Christian period. But it appears that scholars have misinterpreted Sotiriou's words. For while the latter did defend the now-common interpretation, he acknowledged that the mosaic floor had yet to be comprehensively studied.<sup>520</sup> Although the role of separating the nave from the altar is presently fulfilled by a wooden iconostasis, there is some evidence that a *templon* used to exist. First, there are two supporting octagonal colonettes with impost capitals behind the iconostasis – one at the southern end and one at the northern end. The colonette's capitals bear a strong similarity to those of the ciborium (see next paragraph). Second, the western face of the sanctuary's southern pillar possesses two marble revetment slabs. It is thought that they supported marble frames, as was the case for numerous 11<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup> century *templons*.<sup>521</sup>

<sup>519</sup> Sotiriou, *ibid.*

<sup>520</sup> Sotiriou, 1929, p.293. For Voyadjis and Sythiakakis-Kritsimallis and my own thoughts on the floor's date, see Appendix.

<sup>521</sup> Voyadjis and Sythiakakis-Kritsimallis, 2011, p.207. Examples include the church of Theotokos at Osios Loukas Monastery, the

*Nave.* Arguably the most spectacular element of the middle aisle is its ciborium (fig. 19). Made of marble and mounted on an *ambon* (with two opposite staircases), the structure comprises four columns resting on bases bearing impost capitals. The latter present a simplified form of the sculpted vine leaf patterns seen at Servia and Vatopedi.

According to M. Dennert, the form belongs to the end-of-the-11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> centuries.<sup>522</sup> As for the *ambon*, its staircases are supported by two colonettes, one of which is made of green Thessalian Conglomerate (*verde antico*). This stone was a choice material for monumental column shafts from the 6<sup>th</sup> to the 10<sup>th</sup> centuries.<sup>523</sup> The *ambon*'s other potentially relevant architectural element are discussed in appendix B.II. The arches of the nave and its main entranceway (a *tribelon*) are supported by six capital-bearing columns. Voyadjis and Sythiakakis-Kritsimallis have sensibly divided the columns into two groups.<sup>524</sup> The first group comprises the columns of the *tribelon* (fig. 20) and the southeastern column. The *tribelon*'s capitals belong to a form that is apparently considered to have been predominant in late 4<sup>th</sup>-early 5<sup>th</sup> century Greece. The second group includes the southwestern column and those of the northern side (Fig. 21). Its capitals belong to an ionic impost variation encountered on two of the Church of Skripou's capitals.<sup>525</sup> Next, looking at the nave's connection with the side aisles, the aisle separators consisted not merely of columns, pilasters, or walls, as tended to be the case in most pre-late 11<sup>th</sup> century Roman churches<sup>526</sup>, but of a combination of walls and columns.

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*katholikon* of Daphni Monastery, the church of Porta Panagia near Trikala, the church of Samarina in Androusa, near Kalamata). See Appendix for a little more detail on the sanctuary.

522 Dennert, 1997, pp.36-38.

523 It thus appears in Hagia Sophia in Constantinople, Hagia Constantinople, St.Achillios' basilica of Larissa, and the *katholikon* of Osios Loukas.

524 Voyadjis and Sythiakakis-Kritsimallis, 2011, p.201

525 Voyadjis and Sythiakakis-Kritsimallis, 2011, p.205.

526 Such as the Basilica of Servia, Agia Sophia of Ohrid, and Agios Prokopios of Prokuplje.

*Narthex.* the narthex's door is framed by recessed bands surrounded by thick moulding and a wide



Figure 19. The ciborium of the Church of the Dormition. Tourist Centre of Kalabaka, 2016.

flat band surrounded by concave moulding. It is overhung by bevelled, plaster-covered lintel (see Appendix B.II for details on its foundation date).

*Conclusion.* I would argue that the Church of the Dormition's main body and narthex were founded in the 10<sup>th</sup>-mid 11<sup>th</sup> century, judging by the wall-column

structure of the aisle

separators, the narthex's door frame, the sloping roof, and the apses and aisle. Subsequently, in the late 11<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup> centuries, there was a major improvement phase. The *diakonikon* received its current mural paintings, including the medallion in the crypt, a *templon* was added (or rebuilt), and the nave was endowed with an ambon and a ciborium. Voyadjis and Sythiakakis-Kritsimallis push for a 9<sup>th</sup> or early 10<sup>th</sup> century foundation date, on the basis of the nave's southwestern/northern column capitals and the diakonikon's three cornice fragments, the ambon's verde antico colonettes and its parapet slabs. But their case is thinly supported. While the capitals and the fragments have parallels in the Church of Skripou, the colonettes and the slabs' plausible origin dates are very broad.<sup>527</sup> To be sure, Stagoi was a diocesan centre by the time of *Notitia* 7 (901-907). But the bishop's headquarters could have been located in another building.

## 12. Poorly known settlements

The following settlements have either not been located or are very poorly documented. Apart from Lidoriki, all are defunct. They are as follows:

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<sup>527</sup> 6th-10th century and 9th-12th century, respectively.

- a) **Thessalian Thebes**, also formerly known as Phtiotic Thebes. Its ruins are found in the village of Mikrothivai, 3 km. southwest of Nea Anchialos. After a long period of prosperity, Thessalian Thebes slipped into decline in the 7<sup>th</sup> century. Koder and Hild have argued convincingly that by the Later-middle period the city was entirely deserted.<sup>528</sup> A bishop of Thebes is mentioned in the *Notitia 3* (787-800). Then there is silence. The material record is confined to two coins: one of Michael II/Theophilos (820-829), and the other of Manuel I.<sup>529</sup> This does not prove that Thebes disappeared completely, but it evidently shrank to a point where it no longer attracted the attention of any chroniclers, officials, or travelers.
- b) **Neopatras**. Neopatras was known as Ipati until the 7<sup>th</sup> century, at which it point disappears from historical sources. The origin of the name Neopatras is unclear; it bears no relation to Slavic. Perhaps Neopatras was resettled by some Patrasian immigrants. It reemerges in the *Notitia 3* (787-800). The town was still a bishopric in 867<sup>530</sup>, and was elevated to a metropolis in 900, though (like Thebes) it initially only commanded one see. Its diocese experienced a modest demographic increase in the 12<sup>th</sup> century, when the number of its sees was raised to three.<sup>531</sup>
- c) **Ezeros-in-Olympos**. Ezeros first appears in the late 9<sup>th</sup> century, when its bishop Damian signed the minutes of the Council of 879.<sup>532</sup> It is ranked third in the *Notitia 7* (901-907) and 4<sup>th</sup> in the *Notitiae 10* and *13* (968/970-1019/1020 and end of reign of Manuel I, respectively). Its last mention is in the Chrysobull of 1198. At some point afterward it was abandoned. Its remains can be seen on the slopes of Kato Olympos nature reserve, immediately southeast of Kallipefki.
- d) **Echinos** (modern Achinos). Appears in the *Notitiae 7, 9, 10, and 13*. In *De Thematibus*, it is listed a *polis* of the metropolis of Larissa.<sup>533</sup> In the *Notitia 13* Echinos' rank drops from tenth to nineteenth place.
- e) **Etera Gardiki** (Larisa Kremaste in Antiquity, modern Pelasgia). It was 35 km. east of Lamia and a valuable lookout point: it commanded a fine view of the Strait of Trikkeri. It is listed as a bishopric in Isaac Angelos' *Ordo Ecclesiasticus*.<sup>534</sup>

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528 Koder and Hild, 1976, p.271.

529 Karagiorgou, 2013, p.166.

530 It is mentioned ca. 867, in a letter by Patriarch Photios regarding the appointment of a new local bishop. Avramea, 1974, p.143, Rallis and Potlis, 1855, p.393.

531 The first see was Marmaritzana; the latter two Agia and Bela. Koder and Hild, 1976, pp.223-224.

532 Mansi, vol.17, co.376A.

533 Constantine Porphyrogennetos, 1967, p.88.

534 Gelzer, 1892, p.5.

- f) **Domenikon**. A fortress-town which probably commanded a road between Larissa and Servia-Kastoria (see Sections I and III.11). It appears as the twelfth bishopric of Larissa in the *Notitia 13* (end of reign of Manuel I).
- g) **Velas**. Ranked seventeenth in the *Notitia 13*.<sup>535</sup> It likely corresponds to modern Paraklamos, located in Epirus (roughly 40 km. northwest of Ioannina).
- h) **Letsina**. Ranked fourteenth in the *Notitia 10*.<sup>536</sup> It has been identified by P. Vasiliou with Litzas of the Pindos eparchy.<sup>537</sup>
- i) **Lidoriki**. Ranked sixth in the *Notitia 7, 9, 10*, and eighth in the *Notitia 13*. It is located in Phokis. Lidoriki was hit by an epidemic – most likely the Plague – in 1054.<sup>538</sup>
- j) **Petras**. Mentioned in John Tzetzes' *Chiliades*.<sup>539</sup> It is said to be near the sub-region of Magnesia. Not to be confused with Petria, in the modern Macedonian municipality of Skydra, or Petras-in-Olympos, which commanded one of the secondary roads between Thessaly and Macedonia.<sup>540</sup>
- k) **Mavrommati**. Ranked fifteenth in the *Notitiae 10* and *13*, and appears in the Chrysobull of 1198.
- l) **Peristeras**. Ranked eleventh in the *Notitia 10*, and fourteenth in the *Notitia 13*.
- m) **Kapoulianon**. Ranked twelfth in the *Notitia 10*.
- n) **Skopilon**. Ranked second in the *Notitia 13*.
- o) **Kapouis**. Ranked fourteenth in the *Notitia 13*.
- p) **Bodonitsa** (modern Mendenitsa). 25 km. southeast of Lamia, in the Oeti mountain range. Idrisi writes it had "markets of urban character and was prosperous."<sup>541</sup>
- q) **Gardiki** (modern Palaiogardiki). Approximately 15 km. east of Trikala, at the foot of the Chasian Mountains. It lies atop the Antique and Medieval settlements.<sup>542</sup> Vasmer traces 'Gardiki' to the Slavic word *Gordeke*, meaning "town, fortified settlement."<sup>543</sup> Gardiki's first post-6<sup>th</sup> century mention occurs in the *Taktikon* of

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535 Darrouzes, 1981, p.363.

536 Darrouzes, 1981, p.327.

537 Vasiliou, 1960.

538 Euthymios, 1962, p.195.

539 Tzetzes, 1963, p.250.

540 Koder and Hild, 1976, table 2, Tafel, 1839, p.62.

541 Idrisi, 1999, p.408.

542 According to Nikolaou Geōrgiadou, a late 19th century archaeologist who conducted a rudimentary survey. Georgiadou, 1894, p.288.

543 Gordeke itself bears a vague similarity to the Old Bulgarian term 'Gradece'. Vasmer, 1941, p.88.



Basil II (dated to 980<sup>544</sup>), where it is ranked fourth among Larissa's ten sees. It is best to dismiss the *Taktikon* of Alexios I (which writes that the settlement's configuration came into being under Leo the Wise<sup>545</sup>) since Gardiki is absent from the *Notitiae* 7 and 9 (901-907 and ca. 934-968/970, respectively). In the *Notitia* 10 (968/970-1019/1020) Gardiki now ranks fifteenth – a considerable fall, but one attributable partly to the large number of new sees in the *Notitia* 10 (see table 4). It was still very much in existence by the time of the *Notitia* 13 (end of reign of Manuel I), and possessed a agricultural wagon-making industry. In 1185 Akominatos wrote to the bishop of Gardiki asking him to send agricultural wagon-makers to Athens.<sup>546</sup>

- r) **Dion.** The first see of Larissa in the *Notitia* 3 (787-800), and a stopping point on the *demosia leophoros* in the 12<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>547</sup> It is situated in Western Macedonia.

## IV. Numismatic data

Due largely to the fragmented nature of the Ephorate system in Thessaly, and the fact that the fifty coins from Demetrias are not ready for publication (see III.2.B), I only had time to consult the numismatic record of the Ephorate of Larissa. With that said, table 4 indicates that coin usage resumed during the reign of Theophilos (829-842).<sup>548</sup> The finds are initially very limited. The number of finds per ruler does not exceed 10 until the 1070s (table 5). Thereafter, it undergoes a dramatic increase – relatively speaking. Thus, we have 2 finds for Romanos Diogenes, but 25 for Nikephoros III Botaneiates, 48 for Alexios I, 23 for John I, and 317 for Manuel I. However, sheer numbers do not tell the whole story. Most of the coins for Manuel come from two specific finds. The first one contained 229 bronze *trachea*, and the second 43 *electrum aspron trachea*. Only the second find's location is recorded (it is the *paradosi* of a certain Christodoulos Zophouli), but is clear that both were part of hoards. The issue is not that the coins had no value, or that they were (conceivably) not being used at their time of loss, but that they belonged only to two people. Subtracting them from our calculations would bring the quantity of Manuel's coins to a more

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544 Konidari, 1934, p.757.

545 Rallis and Potlis, 1855, p.482. The *Taktikon* is dated to 1081-1116.

546 Michael Akominatos, 1880, 1, p.69. Gardiki was the closest available source of wagon-makers, there being none in Athens.

Note that Benjamin of Tudela passed through a certain Gardiki. He described it as being in ruins and containing but a few Greeks and Jews. But I think he is talking about Etera Gardiki, because his next destination is Almyros, which is much closer to the above settlement than Gardiki. Benjamin of Tudela, 2005, p.69.

547 Guido of Pisa, 1860, p.536.

548 I have left out the 250 *folles* found on Magoula Pefkakia, since they are confined to a single reign.

modest 28. A further 14 *trachea* from Manuel's reign and 48 *trachea* from Isaac Angelos' reign originate from a single specific place. Most likely they are hoard material. If we subtract (probable) hoard finds from our list, we find ourselves with 62 small-number finds for the 1078-1204 period: 31 *folles* and 31 *tetartera*. This number is twice as large as its 797-1078 counterparts, but it is still not very impressive. It becomes still less impressive if we consider that post-1092 *tetartera* were of minuscule value.<sup>549</sup> The 13 Komnenian *hyperpyra* discovered in Melivoia are of vastly greater value (see table 3), but they could easily have only belonged to three or four individuals. So for the moment, we cannot seriously claim that numismatic resurgence in Thessaly was on anything resembling a broad scale.

There is another question to be asked, which will undoubtedly become pertinent in the future if more coins are found. It is posited by Morrison and Markowitz that the curved, thin shape of the *trachy* (there are 30 in my catalogue) was adopted specifically to make thin coins strong enough to resist bending and breakage.<sup>550</sup> *Trachea* were not more susceptible than *folles* and *tetartera* to bending and cracking. To put it differently, it was intended to facilitate debasement. In defense of this interpretation, *trachea* seem to have taken twice as long to properly strike as *folles*.<sup>551</sup> Did the technique work – was fracturing a rare occurrence among *trachea*? I do not know if this was the case for the Larissan specimens<sup>552</sup>, but Grierson and Hendy's *Catalogues of the Byzantine Coins*, which between them encompass all the years from 960 to 1204<sup>553</sup> do not display or mention a single class of coins featuring cracks in them.<sup>554</sup> And even though the *trachy* weighed less than the *folles* and the *tetarteron*, it would be dubious to assert that that they were less pure than their counterparts. One could even make a limited case for the contrary. If *trachea* were less desirable than the other denominations – if their frequency of discarding and loss was higher – we would expect them to constitute a majority of the Thessalian finds. Such is not the case.

On the issue of a mint in Thessaloniki or Central Greece, I have little to add to my remarks in chapter 2.III.9. Suffice it to say that the dramatic increase in Larissa's coin finds from 1078 onwards is not sufficiently compelling evidence. The coins could have been brought from Constantinople or another regional mint (such as Sardis or Pergamon).

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549 This is reflected by Fulcher of Chartre's account of the First Crusade, according to which Alexios distributed "copper coins called *tartarones*" to the Crusader rank and file. Grierson, 1982, p.219.

550 Morrison, 1975, pp.787-788, Markowitz, 2014.

551 That is to say, they required two strikes instead of one. Bendall, 1998.

552 The catalogue I used did not specify the conditions of the coins, or provide illustrations.

553 The first *trachea* were struck in the 960s. Morrison et al., 1999, p.257. For Grierson and Hendy's catalogues, see Hendy 1999, and Grierson, 1973b.

554 The only real exception concerns several variants of two classes of *histamena* from the reign of Michael VII. The silver *trachea* of Michael are also frequently broken. But the problem also applies to contemporary non-concave *miliaresia*. So it did not necessarily reflect the *trachy*'s inherent fragility.

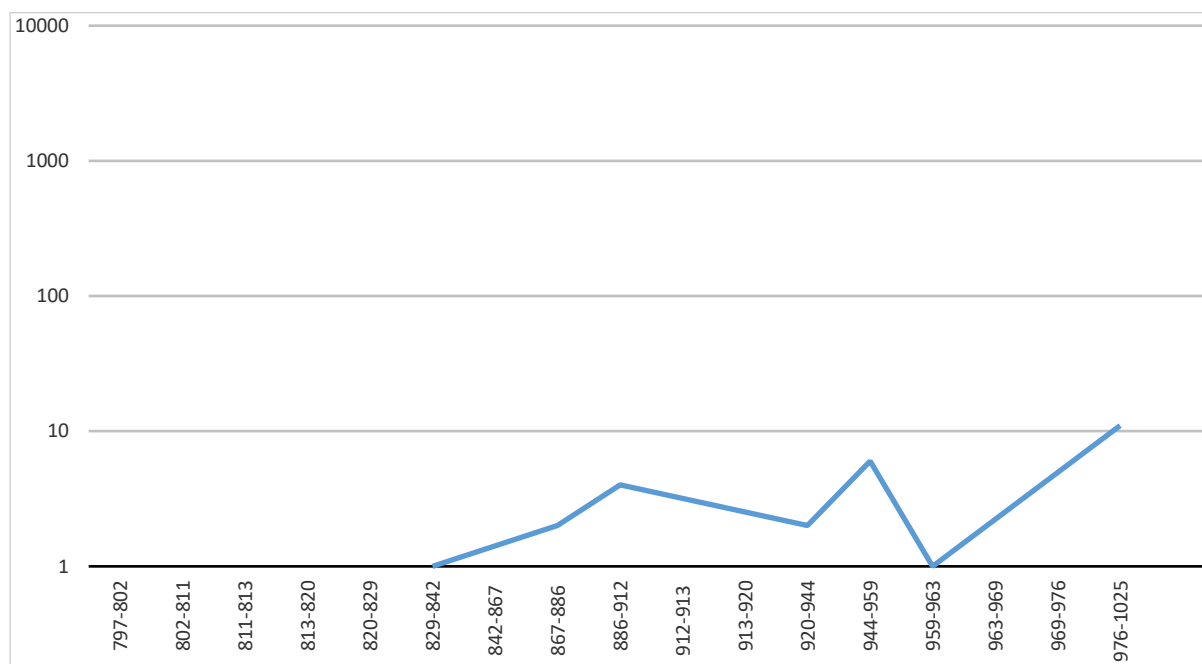


**Table 3.** Coin finds from Thessaly

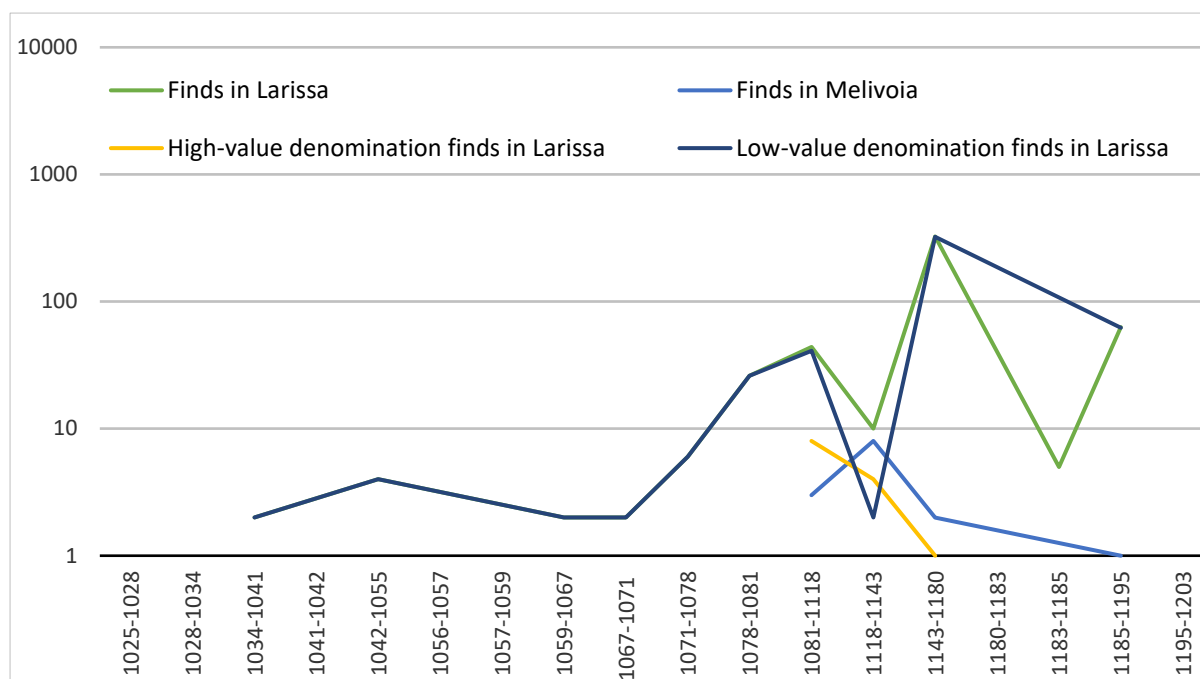
<b>Larissa, acropolis</b>	
<b>Denomination and quantity</b>	<b>Chronological period</b>
1 bronze <i>folles</i>	Constantine Porphyrogennetos
1 <i>folles</i>	Nikephoros II Phokas
3 <i>folles</i>	John Tzismikes
1 <i>folles</i>	Basil II
2 <i>tetarteron</i>	Alexios I
1 <i>folles</i>	Nikephoros Botaneiates
4 <i>tetarteron</i>	Manuel I
1 coin (?)	Middle Rhomanian
<b>Larissa, <i>Paradosi</i> of Christodoulou Zophouli</b>	
<b>Denomination and quantity</b>	<b>Chronological period</b>
43 <i>billon trachea</i>	Manuel I
48 <i>billon trachea</i>	Isaac Angelos
<b>Larissa, specific location unrecorded</b>	
229 <i>bronze trachea</i>	Manuel I
<b>Larissa, all other locations</b>	
<b>Denomination and quantity</b>	<b>Chronological period</b>
2 bronze <i>folles</i>	Basil I
1 anonymous <i>folles</i>	Leo the Wise
2 <i>folles</i>	Romanos Lekapenos
5 bronze <i>folles</i>	Constantine Porphyrogennetos
2 <i>folles</i>	Nikephoros II Phokas
10 <i>folles</i>	Basil II
2 <i>folles</i>	Michael IV
4 <i>folles</i>	Constantine Monomachos
2 <i>folles</i>	Constantine X
2 <i>folles</i>	Romanos Diogenes

1 <i>follis</i>	Nikephoros Briennios (not an emperor, but a contender for the throne in 1078)
25 <i>folles</i> (7 of them bronze).	Nikephoros III Botaneiates
17 <i>tetartera</i>	Alexios I
2 half- <i>tetartera</i>	Alexios I
20 <i>folles</i> (7 from before 1092 coinage reform)	Alexios I
8 gold <i>hyperpyron</i>	Alexios I
1 <i>trachea</i>	Alexios I
2 <i>tetarteron</i>	John I
1 half- <i>tetarteron</i>	John I
4 gold <i>hyperpyra</i>	John I
5 <i>trachea</i>	John I
2 <i>tetarteron</i>	Manuel I
27 half- <i>tetarteron</i>	Manuel I
1 gold <i>hyperpyron</i>	Manuel I
14 <i>billon trachea</i>	Manuel I
1 <i>follis</i>	Isaac Angelos
62 <i>trachea</i>	Isaac Angelos
1 anonymous <i>follis</i>	960-1028
2 anonymous <i>folles</i>	976-1030/1035
3 anonymous <i>folles</i>	1030/1035-1042
2 anonymous <i>folles</i>	970-1092
1 bronze <i>follis</i>	11 <sup>th</sup> century
2 anonymous <i>follis</i>	1042-1050
3 anonymous <i>folles</i>	1050-1060
2 anonymous <i>folles</i>	1065-1070
7 anonymous <i>folles</i>	1070-1075
11 anonymous <i>follis</i>	1075-1080
1 anonymous <i>follis</i>	Komnenian
6 anonymous <i>folles</i>	1085

1 anonymous coin (?)	1195
1 anonymous bronze <i>follis</i>	1195-1200
<b>Melivoia</b>	
<b>Denomination and quantity</b>	<b>Chronological period</b>
1 <i>follis</i>	Constantine Porphyrogennetos
3 gold <i>hyperpyron</i>	Alexios I
8 gold <i>hyperpyron</i>	John I
2 gold <i>hyperpyron</i>	Manuel I
1 copper <i>trachy</i>	Isaac Angelos
<b>Demetrias, citadel</b>	
<b>Denomination and quantity</b>	<b>Chronological period</b>
250 <i>folles</i>	Alexios I



**Table 4.** Coin finds in Larissa, 797-1025.



**Table 5.** Coin finds in Larissa and Melivoia, 1025-1203. The same conclusions as for Boeotia apply regarding the post-1118 and post-1180 declines in circulation (see chapter 2.III.9).

**Table 6.** Middle Byzantine seals from the Theme of Hellas

	Court	Private	Ecclesiastical	Administrative
8 <sup>th</sup> /9 <sup>th</sup> century				42
9 <sup>th</sup> century	1		1	7
9 <sup>th</sup> /10 <sup>th</sup> century	3			16 (1 belonging to a judge, 3 belonging to <i>kommerkiaroi</i> )
10 <sup>th</sup> century	5		5	5 (1 belonging a <i>kommerkiaroi</i> )
10 <sup>th</sup> /11 <sup>th</sup> century			1	22 (15 belonging to judges)

11 <sup>th</sup> century			1	24(21 of them belonging to judges)
11 <sup>th</sup> /12 <sup>th</sup> century				2
12 <sup>th</sup> century			1	18

## V. Sigillographic and pottery data

The chief purpose of this section will be to canvass the sigillographic record pertaining to Hellas (minus specimens donated to museums by their finders) for understandings on Thessalian society's affluence, level of monetization, and the careers and locations of its civil, ecclesiastical, military administrators. As shown in table 6, the amount of recovered seals pertaining to the Theme of Hellas rises from zero in the 7<sup>th</sup> century to 42 in the 8<sup>th</sup>/9<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>555</sup> The numbers dip sharply in the 9<sup>th</sup>-10<sup>th</sup> centuries, make a partial recovery in the 10<sup>th</sup>-11<sup>th</sup> centuries and fall slightly in the 12<sup>th</sup> century. Scrutinizing these figures reveals several noteworthy facts. First, 90 % of the seals from the first time period belong to the same man, a certain Euphemianos, imperial *protospatharios* and *strategos*. The inscriptions on his seals all read: "Lord, help your servant Euphemianos imperial protospatharios and strategos of Hellas." Quite possibly Euphemianos was installed in his functions soon after Stavrakios' campaign, and governed until the turn of the 9<sup>th</sup> century. There was certainly no rapid turnover of *strategoi* in those years, contrary to what the raw figures might suggest. Also, because the terms of most of the seal's administrators are not known, it is impossible to say if the Theme's senior positions were continuously occupied from the accession of Euphemianos onwards. But we have good reason to believe that previously they were virtually unoccupied.<sup>556</sup>

Second, the surge in seal finds of the late 9<sup>th</sup>/10<sup>th</sup> century, and late 10<sup>th</sup>/11<sup>th</sup> century arguably reflect the pressures placed on Hellas' administrators by the Bulgarian wars. Such events would surely have required Hellas' *strategoi* and their subordinates to make their authority felt. This does raise the question of why the ceaseless pirate raids from Crete (between 823 and 961) should have led to the production of only 7 administrative seals. The defence of the Aegean (apart from Evia) may have been entrusted to the Theme of the Aegean Sea, which is thought to have appeared in 843.<sup>557</sup>

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555 Zacos and Vegler, 1972, Zacos, 1984, Cheynet, 2003, Oikonomides, 1994, Herrin, 1975.

556 We know of only two Helladic administrators before Euphemianos. One was the future usurper Leontios, whom Theophanes tell us was appointed to the governorship of Hellas in 695.

557 Oikonomides, 1972b, pp. 46–47.

Third, a mere four *kommerkiarioi* seals are accounted for – three from the 9<sup>th</sup>/10<sup>th</sup> century and one from the 10<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>558</sup> Given this, and that we have six seals from the 8<sup>th</sup> century in our possession<sup>559</sup>, I would suggest that fiscal officials ceased to operate in Hellas upon the re-emergence of monetization – a process which began in the reign of Michael Rhanganbe. Once the local population could fulfil its military obligations in cash, *kommerkiarioi* were no longer required. The latter returned temporarily at the turn of the 10<sup>th</sup> century, when the latest Rhomanian-Bulgarian war resulted in a debacle for imperial forces. The sigillographic record is replete with seals from the second half of the 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> centuries, but these specimens originate almost entirely from border provinces – from theatres of war.<sup>560</sup> My theory does not account for the settlements outside Thebes and Larissa, where the economy appears to have remained exclusively based on transactions in kind. Perhaps, as Haldon implicitly argues, they only collected taxes on an irregular basis – namely during emergencies.<sup>561</sup> At the same time, *kommerkiarioi* were tasked with more than military tax collection. They worked for the *Dromos*, a department which – among other things – helped manage foreign trade.<sup>562</sup> Thus some *kommerkiarioi* were assigned to international commercial stations, such as Abydos, Drista, and Didymoteichon.<sup>563</sup> This is confirmed by a textual reference to the position of the *kommerkarios* in 899. In the 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> centuries, ‘foreign’ *kommerkiarioi* monitored the transactions of Italian merchants in Greece, as attested by their presence in all of the Rhomanian-Italian concession treaties.<sup>564</sup> After the mid-11<sup>th</sup> century they disappear from the sigillographic record, but their legacy in that domain is sparse from the beginning (possibly because their authority was more easily accepted by merchants than it was by peasants).

Fourth, from ca. 800 to the late 11<sup>th</sup> century Hellas was a separate theme from that of the Peloponnese.<sup>565</sup> The sigillographic evidence leaves no evidence on this point. During the above time interval, I believe the two Themes were only fused together when it comes to Thematic judges, whose seals consistently bear the inscription “... judge of the Peloponnesos and Hellas...” This cannot be due to low ‘Greek’ population levels in the reconquered territories. In this case one would expect both Themes to have their own judges by the mid or late 11<sup>th</sup> century. But several explanations are possible. It could be that some of the communities in Hellas had their own magistrates, rendering the Thematic officials partly unnecessary. Alternatively, the judicial prerogatives of the two Themes were combined, or the

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558 This does not include one *kommerkarios* which was shared with Hellas and the Peloponnese. Veikou, 2012, p.244.

559 Zacos and Vegler, 1972, nos. 1044, 1628, 2081, Cheynet et al., 1991, nos. 11 and 178, Zacos, 1984, no.303.

560 Dunn, 1993, pp.11-12, Oikonomides, 1986.

561 Haldon, 2016, p.230.

562 The *Dromos* was the approximate successor of the *Apotheke*, an institution that served the same role but was less efficient. Dunn, 1993b, p.19.

563 Antoniadis-Bibicou, 1963, 157-191. Oikonomides, 1972, p.313.

564 Dunn, 1993b, p.15.

565 Oikonomides and Nesbitt, 1994, no. 22.8, p.62.

position of Judge of the Peloponnese and Hellas was a largely honorific one. After all, of the 37 seal owners concerned, 24 held supplementary court positions, such as *vestes*, *vestarches*, and *protospatharios*. Or perhaps Hellas had no judges of its own, and when one was needed he was summoned from another Theme. There exists at least five sigillography-supported case of Later-middle Roman Themes lacking a particular judge – Antioch, Drougouviteia-Strymon, Kephallonia-Hellas, Kephallonia-Thessaloniki, and Kephallonia-Peloponnese.<sup>566</sup>

The preponderance of bureaucratic, judicial, and palatine seals is one of the more conspicuous features of my assemblage. Out of 136 seals, a mere 16 belong to ecclesiastical individuals. Of these 16 specimens, one (belonging to an archbishop) is only speculated to be from the late 8<sup>th</sup>/early 9<sup>th</sup> century. Private seals are entirely absent. Does this mean that Boeotia and Thessaly's elite was dominated by the bureaucracy and the military, and that merchants, courtiers, intellectuals (namely rhetoricians and panagerists) and the clergy were minor or non-existent players? Probably not. We saw in chapter 2.III.10 how a large percentage of the landowners in the Cadaster of Thebes in fact held court titles. So the absence of the latter in seal collections (and of the other classes I have just enumerated) does not necessarily constitute proof of modest income/living standards. And though merchants received little esteem from people at the top of the social pyramid<sup>567</sup>, which means it may have been effectively pointless for them to wear and use seals) it appears that seals were mostly used by people who had a professional need for them. They were not worn out of a desire for prestige or fashionability.<sup>568</sup>

To summarize, most of the conclusions I have drawn are speculative in nature. But the data does make clear that Hellas' senior administrators – particularly *strategoi* – were handling much more responsibility from the late 8<sup>th</sup> century onwards. It thus confirms the message conveyed by the *Notitia 3* (see chapter 2.II) – that in the late 8<sup>th</sup> century the map of Boeotia and Phokis was strewn with pockets of Roman urban civilization.

In the Diachronic Museum of Larissa, there were 28 sherds of Rhomanian pottery on display (not including 4 which I could not identify without taking them in my hands and 1 which came from the Later-late Roman period. Using Vroom's 2005 Field Guide, I have classified the sherds in the following way: 4 Fine Sgraffito Ware, 16 Champlevé Ware, and 3 Incised Sgraffito Ware (mid-12<sup>th</sup>-second half of 12<sup>th</sup> century, ca. late 12<sup>th</sup>-early 13<sup>th</sup> centuries, and second half of 12<sup>th</sup>-early 13<sup>th</sup> centuries, respectively). In addition, there were 2 identical tripods (of the cooking apparatus variety) for which I have not found a chronological model.

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<sup>566</sup> Veikou, 2012, p.244.

<sup>567</sup> Haldon, 2009, p.203.

<sup>568</sup> Oikonomides, 1985, pp.21-23, Oikonomides and Nesbitt, 1994, pp.61-76.

## VI. Corruption and oppression in Hellas-Peloponnese's administration

Because all my seals were found in Istanbul, they cannot furnish any clues on where Hellas-Peloponnese's governors resided. Nonetheless, Herrin (using the Acts of Lavra and Michael Akominatos) argues that the majority of the late 12<sup>th</sup> century governors governed from Constantinople.<sup>569</sup> The main cause of this trend, allegedly, was that the Komnenian dynasty increased centralization of military and fiscal resources to a dramatic extent, particularly John II. The problem is that resources were not then properly redistributed to the provinces as they should have been. The upshot was that all three sectors of the administration (ecclesiastical, military, and civilian) competed amongst themselves to meet the demands of the centre, which incited *strategoi* and *megalas doukes* to administer their provinces from Constantinople. Their deputies were left unsupervised and frequently took the opportunity to amass enormous authority and wealth. Moreover, positions were routinely purchased rather than obtained through merit.

There is undoubtedly something to be said for the idea of an unsupervised and 'misbehaving' Greek secular administration in the quarter-century before 1204. Our most relevant witness is Michael Akominatos. True, he concerns himself chiefly for the Metropolis of Athens, but the latter sphere included the Boeotian towns of Koroneia and Davlia. More, he often speaks of the Theme of Hellas' senior administrators. According to the Archbishop, during the reign of Andronikos the Helladic *praitores*, *anagrapheis*, *antipraitor* were out of control. While the *strategos* resided in the capital (wanting a more comfortable and profitable life) they were levying tolls on goods passing through the Theme and levying irregular taxation several times a year. Akominatos deemed the situation serious enough to beg a Constantinopolitan friend for help.<sup>570</sup> His remonstrations are at least partly borne out by an abortive reform drawn up by Andronikos I.<sup>571</sup> One of the reform's stipulations was that the *antipraktor*, *praitor*, *krites*, and *praktor* were to receive an official salary, for hitherto the latter officials had exploited the unsalaried nature of their posts to make vast sums of illegitimate money. The reform failed, because it required the approval of certain Constantinopolitan bureaucrats (which was not forthcoming). In the same vein, a general remission of taxes at the accession of Alexios II was apparently denied to Athens,

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<sup>569</sup> Herrin, 1975, pp.266-270, 283-284.

<sup>570</sup> Akominatos, 1880, 1, pp.65-66, no.50.

<sup>571</sup> Khoniates, 1975, p.426.



because of the interference of a Constantinopolitan *chartoularios*.<sup>572</sup> Things looked up to some extent during the reign of Isaac Angelos, whom Akominatos praises for censuring greedy and unjust tax collectors in Hellas.<sup>573</sup> But several years after Isaac's overthrow, in 1198, we find Akominatos composing a memorandum to Alexios Angelos. Its chief points were that his Metropolis' flock were being subjected to excessive taxation and made to pay for ridiculous services – like being assessed for taxation. Again, the archbishop felt compelled to seek help from several Constantinopolitan friends.<sup>574</sup> His efforts must have largely borne fruit, since in a letter dating to two years later he boasts that had "lightened, or rather eradicated, the taxes [in Athens]." <sup>575</sup>

At times Akominatos' rhetoric on his Metropolis' seat invites skepticism, for example when he laments to Isaac that Athens is too poor to present him with the gift of a golden wreath and admonishes Alexios III that Athens is in danger of becoming "a Scythian wilderness."<sup>576</sup> One suspects that he is indulging in some exaggeration in order to foster more sympathy for his flock, particularly since he clearly took his role as defender of his Metropolis (and especially Athens) seriously. But his brother's comments suggests that, generally speaking, he was not far from the truth. Khoniates infers that prior to a certain tax reform of Andronikos (which broke the back of corrupt tax collectors, at least temporarily), provincial inhabitants feared greedy tax collectors, and were apprehensive of being stripped or robbed.<sup>577</sup> He harshly criticizes Isaac Angelos for allowing his finance ministers (Theodore Kastamonites and Constantine Mesopotamites) to charge fees for receiving audiences and to sell offices to the highest bidder.<sup>578</sup> At least the emperor is credited with sometimes sending to the provinces judges chosen for their integrity, who paid the taxes they owed. Alexios III apparently had no redeeming virtues. He ordered the abolition of the sale of offices upon taking the throne, but the measure was never implemented.<sup>579</sup>

For all of Akominatos and Khoniates' dissatisfaction, there were certainly problems under Manuel I. Khoniates characterizes taxation under Manuel as oppressive and grossly inefficient, a notion corroborated by the vicissitudes of bishops and their parishioners in 12<sup>th</sup> century Greece (see Chapter 2.III.1.A) and the swiftness with which the Normans captured Kerkyra in 1147.<sup>580</sup> His description of

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572 Akominatos, 1880, I, pp.48, 54.

573 Smyrlis, 2015, p.198, Akominatos, 1880, 1, p.254.

574 Akominatos, 1880, 1, pp. 307-311, 2, pp.11-13, 25.

575 Akominatos, 1880, 2, p.107.

576 The golden wreath was a traditional coronation gift. Miller, 2014, p.54. The admonition is found at the beginning of Akominatos' memorandum to Alexios.

577 Khoniates, 1975, pp.325-326.

578 Ibid, pp.437-441, 444.

579 Khoniates, 1975, p.483. Lavros and Patmos documents tell us Alexios III initially restrained the bureau of the sea, which was deliberately misinterpreting exemptions on the *kommerkion*. But by 1197, Alexios seems to have given a free rein to the bureau. Actes de Lavra, I, nos.67-68, Patmos, II, nos.11, 56, 59, 60.

580 The fortress seems to have fallen without a siege, even though it withstood a nine month Roman-Venetian siege in 1148-1149.

Manuel's fiscal policy are indicative of a man who loved extravagance and luxury no less than Alexios II's ministers or Alexios III.<sup>581</sup> It emerges that time and again the emperor reached into the public treasury to finance costly, frivolous pursuits, such as tournaments, palace-building, banquets, and showering money on his family (although intriguingly Khoniates only sporadically draws the link between extravagance and burdensome taxation). If we equate wastefulness with corruption, then Manuel was no better than his successors. However, if we do not, there is an argument to be made that Manuel came much closer to keeping corruption within tolerable limits than Isaac or Alexios III.<sup>582</sup> In addition, I am unaware of cases of corruption during the reigns of John II and Alexios.<sup>583</sup> If we move back to before the Komnenian era, in the 11<sup>th</sup> century, we find that venality among senior courtiers, ministers, and naval commanders flourished under weak emperors, such as Romanos III and Michael VII. But it is unclear if the rot affected Hellas' bureaucrats too. Undoubtedly, there was burdensome taxation and corruption in how it was collected in the Hellas of the 1060s. In fact, Kekaumenos cites these problems as the trigger factors behind the Vlach revolt of 1066. But the Vlach movement did not involve any Rhomaioi (apart from Nikoulitzas Delphinas) even after it had met with initial success.<sup>584</sup> So it can be argued that while things were far from perfect before 1180, they were better.

So far I have drawn a distinction between Manuel and his successors. Now I will examine a phenomenon whose intensity did not change after 1180, namely the burdensome taxation implied and denounced by Akominatos and Khoniates. Was it put in place (or maintained) for the people of Hellas's own good? If the taxes were necessary to finance military operations against Sicily, Hungary, the Cumans, and the Second Bulgarian Empire – both to defeat incursions and to keep the fighting outside Rumania – and if the above objectives were achieved, then we could argue in the affirmative. The Hungarians were indeed kept at bay, though they may not ever have possessed the projection of power.<sup>585</sup> Likewise, the Cumans and Bulgarians never set foot in Western Macedonia (or the regions further south), at least not

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Kinnamos, 1976, p.76, Khoniates, 1975, p.72. Khoniates alleges that burdensome taxation prompted the islanders to welcome the Normans as deliverers.

581 For Manuel's oppressive and inefficient taxation, see Khoniates, 1975, pp.56-68, 186, 204-206, 208-209. About the chronicler's aforementioned incoherence, he devotes no less than eleven pages to criticizing the Angeloi' immoderate love of luxury and money and lavish distributions of wealth to courtiers and relatives. Khoniates, 1975, pp.444, 445, 495, 496, 513, 514, 523, 524, 528, 537, 538. Yet he only rebukes Manuel on three occasions. See Simpson, 2013, pp.151-152, Khoniates, 1975, pp.179, 198. For some of his uncritical reports on the regime's expenditure, see Khoniates, 1975, pp.96-97, Hendy, 1985, pp.222, 265, 270-1, 274.

582 Smyrlis, 2015, p.171.

583 I am discounting Zonaras' relevant *Epistome Istorion*, because its main goal seems to be undermining the legitimacy of the Rumanian system of government.

584 Michael Attaleiates, 2002, pp.147-150, 303, Skylitzes Continuatus, 1968, p.171, Kekaumenos, 1972, chapter 77. The Vlach rebels were able to capture the important fortress of Servia before concessions from the emperor pacified them.

585 In 1183, the Hungarians raided the Empire's Balkan territories. However, though they enjoyed considerable success, they did not direct their attention to Hellas.

before 1204. But in 1185 Western Macedonia was traversed from west to east by the Normans, who had landed at Dyrrachion and were on their way to Thessaloniki. The invaders apparently met no resistance. On one hand, this meant that towns on the Via Egnatia (the Normans' presumable path of approach) would have been spared the horrors of war. On the other, it meant that the Normans could have requisitioned food with impunity.

Turning to operations of a more maritime character, the government proved capable of keeping the seas clear of (independent) pirates until the reign of Isaac. It showed less capability in reacting to attacks by the Normans and Venetians. As we know, in 1147, the Normans managed a daring and successful raid against Thebes (as well as Euripos, Amfissa, Corinth, and the coast of the Peloponnese). This in itself was hardly a disgrace to Manuel and his ministers: they had had their hands full managing the passage of the Second Crusade. What is more, the Normans had attacked without a declaration of war. But it is difficult to justify the second main part of the Rhomanian response: planning and launching an invasion of Italy. The Italian campaign proved a money pit (according to Khoniates, it cost 216,000 *hyperpyra* <sup>586</sup>) and brought the Rhomaioi virtually nothing in territorial terms. Nor did it truly shield Greece from the war, since the Normans were able to plunder Almyros and Euripos in 1157. <sup>587</sup> It was only in 1158 that Constantinople revised its strategy. It made peace with the Kingdom of Sicily, a situation which held for the remainder of Manuel's reign. Unfortunately the Normans returned to offensive warfare on a large-scale in 1185. They were decisively defeated at the battles of Mosynopolis and Demetritzes, but not before overrunning and plundering Thessaly. <sup>588</sup> With regard to the Venetians, we know that they launched a retaliatory naval campaign following the mass arrests of 1171. They besieged both Euripos and Almyros. Yet the imperial government seems to have done nothing to oppose them, at least at sea.

Overall, the taxation imposed by Constantinople was clearly was not devoid of benefits. But it is difficult to say whether the gains outweighed the costs – given the army and the navy's mixed performance in protecting the emperor's subjects (especially under the Angeloi). It is equally difficult to quantify the impact that the post-1180 regimes' tolerance for corruption (and involvement in it) had on Hellas' economy. What we can do is ask ourselves whether the regimes' faults were partly the result of unfavourable politico-economic-climatic circumstances – for example, whether they had a smaller tax base to draw upon than their predecessors. We can also try to link the imperial policies to contemporary numismatic trends. In that respect, it is telling that between 1190 and 1199 the *hyperpyron: trikephalon* ratio passed from 1:3 to 1:4. During the same period the *trikephalon: stamenon*

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586 Khoniates, 1975, p.91. This sum was more than twice what Alexios IV offered to pay the Fourth Crusaders in 1203.

587 For the raid on Almyros, see Romuald of Salerno, 1935, p.241. Peace between Byzantium and Sicily was signed in 1158. Kinnamos, 1976, p.172.

588 Khoniates, 1984, p.197.

ratio passed from 3: 60 to 4: 120.<sup>589</sup> But we cannot know how badly the Theme of Hellas was affected by this devaluation until more numismatic material from Greece has been studied (see section V and chapter 2.III.9).

## VII. Dates of the *Notitia 10*

It will be noticed that I make heavy use of the *Notitiae Episcopatum* as dating indices. But it happens that one of the *Notitiae* is deeply problematic – it has been assigned many different estimated dates (usually for no obvious reason) or dismissed as essentially useless.<sup>590</sup> I am speaking of the *Notitia 10*. In this section, therefore, I will briefly explain why I have dated the *Notitia 10* in the manner I have.

There is no denying that the *Notitia 10*'s registers present serious disparities. Hence, all of the sees in Sicily (except possibly those in the modern province of Trapani) are displayed as being under Roman control, a state of affairs which predates the mid-9<sup>th</sup> century. The Archbishopric of Ohrid's sees – including Kastoria, Prespa and Heraclea-in-Pelagonia – are absent from the *Notitia*. This could reflect the operations of the final Rhomanian-Bulgarian war (976-1018), since Kastoria was almost certainly a Rhomanian possession as of 976 (see Chapter 4.III.12.A). On a related point, the six sees which were taken over by Bulgaria at some point after 976 (Veroia, Servia, Ioannina, Stagoi, Adrianople, and Bothrotos), and whose transfer to the Archbishopric of Ohrid was confirmed by one of Basil II's 1020 *sigillia*, are still under the jurisdiction of Thessaloniki.<sup>591</sup> Further south, Vesaina, which was only founded in the 10<sup>th</sup> century<sup>592</sup>, is shown as a see of Larissa. Turning to Asia, Metilene and Idrus are listed as a bishopric and a metropolis (respectively), changes that did not take place until ca. 934 and 968-970,<sup>593</sup> and Petras (shown here as a bishopric of Smyrna) only received its position in 1166. Lastly, the Metropolis of Crete is superior in rank to Adrianople, though this was not the case until the Synod of 1027. If we look at the overall picture yielded by the above elements, I think we can make a reasonable case for dating the majority of the *Notitia 10*'s registers to 968/970-1019/1020.

## VIII. Conclusions

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589 Papadopoulou, 2015, p.191. The *hyperpyron*, *trikephalon*, and *stamenon* were gold, silver, and copper coins (respectively).

590 Notably by Darrouzes. Darrouzes, 1981, pp. 116-117.

591 Gelzer, 1893, pp.42-46. The Archbishopric of Ohrid was a Patriarchate until 1018. The sees it had controlled before 976 seem to have included Kastoria, Prespa and Heraclea-in-Pelagonia.

592 When it was founded, according to the Diachronic Museum of Larissa.

593 It became a metropolis in 968-970. Peine, 1886, p.537.

The first sign of economic recovery are impressive. The *Notitia 3* (787-800) lists seventeen Thessalian bishoprics, whereas the *Notitia 2* denoted zero (ca. 700-787). The increasing presence of the secular administration and the broadly concurrent disappearance of *kommerkiarioi* seals has been noted in Chapter 2 (III.9 and V) and Section VI.<sup>594</sup> Then comes a plunge: in the 9<sup>th</sup> century seven of the aforementioned bishoprics permanently disappear from the sources.

Unlike in Boeotia, however, the decline is (to a large extent) reversed more quickly. In the Council of 869 and the *Notitia 7* (901-907), five new bishoprics<sup>595</sup> swelled the Archbishopric of Larissa's ranks. Despite the Bulgarian incursions of ca. 918, 976-979, and 996-997, a third round of expansion had taken place by the time of the *Notitia 10* (date: 968/970-1019/1020), in which appear not fifteen but eighteen bishoprics. The spatial distribution of the settlements in existence by the early and late 10<sup>th</sup> century may suggest a climate of insecurity (see Appendix E, fig. 20, and section I). But equally conceivably, the settlers concerned could have been seeking to tap into the Pindos and Kissavos' arborifeal potential (see section II).

The third phase essentially lasted until 1204. The boost in numismatic circulation in Larissa (which began in the 1070s) should not be given much importance, because (excluding hoard material) the coins are all low-value denominations (*folles* and *tetartera*). And, in my opinion, there are simply too few of them. What is noteworthy – looking at the late 11<sup>th</sup> century and beyond – is the long-term installation of the Venetians in Farsala, Ezeros-on-Olympos, Almyros, and Demetrias. It is around this time – in the 1070s – that portuary activity in Demetrias ceases. But this did not really matter, since Demetrias was adequately replaced by Almyros. Indeed, the latter settlement was suited for the job: it met all four of the Rhomanian criteria for building ports (see chapter 4.10.A) and seems to have been connected by *demosiai hodoi* to Larissa and Vesaina (see section II, IV.3, and figs. 3-4). Through these channels goods and travellers (such as Tudela and Idrisi) could flow freely and make their way to the four corners of Thessaly (not to mention neighbouring Epirus, Western Macedonia and Boeotia). Indeed, there is reason to think that Velestinos, which became a bishopric by the time of the *Notitia 13* (end of reign of Manuel I) owed its revival in no small part to its position as a junction between Larissa, Vesaina, and Almyros (see IV.4).

It is tempting to view the role of the Vlachs in the third phase as negative, since Benjamin of Tudela describes the ones living outside Zitounion as lawless brigands.<sup>596</sup> But for all we know the Vlachs Tudela spoke to were having a laugh at his expense. They realized he was a foreigner and made the most of the opportunity. Assuming that the nomadic people were not of an inherently violent

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594 This strongly suggests that, just like in Boeotia, Thessalians had commuted their military obligations from goods to cash.

595 One at the Council and four in the *Notitia 7*.

596 Benjamin of Tudela, 2005, p.68.

disposition <sup>597</sup>, they would potentially have represented a lucrative market for local Rhomaioi merchants and agriculturalists, not least because dairy animals were expensive to purchase and feed. That said, some might argue that the Thessalian Vlachs were not fully nomadic, because the ringleaders of the revolt of 1066 resided in Larissa. But the ringleaders sent their wives and children to "Bulgaria" before the revolt for safekeeping, suggesting that they only lived in Larissa for part of the year. <sup>598</sup>

Overall, it is not unreasonable to think that a Thessalian living on the eve of the Fourth Crusade and seeking to enter the imperial court would have been better received than Niketas Magistros (ca.870-946). Niketas was an ambitious Larissan-born man who eventually became *magistros* – one of the highest Rhomanian court ranks then in existence. Nevertheless, he was mocked by courtiers for having a Slavic (e.g. barbarian) look. Likewise, in the 990s the poet John Geometres implies that the people of Hellas [the geographic area] were barbarians in speech and manner: “having seen Hellas, not the land of barbarians, you have become barbarised in your speech as well as your manners.” <sup>599</sup> He would probably have been more measured in his words in 1204. By then, in terms of agricultural productiveness, communication infrastructure, openness to the outside world, and ecclesiastical maturity, and by the standards of a ‘typical’ Medieval Roman province, Thessaly did not deserve to be described as barbaric.

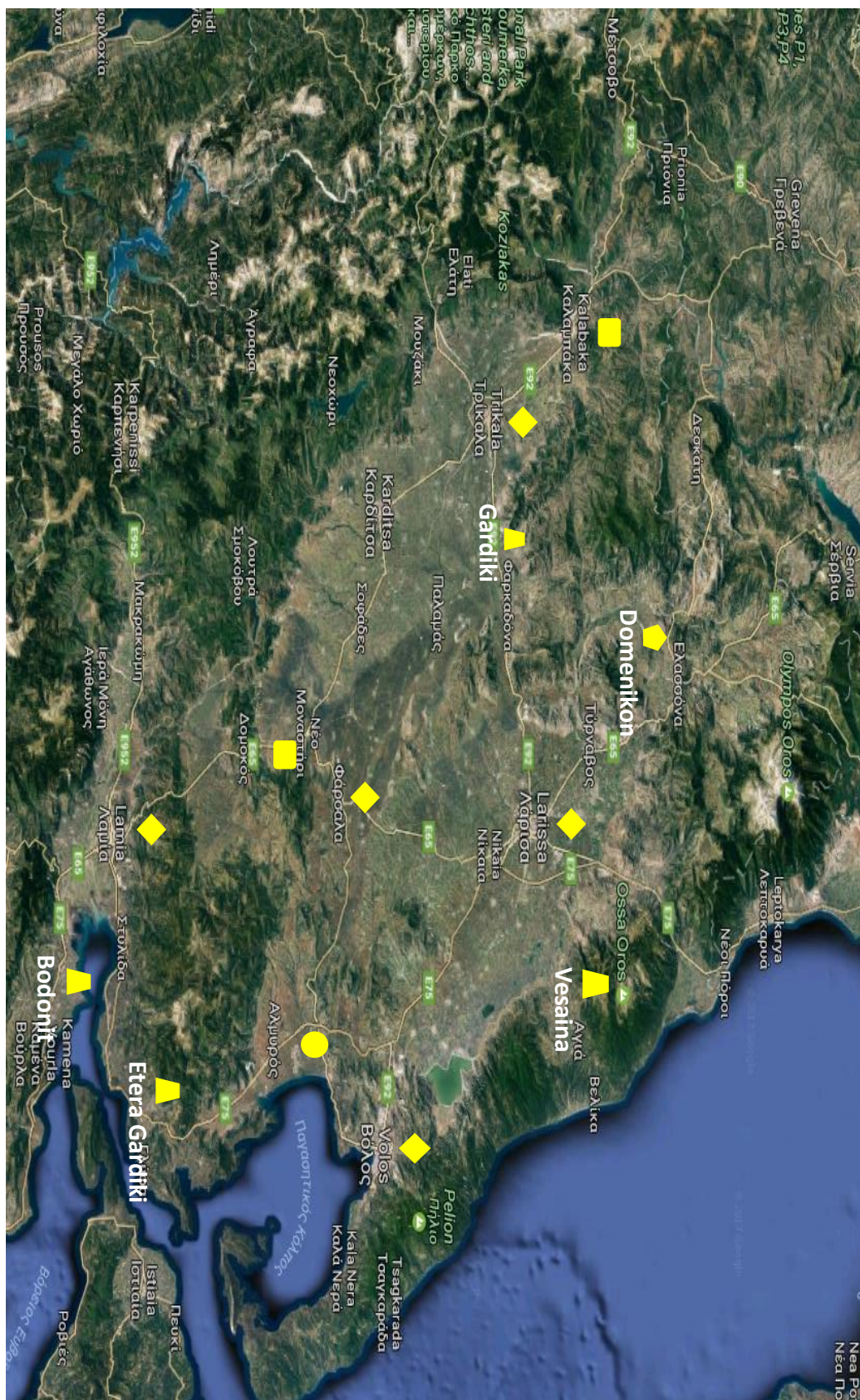
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597 The Vlachs did revolt in 1066, but only out of a desire for lower taxes.

598 Kekaumenos, 1998, chapter 12.3.

599 Anagnostakis, 2013, pp.21, 25.





**Figure 19.** Distribution of urban settlements in Thessaly during the period 783-1204.

**Figure 20. Chronology for fig. 19**

Settlements in existence by late 8th century



Settlements in existence by early 10th century



Settlements in existence by late 10th century



Settlements in existence by early 12th century



Settlements in existence by late 12th century





## Chapter 4. Western Macedonia: on the northern borderland

### I. General comments, physical geography, and infrastructure

In Chapter 4 I will be making extensive use of *The Byzantine Settlements in Macedonia through the Archaeological Data (4th - 15th Centuries)* and *Η βασιλική του Αγίου Αχιλλείου στη Μικρή Πρέσπα*, and must extend my thanks to their authors, Karagianni and Moutsopoulos. As the first (and thus far only) archaeology-based monograph on urban settlements in Greek Macedonia – Karagiannis' work has proven invaluable to me. I had hoped to make similarly extensive use of Theodorides' book *Ιστορία της Μακεδονίας κατά τους Μέσους Χρόνους 285-1354*. But despite what its title suggests, the book focuses exclusively on Central/Eastern Macedonia and FYROM (Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia). The settlements of Western Macedonia do not receive so much as an allusion. Fortunately there were other physical geography treatises at my disposal. The most comprehensive and relevant ones belong to Hammond and Struck. Hammond's work does present some inconveniences. It lacks a proper topographical map, and the locations of mineral deposits are only sketchily defined. Scholars unfamiliar with Antique Macedon may find it difficult to get their bearings, since places are usually referred to by their Antique names. But in terms of the composition of the ground's soil and rocks, the crops cultivated today on the plains, vegetation, and mineralogy, Hammond's book suits my purposes fairly well. Struck's treatise, though it could be better structured, describes the agricultural potential of several geographic spaces on and near the Western Plain. Its most helpful contribution are three maps depicting the evolution of Western Macedonia's coastline from 500 B.C. to 500 A.D. These illustrations make it easier for readers to understand the outline of the *demosia leophoros* and raises the possibility that a road existed between the Axios and the Aliakmon in Rhomanian times (see figs. 3-5). As for Moutsopoulos, the book he has produced is remarkably systematic, varied in the kinds of archaeological evidence they use, and sensitive to the wider architectural background of Agios Achillios. In III.12, I will endeavour to add some of my own conclusions to Moutsopoulos' work. The organization of Chapter 4 will be identical to the previous one: the settlements will be addressed more or less in clockwise order.

There are, broadly speaking, four topographical unit to Western Macedonia. The first element (mentioned in Chapter 1.I) is the Western Plain of Thessaloniki. It consists chiefly of flat, solid, cultivable terrain, except for the delta of the Aliakmon River. Until the 1930s, it was broken up by Lake Giannitsa (see fig.20). Both in Late Antiquity and the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the lake was described as being (either partially or completely) encircled by marshland.<sup>600</sup> It is likely that it was a breeding ground for malaria, since its perimeters were almost wholly devoid of any urban centers during my period of study (as was the case for Lake Copais). Three great waterways cut through the plain, reaching deep inland: the Aliakmon, the Loudias, and the Axios (the latter forms the eastern edge of my study area). They seem to have been of considerable depth in the past. This is easy enough to explain. The mountains where the rivers takes their sources is formed of crystalline rocks, which can hold considerable water.<sup>601</sup> In addition, the mountains' slopes are provided with an ample soil layer and dense forestation. Ground altitude on the Western Plain ranges from 36 m. to 138 m. To the north of the Plain lies the smaller Moglena Basin, on which I shall say more in III.2. The two spaces are linked by a 500 m. wide, low-level pass<sup>602</sup>, and the Moglena (or Moglenitsa) River. The third unit comprises all the land west of the Voras and the Vermion, and is characterized by thickly wooded and shrubbed mountains and rolling hills. This configuration is interrupted by a few narrow pockets of flat terrain, although the latters' altitude is high (it ranges from 606 m. to 710 m.). Lastly, we have the Pierian Plain. It is separated from the Western Plain by the Pierian Mountains, and extends all the way to the Vale of Tempe.

Again, we have information only on the region's intra and inter-regional roads. There are five 'long' routes to speak of, two of which were public avenues (figs. 1-2). The first one, the Via Egnatia, formed a mostly straight line from the Axios to Edessa. Between the Axios and Edessa branch roads ran to the Pass of Demir Kapi (and thenceforth to Nis and Belgrade) and to Moglena, respectively.<sup>603</sup> Beyond Edessa the Via Egnatia went through a gap in Mount Vermion, skirted Lake Vegoritida (Medieval Ostrovo) and crossed the Plain of Pelagonia, leaving Western Macedonia at modern Niki. In Pelagonia a loop route branched off, via Kastoria, Nestorio, and the Voidomatis Valley (near modern Konitsa). It rejoined the Via Egnatia at Doliana (in modern Albania). Bohemund's Crusader contingent made use of it in the winter of 1096, although it is unclear if the Nestorio-Voidhomatis segment consisted of a proper road or a foot/horse track.<sup>604</sup>

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600 Bintliff, 1976, p.250, Tozer, 1873, p.155, Leake, 1835b, p.287. Note too, that the former bed of Giannitsa was very boggy underfoot more than forty years after its reclamation. Bintliff, *ibid*, p.244.

601 Hammond, 1972, p.36, Jaranoff, 1931, p.13.

602 Through which the Mavrovouni offshoot of the Thessaloniki-Edessa highway now runs.

603 Constantine Porphyrogenetos, 1993, p.42.15-18. For evidence of the road to Moglena, we may note that in 1082 Bohemund reached Moglena via Edessa. Anna Komnene, 1928, p.125.

604 Hill, 1962, book I, pp.7-8.

Crossing the Via Egnatia and its offshoots on horseback would have been an arduous proposition. Nowadays, snow in the Thessalian portion of the Pindus Mountains (specifically in the Katara Pass) frequently reaches 2 m. in depth.<sup>605</sup> There is at least one good indicator that conditions were identical in the Middle Ages, in the Via's mountain passes. In 1148, Manuel attempted to sail from Thessaloniki to Kerkyra (Corfu) by ship. Because it was late in the year, the sea route was not practicable. Despite his desire to take command of the siege on Kerkyra, the emperor apparently did not consider the land option. Instead he overwintered in a village near Veroia. Evidently, crossing the Via would have been too hazardous.<sup>606</sup>

The third road, already discussed in chapters 2.I and 3.I, was the *demosia leophoros*.<sup>607</sup> Going by the 4<sup>th</sup> century Peutinger Table, it shared the trajectory of the Via Egnatia until Pella. Between Pella and the modern town of Kyrros it broke away, heading to Veroia, Acerdos (modern Vergina), Aloros (between the Aliakmon and Pydna/Kitros), and Kitros.<sup>608</sup> Thereafter it veered inland, to Katerini and Dium (modern Dion).<sup>609</sup> The road passed through another settlement 19 km. south of Dion – most likely Platamon – after which it went southwest, to the Vale of Tempe and Thessaly. The road's construction material differed from the Via Egnatia for at least part of its length. An excavation by Marki at Kitros has shown that in the 10<sup>th</sup> century, the road's top layer consisted not of paving stones or cobbles, but of crushed bricks and sand.<sup>610</sup> In principle, the two types of material are of sensibly equal quality. Crushed bricks are more easily displaced, but provide a non-slippery surface. At Katerini, a most branched off the *demosia leophoros* and led to the secondary pass of Petra, between Macedonia and Thessaly (fig.1). In the early

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605 Simou, 2016.

606 Kinnamos, 1976, p.79. Though we are not explicitly told Manuel sought to embark in Thessaloniki, the location of his winterstopover strongly suggests he did. This is not to say that snowed-up passes were impassable. In 1097 Bohemund's Crusader contingent made it through the Vermion Mountains in winter. But their progress was slow. They left Kastoria several days after Christmas, and reached the Axios on 18 February. William of Tyre, 1986, p.177. That is an interval of approximately 52 days. By contrast, if we divide the distance between Kastoria and the Axios (161 km, using the modern highway) by a conservative speed for an ox-driven cart (3.2 km/h), and allow for 10 hours' rest every day, we get roughly 70 hours. That is how long the journey will plausibly take in good weather and on level roads. Clearly, the wintry conditions presented enormous difficulties to the Crusaders.

607 Miller, 1888, Pritchett, 1965, p.209.

608 The highly circuitous nature of the *demosia leophoros* between Pella and Aloros (see fig. 36) can be explained by the fact that the road was probably laid in the Hellenistic Period or earlier. If Struck's reconstruction of Western Macedonia's coastline is to be believed (fig.38) it was unfeasible in the 1st century B.C. to construct a road running along the coast of the Thermaic Gulf (between Thessaloniki and Kitros).

609 Pritchett, 1980, pp.213-214.

610 Marki, 1999, p.40.



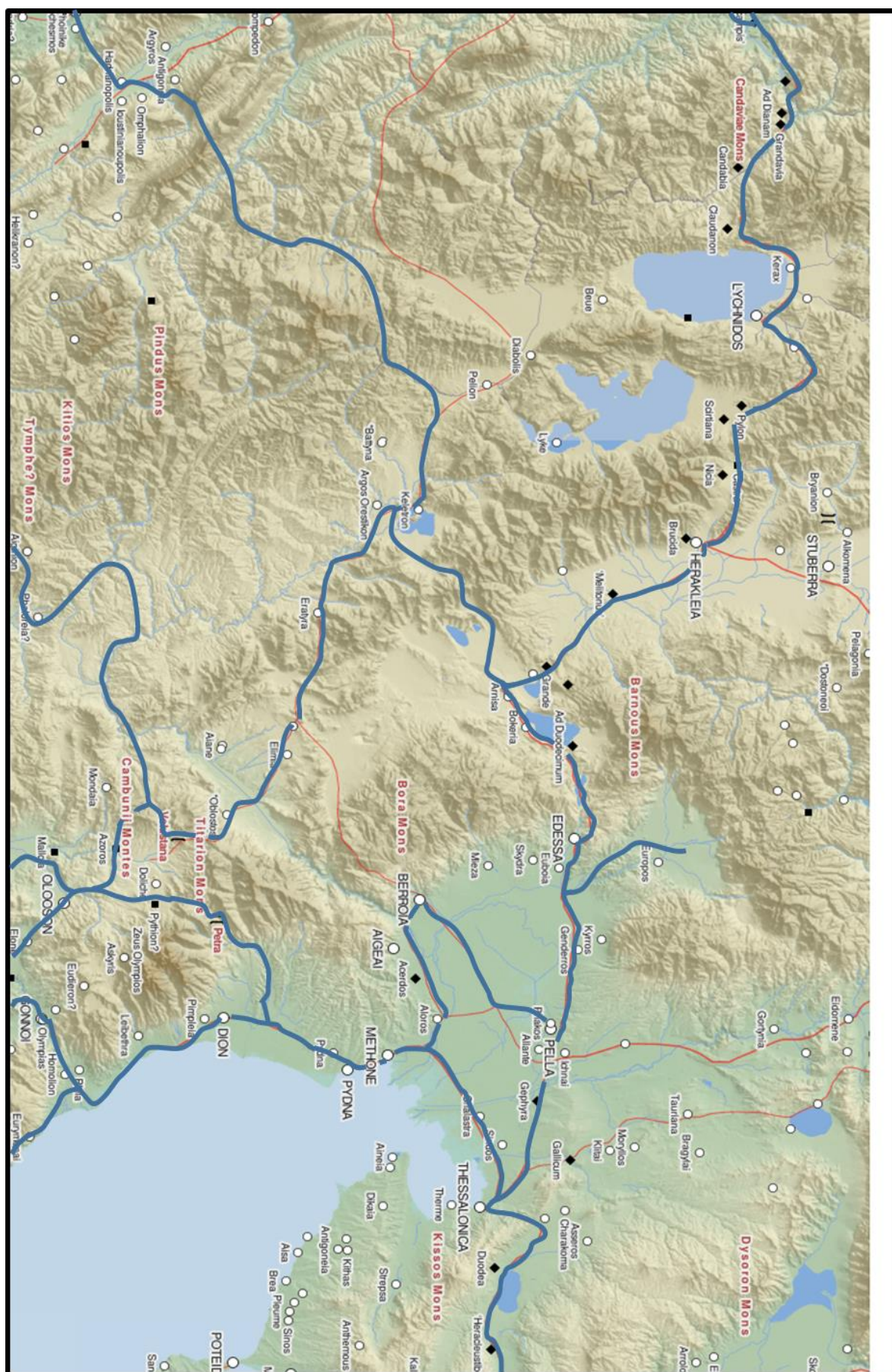


Figure 1. Possible road and path network in Western Macedonia during the period 783-1204. Background courtesy of Åhlfeldt, 2015.



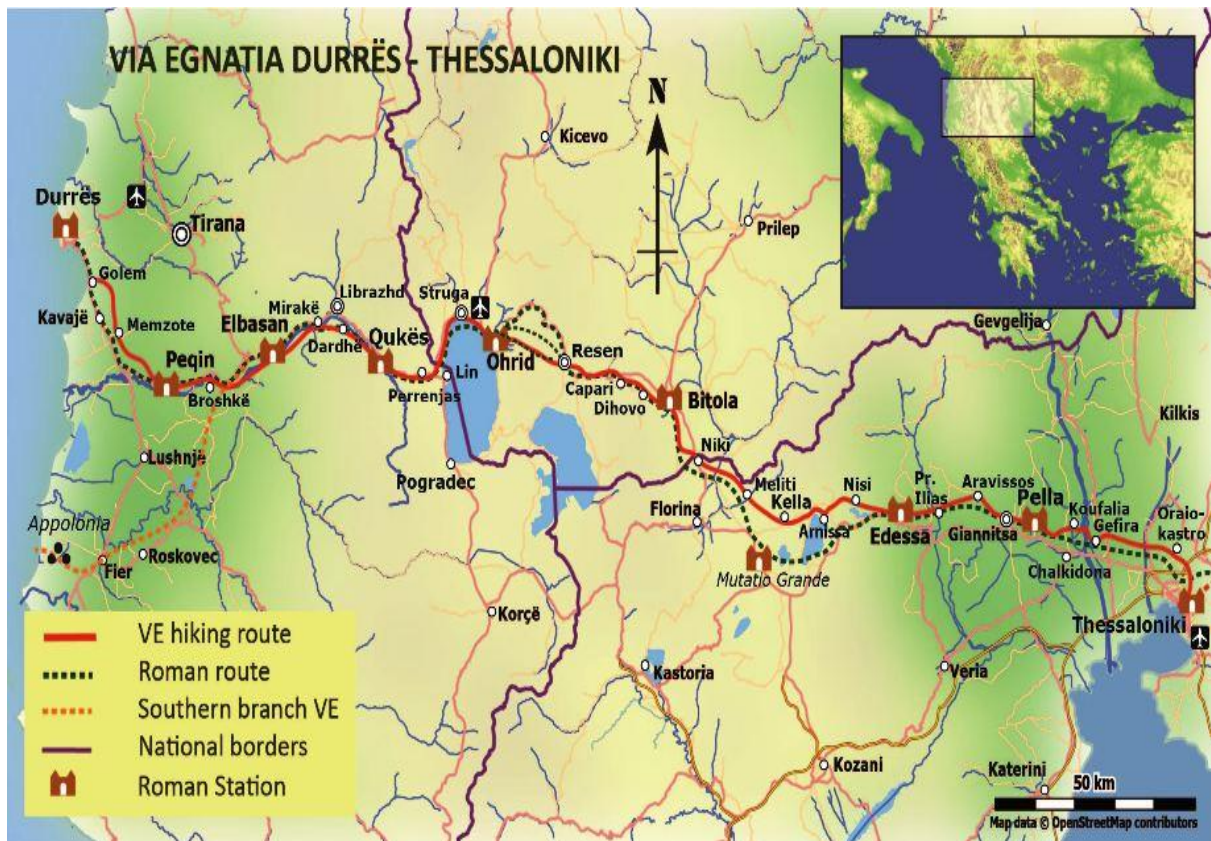
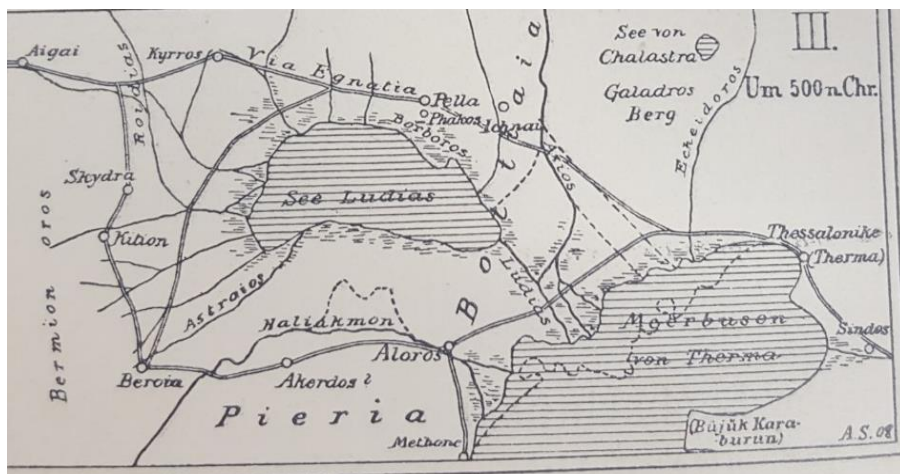
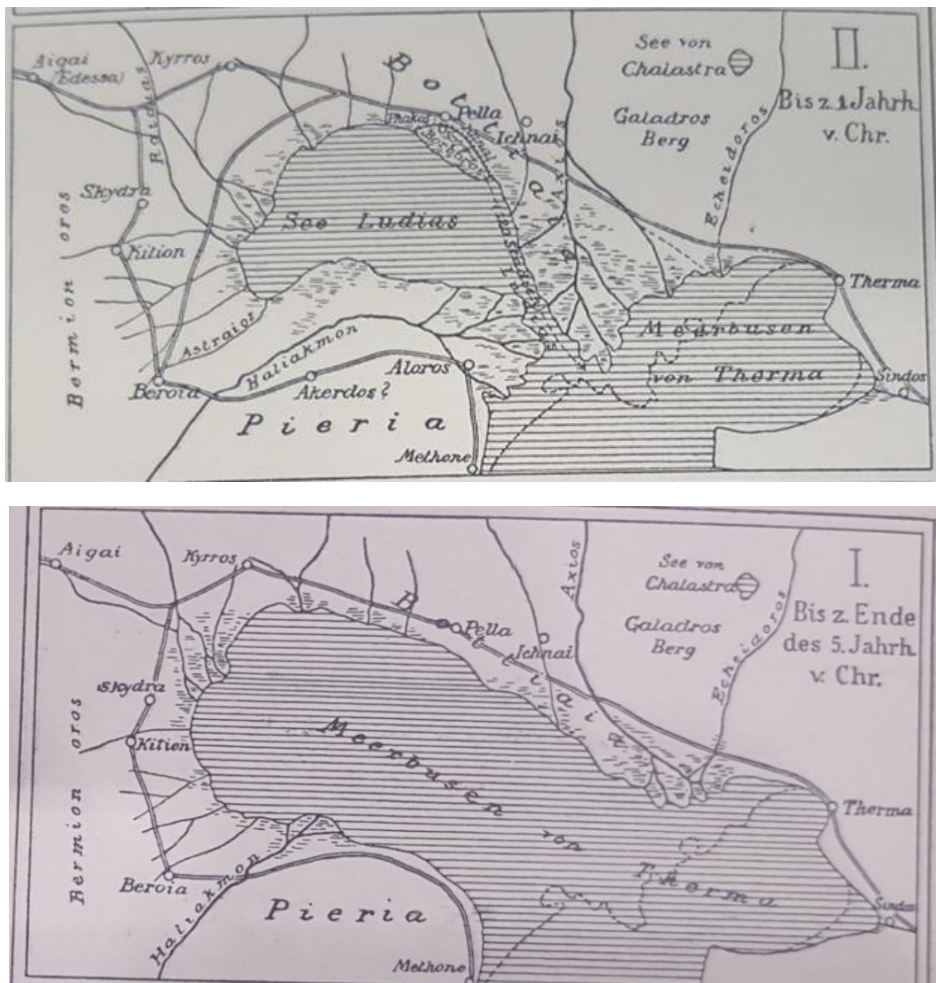


Figure 2. The Via Egnatia in the Roman period. Van Attekum and De Bruin, 2014.



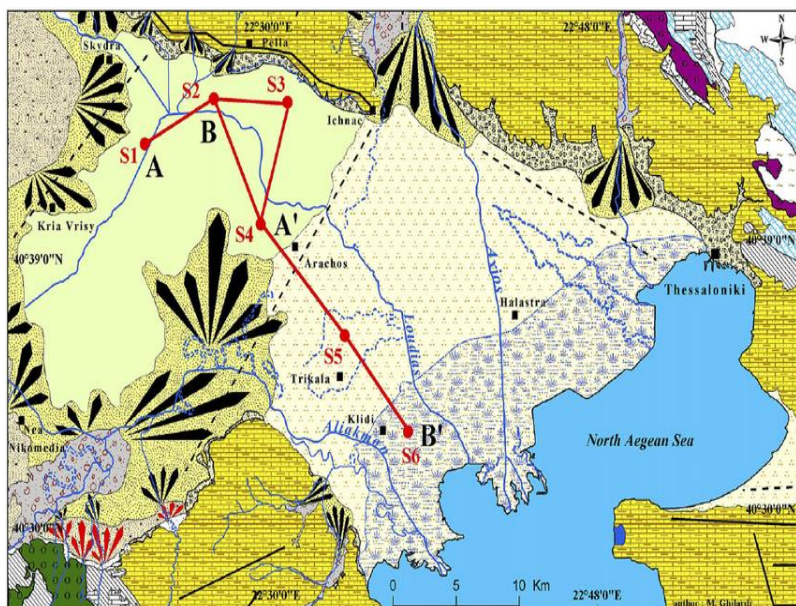


**Figures 3-5.** Expanse of Lake Giannitsa and Thermaic Gulf, 5th century B.C., 1st century B.C., and ca. 500 A.D. Struck, 1908, p.96.



19<sup>th</sup> century, Leake explicitly attests to the existence of such a thoroughfare.<sup>611</sup> It ran by the fort of Voenas, approximately 8.5 km. southwest of Katerini.<sup>612</sup> In appendix C.I, I make the case that the fort was founded at the end of the 11<sup>th</sup> century. If we accept my interpretation, the Petra road must have been operational at this date. For wanting to cross the Cambusian and Chasian ranges, two alternative to the *demosia leophoros* and the Petra pass appear to have existed: the roads which Basil II and Bohemund employed to reach Stagoi and Kastoria (the former heading south, the latter north<sup>613</sup>).

There is a sixth prolonged road of which I have not yet spoken, believed to have run directly from



Thessaloniki to Aloros (at which point it merged with the *demosia leophoros*). Its credibilities rests on the Klidi Bridge, situated outside Klidi and between the Aliakmon and the Loudias' current channels (fig. 6). Delacoulonche, who studied the arched bridge at length, considered its architecture to be characteristic of the 3<sup>rd</sup> century A.D.<sup>614</sup> Is his assessment strictly accurate? The Peutinger Table, which has a

Figures 3-5. Expanse of Lake Giannitsa and Thermaic Gulf, 5th century B.C., 1st century B.C., and ca. 500 A.D.

Struck, 1908, p.96.

*terminus post quem* of 330 A.D.<sup>615</sup>, displays no Thessaloniki-Aloros road. However, it should be noted that the distance between Veroia and Dion in the Peutinger Table is roughly 115 km – some 48 km. more than in the earlier Antonine Itinerary (prepared either during the reign of Antoninus Pius or in the early 3<sup>rd</sup> century AD). What I think we are looking at is a conflation of two separate Thessaloniki-Dion routes in the Peutinger Table.<sup>616</sup> The former itinerary made a vast detour via Pella, Veroia, and Aloros. The latter one ran alongside – or very close to – the Thermaic Gulf between Thessaloniki and Aloros. This theory becomes particularly credible when we consider that the present-day coastal highway between

611 Leake, 1826, p.135, Leake, 1835, vol. 3, p.337.

612 Velenis and Papathanassiou, 2008. Adrianos lacks an Ottoman ancestor, according to cartographic sources. Nonetheless, this is not necessarily indicative of a settlement with a purely modern history; Adrianos could have been abandoned at some point between the 11th century and the arrival of the Ottomans. Krüger, 1984, p.551.

613 See fig. 1 and Chapter 3.I, III.14.

614 Delacoulonche, 1859, p.224.

615 It shows Constantinople, which was founded in 330.

616 Edson, 1955, pp.178-179. The 12th century *Geographica* cannot help us, since it does not give the distances between places.



Thessaloniki and Nea Agathopouli (about two-fifths of the way between the Aliakmon and Kitros, so near where Aloros would have been) is 45 km. long. This would account for the dramatic divergence in distance between the Antonine Itinerary and the Peutinger Table, and for the apparent absence of a direct coastal route in the Table.

In terms of naval transportation, Western Macedonia was indirectly served by Thessaloniki's port. It has been submitted by Avramea and the Ephorate of Antiquities of Pieria that another harbour existed at Kitros. But as I explain in III.11, I believe this interpretation to be unfounded. The sparsity of ports was partly compensated for by the Loudias, Aliakmon, and Axios, which extended deep inland and were capable of accommodating commercial vessels. Indeed, Kaminiates explicitly states that the main rivers west of Thessaloniki were navigable upstream for commercial purposes. Likewise, Theophylaktos of Ohrid and Kantakouzenos tell us that the Axios could not be crossed on foot or on horseback and that the river was navigable as far as Skopje in the spring.<sup>617</sup> I will provide a little more detail on the rivers in III.5.

Unlike in Central and Eastern Macedonia, historically relevant mineral deposits are relatively sparse. They are limited to the southwest of Florina, the north of Kastoria, the northeast of Veroia, at Grevena, and several places in the mountains surrounding Edessa (iron ores at Florina, copper ores for Kastoria, Veroia, and Grevena, and iron, copper, and gold-containing zeroist and pyrite for Edessa<sup>618</sup>). The highlands encasing the southwest part of the long valley west of Katerini apparently consist of marble<sup>619</sup>, but the Rhomaioi would not necessarily have been aware of this. On the other hand, the coast of Kampania was rich in scrubland in the generation of Schulze-Jena, and the 16<sup>th</sup>-century naturalist Pierre Belon found the Kermes oak and the Terebinth to be pervasive in Aegean Macedonia.<sup>620</sup> In addition, Kaminiates rather ambiguously testifies to the presence of a plain "with mostly treeless vegetation, but supplying all kinds of crops" between Thessaloniki and Veroia.<sup>621</sup> More than likely some of these crops were cereals. In the 1920s cereals took up more than 71 % of the cultivable land in Macedonia (both the Greek region and FYROM). They represented 46.7 % of the agricultural production's value, and originated in significant part (24.2 %) from the erstwhile regional units of Edessa, Florina, and Kozani (which between them covered almost all of Western Macedonia). In order of decreasing importance, the crops were as follows: wheat, rye, bearded wheat, barley, oats, spelt, black wheat, millet, corn, and rice.<sup>622</sup> It should be

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617 Kaminiates, 2000, p.13, Theophylaktos, 1986, col.110, pp.530-531, Todorova, 1984, p.47.

618 Hammond, 1972, p.13, Struck, 1908, p.55.

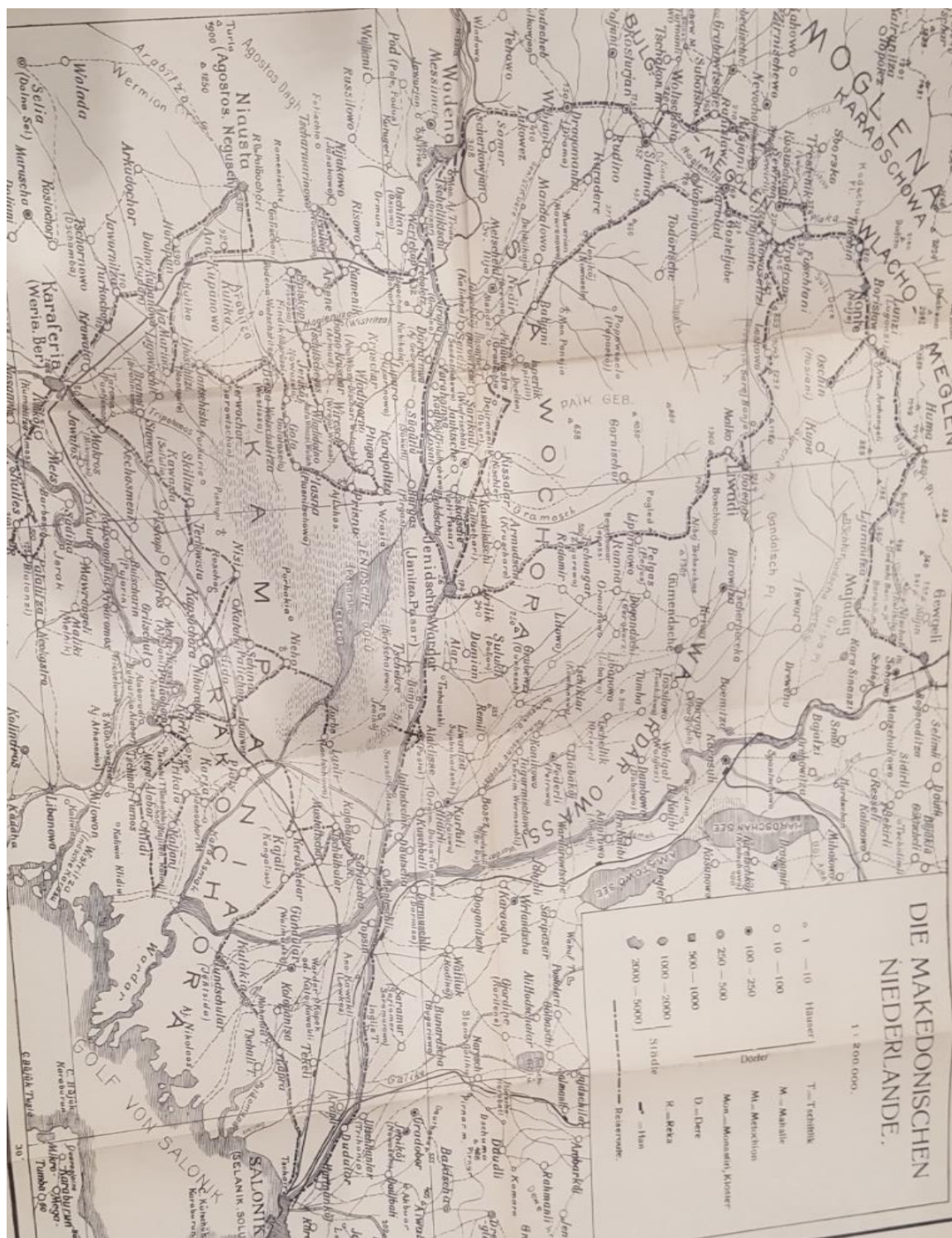
619 Philippson, 1938, p.76.

620 The Kermes oak's leaves are a favorite food of the cochineal, an insect which produces a highly prized red dye. Likewise, the Terebinth's berry is feasted upon by the aphid (which secretes a valuable red dye), and its leaves were collected for tanning. Belon, 1555, pp.113-114, 126. As for Kampania, it is a common name for the geographic space bound by the Aliakmon, the Axios, and the location of the former Lake Giannitsa. Schulze-Jena, 1927, p.119.

621 Kaminiates, 1987, 6.4

622 Jaranoff, 1931, pp.47-48, 50-51, p.103.

noted that this data was assembled at a time when fertilizers and genetically modified, weather-resistant crops had not yet been introduced to Macedonia – in other words, when agricultural was still highly traditional. And the data is partially confirmed by Struck, who testifies in 1901-1907 that the former town of Jedinische (see fig. 7) was a major grain producer.



**Fig. 7.** Western Macedonia, ca. 1908. Jenidsche is just north of Lake Giannitsa (referred to here as Jenidsche Gölü). Struck, 1908, table 1.

Despite the extent of the surface covered by cereal crops, it is unlikely they were ubiquitous. Indeed, a list of Aegean Macedonian game, compiled by Belon, comprised “fallow deer, wild cattle, long-haired goats, boars, red deer, hedgehogs, foxes, wolves, and hares.” Belon’s testimony is echoed by the First World War soldier Arthur Mann, who found game abundant in Macedonia’s wetlands.<sup>623</sup> There was a stretch of grassland around the Axios, since the 12<sup>th</sup> century *Timarion* writes that “the plain of the Axeios is delightful for the soldiers to put their horses out.”<sup>624</sup> Pastures might have been prevalent too on the coast of Kampania, as this was the case in the early 1900s.<sup>625</sup> West of Voras and Vermion – in the Greek part of the Plain of Pelagonia – cereals were cultivated in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. The amount of grain they produced was apparently the largest in all of Greek Macedonia.<sup>626</sup> And according to Hammond, the territories around Lakes Orestiada, Petron, and Vegoritida are capable of producing excellent cereals.<sup>627</sup>

The predominant climate of the Western Plain of Thessaloniki is a dry variant of Humid Subtropical. On one hand, it is characterized by warm summers (a mean of 25.7 °C in July) and cool winters (a mean of 4.6 °C in January). But its annual precipitation (540 mm.) falls short of typical Humid Subtropical quantities (890 mm), and it is very unequally distributed, with the April-September months receiving only 15 %.<sup>628</sup> Since the British Naval Intelligence Division implied in the 1940s that frost was a common occurrence in the winter, the season’s temperatures may have been lower than they are today in Medieval times.<sup>629</sup> One major variation should be noted. The Axios valley and the western coast of the Thermaic Gulf are subject to a prevailing cold northerly wind.<sup>630</sup> Known as the Vardaris, it occurs when atmospheric pressure in FYROM is higher than over the Aegean Basin. It enters Greece through the Moravia-Vardar Gap, and this channeling effect gives it tremendous momentum. Consequently, the Axios Valley’s winter air feels much colder than it actually is. What the Vardaris’ precise wind-chill factor (perceived decrease

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623 See Dunn, 2005, pp.64-65. For original sources, see Belon, 1588, p.119, and Mann and Wood, 1920, p.33. See also Jaranoff, who states that game in Macedonia includes otters, wild cats, wolves, foxes, sables, and hares. But the importance of game should not be overestimated: Jaranoff adds that hunting constitutes the principal occupation of no family in the region. Jaranoff, 1931, p.126.

624 Romano, 1974, ch.83.

625 The pastures are interspersed with the aforementioned scrubland. Schultze-Jena, *ibid.* By the same reasoning, it is plausible that the situation of the mountain slopes and plains near Stenimachos (near Naoussa) ca. 1900 had a Medieval antecedent. The slopes and plains were then largely covered with grape vines and cereal. Struck, 1908, p.48. Struck also writes that beekeeping was diligently practiced in Stenimachos, and that the local honey was highly appreciated.

626 Schultze-Jena, 1927, p.160. The cereals included wheat, barley, oats, and rye.

627 Hammond, 1972, p.106. See also Leake, 1835b, p.269 on the Western Plain’s corn-growing potential between Edessa and the space formerly occupied by Lake Giannitsa.

628 The figures of 540 mm. and 890 mm. are based on Veroia and Trieste’s precipitation, respectively. Eliassen, 2007.

629 British Naval Intelligence Division, 1945, p.116.

630 Koletsis et al., 2016.

in air-temperature) is I do not know, but it is sufficient to regularly bring snow to Thessaloniki.<sup>631</sup> The extent of the zone affected by the wind regime is displayed on fig.27 (appendix D).

For the lowlands west of the north-south mountain chain, the climate can be described as an amalgamation of Humid Subtropical and Continental.<sup>632</sup> Temperatures are marginally cooler than at Veroia, Pella, or Edessa. In Kastoria, for instance, average July/January temperatures are 21°C and 1 °C. Local low temperatures in December, January, and February routinely fall to -0.9 °C, -2.8 °C, and -1.00 °C. But the district's precipitation is relatively parsimonious, averaging at 530-542 mm. yearly (although the precipitation's consistency is roughly identical to that seen on the Western Plain).

## II. Borderland problems and historical context

Until the early 11<sup>th</sup> century, only a poorly defined fragment of Western Macedonia lay under Greek authority. Several political maps of contemporary the region's frontiers have been put together<sup>633</sup>, but they appear to be the largely the product of guesswork. I will address the issue in a little more detail in III.13. What is clear is that Rhomanian Western Macedonia lay on the border with Bulgaria. Thus, it was constantly on the front line in the event of a Rhomanian-Bulgarian war – of which there were s in this period. The inevitable repercussion was that the border zone fluctuated drastically. The description I have offered only reflects its most frequently occurring limits in the 10<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> centuries. This political geography – compounded by a lack of natural defenses – had important ramifications. It obliged urban settlements to adopt a more military-oriented architecture than their counterparts in Thessaly or Boeotia. Accordingly, we shall see that a much greater proportion of the material remains in the next chapter consist of castles, towers, and fortified enclosures. On the other hand, in the realm of foreign trade, Western Macedonia's borderland status seems to have been of lesser consequence. Let us take Kastoria as a case in point. The town changed hands no less than four times between 890 and 1018. In the case of a Bulgarian occupation, the residents would have lost easy access to Greek products. All their imported goods would have had to go through Thessaloniki, Christoupolis (modern Kavala), Develtos (modern Debelt), or Constantinople.<sup>634</sup>

In all likeliness Christoupolis was the nearest customs station available to Western Macedonians until 904. Thereafter it was replaced by Thessaloniki. I will explain why and when the transition took place momentarily. For now, I will focus on Christoupolis. Would the vegetables, fruits, and nuts unique to the Mediterranean Basin have become indulgences to the Rhomaioi (under Bulgarian occupation)? I will do

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631 Giannoulakis, 2014, p.114.

632 This regime falls under the designation 'Oceanic' in fig. 27 (Appendix D).

633 Greve, 1917, Treadgold, 1997 p.546, Whittow, 1996, p.166.

634 Dunn, 1993, pp.12-13.

my best to answer the question. Christoupolis was a good 300 km. away from Kastoria, using the Via Egnatia. In Chapter 2.III.1 I emphasized the costliness of Medieval road transport. But I was then comparing the process to sea transport and focusing on marble. Judged by itself, broken down to the individual level, and with foodstuffs as the object of discussion, road transport comes across as relatively affordable. I will further narrow my case study and concentrate on olive oil, a Mediterranean staple that might have regularly found its way into Rhomania's inland territories. If a man residing in Bulgarian-controlled Kastoria wished to purchase olive oil from his local market, how much would he pay? The climate is unsuited to olive tree cultivation<sup>635</sup>, meaning the oil would have come from Christoupolis. A reasonably plausible weight of purchase for one week's worth of oil would have been approximately 0,621 kg.<sup>636</sup> By adding the weight of a proportionally-sized amphora, we come to 0.980 kg.<sup>637</sup> As noted in Chapter 2.III.1.A.4, the price of a 550 kg. wagonload of goods would have increased by approximately 3.3 % (of the initial cost) for every 10 km. it was transported. In other words, the price would have increased by 33 % for every 100 km. it was transported. 33 multiplied by 3 (since the distance between Kastoria and Christoupolis is 3 x 100 km.) gives us 99%. The figure rises to 109 % if we factor in the *kommerkion* (10% of the value of the merchandise). If we adjust the weight (550 kg.) to the requirements of our aforementioned consumer, we come up with transport expenses of roughly 0.19 %. Assuming the consumer had a wife and two children to feed, the percentage rises to 0.70 %. Where would olive oil have come from while Kastoria was under Rhomanian control? Perhaps Edessa, which would have been not too far away (about 100 km.) and climatically suitable. A rough calculation for the transport expenses involved in importing oil from Edessa yields the figure of around 0.06 %. 0.70 minus 0.06 gives us 0.064 %. That is what the increased cost of importing oil from Christoupolis to Kastoria would conceivably have been after a Bulgarian takeover. At this point it is necessary to make a foray into the world of prices and wages. For want of anything better, I am compelled to rely on prices in Constantinople. We know that in the late 9<sup>th</sup> century, 10 litres/kg. of oil were worth 1/16<sup>th</sup> of a *nomisma* (or 18 *folles*) in times of peace.<sup>638</sup> A price hike of 0.64 % would have amounted to slightly less than 1/10<sup>th</sup> of a *folles*. And 10 litres was surely well in excess of a person's weekly requirements. Let us assume that our consumer did not hold an extremely physically demanding job and consumed 0.621 kg. of oil a week. If he had to provide for a wife and two children, he would have needed around 2.484 kg of oil. So, his weekly expenditure would have

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635 For one thing, young olive trees and the branches of older trees can be killed at temperatures of below -4 °C in the winter, and in Kastoria that figure is exceeded in January. For another, at 697 mm., Kastoria's mean annual rainfall is too much for the tree. Vossen, 2007, p.4, Ioannina weather station, 2012.

636 The figure is taken from a study (covering most of the geographic regions of Greece) on the association between the Mediterranean diet and blood pressure. Psaltopoulou et. al, 2004.

637 Peacock and Williams, 1986, p.52.

638 Morrisson and Cheynet, 2003, p.838.

been slightly less than 25 % of 18 *folles*, namely 4.5 *folles*. At most – if he had been forced to absorb the full increase in transport expenses – the consumer would therefore have faced a price hike of 0.288 *folles* (0.61 % of 4.5). To put this in perspective, the typical weekly salary of a skilled 10<sup>th</sup> century silk artisan in the capital was about 83 *folles*.<sup>639</sup> I think we can agree that 0.274 *folles* was an insignificant percentage of the above wage, and that the great majority of Kastorians could probably have absorbed such a price increase with ease. My conclusions are equally valid for most of Western Macedonia's other pre-1018 Greek urban communities, namely Edessa, Veroia, Kitros, Likostomo, Petras, and Drougouviteia. All were further east than Kastoria, so they would logically have found it easier to import commodities. Perhaps the only case apart is Servia, which was more distant from Christoupolis than Kastoria. A reasonable distance estimate between Christoupolis and Servia is 409 km., using the modern Kastoria-Servia road. But even then, the resulting price hike for Servians would have been barely 0.313 *folles*.

So far I have only spoken of olive oil. What about other imported Mediterranean foodstuffs, like feta, oranges, almonds, or artichokes? I will not discuss artisanal goods – what percentage of Kastoria's domestic implements were imported and how Rhomanian artisanal products compared with their Bulgarian counterparts. Doing so would require being able to read Bulgarian and study the Ephorate of Kastoria's artifacts, and neither options are available to me. This much may be said: that the volume: weight ratio of olive oil is considerably less favorable than for feta and almonds, and only marginally more favourable than for oranges. In other words, none of the latter three comestibles would have been significantly more expensive to import under Bulgarian occupation. The only inconvenience I can think of is longer waiting times, since the imports would have had to come from Christoupolis. If we accept my point of view, we have some cause to believe that – in terms of purchasing power – Western Macedonian' lives remained unaffected by the regions' fluctuating political character. The world continued to turn.

To return to the transition from Christoupolis to Thessaloniki, in 894 Leo VI moved the market in Constantinople to Thessaloniki, a decision that provoked a war with Bulgaria. The Bulgarians would have been required to pay higher tariffs in Thessaloniki, a scenario they found unacceptable. But military operations culminated with the decisive Bulgarian victory of Boulgarophygon. In a subsequent peace treaty, according to Theophanes, the Rhomaioi restored the Constantinopolitan market.<sup>640</sup> And yet, the Narash inscription of 904 indicates that thenceforth the border would run 20 km. north of Thessaloniki, and that some goods exported into Bulgaria would originate directly from Thessalonikian workshops. Evidently Tsar Simeon took advantage of Thessaloniki's dangerously vulnerable condition (bearing in

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639 This information is obtained from Kaplan, who himself obtained it from the *Book of the Eparch*. Kaplan, 2000, p.161. There are no precisely locatable figures for provincial wages on the mainland.

640 Bekker, 1838, pp.853-855.

mind that the city was sacked by Arab corsairs in 904) to secure favourable concessions.<sup>641</sup> And despite ample signs that Thessaloniki had made a full recovery by the 920s (at the latest), the concessions seem to have remained in place until the beginning of the Rhomanian conquest of Bulgaria (in 968). They are certainly not mentioned in the Rhomanian-Bulgarian Treaty of 927. The transition of customs points (if we accept that it happened) signifies that from 904, Western Macedonians living under Bulgarian occupation would have paid even less for their food imports (Thessaloniki was approximately 198 km. distant from Kastoria, compared to 300 km. for Christoupolis).

On the matter of the region's ethnicity, Slavic immigration is thinly attested. The main players, so to speak, were the Sagoudatai and the western branch of the Drogouvitai tribe (the eastern branch lived in Thrace). Both lived between Thessaloniki and Veroia, at least of ca. 900.<sup>642</sup> How great were their numbers? The *Miracles of St. Demetrios* lists the Sagoudatai and Drogouvoutia as two of the principal enemy units in the 677 siege of Thessaloniki (the others being the Rynchinoi and Strymonitai). But the source does not give the Slavs' numbers, or state whether they had enough soldiers to completely blockade the city.<sup>643</sup> Regardless, our information on the newcomers' relationship with their Greek neighbors – such as it is – does not exactly convey the Slavs in a peaceful light. In addition to taking part in the siege of Thessaloniki, the Sagoudatai launched a series of plundering raids on the coast of Thessaly in the 680s.<sup>644</sup> A *modus vivendi* appears to have been reached with the Drogouvitai by 879. By then, the tribe was under the jurisdiction of the Theme of Thessaloniki and at least partially Christianized (see III.7). In *De Administrando*, Constantine Porphyrogenetos notes that Michael III had to quell an uprising of "Macedonian Slavs", but he does not specify which part of Macedonia.<sup>645</sup> And at the beginning of the 10<sup>th</sup> century the Drogouvitai and Sagoudatai were paying taxes to the *strategos* of Thessaloniki.<sup>646</sup> In fact, it is likely the tribes had become tributary before Kaminiates' generation. At the Council of 879-880, a Bishop Peter of Drogouvitia is in attendance.<sup>647</sup> Apparently the Drogouvitai had converted to Christianity. Of course, we should not assume that the entire tribe had chosen conversion, that those individuals who accepted baptism relinquished all their pagan customs, or that the Drogouvitai had abandoned their traditional language. When Michael III sent Cyril and Methodius into the hinterland of Thessaloniki to fashion Old Church Slavonic, he advised Cyril that "all Thessalonians [the contemporary

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641 Oikonomides, 1995, pp. 239-243. Zlatarsky, 1971, pp.334-337, Angelov et al., 1981, p.284. Kaminiates' testimony is less useful. He clearly implies Thessalonikians had commercial relations with the neighbouring Bulgarians, but does not say if he describing the situation before 904 or after it.

642 Kaminiates, 2000, p.13.

643 Curta, 2006, pp.96-97.

644 Havlikova, 1991, p.96.

645 Constantine Porphyrogenetos, 1967, pp.229, 231.

646 Kaminiates, 2000, p.8.

647 Mansi, XVII. Col. 376A.



Constantinopolitan term for the Theme of Thessaloniki] speak pure Slavic.”<sup>648</sup> This implies that “Thessalonians” spoke Slavic in addition to Greek.

### III. Main body

#### 1. Edessa

##### A. History

Edessa was of no mean strategic significance, for it controlled the Via Egnatia at the point where it entered the gap between the Vermion and Voras Mountains. And it had a valuable natural resource in the form of the Vodas River.<sup>649</sup> This waterway, which cuts through the modern town and never runs dry, was already present in the 11<sup>th</sup> century (see Skylitzes’ testimony, in Part B). It takes its source in Lake Vegoritida (Medieval Ostrovo), 18 km. away. The river seems to have existed as early as the 6<sup>th</sup> century, since Procopius reports that the river “Skirtus” destroyed much of Edessa, and that Justinian made a new channel for it through the town.<sup>650</sup> According to the Voden Inscription<sup>651</sup>, Edessa was occupied by the Bulgarians in 989. Successfully besieged by Basil II in 1001/1002, the place revolted in 1015. However, by the end of the year the Rhomaioi had again recovered it.<sup>652</sup> Many Western Macedonian communities were subjected to this frequent changing of hands, but in Edessa Bulgarian rule appears to have had a lasting, if superficial, impact: it led to the replacement of the term Edessa by ‘Vodena’ (or ‘Vodina’) which is derived from the Slavic word for water, ‘voda.’<sup>653</sup>

##### B. Archaeology

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<sup>648</sup> Life of Methodius, 1989, p.5.

<sup>649</sup> Potential resources include grape vine, mulberry, red dates, apricots, apples, plums, and grapes, which flourished in or outside Edessa in the early 19th century. Leake, 1835b, pp.271-274. I would put in the same category the iron, copper, and silver deposits mentioned by Struck. See Section I.

<sup>650</sup> Hammond, 1972, p.142.

<sup>651</sup> Here is an English translation: “In the city of Voden, I Samuil, faithful to Christ, Emperor of the Bulgars and Romans, Godsent emperor of all lands from Raska to Macedonia, Thessaly and Greece, nephew of the old Shishman who was Khan of the inhabitants of Trnovo, built this prayer home, to exist forever. The foundation were laid in the epoch of Jeremiah, who was the first Christian in Melnik. This temple was built for the sins and saving of the Bulgars from damned Satan, who comes from Constantinople. This temple was finished during the 14th year of my rule with the help of monk Gavril, who is the spiritual shepherd of the inhabitants of Meglen. Written during year 6497 from the foundation of the world, 5th Indiction”. The original inscription can be found at the National Archaeological Museum in Sofia, although its authenticity is sharply contested by FYROM nationalists.

<sup>652</sup> See bottom of section II. To punish the Edessans for their betrayal, Basil deported them to the province of Boleron.

<sup>653</sup> Chisholm, 1911. The original designation was only restored in 1926, at least officially.



To the northwest of the modern city, on a rocky plot, excavating revealed 117 graves. The configuration of the site was well organized and technically impressive. The graves are arranged in parallel rows, and carved into the rock. The site also displayed some rather un-Orthodox elements: 60 pieces of jewelry were distributed in 45 of the graves, and the majority of the latter follow the anthropomorphic tomb design. Christian Roman graves never followed the anthropomorphic design.

Could the cemetery have belonged to the Vlachs, who (according Benjamin of Tudela) were not Christian? <sup>654</sup> The possibility should certainly be considered. 3 of the graves do contain an identical number of bronze crucifixes, but it was unusual for Christians to be buried with such large religious objects. Moreover, Edessa's geography was well suited to the Vlachs' nomadic lifestyle, and contemporary Central Macedonia was populated by Vlachs. For instance, a group of Vlach shepherds lived on Mount Athos at the end of the 11<sup>th</sup> century, enjoying peaceful relations with the monks. They were expelled between 1090 and 1105, but only at the initiative of the Patriarch. It should be noted also that Tsar Samuel's brother David was killed by vagrant Vlachs at a spot between Prespa and Kastoria <sup>655</sup>, Kekaumenos indicates that the Vlachs were extensively found in Macedonia, the Athosian Vlachs were shepherds, Anna Komnene considers one of the chief characteristics of the Vlachs to be their nomadic lifestyle, there were Vlach pastoralists in the Theme of Moglena as of 1184, and the Vlachs of Greek Macedonia had – until the 1950s – a long tradition of sheep rearing. <sup>656</sup> Getting back to Edessa, there is more certainty regarding the cemetery's chronology. The bronze crucifixes – all found on the chest of children – constitute types occurring from the end of the 10<sup>th</sup> until the 12<sup>th</sup> century. The graves also yielded a handful of rings with hanging stones and two distinctive silver earrings (in the shape of a grape with granulated decoration). The two types of jewelry have been identified in several southern Balkan cemeteries dating to the end-of-10<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> centuries, including Arkiva, Naissos, Proseca and Corinth. I would cautiously advance that the cemetery was founded after the restoration of Roman rule in the region, since none of the corpses exhibit signs of a violent death.

This discussion about Vlachs and cemeteries is interesting, since it suggests Edessans had regular access to pastoral foods (such as sheep/goat dairy products and wool). But did Edessa have the trappings of an urban settlement? Two clues point to an affirmative answer. Skylitzes, writing on the Rhoman conquest of Bulgaria, describes Edessa as "a fortress located on a precipitous crag around which the waters of Lake Ostrovo flow." <sup>657</sup> And in the *Escorial Taktikon* of ca. 975, Edessa appears as the seat of a

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654 According to Benjamin of Tudela. See Chapter 3.III.7. It is difficult to tell whether Tudela is talking about the Vlachs outside Lamia, or the ethnic group in general, and whether he was lied to by his Vlach interlocutors (if he had any). Therefore, his testimony should be treated with caution.

655 This happened in 976. Kedrenos, 1839, p.439.

656 Kekaumenos, 1998, p.236, Anna Komnene, 1928, p.199, Lavra, 1, no. 66, Anonymous, 1995.

657 Skylitzes, 2010, p.327.

Theme.<sup>658</sup> Yet this situation may have changed after 1015, if the concurrent deportation of Edessans to Boleron ensured that their home was no longer large enough to qualify for continued Thematic capital (or episcopal) status. Thereafter, Edessa goes virtually unmentioned by material or textual sources, be they seals, synods, *sigillia*, or chroniclers, until the *Notitia 13* (end of reign of Manuel I).<sup>659</sup>

Treadgold contends that the Theme of Edessa mentioned by the *Taktikon* was actually situated in Mesopotamia.<sup>660</sup> This viewpoint hinges on the testimony of Leo the Deacon, according to whom Nikephoros Phokas captured Edessa during his 968 Syrian expedition. The problem is that Leo treats the Emperor's campaign as a raid: "The Emperor Nikephoros raided Syria in this way as I have related..."<sup>661</sup> It is therefore unlikely Phokas made any permanent conquests, the more so since a part of the lands he passed through (namely the coast of Syria from Antioch to Tortosa) was conquered by John Tzimiskes in 975. Also, Treadgold suggest that at this time Macedonian Edessa was usually called Vodena. Yet there are so few mentions of the settlement<sup>662</sup> that I see no point in having in mind a 'standard' denoting manner.

## 2. Moglena

This site consists of a forty-acre castle, built on top of a hill and 200 m. northeast of the Moglena (or Moglenitsa) River. Nowadays it is commonly associated with the village of Chryssi, 500 m. away, but it undoubtedly corresponds to the Roman town of Moglena (I will explain why on the next page). The castle's most distinctive features are three towers on the eastern battlements: one round, one square, and one elliptical (wall thicknesses: 2.40 m.-2.45 m). The towers have been preserved to a height of 6.5 m. -8 m. (fig. 8).

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<sup>658</sup> Oikonomides, 1972, p.266.

<sup>659</sup> The exception is Anna Komnene, who writes that "after attacking several places repeatedly without success, he [Bohemund] reached Moglena via Vodina and there rebuilt a small fort which had long laid in ruins." In the *Notitia 13*, Edessa is listed as a bishopric of Moglena. Darrouzes, 1981, p.372.

<sup>660</sup> Treadgold, 1997, p.949.

<sup>661</sup> Leo the Deacon, 2005, pp.120, 126.

<sup>662</sup> And all but two of them are concentrated in the period 975-1015. The exceptions are courtesy of Anna Komnene and the *Notitia 13*'s appendix. Darrouzes, 1981, p.372.



**Figure 8.** The eastern bastion of Moglena Castle. Thanasis, 2013.

For the southern, northern, and western battlements, only several foundations have survived. Also noteworthy is the southern gate, which is provided with a protective recess, and an ecclesiastical building on the south side of the hill. The latter is a cemetery church of the free-cross plan. The church's dimensions have not yet been established, but they must have been exceptional by Middle Rhomanian standards. There were 53 cist tombs built under the floor, although 11 of them were re-used. The tombs yielded a small stone cross and three bronze rings.

In 1985 an excavation team revealed vestiges of a 21 m. long interior intramural basilica. The vestiges included a niche, a half-dome (in the east), a series of small concentric niches which likely formed a bishop's throne, and a north wall which continues past the dug-up area. The basilica's most unique feature is its walls: their outer face is grouted with pink-black mortar. The same mortar covers a small part of the adjacent stones and broken bricks. Although there are multiple examples (possibly assignable to the Middle Rhomanian period) of masonry incorporating pink mortar in Epirus <sup>663</sup>, the combination of black and pink was highly uncommon. Indeed, in the course of my research, not a single example has come to my attention. I cannot account for the paucity of pink, but that of black is more easily explicable. Black mortar gets its color from coal ash, which is dangerous to the respiratory system if inhaled in large

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<sup>663</sup> Veikou, 2012, p.110.

and prolonged doses. Later interventions showed that the basilica was three-aisled, and that the aisles were divided by pilaster walls. They also revealed some loom weights and a dozen black-glazed shells in the foundations of the west wall, as well as *in situ* slabs of marble and gray stone and various decorative fragments (of wall paintings, mosaics, and sculptures). The sculptures can apparently be dated to the 11<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup> centuries. On the basis of the throne fragments, the masonry, and the sculptures, Eugenidou has assigned the place a 10<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup> century lifespan.

This provides fairly strong evidence of the site's connection with the community of Moglena. For we know that Moglena was in Rhomanian hands from 1015<sup>664</sup> to 1205, (when it was captured by Tsar Kalojan). We should note too, that Rhomanian Moglena was located next to the Moglena River – like its modern-day counterpart. The presence of a basilica, Moglena's appearances in one of the 1020 *sigillia* and the *Notitia* 13<sup>665</sup>, and the fact that it became a Thematic capital in 1086<sup>666</sup> gives us ample reason to believe it constituted an urban settlement (especially during the 1086-1204 period). Anna Komnene's reference to Moglena (see III.1) does indicate that the place lacked any fortifications by the 1080s. But this inference itself strongly suggests that Moglena been at peace for years, if not decades (particularly considering its promotion to Thematic capital in 1086).

Struck describes the Moglena Basin as a garden in which are grown rice, pepper, fine gray-blue grape, poppy (a flower whose seeds were used by the Rhomaioi in bread and pastry), fruits, and cotton.<sup>667</sup> His comments are echoed by Hammond, who writes that in the 1860s the Basin's crops included pepper, chestnut trees, the Kermes oak, cherry, and wheat.<sup>668</sup> Considering this unique situation and the Basin's isolation (meaning it must have been fairly easy to defend), it is a wonder that Moglena does not seem to have been occupied before Medieval times.

### 3. Pella

Pella, the one-time home of the Macedonian kings, was destroyed by an earthquake in the first century B.C. Afterwards, the Romans founded a new settlement approximately 200 m. to the west. Did New Pella

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664 When it was conquered from the Bulgarians by the *doux* of Thessaloniki. Skylitzes, 1973, p.352.33-34. In the process, the walls were razed to the ground.

665 For the *sigillion*, see Gelzer, 1893, p.45. For evidence of Moglena's episcopal status between 1020 and the *Notitia* 13, note the duration of Bishop Hilarion of Moglena's term: 1154-1164. Kaluzniacki, 1901 pp. 27-58.

666 Lavra, I, no.48.6. See also a document of Lavra dating to 1091-1106 in which is mentioned “τῷ θέματι Βερροίας καὶ Μογλένων.” Rouillard and Collomp, 1937, p.122.

667 Struck, 1908, p.72.

668 I would suggest the soil's fruitfulness and diversity are attributable – at least in part – to a combination of a Humid Subtropical regime the Moglena River, which cuts through the whole length of basin, and volcanic activity. Hammond, 1972, pp.10, 166. For geological evidence of volcanic activity, see Koukouzas et al., 2015.

still exist in some form by end of the Transition period? In recent decades Chrysostomou has located elements of a military structure on the site: two towers and a 1.2 m. wide, 82 m. long wall on a south-north axis.<sup>669</sup> The wall, greatly dilapidated, consisted of stones and powerful mortar at its base and of brick higher up. As for the towers (wall width 1 m.), one of them was fully intact, while the other was reduced to a western façade. In the ground floor of the former structure investigators unearthed a gold *tetarteron* of Alexios I. The coin was accompanied by a number of contemporary ceramic sherds. On the basis of these finds, Chrysostomou argues for the existence of a flourishing town during the Rhomanian period.<sup>670</sup> I have not found any textual evidence to prop up this interpretation. According to Tafel, the last Ancient textual mention of Pella occurs in Stephanus of Byzantium's *Ethnika*. Tafel furthermore states that Pella was called *Palatisia* in Middle Rhomanian times. Since in the Middle Ages *palati* was Latin for palaces (as it is still is today), it could be that the Rhomaioi associated Pella with its Macedonian heritage.<sup>671</sup> However, Tafel fails to substantiate the significance of *Palatisia* with a source.

## 4. Veroia

### A. History

Veroia (Berroia on fig.1) first reappears in the *Vita* of Saint Theodore the Studite (759–826), where it is referred to as a recently-built *kastron* subordinate to the Theme of Thessaloniki.<sup>672</sup> That being said, Kedrenos' allegation that Empress Irene ordered Veroia to be rebuilt in 784 (following an earthquake) is unfounded. Kedrenos is contradicted by the other Rhomanian sources (Zonaras, Leon Grammatikos, and George Harmartolos), who clearly state that Irene visited Bera-in-Thrace.<sup>673</sup> It seems Kedrenos is misdating the earthquake which occurred ca. 900 (see next paragraph). In the same vein, Theophanes tell us that "Veroia" was captured bloodlessly by the Bulgarians in 812.<sup>674</sup> I suspect he too is confusing Veroia with Bera. There is no further proof, even from him, that the Bulgarian presence extended to Macedonia in the early 800s.<sup>675</sup>

Veroia's next mention occurs ca. 900, and deserves scrutiny. According to Moutsopoulos, the Muslim corsairs who sacked Thessaloniki in 904 followed up their exploit by plundering the neighbouring settlements, including Veroia. Moutsopoulos' assertion has been accepted as fact by Hionidis and the

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669 Chrysostomou, 1995, Chrysostomou, 1996.

670 Chrysostomou, 1996, p.134.

671 Tafel, 1972, pp.56-57.

672 Theodore Daphnopates, 1914, p.292.

673 Kedrenos, 1839, p.29, Zonaras, 1870, book 15, p.359, George Hamartolos, 1904, vol. 110, Leon Grammaticus, 1842, p.194.

674 Theophanes, 1997, p.494.

675 Although they did campaign in Western Thrace in 808. Sophoulis, 2011, p.187.

Ephorate of Antiquities of Imathia.<sup>676</sup> But in fact, it is unsubstantiated. Moutsopoulos appears to rely on Chapter 14 of *The Capture of Thessaloniki*, in which Kaminiates tell us that Veroia was recently severely damaged by an earthquake. He then relates the contemporary misfortune of Demetrias, which was sacked in 902: “Then, when in spite of this event [the earthquake in Veroia] we...showed no inclination to turn over a new leaf, He turned to another expedient...In fact, another city in Greece, named Demetrias...fell victim to the barbarian not long before the date of our own capture.”<sup>677</sup> I suspect Moutsopoulos takes “another city in Greece” to mean that another Greek city – namely Veroia – had recently been sacked. But Kaminiates is almost certainly comparing Demetrias to Thessaloniki, especially since his preceding passage on Veroia makes no mention of a sack.

Veroia had at least partially recovered from the aforementioned earthquake by the mid-10<sup>th</sup> century. In the *Notitia 9* (ca. 934-968/970), it is ranked second among Thessaloniki’s bishoprics. By the 970s, it had gained the additional position of Thematic capital. To be sure, this happened at a time when Bulgarian-Rhomanian hostilities were raging. Indeed, Veroia changed hands no less than five times in the space of thirty-one years: in 985, in 991-994, in 997, in 1001/1002, and in 1016.<sup>678</sup> But upon the restoration of peace Veroia’s status was confirmed. It is implied to still have been a Thematic centre in the 1090s. A contemporary letter of Theophylaktos of Ohrid is addressed “to the Sebastos and Dux of Veroia, Lord Constantine...”<sup>679</sup> By that time *duces* were the military officials in charge of Themes. Concurrently (between the 11<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup> centuries) the archives of Mount Athos inform us that the Mountain’s clergymen owned a number of houses and bathhouses in Veroia.<sup>680</sup> We cannot be sure this business truly benefited local tenants, assuming the properties were let out. But clearly, Veroia was well populated. This idea is supported by its inclusion in the *Notitiae Episcopatum 10* and *13* (968/970-1019/1020 and end of reign of Manuel I) and Basil’s third *sigillium* (1020) placing the diocese of Veroia under the jurisdiction of the Archbishopric of Ohrid.

The *Notitiae* and the *sigillium* do not refute the possibility that Veroia lost its Thematic position at some point between 1020 and the 1090s. This could easily have happened due to Peter Delyan’s revolt (which spread to all of Western Macedonia), the Uzes raid of 1064-1065 (see section V). Be that as it may, after the Norman invasion of the 1080s (which Veroia successfully resisted), the town experienced a protracted period of tranquility. The Palaiologan cleric Theodoros Skoutariotes writes that the Vlachs and Bulgarians pillaged Veroia in 1186, but like Theophanes and Kedrenos he is evidently confusing the Macedonian

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676 Hionidis, 1970, p.20.

677 Kaminiates, 2000, pp.25, 27.

678 Zonaras, 1868-1875, p.135.161, Skylitzes, 2010, pp.452, 465.

679 Theophylaktos of Ohrid, 1852, col. 488.

680 Kalpakidis, 2003, p.118.

settlement with Bera. And as of 1204, Veroia possessed an additional urban 'credential' (in addition to its administrative and ecclesiastical ones): the presence of a local *archon*, George Pakourianos.

## B. Archaeology

On the southeast slope of Toumba Stadium<sup>681</sup>, three seasons of excavating have identified a series of densely populated, consecutive building phases. They contained an abundance of coins and pottery, most of which dated to the 10<sup>th</sup>-13<sup>th</sup> centuries. There were two small living areas (both 5 m. wide and 3.80 m long) on the west side of the plot, one of them with a kiln (diameter: 1.30 m.). They too were assigned an 11<sup>th</sup>-13<sup>th</sup> century lifetime. The design of the walls was a crude affair: mud and rubble with a few intermediate tiles.

Next, on the western slope of the acropolis, four sites were uncovered in the 1970s and 1990s.<sup>682</sup> The first one yielded a structure dating to the 5<sup>th</sup> or 6<sup>th</sup> century. It was supported by massive underpinnings, suggesting that it was a very tall building with several stories. A major alteration occurred at some point during the Middle Rhomanian Period. Two of the original three rooms were divided in half, using mud-built walls 0.50 m. wide. The latter barriers contrast sharply with the walls from the Paleochristian era, which were made of carefully cut limestone. The presence of a hoard of twenty-seven *folles* of Leo the Wise next to one of the walls suggests that the edifice survived until at least 912. Newer walls were founded above the original building, but their date has not been established. On the second plot (belonging to a certain Lazarides), several buildings were found. It is claimed by Pasaras and Tsanana that the structures functioned either as workshops, storehouses, or stables, since several such buildings had existed there before the Middle Rhomanian Period. The plot's proximity to the Tripotamos River (a subsidiary of the Aliakmon approximately 200 m. away) would certainly have been useful for workshops and stables, although probably not storehouses.<sup>683</sup> On the basis of some glazed pottery in a destruction layer (in one of the buildings), the site's date has been narrowed down to the end-of-the-12<sup>th</sup>- early 13<sup>th</sup> centuries. Third, a commercial complex was discovered in 1991.<sup>684</sup> It belonged to four phases:

- a) several walls, undated.
- b) an oblong building with a wine press, dating to the late 7<sup>th</sup> -late 10<sup>th</sup>/early 11<sup>th</sup> century.
- c) a pottery kiln dating to the 11<sup>th</sup> century.
- d) two 12<sup>th</sup> century oblong buildings, though to have functioned as storerooms or workshops.

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681 The stadium was built in 1925, on the site of the Medieval acropolis. In the process, the hill was leveled.

682 Pasaras, 1992.

683 Moreover, on the fertile plain of Western Macedonia, it is not uncommon for rivers to have been diverted in Modern times. Hence the Tripotamos could have been further east in the Middle Ages – and closer to the Lazarides plot.

684 Pasaras and Tsanana, 1991, p.298.

Lastly, in 1991, a building with five dozen coins from Late Antiquity was revealed on an adjacent plot. Operations were then suspended because of the weather. As of 2017 it is unknown when or if they will resume.

The only fully intact Rhomanian building in Veroia is the Basilica of the Old Metropolis (dimensions: 37.80 m. x 17.80 m.). It is located on Vasileios Constantinos street, about 1.5 km. south of Toumba. The triple-aisled, triple-apsed monument is the largest non-military structures in my area of study. Curiously, it is significantly larger than Kitros' basilica (dimensions 23.20 m. x 16.60 m.), despite Veroia being consistently outranked by Kitros in the *Notitiae Episcopatum* (Appendix F, table 2). Given that Veroia was a Thematic capital from 975 onwards, the grading may have reflected its greater populousness (and therefore need for a higher-capacity basilica). Similarly, at Servia – which was lower down the episcopal ladder than Kitros but a Thematic capital by 1163– the basilica's dimensions were approximately 30 m. x 12 m. 30 m.

Despite the Turkish occupation, the basilica's configuration does not seem to have undergone many alterations (the only exception being the semi-circular arches of the upper windows, which the Turks replaced with pointed ones). The east and north walls' windows were bilobed and decorated with toothed arches. This points to a church of the 11<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup> centuries, as does the building's masonry (which alternates between stones/ horizontal terra-cotta and clumps of mortar). On the other hand, the northern half of the building's roof is sloped, in the manner of Hellenistic basilicas.<sup>685</sup> Even more importantly, the north door is crowned by an architrave featuring flower mouldings. Such overt decorations were popular in pagan Roman and Paleochristian basilicas, but had fallen out of fashion by the end of the Iconoclastic period. Flower mouldings were still being made, but they were now more low-key in design and function. For example, instead of surrounding the interior spaces of churches or standing atop front doors, they tended to be the center-pieces of triptychs, ivory caskets, and cosmetic tools.

On the strength of an inscription on the north aisle's floor, the basilica is thought to have been dedicated ca. 1078 by Nikitas, Bishop of Veroia.<sup>686</sup> The inscription does not bear a date, but Nikitas' position is attested in a transaction document of 1078.<sup>687</sup> I would therefore speculate that the building was of Paleochristian origin (or earlier), but was restored by Nikitas (and credited to himself). The Old Metropolis might not be the only religious building dating to Middle Rhomanian times. One of the columns of the Church of Christ Pantocrator<sup>688</sup> bears an inscription dedicated to the Bishop of Veroia:

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685 Unfortunately the southern half of the roof has been destroyed, so it is impossible to know if the roof ever exemplified the Hellenistic style.

686 Papazotos, 1994, p.90.

687 Marge and Matskani, 2007, pp. 72–73, 78.

688 Present location: Mitropoleos street.



“...Βασιλείου του Θεοφιλεστατου ἐπισκόπου Βεῤῥοίας...”<sup>689</sup> The text also describes Basil as the owner of a bath: “...το παρὸν λοετρὸν ἐπὶ Βασιλείου...” Papazotos claims that the inscription has been dated to 1123, though he does not support his reasoning. Possibly the bath was founded in the same year.<sup>690</sup> Also worth noting is a bronze icon found in the sanctuary of the church of Agios Antonios (founded in 1860). In an unusual design, the icon’s backside has two sigillographic inscriptions moulded into it. These purportedly are of 12<sup>th</sup> century origin.

This brings me to the fortifications. The principal surviving section can be found just outside the Byzantine Museum. It measures approximately 30 m. long and has the shape of a ‘v’, with the apex pointing east. I will describe both exterior faces of the v.<sup>691</sup>

- a) The southeastern face (fig. 9) measures 20 m. There are several construction phases. The lowermost consists of approximate ashlar masonry. Some stones are perfectly cut, but a significant percentage have very rounded edges. Judging by these traits, and by the stones' sizes, I would say they originate from Hellenistic or Antique Roman times. The stratum is superimposed by another layer. This one is probably Later-middle Roman; it makes abundant use of porous limestone and terra-cotta (in addition to white-sandy mortar), and the stones are fairly heterogeneously sized/shaped but arranged in regular courses. Next, about 11 m. northeast of the wall’s vertical edge and at ground level, there is a layer of rubble masonry. I would assign it a 7<sup>th</sup> century *terminus post quem*, since it is bound by mud mortar. Above it lies a Cyclopean stratum. Lastly, the Cyclopean blocks are superimposed by a revetment (or a solid layer, it is hard to tell) of brown-red terra cotta.
- b) The northeastern face (fig. 10) contains, from bottom to top, a Hellenistic/Antique Roman phase or *spolia*, a rough stonework phase, a probable *spolia* phase, and another rough stonework phase. This arrangement prevails for about 3 m., after which the upper three strata are reduced to one, of rough stonework. Then, a further 1 m. to the east, the bottommost layer disappears too. The rough stonework strata are vaguely similar to Type B masonry, but they lack any terra-cotta, and their dark-brown (as opposed to whitish-yellow, whitish-grey, pinkish-white, white, or pink) mortar is uncharacteristic for Medieval Greece.

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689 Papazotos, 1994, p.91. Possibly the same Basil bishop of Veroia whom Laurent has assigned by seal to 1050-1100. Laurent, 1963, p.343.

690 Papazotos, 1994, p.91.

691 The interior faces are smothered by contemporary residences.



**Figures 9-10.** Veroia, wall near Byzantine Museum.

The archaeological finds are too vague to allow for any conclusions on the qualitative evolution of the buildings. Nor do they attest to industrial activity, with the exceptions of the kilns southeast and west of Toumba. But they confirm the surge in economic activity (from the 10<sup>th</sup> century onwards) suggested by the chroniclers and *Notitiae Episcopatum*, and put Veroia in the running for being an ‘in-between’ settlement.

## 5. Dovrokouvistis

The precise location of Dovrokouvistis (not to be confused with Drougouviteia, discussed in Section 6) has not been established. In the *Partitio Romaniae*, it appears beside the *chartolouraton* of Sthlanitza. But Sthlanitza itself has not been pinpointed on the map. Our best clue originates from the biography of an anonymous 12<sup>th</sup>-century monk, which states that “in March 1149 the basilica of the monastery of Joseph was founded by the emperor Manuel Komnenos...not in Thessaloniki...but in the *χωριον* of the theme of Veroia which is called Dovrokouvitsis, separated from Thessaloniki by a two day horse ride...about two *milia* from the κάστρο of Veroia...”<sup>692</sup> This strongly suggests that Dovrokouvistis was located on the Pella-Veroia branch of the *demosia leophoros*, two *milia* outside Veroia (see fig. 21). So, if we can locate the branch, we will effectively have found Dovrokouvistis.

*Χωριον* can be broadly translated as ‘village.’ Yet the monk’s description may have been outdated by the end of the 12<sup>th</sup> century. For one thing, the Chrysobull of 1198 indicates that Dovrokouvistis was home to a Venetian colony.<sup>693</sup> For one another, the community was then the seat of an administrative unit known as a *chartoularaton*. *Chartoularaton* are not really part of the *thema-droungos-turma* hierarchy, for they only become common in the 13<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>694</sup> Yet the position of *chartoularios* already existed during my period of interest, as far back as the 9<sup>th</sup> century. And it frequently involved high-ranking assignments (see appendix C.V). This makes it plausible that the *chartoularaton* of Dovrokouvistis was an administrative center, which is one of my urban criteria.

## 6. Drougouviteia

### A. Etymology and location

Drougouviteia, which took its name from the Drogouvitai, has yet to be located on the map. One clue is provided courtesy of the 19<sup>th</sup> century scholar Tafel, who comments that “Drugubitia” lies between Veroia and Thessaloniki.<sup>695</sup> It does not help that the name Drogouvitai had multiple variations: Drugubitia, Dragouvitai, Dourgavitias, Druguvites, etc.<sup>696</sup> The etymologist I. Dujcev proposes that “Drogouviteia” has its origins in the Slavic word *drega*, which is to say “forest” or “swamp”.<sup>697</sup> In other words, the

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<sup>692</sup> Hionidis, 1970, p.20.

<sup>693</sup> Zepos, J. and Zepos, F., p.469.

<sup>694</sup> Magdalino, 1992, p.34, Theodorides, 1970, p.306

<sup>695</sup> Tafel, 1839, p.50.

<sup>696</sup> Thus in *Η Βεροία και οι ναοί της*, Papazotos considers Dovrokouvitsis and Drougouviteia to be one and the same. Papazotos, 1994, p.52. I suspect he is relying too heavily on Drougouviteia’s mention in the 10th century *Nova Tactica*. There, the settlement is recorded as ‘Dourgouvitiou’, which is fairly similar to ‘Dovrokouvitsis’. Gelzer, 1890, p.68, no.1391.

<sup>697</sup> Dujčev, 1964, p.221.

Drougouvitaï initially had a different name, and rebaptized themselves upon settling down in Western Macedonia. On that basis, Dujčev traces Drougouvitaï's location to the now-drained Lake Giannitsa, whose shores were lined by swampland. Dujčev's theory appears credible, since several present-day localities in present-day Upper Macedonia and Bulgaria <sup>698</sup> are found in mountainous or forested territories, and have root words which evoke *drega*: Dragovec, Dragovica, Dragoica, Draga, and Dragor.

<sup>699</sup>

## B. History

In section II, I noted Drougouvitaï had become a bishopric by the Council of 879-880. It retained this position in the *Notitiae* 7, 9, 10, and and 13 (901-907, ca. 934-968/970, 968/970-1019/1020, and end of reign of Manuel I. In the *Escorial Taktikon* (ca. 975) <sup>700</sup>, Drougouviteia is listed as the seat of a Theme. What happened to the Drougouvitaï and their Slavic ethnicity during these years? This much is certain: the tribe still existed in name by the second half of the 11th century. A contemporary seal attests to the existence of a *protospatharios*, *hypatos*, and judge of the Velum. <sup>701</sup> The seal speaks of the “Δρουγοβιτών”, so of the Drougoviton people. Also, the conversion to Christianity that took place in the 9<sup>th</sup> century (or earlier) could have involved a fraction of the tribe – namely one that dwelt in the eponymous town.

## 7. Kampania

Kampania (also known as Kastrion or Kastrin before 1926) is one of the lower ranking bishoprics of Thessaloniki in the *Notitiae* 10 and 13 (968/970-1019/1020 and end of reign of Manuel I). But its location is the subject of a minor debate. In Kantakouzenos' *History*, it is implied to be near Likostomo (itself in the Vale of Tempe): Καὶ ἐκ τῶν Θεσσαλίας πολιχνίων τὸ Λυκοστόμιον λεγόμενον καὶ τὸ Καστρίον. <sup>702</sup> Conversely, Leake tell us that the Bishop of Campania formerly resided at Kapsokhori (an erstwhile village between the Aliakmon and the Mavroneri), and that he now resided at Kulakia (modern Chalastra, 1 km. east of the Axios. <sup>703</sup> In other words, Kampanias may fall outside the limits of my chosen geographical zone. But Kantakouzenos' credibility is higher than Leake's, since he was alive when Kampania existed and conducted several military expeditions in Western Macedonia (meaning he must have been familiar with the region's human geography). Moreover, Leake neglects to provide a reference.

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<sup>698</sup> But which probably have an ancient origin.

<sup>699</sup> Dujčev, 1964, p.220. For his part, Vasmer notes that Drougouviteia comes from the word drugovati, meaning “to be allied.” This not particularly helpful in narrowing down the settlement's location. Vasmer, 1941, p.177.

<sup>700</sup> Oikonomides, 1972, p.357.

<sup>701</sup> Jordanov, 2003, no.24.10.

<sup>702</sup> Schopen, 1828, p.4.19.

<sup>703</sup> Leake, 1835, vol. 3, pp.360, 380, vol.4, p.298.



## 8. Kolindros

Kolindros<sup>704</sup> is ranked tenth in the *Notitia* 7 (901-907), ninth in the *Notitia* 10 (968/970-1019/1020) and eleventh in the *Notitia* 13 (end of reign of Manuel I). It was actually a see of Larissa, but the Rhomanian's concept of ecclesiastical borders was highly porous. Although absent from the *Notitia* 9 (ca. 934-968-970), it was captured by the Bulgarians in 986-997.<sup>705</sup> The enemy may have been attracted by Kolindros' strategic importance. Given what we know of the *demosia lephoros* (see fig. 1), it must either have passed through Kolindros or roughly 5-15 km. away from it.

## 9. Platamon

Platamon's most noteworthy feature is a four-level stronghold, extending over two hectares (fig. 11). The first level was a polygonal enclosure. This was followed by an internal wall, which shared the southwest angle of the outer enclosure. Then, at the top of a hill, there was a curtain wall which protected a 16 m. wide octagonal tower. The tower included three floors and a basement. Most of these architectural elements are all the work of the Franks. However, in the polygonal tower a cistern has been found and dated to the Middle Rhomanian period. How much of the tower belonged to the Rhomanians, then? To when should we trace its origin? It is hard to tell, given how heavily the Franks borrowed from the Greeks in terms of masonry. Still, there are several clues at our disposal. To begin, the entrance to



**Figure 11.** Platamon Castle. Paulick, 2016.

<sup>704</sup> The name is a holdover from Byzantine times, not a product of the contemporary Greek government.

<sup>705</sup> Skylitzes, 1973, 344.93.



**Figure 12.** Platamon's castle, gate of outer enclosure.



**Figure 13.** Platamon's castle, door of inner enclosure.

the inner enclosure features a pair of flanking half-columns and a lintel, all three made of marble (figs. 12-13). The entrance to the outer enclosure is ornamented with a semi-cylindrical arch. The arch's stone fabric is divided into neatly equal blocks by mortar. There do seem to be some signs of cost-cutting or rushed work. The half-columns do not actually connect with the lintel, and the arch's stone is of the porous kind. But overall, the doorways feel more like structures that one would expect to see in a palace than a castle. On that note, the inner entrance was located in a zone relatively safe from attack by besiegers. The outer entrance was much more exposed. But how it compared to the half-columns in terms of expensive is open to question. The two crucial factors are how durable (and therefore how to difficult to cut) the limestone in question is, and how abundant and accessible it was to Platamon's Medieval architects. Thus, the castle's lord may not have been risking much by placing the semi-cylindrical arch in an exposed location. The point I am making is that – much like the cornices of the castle in Livadia – Platamon's two entrances served a decorative rather than defensive function. As such, they arguably reflect the growing popularity of palatial castles in 14<sup>th</sup>-15<sup>th</sup> century Western Europe. Second, one of the octagonal towers' windows is divided by a column decorated with a moulded cross. Third, elaborately-shaped towers were more characteristic of Frankish architecture. I would even advance that the tower qualifies as a display of palatial architecture, because such towers possessed many more angles than their square and rectangular counterparts. Consequently, they were more liable to sustain damage during a siege.<sup>706</sup>

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<sup>706</sup> The outer curtain of Platamon has many angles too, and it would obviously have been at the front line of any storming attempt. But the each of the angles is fully covered by a tower.

Outside the castle, two plots are of interest. First, on the northeast side of the hill, a trial investigation located a church in 1989.<sup>707</sup> It consisted of two rooms with a narthex and a three-sided niche at its eastern end. Within the building were found a breastplate dating to the end-of-the-10<sup>th</sup>–early 11<sup>th</sup> century and a liturgical vessel broken into 48 pieces. The vessel was wholly restored by the investigation's ceramic specialist. Its stylistic approach places its creation in the same era as the breastplate. Second, a rescue excavation on the northern slope of the hill uncovered a bronze pectoral cross dating to the 10<sup>th</sup>-11<sup>th</sup> centuries.<sup>708</sup> This leads me to suspect that a graveyard or cemetery existed in the vicinity, connected to the church. The use of ground-penetrating radar should hopefully shed some light on the matter, since (despite the investigation's character) the plot's natural stratigraphy is still accessible today.

In summary, solid material evidence for a pre-Frankish phase on the site is effectively confined to the polygonal tower's cistern. The gap is partially made up for by Idrisi. The geographer reports that "Platamon is a prosperous town, whose houses are distinguished and the residences magnificent, its territory is agreeable and enjoys abundant resources. One sees ships casting anchor and docking into its port."<sup>709</sup> Idrisi's words aside, there is good reason to believe Middle Rhomanian Platamon was an urban settlement by the 12<sup>th</sup> century. It commanded the *demosia leophoros* (or stood adjacent to it), appears in the 1198 Chrysobull, and is referred to as a bishopric four years after the Fourth Crusade.<sup>710</sup>

## 10. Kitros

Kitros (Antique Pydna) is situated on the western edge of the Bay of Thessaloniki, at a place where the coastline alternates between rocky cliffs and long, sandy beaches. Its first Later-middle Roman mention is in the Council of 879-880.<sup>711</sup>

### A. Archaeology

The archaeological evidence can be summarized as follows:

- a) In 1989, the remains of a cluster of edifices - namely a bathhouse, an inn, a wall, and a small cemetery church with two 13<sup>th</sup> century ceramic stoves - were discovered 1 km. southeast of Makrygialos. The bathhouse consisted of a *caldarium* and *praeefurnium*.

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<sup>707</sup> Loverdou-Tsigarida, 1993.

<sup>708</sup> Loverdou-Tsigarida, 1997.

<sup>709</sup> Idrisi, 1999, p.409.

<sup>710</sup> See Section I, Zepos J., and Zepos, P., p.469, Migne, 215, p.1433.

<sup>711</sup> Canivez, 1953, col. 898. The transition from Pydna to Kitros apparently occurred in the 6th-7th century. Ephorate of Pieria, 2015.



Figure 14. The *caldarium* at Kitros. Dimensions: 7.50 m. x 2.90 m.

- b) Regarding the inn, there was initially no evidence that it was reserved for guests. Indeed, the space's restricted dimensions and lack of any "public" architectural features suggest the opposite. In 1991, however, further investigation revealed that the complex contained three fully enclosed rooms, a lairage with a courtyard, and a portico. At this point it was assigned two construction phases. One room and the lairage- yielded pottery with champlevé decoration, undecorated scrap utensils such as kettles, jars, jugs, a *folles* of Alexios I dating to 1081-1092, and an anonymous *folles* dating to 1030-1042. On the basis of these finds, the rooms and lairage have been traced to the same period as the bathhouse. The complex's rooms date back to the mid-12<sup>th</sup> century. The smaller of the two was equipped with an inglenook and a plaster coating on its walls, making it probable that it functioned as the inkeeper's quarters. Did the two phases overlap? Probably, for a hoard of fifteen coin lay hidden in the west wall of the 'inkeepers' room. They dated to the reigns of Manuel I, Isaac Angelos, and Alexios Angelos. Accordingly, there is a possibility that the hoard was created in response to the arrival of the Franks, who besieged and stormed Kitros in 1204. Karagiannis has interpreted the smaller room as a workshop, because next to the inglenook were the fragments of an oven. The heating device was pierced by five channels, within which was found a handful of glazed shells and two currencies of Manuel I. In my opinion, the oven was used for domestic rather than industrial purposes. I cannot think of any workshop equipment that would need to be pierced with five channels, save a water basin. The pottery and coins could simply be refuse, tossed in after the arrival of the Franks.
- c) The *caldarium*, 11 m. east of the inn, was a rectangular building made of brick masonry (fig. 14). Heat was transported to it via mortar-lined clay pipes, rather than the hollow space under the floor. On two embankments outside the bathhouse complex, investigators located 12<sup>th</sup>



century pottery and currency from Alexios I and Manuel I. Some might see the clay pipe this arrangement as a technological step forward from the Roman period: first, clay pipes would have been better heat conveyors than the traditional method, and second, they would have required less protective mortar than a chamber full of brick pillars (or stone, as is the case here). But it would be more accurate to describe the hypocaust as a display of clever engineering. Its components were the same as those used in the 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> century AD.; they were merely arranged in a more resourceful way. The *praefurnium* does not seem to have been conserved after its exhumation. On my visit to the site, in 2016, I was unable to locate it. There is no explicit evidence on the bathhouse's ownership, but I suspect it was open to the public. While evidence for provincial baths in the Middle period is scanty<sup>712</sup>, it is difficult to believe that a private owner would have wanted his bathhouse adjacent to an inn, a type of accommodation whose clientele had a dubious reputation among respectable travellers.

- d) Approximately 180 m. north of the first cluster stands the remains of an enclosed castle. The stronghold was founded during the reign of Justinian, but was rebuilt in the 10<sup>th</sup> century, following the passage of the Bulgars (913-927). The main vestige that has survived is a north wall-room-interior platform compound, along with part of a nearby east enclosure. I will describe both the compound and the enclosure. The interior face of the compound is made of rough brick and stone bands mixed with *spolia*. In contrast to the way Medieval Roman *spolia* was generally employed, this one occurs not at the wall's angles or base but everywhere else. It is also distributed in an extremely disorderly fashion. The wall's thickness matches that of its Justinianic predecessor, but the mortar has been poorly applied. It covers massive sections of the stones and bricks – to the point there is frequently as much mortar as stone and brick. Evidently too much liquid mortar was added to the joints and it spilled onto the vertical face.

Regarding the exterior face, the thickness and masonry style are the same, except that there is less *spolia* to be seen (though the recycled material is still distributed in a random fashion). The mortar's presence remains overbearing. It actually almost entirely obstructs a 2 m. horizontal stretch of the wall (fig. 15). This seems to bear witness to construction work that was rushed in character.

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712 See Magdalino, 1986, p.175 and III.12.B.

When it comes to the eastern enclosure, one half essentially replicates the design of the afore-mentioned walls. The other half has much less elaborate masonry. The variations in shape and size of the stones (there are no bricks) are so great that it is hardly possible to distinguish any courses. Overall, though, I would suggest the two enclosures' construction is a close match for Type B masonry (mid-9<sup>th</sup> century onwards).

- e) In addition to the castle, the enclosure is home to the ruins of a single-aisled, triple-apsed basilica (fig. 17). Measuring 23.20 m. x 16.60 m., liberally furnished with mosaics, frescoes, and sculptures, and possessing an ambulatory, it shows every sign of having been the local bishop's seat. The best described element are two small annexes (4.35 m. x 3.90 m.) north of the main building. The first room had a stratigraphic layer filled with interior domestic utensils: scales, a glass oil lamp, some unglazed vessels, bone needles, and food residues (including fish bones and sea shells). There were also half a dozen *tetartera* of Manuel I. In the centre of the room, two pits were excavated. They were found to contain nails, ash, and cooking pottery from the 12<sup>th</sup> century. Access to the area was made via the staircase of the exonarthex. Marki considers that the room belonged to the church's sexton, and that it was burned by the Franks. If we accept his premise, it is likely the two pits were created after 1204, and were used to discard some of the former owner's belongings. For a while the room was connected [via two entrances] to another adjacent annex to the west. This space yielded a layer with late-12<sup>th</sup> century burned pottery and large fragments of vases with spouts (which may have served to supply oil lamps). It apparently served as an alternative method of access to the sexton's room. Entrances were eventually constructed in the room's east wall. When this happened, the western entrances were blocked with makeshift mud-built walls.
- f) There is another stone building roughly 40 m. southwest of the castle, and situated mainly in a ditch (fig. 16). It has not yet been the subject of a large-scale field study. What I can say at present is that the masonry of the walls is an assortment of spolia, poorly-cut ashlar bands, and rubble, with frequent horizontal terra-cotta plinths. Again, the description corresponds more or less to Type B masonry.



**Figure 16.** The structure southwest of Kitros' castle.

I have three comments on the above information, provided by Marki. First, since the stone building was possibly contemporaneous with the inn/bathhouse/pottery workshop and the castle, we might be looking at an 'intermediate' settlement (see Chapter 1.II). Then again, since we do not know whether the stone building and the inn/bathhouse/workshop cluster formed part of Kitros, it is premature to draw definite conclusions.

Second, Marki asserts that the basilica dates to the 10<sup>th</sup> century. She implies that when the Bulgarians seized control of Kitros in 913-927<sup>713</sup>, they burned down not just the castle but the Justinianic basilica. Yet such circumstantial reasoning is unsatisfactory, even when combined with the presence of a triple-apse configuration in the episcopal basilica. It would be more reasonable to give the monument a 1204 *terminus ante quem*, given the presence of ash and 12<sup>th</sup> century pottery (some of it burned) in the annexes and the date of the Franks' capture of Kitros. Nevertheless, the theory that the Franks destroyed the basilica is itself not irrefutable. The ash and burned pottery could be explained as cooking material. And even though neither annex has yielded a heating appliance, there must have been one nearby, given the presence of cooking pottery in the first annex.

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713 The chronology of our only explicit source on the Bulgarian capture of Kitros, the anonymous treatise *De obsidione toleranda*, is ambiguous. Van den Berg, 1947, 52.8-11. Though most scholars attribute its capture to the men of Symeon, Makrypoulias proposes a later date, either 986 or 996. Makrypoulias, 2013, pp.91-92.



**Figure 16.** The structure southwest of Kitros' castle.

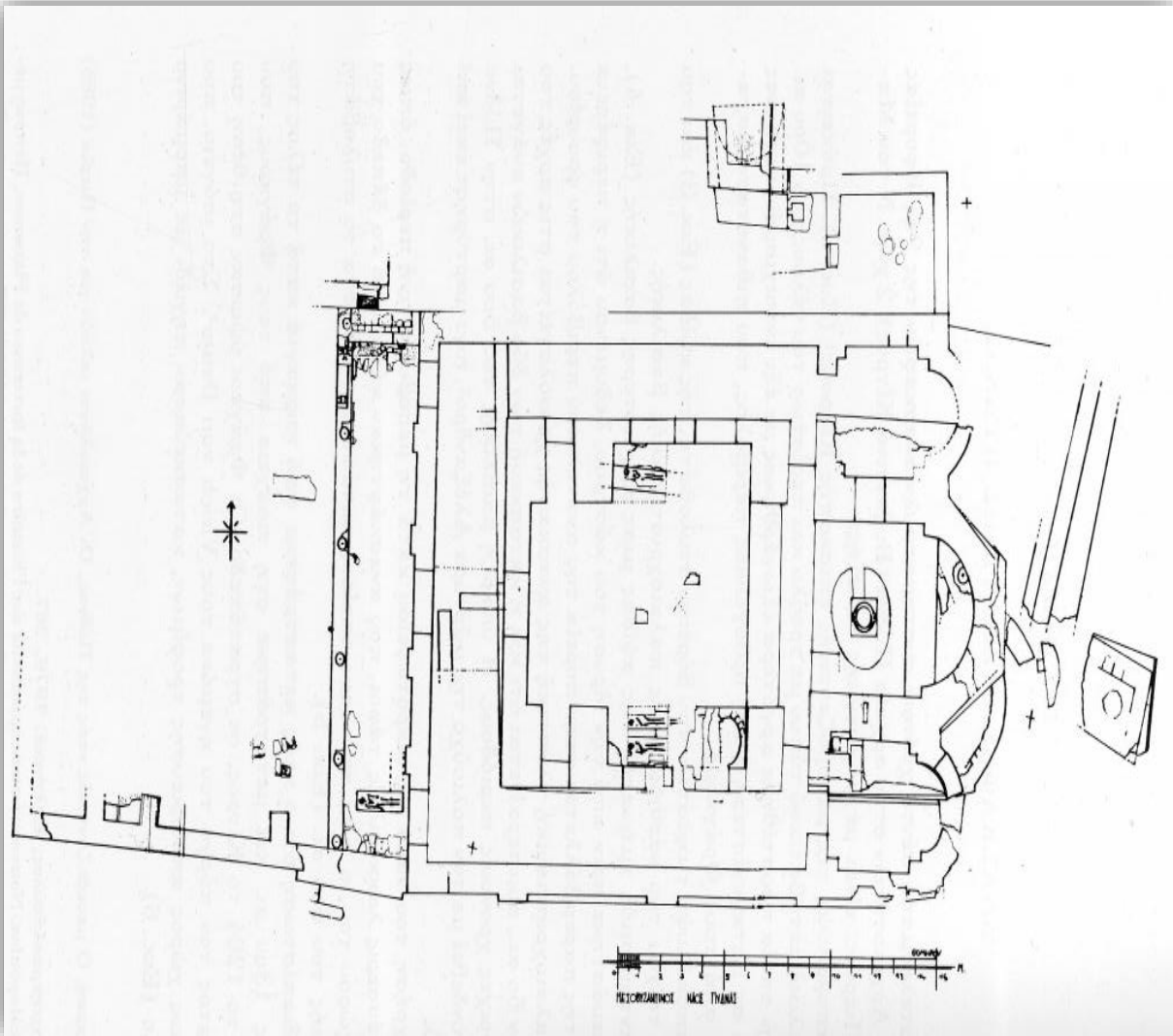


Figure 17. The Episcopal basilica of Kitros. Marki, 1988, p.196.

Third, on the basis of the position of the inn/pottery workshop/bathhouse cluster (no more than 25 m. west of the sea) Marki contends that Kitros possessed a port. I initially disagreed with her. After all, the buildings could have been placed where they were to facilitate their resupply (in food, water, charcoal and wood) by land, since they stood at the southeastern end of a long stretch of level ground. Even the pottery workshop's presence does not constitute proof of a harbour. Certainly, the clay in pottery manufacturing requires water, since it needs to be kept moist during the fashioning stage. But water could have been fetched without the use of shipping facilities. Perhaps most revealingly, no docking facility vestiges have come to light, be they moles, lighthouses, nails, walls, or goods. Idrisi does remark that the fastest route from Kitros to Thessaloniki was by sea: "From there [Kitros] to Thessaloniki, by the most direct route (by sea)..." But a port was not indispensable for this mode of transportation. One could

easily have rowed a canoe to a ship waiting off-shore.<sup>714</sup> However, there is one undeniable piece of evidence: in eleven Venetian *colleganze* dating to 1167-1168, Kitros is implied to be a commercial calling point on the Constantinople-Alexandria trade route.<sup>715</sup>

The apparent relative delay in building a port – the Venetians were not granted the right to trade in Kitros in any of the pre-1160s chrysobulls – might seem surprising, until we consider that the town failed to meet all the Rhomanian criteria for a port. There were four benchmarks: the presence of a sandy beach, a rocky area that offered protection from currents, winds, and enemy attack, being located on a road or at the mouth of an inland river, and the existence of a body of fresh water for sailors. Kitros fulfilled the first three prerequisites, but not the fourth. Though there is a modest-sized marsh 4 km. southeast of the Rhomanian settlement, its water is salty. Kitros' need for a port would have been alleviated by the existence of the coastal road between it and the Axios (see Chapter 4.I). Such a road would do much to explain why Kitros consistently remained Thessaloniki's highest-ranking bishopric, Idrisi described it as "a considerable town, prosperous, strong, endowed with markets and a fertile territory", and the Chrysobull of 1198 refers to it as the seat of a *katepanikion* (a province comprising a fortified town and its surroundings).<sup>716</sup>

## 11. Servia

### A. History

Servia's first Medieval mention occurs in the *Notitia* 7 (901-907)<sup>717</sup>, where it is ranked fifth among the Metropolis of Thessaloniki's sees (see Appendix F, table 3). Sigillographic evidence attests to the existence of a Bishop John of Servia in the 9<sup>th</sup>/10<sup>th</sup> century. Servia's rank remains consistent in the subsequent *Notitiae*, except in the *Notitia* 13, where it falls to sixth place. This ecclesiastical responsibility was, as of

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714 Idrisi, 1999, p.409. The French translation, courtesy of Nef and Bresc, is : "De la [Kitros] a Thessalonique, par la voie la plus directe (par la mer)..."The same point applies to an anecdote in the *Life of St Phantinos the Younger*. It tells the story of a young slave who was captured by the Bulgarians. Taken to Kolindros, he managed to escape on foot to Kitros, and thence proceeded by boat to Thessaloniki. Follieri, 1993, p.61.

715 Morozzo della Rocca and Lombardo, 1940, nos. 183, 187, 188, 189, 190, 193, 194, 195, 196, 197, 198.

716 Zepos, J., and Zepos, P., p.469, Theocharides, 1954, pp.70-71.

717 According to Constantine Porphyrogenetos, Servia obtained its current name in the early 7th century. At that time, a group of Serbs from "beyond Turkey in a place called by them Boiki", sought sanctuary in the Roman Empire. Heraclius responded favourably to their request, and granted them the site of Servia. The Serbs thus became servants of the emperor, seeing as 'Servia' equates to the Latin word 'servio', I serve. A different viewpoint is emitted by the 19th century Kozanian scholar Harisios Megdanis. According to him, Servia came from the Latin verb "servo", meaning 'I watch over', 'protect.' Both reasonings are defensible. On one hand, Servia watch the plain below the citadel and a road leading from Macedonia to Thessaly). On the other, it was a common Roman practice to grant asylum to cooperative nomadic people. One thing is clear, the Serbian occupation – if it did occur – has left very little for modern-day archaeologist to work with.

1163, supplemented by a position as Thematic capital.<sup>718</sup> During the ulterior part of the Roman-Bulgarian conflict of 976-1018, Servia was caught in the line of fire. It was captured by Samuel in 987-989.<sup>719</sup> In 1101, Basil II laid siege to Servia, but grew tired of waiting and concluded that the place was too strong to be taken by force: “Πολλὰ οὖν οὗτος κοπιάσας και ἀγρυπνήσας ενιαυτον ολον εις το ελειν αυτην απολεμητον οὔσαν κρατησαι ουκ ἴσχυσεν”. He eventually gained possession of Servia by having his men climb through a conduit of a bath below the walls. The walls were then razed, Kekaumenos tells us.<sup>720</sup> Presumably he is not strictly accurate, since the Bulgarians attempted to regain Servia almost as soon as they had lost it<sup>721</sup>). Nothing more is heard of the town until the mid-13<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>722</sup>

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718 The information is derived from an 1163 fiscal document written to the Bishop of Stagoi by a high-ranking functionary, in response a request by the Bishop for certain privileges. The document mentions in passing that Stagoi falls under the jurisdiction of the “Theme of Servia.” Astruc, 1959, p.223.

719 Xingopoulos, 1957, p.7.

720 Kekaumenos, 1998, pp.110-113.

721 Curta, 2006, p.281.

722 The contemporary *Chronicle of the Morea* describes Servia as a *χαστέλλι*. Four generations later Kantakouzenos more or less confirms the *Chronicle*’s words: “That city is situated at the top of a peak on the border between Bottiaia and Thessaly. It seems to float in the air. On this summit the city is divided by three sets of walls.”



## B. Archaeology

The elaborate and geographically forbidding nature of Servia's fortifications make clear that the town was of appreciable strategic importance. This is not surprising, considering that it commanded the two Macedonia-Thessalian roads running through Chasia and Cambunia (see section I).

Confirming this interpretation, archaeological evidence (for which I must thank the 11<sup>th</sup> Ephorate of



**Figure 18.** Plan of the fortifications of Servia. Petkos, 2009, p.6.

Byzantine Antiquities) – shows that the castle was superbly protected. As indicated previously, there



were three levels: a lower town, an upper town, and a citadel (fig. 18). The levels were perched on a very steep, rock-strewn hill. They enclosed 0.6 hectares, 4.94 hectares, and 18.5 hectares, respectively. No fewer than four construction phases have been identified: one dating to the 6<sup>th</sup> century (parts of the enceinte), the second to the reign of Leo the Armenian (the south tower of the citadel), the third to the reign of Romanos Lekapenos (same zone as before), and the fourth to the 11<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup> century (everything else). I will supplement the 11<sup>th</sup> Ephorate's data with a few personal observations on the citadel (fig. 19), which can be categorised into two parts:

a) The enclosure. I have found it necessary to subdivide it into four sections.

- The northwest tower. From top to bottom it exhibits at least four strata. The first, 4 m. high, is rubble masonry with terra-cotta in the horizontal gaps. It is mostly devoid of mortar. The second layer, 10 m. high, is similar to the previous one. However, it is practically buried in mortar. In the next layer, 3 m. high, a significant percentage of the stones are large (albeit badly cut) rectangles/squares. The mortar is close to the surface, but not ubiquitous. The last layer consists of randomly arranged oblong blocks, again bound together by pervasive quantities of mortar. A single window survives; it is mono-lobed on the interior, with a semi-circular toothed arc made of terra-cotta. Half of the tower has fallen away, as shown on figure 19.



Figure 19. Aerial view of the citadel of Servia. Petkos, 2009, p.7.

- The northeast tower, approximately 22 m. northwest of the previous one. It features rubble masonry and terra-cotta (in the horizontal gaps) partially buried by mortar.
  - The southwest tower (height: approximately 15 m.). It seems to have been pentagonal, though one of its faces is missing. From top to bottom it displays three layers. One has courses of square/rectangular blocks bound by inconsistent amounts of mortar, the second stones of all shapes and sizes and regular amounts of mortar, and the third terra-cotta and (for the most part) mortar-bound oblong blocks arranged in courses. One of the tower's angles consists of large square blocks of *spolia*.
  - The citadel's curtain itself (width: approximately 1.60-1.80 m.). Its masonry is generally heterogeneous, spaced-out stones, though there is one case apart. The stretch of wall directly below the northeast tower features a distinctive layer, consisting of courses of rough masonry. The stones are almost invariably rectangular or oblong, and in one (6 m. x 4 m.) sector the 'buried mortar' configuration crops up again. Its northeast corner cuts straight through where the missing half of the northeast tower would have stood.
- b) The intra-mural buildings.
- A destruction layer.
  - A two-level wall (possibly of the buttressing variety).
  - A room (8 m. x 6 m.) partially submerged by the two-level wall. It had a tiny stone tower at the centre of its surface. The tower's upper half is hollow, while the lower-half is solid. We may be looking at an offering box. Its masonry comprises fairly regular but roughly-cut stone courses with liberal amount of terra-cotta. The room is paralleled by a morphologically similar structure on the north side of the entrance passageway. It contained a stone basin (4 m. x 4 m.), possibly a water reservoir. The masonry is similar, except that it is devoid of terracotta.
  - A square, stone-built enclosure. Three of its walls survive. One consists of rubble masonry, one of very poorly aligned courses of square/rectangular blocks, and another of marginally better aligned courses.

The northeast tower and the second layer of the northwest tower present significant similarities to Type A masonry. The third layer of the southwest tower is highly similar to Type B masonry. To a lesser extent, the latter point is true of the citadel's curtain and the room partially submerged by the two-level wall. I would cautiously assign the northeast and northwest tower (except for its bottom layer) a 7<sup>th</sup>-10<sup>th</sup> century *terminus post quem* for, and the curtain a mid-9<sup>th</sup> century *terminus post quem*. The

southwest tower was probably built by the Latins, given the latter's penchant for elaborately-shaped fortifications. Xingopoulos observes that Thessaloniki, Serres, and Philippi all featured 'last-stand' enclosures in the 14<sup>th</sup> century, either secondary or tertiary.<sup>723</sup> He seems to be implying Servia's innermost enclosure was equally a product of the 14<sup>th</sup> century. This argument is of little help to me, because we do not know if an innermost enclosure existed in the 11<sup>th</sup> century.

In terms of the citadel's function, we should note that there are no wells or cisterns, except (possibly) for the shallow structure north of the entrance passageway. This raises the question of how the Bulgarian defenders during the 1015 siege were able to endure a lengthy siege. There are no water-retaining structures to be seen. Then again, perhaps they were eventually worn down by the passage of time or used as *spolia* for other projects. Regarding the bathhouse mentioned by Kekaumenos, I have not found any traces of it. It must have abutted the outer enclosure, since Basil II's men used it to penetrate into Servia. But the enclosure has mostly disappeared. Nevertheless, the bathhouse was presumably open to the public: Kekaumenos implies that when Servia was in Rhomanian hands the *strategos* and his *taxiarchies* made frequent use of it.<sup>724</sup>

Within the precincts of the lower town, the 11<sup>th</sup> Ephorate identified one contemporary basilica, known locally as the Katikoumenon (dimensions: approximately 30 m. by 12 m.).<sup>725</sup> It was triple-aisled, tripled-apsed, and its walls contained abundant timbering (not unlike the basilica of Agios Achillios at Prespa). Outside the basilica's north wall, there was a tiny, single aisle, measuring 4.40 m. x 2.65 m., which was connected to the narthex but posterior to it. The basilica carries traces of rich fresco decorations on the walls of the nave, the southern wall of the northern aisle, and the narthex. The building (described in Appendix C.4) can be dated to

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723 Xingopoulos, 1957, p.23. See also Tafrali, 1913, table 5.2, Papageorgiou, 1894, table 2, and Ducoux and Lemerle, 1938, table 7.

724 Kekaumenos, 1998, p.110. *Taxiarchies* commanded units that typically numbered 1,000 soldiers.

725 While Petkos claims that five Byzantine churches are accounted for, he does not provide evidence for them. Petkos, 2009, p11.





**Figure 20.** The Basilica of Katikoumenon. Petkos, 2009, p.10.

It is likely that the upper and lower towns were abandoned in favour of the plain after 1018 and the inhabitants settled on the plain.<sup>726</sup> Not only was the acropolis' inaccessibility a hindrance in times of peace, but the third enclosure has a very steep slope – on average 32°.<sup>727</sup> We have several 10<sup>th</sup>-11<sup>th</sup> century examples of this phenomenon Anatolia, notably at Ephesus, Sardis, and Pergamon.

## 12. Kastoria

### A. History

Kastoria was the descendant of Macedonian Keletron (see fig.1) and Roman Diocletianopolis. According to Procopius, Justinian had Diocletianopolis rebuilt – after it had been destroyed by barbarians – on the peninsula that juts out into Lake Orestiada. The settlement is not mentioned again until the mid-10<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>728</sup> Thereafter it is referred to as Kastoria, though its location remained identical. A popular theory holds that the name *Kastoria* derived from the word *κάστωρ*, meaning beaver in Medieval Greek. If true,

<sup>726</sup> And that this situation prevailed for the remainder of my period of study.

<sup>727</sup> I calculated this figure during one of my visits to the castle. Having obtained the height of the hill using an altimeter, I divided the height of the hill's slope by its length. This gave me the slope percentage, which I then converted to slope degrees.

<sup>728</sup> Kedrenos does mention a certain Καῖστορία while relating a punishment meted out by the empress Irene (797-802) to a patrician: “τόν δέ μάγιστρον καὶ θεόδωρον πατρίκιον τὸν Καμουλιανόν καὶ ἑτέρους τῶν ἐν τέλει ἐξώρισεν ἐν Καῖστορία.” Kedrenos, 1838, vol.2, 24.9-10. But I suspect that Καῖστορία is a corruption of the Latin word *quaestorium*, or ‘quarter’. In this case the patrician would have been confined to his quarters. If the alternate meaning – Irene exiled the patrician to Kastoria – were the correct one, then ἐξώρισεν should be followed by πρὸς.

the theory carries profound implications. It means that Kastoria was already involved in producing fur – a long-running business that is still going strong today. The explanation is one among several. *Kastoria* could also have originated from the word *κάστρο* or the mythological hero *Κάστωρ* (Castor). However, in my opinion the common noun *κάστωρ* is the strongest candidate. For one thing, its spelling is closer to *Kastoria* than *kastro*. For another, while Castor was worshipped in Kastoria by the Greeks and Romans, it does not follow that his cult survived into the Middle Rhomanian period.

At the beginning of the 9<sup>th</sup> century, as stated in Section II, much of Western Macedonia belonged to two or more ostensibly tributary Slavic tribes. There had been no reconquista against the Slavs, except in “Thessaloniki”, as Theophanes vaguely puts it.<sup>729</sup> It is doubtful whether any of the tribes dwelt in or near Kastoria: neither the Sagoudatai nor the Drogouvitai are attested as having a presence west of Voras-Vermion range. In the following century, the political situation immediately north of Western Macedonia altered dramatically, and not necessarily in a manner favourable to the Rhomanians. After the death of Krum the Bulgarians began pushing westwards. Did they eventually annex Western Macedonia? It is difficult to say. They had certainly gotten as far west as Prespa by 879: a Bulgarian bishop from Prespa attended the Council of 879.<sup>730</sup> Then too, in 886 Clement of Ohrid was commissioned by Tsar Boris to build a literary school in Ohrid.<sup>731</sup> The two pieces of information suggest that by this point the Bulgarians had incorporated all of present-day FYROM into their realm. On the Rhomanian side, the Theme of Thessaloniki, which replaced the Archontate of Thessaloniki, is attested from 824 century onwards.<sup>732</sup> It was presumably better suited for defense, and probably included the southern half of the Western Plain of Thessaloniki (as of 904), since Kaminiates informs us that some of the Slavic tribes on the Plain “pay tribute to the Scythians who live not far from the border.”<sup>733</sup> W. Greve produced some highly topographically detailed maps dating to the rules of Omortag, Boris, Simeon, and Samuel<sup>734</sup>, but he neglected to provide any supporting primary sources. Likewise, the possibility that the Rhomanians reluctantly snapped up Western Macedonia before the Bulgarians could do so is a matter of speculation.

To get to the point, by the reign of Leo the Wise Kastoria had become an outpost on the Roman-Bulgarian borderland.<sup>735</sup> But at what point did it permanently pass into Greek hands? Was it in 927, with

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729 Theophanes, 1997, p.630.

730 Golunbiski, 1871, p.58.

731 According to Theophylaktos of Ohrid, although – since he was born one hundred forty years after Clement’s death – his reliability is dubious. Migne, 126, p.1229, Erti, 2008, p.436.

732 Specifically, in a letter from Michael II to Louis the Pious. Mansi, XIV, 418. For an earlier, but more uncertain piece of evidence, see the *strategos* seal in Wassiliou-Seibt and Seibt, 2004, no.308, and Wassiliou-Seibt and Seibt, 2015, p.233.

733 By “Scythians”, he is referring to the Bulgarians. Kaminiates, 2000, p.13. The other tribes were paying tribute to “the city”, namely Thessaloniki.

734 Greve, 1917.

735 Confirming this impression, Kekaumenos states that Servia lies at the confines of Bulgaria. While Kekaumenos is writing in the 1070s,

the synchronous Rhomanian-Bulgarian treaty? Zlatarsky defends the latter interpretation. I will cautiously agree with him, since his viewpoint has gained a large measure of acceptance in germane scholarship and I have not managed to obtain his relevant work.<sup>736</sup> In *De Administrando* (though to have been written between 948 and 952) Kastoria is listed as a Rhomanian possession<sup>737</sup>, and there were no further wars between Rhomania and until the reign of Nikephoros Phokas. The town was reclaimed by the Bulgarians in 990, but upon the elimination of the Tsardom reverted to Greek control.

I offered some thoughts in Section II on how Western Macedonia would have been impacted by its borderland status. Here I will add more specific considerations. First, it is probable that Kastorians would only have been moderately inconvenienced by the Bulgarian economy's absence of coins.<sup>738</sup> According to Fine's survey of the Early Medieval Balkans, coins finds in Kastoria up to the mid-10th century are extremely sparse.<sup>739</sup> Second, even though there were long phases of genuine peace – during which the Bulgarians did not engage in annual raids (unlike the Muslims in Eastern Anatolia)– one would think that a consequence of Kastoria's condition as a frontier settlement was stilted growth. By this I mean that people were reluctant to expand their agricultural plots or build new churches for fear that peace would prove transitory. Perhaps they worried that their investments would be ruined in the next war: that their crops would end up burned, their church pillaged, or that the mobile capital they accumulated would be lost if enemy forces sacked Kastoria.

Archaeologically, my interpretation is difficult to prove. Certainly, the quality of six of the seven Kastorian religious buildings that I examine (in section B) seems to increase continuously with the passage of time. The trouble is that the shift in quality begins in the 10<sup>th</sup> century – well before the end of the first Bulgarian empire. Construction intensity marginally increases after the end of the First Bulgarian Empire. Only three of Kastoria's chronologically relevant religious buildings are thought to have been erected after 1018, despite the relocation of the Radenos family from Anatolia to Kastoria in the 12<sup>th</sup> century (see chapter 2.III.12), and a further two pre-1018 churches were renovated in the 12<sup>th</sup> century. There are textual signs that the vast majority of the 11<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup> centuries were marked by amplified economic prosperity. Kastoria was home to a thriving (and Greek-speaking) Jewish community and served as a

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at the time "Bulgaria" comprised all of the lands of Tsar Samuel's realm. Wassiliewsky and Jernstedt, 1896, pp.28-29.

736 Zlatarsky, 1971.

737 Under its old name, Diocletinapolis. Constantine Porphyrogenetos, 1617, p.87.

738 There is no doubt that the First Bulgarian Empire's economy was overwhelmingly natural in character. Kaminiates implies that trade which took place between Thessaloniki and Bulgaria was based on barter, the Arab geographer Al-Masudi (writing between 915 and 956) notes that the Bulgarians pay in oxen and sheep for the goods they bought, the *Book of the Eparch* states that trade between Byzantines and Bulgarians was based on barter, and the revolt of Peter Delyan was triggered by the imposition of taxes in coin. Frendo and Fotiou, 2000, p.148, Dujcev, 1970, IX, 6.

739 Fine, 1991, p.170. Again, having been denied access to the numismatic catalogues of Western Macedonia's Ephorates, or to make contact with Fine, I am unable to comment on his assertion.

Thematic capital by the late 11<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>740</sup> It retained the position as of ca. 1150, when Andronikos Komnenos was briefly made *doux* of Niš, Braničevo, and Kastoria.<sup>741</sup> In the 12<sup>th</sup> century, Idrisi describes Kastoria as “a rich, agreeable, and prosperous town, surrounded by villages and farmland.”<sup>742</sup> It adjoined a great lake in which marine life was fished. This description contrasts strikingly with the picture presented by Kastoria’s role during the First Crusade. In the winter of 1097, Kastorians had refused to sell food to Bohemund’s contingent.<sup>743</sup> This strongly suggests that Kastoria and its hinterland was not generating a food surplus, unless that summer’s harvest had been poor or a recently visiting imperial delegation had requisitioned large amounts food. Finally, the town is mentioned in the appendix to the *Notitia 13* (end of reign of Manuel I) and the Chrysobull of 1198.<sup>744</sup> We therefore have reason to believe that by 1198, Kastoria was one of the most economically potent towns in Western Macedonia. But the aforementioned developments occurred many years after 1018.

### B. Archaeology

In this segment I will concentrate, first on Kastoria’s medieval fortifications, then its religious buildings. The consensus is that the fortifications have at least two phases. The earlier one extended from one end to the other of the peninsula’s bottleneck (fig. 21). It is thought to be of Justinianic origin. However, chronological interpretation of the second phase (which I will refer to as the ‘long wall’) has produced two interpretations, both of them fairly complex. Tsolakis considers the project to be a work of the 14<sup>th</sup> century. He points out that in Anna Komnene’s *Historia*, we are told the town was built “near the neck [of

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740 The evidence of a Thematic capital is dated to the reign of Michael VII (1071-1078). Skylitzes, 1973, p.716. For the Jewish presence, see Molho and Mevorah, 1938, pp.11-12. Benjamin of Tudela has nothing to say on Kastoria. Presumably he was unable to visit it.

741 Chaladon, 1912, p.409.

742 Idrisi, 1999, p.406,

743 The Crusaders responded by taking what they required by force. William of Tyre, 1986, p.176.

744 Darrouzes, 1981, p.371, Zepos, J., and Zepos, P., p. 469.



land] and the towers and the middle towers.” This clearly refers to the short wall.



**Figure 21.** The walls of Medieval Roman Kastoria. Karagianni, 2010, p.155.

Conversely, Mauropoulou-Tsioumi has dated the long walls to the 10<sup>th</sup> century. She argues that the adjacent church of Koubelidiki – which Moutsopoulos believes was founded in the 9<sup>th</sup> or early 10<sup>th</sup> century – bears a mutilated inscription on the base of its dome’s drum. It reads *Κουτριωτισσα*. According to Mauropoulou-Tsioumi, this Medieval Greek word is a corrupted form or a misspelling of *Καστριωτισσα*, which can be translated as ‘castellan’ or ‘fortification governor’. Not only that, but the dome inscription describes ‘Κουτριωτισσα’ as “unconquerable through painful determination...” Such a martial description would have been appropriate, given the church’s minimal distance from the wall (8 m.). Pelekanidis even alleges – having noticed a scratch in Koubelidiki’s conch’s south-eastern face – that the conch formerly touched a section of the wall. But it is not worth lingering over his hypothesis, since this would require proving that the wall near Koubelidiki shifted eastwards between the 12<sup>th</sup> century and today.<sup>745</sup> To return to the main subject, I am inclined – albeit with reservation – to support the second interpretation. My reasons are threefold. First,, Anna Komnene describes how her father gained possession of Kastoria by crossing the lake and landing on the northern shore, which was defenseless. At no point does she mention

<sup>745</sup> To reiterate: the wall section in question is today separated from Koubelidiki by 8 m.



any interior fortifications. Therefore, the long curtain cannot have been in place at the time. If it had, the Normans would surely have retreated to it.

Third, there is some very slim material evidence that the interior fortifications – more specifically a tower immediately southeast of Koubelidiki – were repaired well before the 14<sup>th</sup> century. During the initial phase of a consolidation operation, the 11<sup>th</sup> Ephorate of Byzantine Antiquities uncovered a backfill layer outside the tower's northern wall. The layer yielded multiple sherds of Middle and Late Rhomanian pottery and a number of coins, including a *stamenon* of Isaac Angelos. The distinctive composition of the layer relative to its surroundings – dark loamy soil – and its contents give us cause to believe that it initially formed part of the southwest tower's ground floor.

Koubelidiki itself would seem to be an ideal piece of evidence. Moutsopoulos submits that it originated in the 9<sup>th</sup> or 10<sup>th</sup> century. Not only was the church feature the triple-apse arrangement (in which the sanctuary was flanked by a *prothesis* and a *diakonikon*) – something unique to the Middle and Late Rhomanian Periods – but the tower windows are bordered by complete, dentiled arcs. This type of window appears in several Rhomanian churches of the period 850-950.<sup>746</sup> Equally importantly, the configuration of Koubelidiki's ceiling is seen in a monument of Central Macedonia, the Church of St. Andrea of Peristera (see Appendix C.IV.A for details). Of course, while the timespan 850-950 is a possibility, the church might not have been built then. Rather, it could have been restored. The inscription does not actually use the verb "I build". It says: "...ὁρῶ κατα οἶκον, ανίστορηδεις ο δειος ουτος δομος..." In this context ὁρῶ would most likely mean "I provide for." When it comes to the name *Κουτριωτισσα* – I do not pretend to be a specialist of Medieval Greek etymology. But Mauropoulou-Tsioumi's assertion that the word is a corruption or a misspelling of *Καστριωτισσα* strikes me as wishful thinking, given her lack of supporting comparisons.

Leaving behind military architecture, there are six medieval churches in Kastoria which have been well studied. They are Agios Stephanos, the Taxiarchis Metropolis, Koubelidiki, Agios Anargyroi, Agios Nikolaos of Kasnitzi, and the Taxiarchis.<sup>747</sup>

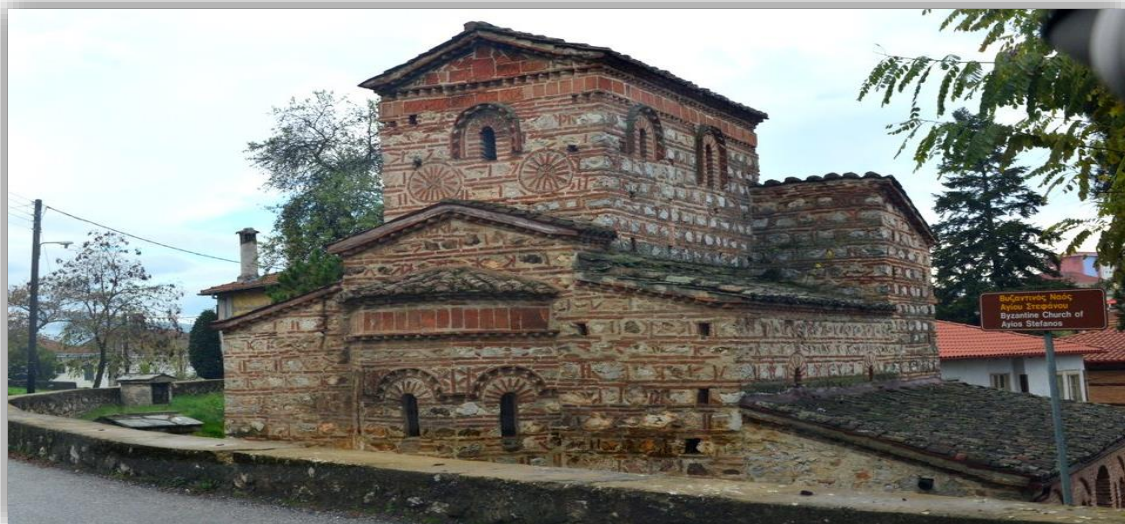
*Agios Stephanos and the Taxiarchis Metropolis.* The first two edifices possess galleried narthexes, a series of paintings, three apses, three aisles, and (in the former building's case), semi-cylindrical domes over each of the aisles (figs. 22-23). Agios Stephanos' windows are noticeably more intricate, inasmuch as each of them is surrounded by two arches or semi-arches. The inner arches are terra-cotta/stone courses, while the outer ones are thin terra-cotta bands (partially straight, partially zigzagging). Apart from windows, the only major design differences between Agios Stephanos and the Taxiarchis lies in their exterior decoration. The terra-cotta ornamentation in Agios Stephanos outclasses its Taxiarchis

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746 Other models include Agios Basileios Gephiras in Arta, Agios Theodoroi in Stamna, and Panaxiotissa of Gabrolimnis in Nafpaktos.

747 Epstein, 1980.

counterpart: it includes two thick, continuous course of tiles, one in the space between the dome windows and the roof, and another outside the sanctuary. The fairly intricate designs of the narthexes lead me to suspect that the two buildings were used for numerous pagan conversions. After all, given Kastoria's border town status in the 9<sup>th</sup>-10<sup>th</sup> centuries, it would have been a convenient place for Bulgarians seeking conversion. The foreigners could have done this in their own lands, since they had started embracing Christianity decades before the early 10<sup>th</sup> century. But Later-middle Roman culture was held in high esteem by the Bulgarian elite. Hence, obtaining baptism in a Roman church would have been a great achievement for a Bulgarian individual. It would have been a fine way for him or her to enhance his social status. Zlatarsky has argued that Kastoria was under Bulgarian control well into the 10<sup>th</sup> century. But even were this true, there is little contemporary material proof that the Bulgarian Church looked to its Rhoanian equivalent as a model, except for the Basilica of Pliska and the Rila Monastery. In other words, we cannot be sure that Bulgarian religious architects would have followed Rhoanian protocol regarding the purpose of narthexes.



**Figure 22.** Agios Stephanos. Papanikolaou, 2013.



**Figure 23.** The Taxiarchis Metropolis. Municipality of Kastoria et al., 2013.

Most of Agios Stephanos and the Taxiarchis' paintings feature a rigid arrangement within a two-dimensional background, dark outlining of constituent parts, and squat proportions. In this manner they are closely comparable to frescoes from four churches in Thessaloniki and Cappadocia (one in Thessaloniki and three in Capaddocia, respectively). All four churches are of early 10<sup>th</sup> century origin.<sup>748</sup> Overall, it is reasonably feasible that Agios Stephanos and the Taxiarchis Metropolis date to the early 900s (although they could have received their decorations after being founded). If we accept my line of thought, the cloisonné masonry represents one of the earliest of its kind. It also arguably represents a precursor of what scholars call the Helladic School, an architectural style that formed the template for Greek churches and basilicas of the 11<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup> centuries. The most important features of the Helladic School, apart from cloisonné masonry, were decorative brickwork, gabled windows flanked by semi-arches, and a two-columned cross-in-square plan.<sup>749</sup> The "Metropolis" part of the Taxiarch's name is interesting. It signifies "seat of a metropolitan bishop" or "mother city" in Greek. In Chapter 1.II I conformed to the viewpoint that the term "polis" had ceased to be associated exclusively with urban settlements by the 10<sup>th</sup> century. And the metropolitan inference could have been empty boasting. Nevertheless, the Taxiarchis was clearly the seat of a bishop, for a fragment of a *synthronon* – including a portion of a throne – was found in the conch.

None of the epigraphs in the Taxiarchis (though there are at least eight) are datable to my period of study. Nevertheless, one renovation inscription (located above the entrance of the narthex), is of relevance. It

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748 Orlandos has compared the Taxiarchis to Agios Nikolaos of Orphanon in Thessaloniki, Agios Stephanos of Mesembria, and Agios Theodora of Arta (the first two monuments belong to the 12th-13th centuries, and the third to the 14th century). But the resemblance is slim – it is apparently limited to semi-cylindrical sanctuaries. Orlandos, 1938, p.106.

749 Pevny, 2000, pp. 159, 164.

seems to imply that the building became the property of a certain Michael upon the passing of “the most holy monk Daniel”. Here is the entire, deciphered inscription <sup>750</sup>:

ἀνακαισμός τοῦ θεοῦ δόμου τούτου. ἀνιστορίθη ἡ καλητεχνουργία...καμασευ...[θ]εὸς  
 παντοκρά[τωρ...οἶ]κου [τούτ[ου] παμμεγίστου Μικαὴλ Ταξιάρχου  
 δι' [ἐξόδου τοῦ πανοσιωτ]άτου Δανιὴλ ἱερομονάχου βασιλεύοντος Συμεὼν  
 τοῦ Π[αλαιολόγου ἄμ]α τοῦ υἱοῦ αὐτοῦ [Ιωάννου τοῦ Δο]ύκα ἐξωκισκλιοστοῦ  
 τοῦ ἔτους  
 π[ληρουμένων] ὀκτακοσίων ἐξηκόστο [υ] ὀγδοο υ περιπατουσης ἰνδίκτου  
 τρῖς καὶ δεκάτης.

The Symeon mentioned is clearly Symeon Uros-Palaiologos, Emperor of Epirus from 1359 to 1366. And it was evidently part of a monastery before the passing of “the monk Daniel.” Does this mean that the monastery in question was created in the 14<sup>th</sup> century? Not necessarily. The Taxiarchis could have been serving a monastic function in its earlier centuries. <sup>751</sup>

*Koubelidiki*. This monument (fig. 24) shares most of Agios Stephanos and the Taxiarchis' external features, although the terra-cotta in the vertical gaps are more predominant (see Appendix C.IV.A). It differs markedly only in terms of roofing and fenestration. Hence, while both the two previously mentioned buildings are pierced by tooth-arched windows along their clerestories, Koubelidiki possesses two supplementary windows 1 m. above ground level. These openings, twice the width and one third taller than their counterparts in Agios Stephanos and the Taxiarc), lend Koubelidiki a brighter and more pleasant interior appearance.

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750 Orlandos, 1938, p.97.

751 Orlandos interprets the noun “ἀνακαισμός” to mean ‘foundation’. While I was unable to find a dictionary translation, the synonymous noun ἀνακαίνισις means ‘renewal’.



**Figure 24.** Koubelidiki. Karalus, 2016.

*Agioi Anargyroi* and *Agios Nikolaos*. In terms of masonry, *Anargyroi* and *Nikolaos* (figs. 25-26) meet, if not exceed, the overall standards set by *Agios Stephanos*. The horizontal cloisonné lines are virtually uninterrupted, the vertical brick bands are much more frequent, the tile band at the base of the dome is endowed with recurrent diagonal projects, and (in the case of *Anargyroi*), the stones are mostly ashlar. At *Nikolaos*, the terra-cotta kappas have evolved beyond the simple role of ‘vertical gap fillers’ to form entire horizontal courses. In addition, the range of brick decoration have become richer on *Nikolaos*’ walls. Beyond the aforementioned kappas one can now discern incised-tile courses, toothed patterns, and tent-like patterns. Conveniently for us, the bulk of the mural paintings in *Anargyroi* have survived.





Figure 25. Agioi Anargyroi. *Wonder Greece*, 2013.



Figure 26. Agios Nikolaos. Municipality of Kastoria et al., 2013.

- Σποραὲς δ' πάντων καὶ φθοραὲς πάλιν χρόνος  
 ἔσπευσεν καὶ σοῦ τὸν περικλυτὸν δόμον  
 διαβασίᾳ<sup>2</sup> τῇ φθορᾷ κατακλῦσαι  
 Ἐγὼ δὲ πιστὸς εὐτελὲς ὁμῶν λάτρις,  
 5 Θεόδωρος κλὸν Λημνιωτῶν ὁσφύος  
 ἀντιπαλαίσας τῇ φθορᾷ τῇ τοῦ χρόνου  
 βάθρων ἀπ' αὐτῶν<sup>3</sup> μέχρι καὶ στέγης φθάνω,  
 τὴν εὐπρέπειαν τοῦ ναοῦ παριστάνων·  
 πλὴν ἐπ' ἀδίκου σοῦ προσιστῶ τοὺς στύλους  
 10 τῶν τῆς ἐμῆς δὲ τριμεροῦς ψυχῆς πόθῳ  
 σεπτῆς θυάδος ἐξεγείρω τὸν δόμον  
 σκηνην ἐκεῖσε τὴν αἰίδροσον χλόην,  
 εὐρεῖν δυσοιπῶν καὶ τόπον τῶν πράξεων·  
 τανῦν δὲ ρῶσιν σαρκὸς ἡσθημένης  
 15 καὶ σωματικῆς δωρεὰν εὐδεξίας  
 τὴν χάριν αἰτῶν σὺν συνεύρω καὶ τέκ[νω]<sup>4</sup>.

Figure 27. The poem at the bottom of the Anargyroi's narthex window. Orlandos, 1938, p.35.



One phase in the narthex, featuring representations of Saint Constantine, Saint Constantine, Saint Nikolaos, and Saint Basil, bears close comparison with frescoes found in Cappadocia <sup>752</sup>, which are dated to the early 11<sup>th</sup> century. They are highly reminiscent of the frescoes of the Panagia ton Chalkeon, constructed in 1028. <sup>753</sup> A later phase in the south and central bays of the narthex, consisting of frescos, has been dated to the mid-12<sup>th</sup> century by O. Demus. <sup>754</sup> One of Anargyroi's frescoes – found at the sides and foot of the entrance window – is particularly noteworthy. Below it is a 12-line inscribed poem, written in white letters on a blue background. <sup>755</sup> The poem is written in impeccable iambic trimeter (fig. 27).

Similarly, the poem's language is remarkably baroque. Evidently the patron had access to the finest scholars money could buy, unless he was himself a learned man. Speaking of the patron, the reader is told that the church was raised up (ἐξεγείρω) by a certain Theodoros Limniotis: “Θεόδωρος κλῶν Λημνιωτῶν οσφύος.”

The underlying theme of the poem is the patron's desire for physical wellness and for his recovery from sickness. The inscription does not tell us whether the church originally had a different name, whether it was rebaptized by Limniotis, but it does suggest the renovation was privately funded. The impression is confirmed by an epigraph in the *prothesis*. The deciphered characters read:

διὰ λευκού χρώματος Δέησις τῆς δούλης Θεοῦ Ἄννης καὶ κητόρισας διὰ κιτρίνου χρώματος Θεόφιλος ὁ Λημνιώτης καὶ χήτωρ. <sup>756</sup>

Epstein contends that the epigraph's Lemniotis is the same individual as the one in the aforementioned poem, and I concur. The different first name can be attributed to Limniotis having retired into his church as a monk. At the same time, by retaining his family name the patron would have ensured that his life's deeds went down in posterity. The corollary of this argument, if we accept it as valid, is that Agioi Anargyroi was part of a monastic complex by the time of its mid-12<sup>th</sup> century enhancement. It was upon retiring that Limniotis must have written the 16-line poem: the insinuations to physical illness suggest he was nearing the end of his life. Does this mean that the construction work alluded to in the *prothesis*' epigraph took place during Limniotis' prime? Perhaps, but they may also have taken place after his death, in which case the use of Limniotis' name was a commemorative act. <sup>757</sup>

Regarding Agios Nikolaos, Epstein proposes to narrow the foundation date down to the 1160s-1170s, partly on the basis of stylistic similarities with the frescoes in the Church of St. Panteleimon in FYROM

752 Particularly Direkli Kilise in the Ihlara Valley and the Church of Agios Barbara in Soganli Dere.

753 Likewise, Anargyroi's column capitals are basically identical – albeit smaller – to those of the Panagia ton Chalkeon.

754 Demus, 1963, p. 341ff.

755 Orlandos, 1938, p.35.

756 Drakopoulou, 1997, p.53.

757 Orlandos has identified Limniotis with Theodoros Limneotis, a religious man invoked in Agios Stephanos' foundation/renovatory inscription. See Appendix. Orlandos' interpretation has merit. The problem is that Limneotis was buried in Agios Stephanos. It is very unlikely he would have been buried in the church had his place of retirement been Agioi Anargyroi.

(founded 1164) and Anargyroi.<sup>758</sup> She also asserts that the church's founding inscription – dedicated to its patron, the *magistros* Nikephoros Kasnizes – has been paleographically dated by I. Sevchenko to the late 1100s.<sup>759</sup> Epstein's interpretation runs into two problems. First, in *The Life of St. Nicholas* – Epstein's reference for the paleographic dating – Ševčenko does not talk about Kastoria.<sup>760</sup> Second, Nikephoros is referred to as a *magistros* in the inscription. As Epstein herself acknowledges, the title fell out of use after the early 12<sup>th</sup> century. Our information on the Kasnizes family as a whole offers few insights. Two seals belonging to two *protospatharioi* from Preslav (Theodore and Niketas Kasnizes) have been dated to the 11<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>761</sup> Considering these problems, and given that it is dangerous business to rely on only two comparative examples (unless the comparison is supported by other forms of evidence), I would very cautiously place Agios Nikolaos' foundation between the early and mid-12<sup>th</sup> century – ca. 1140.

*The Taxiarchis*. Founded on the current square of the 2<sup>nd</sup> school of Kastoria,<sup>762</sup> it is a small single-aisled basilica. It bears a semi-cylindrical sanctuary and is projected westwards by an ulterior narthex. The narthex's distinctive (possibly post-medieval) chronology is confirmed by the fact that it has two blind internal apses in its southern end. Such an arrangement was unorthodox in Later-middle Roman times. The masonry of the nave consists of isodomic, roughly cut stones surrounded by horizontal bricks. Some of the bricks are inscribed with the monogram of Christ. Since the stones are periodically separated by vertical joints, the overall design could be described as incomplete cloisonné.<sup>763</sup> On the basis of their masonry, the Taxiarchis can be dated to the 11<sup>th</sup>-13<sup>th</sup> centuries.

*Saint Stylian*. The last building I will mention is the Basilica of Saint Stylian (dimensions, approximately by 12 m x 4 m.). The iconography of its surviving paintings – the Entrance into Jerusalem, the Annunciation, the resurrection of Lazarus, and the Presentation at the Temple – place its foundation firmly in the 12<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>764</sup>

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758 Specifically prominent folds in the clothing of the figures and high contrasts in the modeling of flesh.

759 Orlandos, 1938, pp.144-146. See also Appendix for some details on a possible 12th century fresco.

760 Ševčenko, 1983.

761 Jordanov, 1993, no. 366-368, 464.

762 Or at least the school was there in the 1930s. Orlandos, 1937, pp.164-165.

763 The floor also hides two older strata, only one of which has been properly examined. However, both are posterior to the Middle Ages.

764 On the southern and eastern walls. Tsigaridas, 1988, pp.310-313.

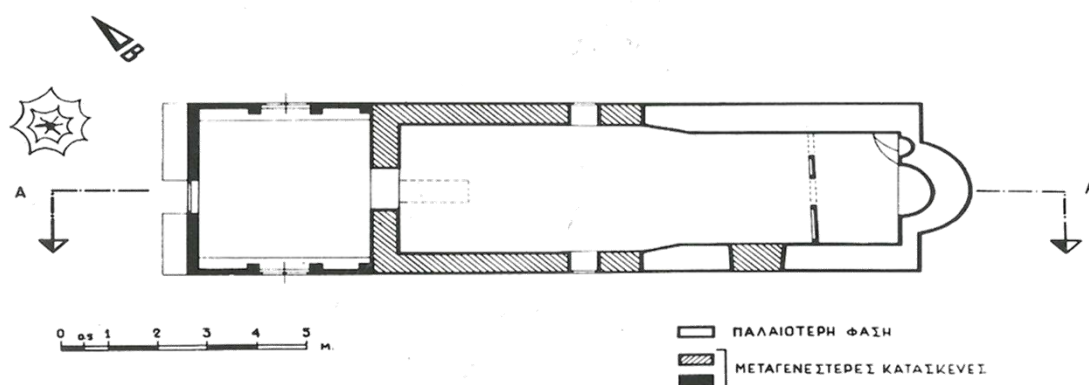


Figure 28. Saint Stylian. Tsigaridas, 1988, fig. 1.

### C. Prosperity, but for whom?

I would argue that the monuments in section B and the Chrysobull of 1198 reflected increasing prosperity for the clergy and merchants exporting their goods to Constantinople, and an increasingly skilled class of painters. This state of affairs seems to have held true under both under Bulgarian and Greek rule (with regard to the monuments). At the same time, one could argue that monastic institutions were becoming more affluent. As noted previously, we have reason to believe that Agios Anargyroi was part of a monastic complex by the time of its 12<sup>th</sup> century refurbishment. The same thing may have held true for the Taxiarchis Metropolis in the 10<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup> centuries. That the two “monasteries” only form a limited percentage of Kastoria’s contemporary religious monuments is not surprising. Urban monasteries in the Later-middle Roman Empire are very thinly attested, except perhaps in Constantinople. And even if they were widespread in Kastoria, they would have been swallowed up by posterior land development. Indeed, it is because of said development that most of the long walls and isthmus wall are no longer visible. Finally, we can make a slim case that Agios Anargyroi (in its monastic form) reflected a growth in patronage by the local secular elite. After all, Theophilos Limneotis was a secular man before he took up monasticism, and I already commented in Chapter 2.III.1 on the popularity of *kharistike* (whose key feature was the liberal sponsoring of the monastic world by wealthy secular men).

### 13. Prespa

#### A. General comments

Prespa was the capital of Bulgaria and an archbishopric (if not a patriarchate) during the reign of Samuel and his few successors, as I argue on the third page of this section. The town's prominence did not entirely dissipate following its capture by the Romans (in 1018). Prespa was a bishopric and the home of an *archon* in the late 11<sup>th</sup> century. In one of Theophylaktos of Ohrid's (ca. 1055–1107) surviving letters, the Archbishop explicitly asks a Prespan *archon*'s help in organizing a synod in Prespa.<sup>765</sup> There was still a local bishop as of the *Notitia 13*'s compilation (end of reign of Manuel I). And Prespa was probably a ranking administrative center by 1198. The chrysobull of that year speaks of the "Province of Prespes."<sup>766</sup> Despite these achievements, the settlement's location has not been precisely established. The most plausible candidate is the island of Agios Achillios, approximately 650 m. south of the northern shore of Mikri Prespa Lake.

#### B. The basilica of Agios Achillios

The island owes its plausibility mainly to the presence of a triple-apsed, triple-aisled basilica, with which it shares its name. Even in its thoroughly dilapidated present-day condition, Agios Achilleios impresses through sheer size. At its maximum dimensions, it measures 22.00 m. x 44.70 m. The effect must have been doubly impressive for Orthodox followers entering the basilica for the first time, especially those walking down the central aisle.<sup>767</sup> The aisle dividers belong to a category in which walls are pierced at regular intervals by arched openings. The openings' widths are highly inconsistent. This class is discernible in multiple monuments arguably dating to the mid-10<sup>th</sup>–early 11<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>768</sup>

*Masonry.* The walls are constructed mainly of irregularly shaped and positioned collector stones, framed vertically and horizontal by terra-cotta and set in abundant ceramic cement.<sup>769</sup> This style conforms closely to the definition of cloisonné. In various parts of the of the basilica's north wall, at the bases of the sanctuary and *prothesis*' domes, and in the north wall of the *diakonikon*, horizontal support layers of wood (cedar) occur. They are arranged more or less according to the "imantosis" system, namely in

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<sup>765</sup> Theophylaktos of Ohrid, 1879, p.469.

<sup>766</sup> Zepos, J., and Zepos, P., p.469.

<sup>767</sup> The central aisle measured 9, 25 m. in width, whereas the flanking ones measured only 4, 25 m.

<sup>768</sup> Such as the Basilica of Servia, the Metropolis of Mesembria, Agios Prokopios of Prokuplje, Protatos (on Mount Athos), and the Basilica of Zourtsas in Kato Figalia. Moutsopoulos, 1989b, pp.678-681.

<sup>769</sup> Moutsopoulos, 1989b, pp.673-675.

hollow rectangles, and extend from the walls' exterior faces to their interior faces.<sup>770</sup> Examples of cloisonné, (perhaps the most well-known legacy of the Helladic School) are manifold, mainly in Greece but also further abroad.<sup>771</sup> The inner faces seem to have been coated with fine mortar, judging by extensive surviving patches. The fact that most of the mortar fragments' edges are fractured (as seen on fig. 29) gives us cause to believe that the covering material was applied to the whole of the interior.

In several places the visual unity of the walls's surface is interrupted. One case is trivial: the sanctuary is pierced by a trilobed window, whose dividing colonette support three arcades.<sup>772</sup> Other cases are more egregious. The bases and domes of the *prothesis*, *diakonikon*, and sanctuary are all built at least partly of cubic/rectangular limestones, the latter divided by a series of single terra-cotta rows. Horizontal cedar beams are occasionally present, but not



**Figure 29.** Agios Achillios' sanctuary and central aisle. 16th Ephorate of Byzantine Antiquities of Kastoria (now Ephorate of Antiquities of Kastoria), 2008.

vertical framing bricks. I suspect they were rebuilt subsequent to Agios Achillios' foundation, particularly in light of the apses' shape (see next page). The most remarkable masonry-related

<sup>770</sup> The rectangles come in pairs; typical dimensions are 0,27 m. x 0,35 m. Moutsopoulos, 1989b, p.674.

<sup>771</sup> They include the Basilica of Sisani (except for the walls' foundations), Agia Sophia of Ohrid (except in the part of the sanctuary apse above the windows. Krautheimer, 1992, p.124), the Basilica of the Dormition at Kalabaka, the Basilica of Servia, and the Old Metropolis at Messembria. Rachenov, 1932, p.5. The masonries of Sisani and Servia constitute even closer parallels, inasmuch as they featured abundant quantities of wood. Petkos, 2000, p.315, Xyngopoulos, 1957, p.33.

<sup>772</sup> The arcades' design consists of mortar overlaid with thin red brick bands at perfectly regular intervals. It was logical that the architect should have designed window arcades to stand out from their surroundings.

observation is that both walls of the south aisle lack “proper” foundations. Instead, they are based on soil.<sup>773</sup> Even in Bulgaria such an incomplete job was not the norm for high-status ecclesiastical buildings, bearing in mind Agios Achillios was almost certainly built at a time when Prespa was under Bulgarian rule (see discussion on Agios Achillios’ history). Not only that, but Prespa was the seat of the Bulgarian Patriarchate and is thrice implied to have been the Bulgarian state’s capital: when Samuel transported his Larissan relic there ca.979, in 1014, when the Tsar died, and in 1016, when the current Tsar Ivan Vladislav invited a Serbian prince to the royal court in Prespa.<sup>774</sup> This means Agios Achillios’ buildings should have been one of the most heavily invested-in religious projects in the Bulgarian Empire.<sup>775</sup>

*Sanctuary.* The sanctuary is semi-circular. At the eastern-most point of its base, it is pierced by a trilobed window. To the trilobed window’s right and left, Milioukof noted that the mortar bore sixteen

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773 Moutsopoulos, 1989b, p.673.

774 Adontz, 1938, pp.32-33. Adontz relies on the testimony of Skylitzes. For evidence of Prespa’s Patriarchal position, see top of next page and my conclusions on the Basilica.

775 As I see it, there are three explanations: either – for whatever reason – the architects were under desperate time pressure, the war with Byzantium imposed budget constraints, or Prespa was not Bulgaria’s capital when construction began.

Α/Α Θρόνων	Ἀνάγνωση κατὰ Μιλιούκωφ (ἔ.α., σ. 50-51)	Ἀνάγνωση 1965	Εἰκὼν
II	{θ}ρον(ος) π(ο).. πεδ...	† Θρον πο Πεδ ἡ Πρδρυ	34,II
III	† Θρον(ος) π(ο) Βιδήνη(ς)	† Θρόν πδ Βιδηνη †	34,III
IV	† Θρον(ος) Κε(φα)λονίας	Κε--αλονίας	34,IV
V	Θρ(όνος) π(ο) Βερ(ρο)ίας	Θρ π Βερρ-ας	34,V
VI	† Θρόν(ος) πο Ἡρακλ(είας)	† Θ Ηρακλ--ς	35,VI
VII	Θρ(όνος) πο Β..υλ.. δ (?)		
VIII	.... π ...		
IX	Θρον(ος) Σελα(σφόρου)	Θρον Σελασφορδ †	35,IX
X	(Θρό)νος πδ Σκωπίων †	† --νας πδ Σκωπιων	35,X
XI	† Θρον(ος) πο Σαρδικῆς	† ο Θρον πο Σαρδικης	35,XI
XII	Θρόν(ος) πδ ἔδρου (?)	† Θρόνο πδ Εδερ--	36,XII
XIII	Θρό(νος) πο ιςρις (?)	† Θρο- πδ Πρ--	36,XIII
XIV	† Θρόν(ος) .... νου		

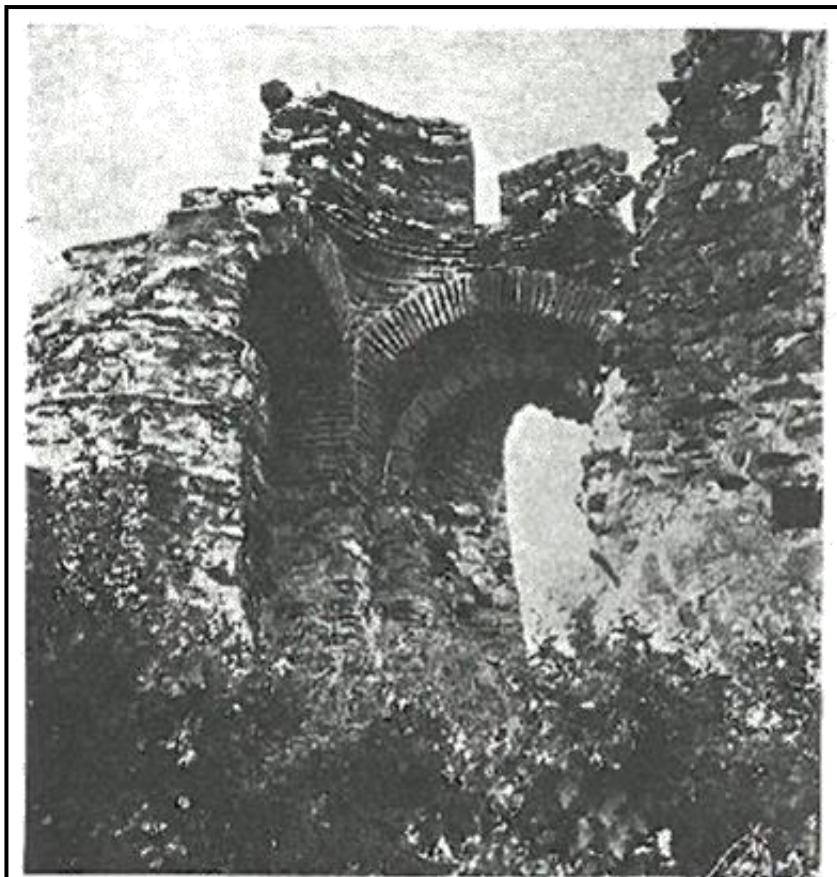
**Figure 30.** Agios Achillios: the number of and origins of visiting bishops, as shown by the throne inscriptions in the sanctuary. The right-hand column displays the actual inscriptions, the left-hand columns translates them into modern Greek. Moutsopoulos, 1989a, p.405.

or eighteen contiguous painted semi-circular arches. He interprets these paintings as evidence of bishops' thrones. Milioukof's inference initially struck me as dubious – surely the basilica was only occupied by one bishop or archbishop at a time. But on the other hand the edifice must have periodically hosted diocesan councils or regional synods. In this case each attending bishop would also have sat on a throne. Or rather, we ought to speak of archbishops and not bishops: the semi-circular space under each arch was filled by an inscription, which gave the place of origin of the attending prelate (fig. 30). The place names came from the four corners of Bulgaria under Samuel, from Veroia to Vidin and Kephalaria to Sofia.<sup>776</sup> Yet this is still not enough to confirm the the widely believed theory that Prespa was, for a time, the seat of the Bulgarian Patriarchate. For the boundaries of the post-1018 Bulgarian Archbishopric corresponded roughly with those of its Patriarchal precursor. One of Agios Agillio's bishoprics, Heraclea, could be Heraclea-in-Thrace, well outside the jurisdiction of the Patriarchate. But it could just as easily be Heraclea-in-Pelagonia (modern Bitola).

<sup>776</sup> Although some of these settlements may have merely been claimed by the Bulgarians, or been very briefly under their sway.



The north wall of Agios Achillios' sanctuary was covered by two layers of mural frescoes. On the basis of identical artwork in Agia Sophia of Ohrid, Moutsopoulos, Grabar, and Chatzidakis have – rather tenuously – attributed the later frescoes to Archbishop Leo (1037-1056).<sup>777</sup> More helpful is the apse's semi-cylindrical form. Identically-shaped apses feature in several monuments that date to the late 11<sup>th</sup>/12<sup>th</sup> century or were renovated in that period.<sup>778</sup> This lends some credence to the idea that Agios Achillios' three apses are posterior to the rest of the building. Conversely, I can think of only one pre-late 11<sup>th</sup> century apse, that of the Protaton Church.



**Figure 31.** Agios Achillios' prothesis: the brick semi-arches framing the interior of the windows. Moutsopoulos, 1964-1965, table 39.

*Prothesis and diakonikon.* The sanctuary was flanked by a *diakonikon* and a *prothesis*, which communicated with the sanctuary with it via small, narrow apertures.<sup>779</sup>

Moutsopoulos conducted a study of a section of the stratigraphy under the altar of the *prothesis* (fig. 31). This resulted in the disclosing of three stratigraphic layers. The first one, directly below the current surface, measures 30 cm. in length. It contained a copper coin of Isaac Angelos, three coins of Manuel I (two copper *nommion*<sup>780</sup> and one bronze *folles*), and two

<sup>777</sup> Moutsopoulos, 1989, p.168, Grabar and Chatzidakis, 1965, p.257.

<sup>778</sup> Such as the Old Metropolis of Veroia, the Panagia of Zourtas in Kato Filagia, the Basilica of the Dormition in Kalabaka, and the Basilica of Servia.

<sup>779</sup> The prothesis had windows on its north and east walls, whose interiors are framed by brick semi-arches. These decorations, because they are continuous, effectively divide the room's height in half. They also occur in Koubelidiki of Kastoria, the *katholikon* of Stilo in Calabria, Palaia Episkopi of Tegea (in the Peloponnese), and the church in Ano Lambono near Argirokastro (respective foundation dates: probably 10th century, 11th century, 10th century, possibly second half of 10th century. See III.13.B, Megaw, 1966, pp.17-18, Millet, 1916, p.270, Megaw, 1966, p.18.

<sup>780</sup> The *nommion* seems to have been the least valuable denomination during the Komnenian period. It was worth roughly half a *tetarteron*.

pieces of brick. Next came a 0.10 cm. lime mortar pavement. This layer was followed a 0.30 cm. stratum containing animal bones, a horse's tooth, pieces of fallen wall, slag from metal firing, Medieval Roman potsherds and pieces of glass oil lamp. The soil rested on a 0.10 cm. light pink ceramic-cement floor. After this came a third, 0.75 cm. stratum containing a Justinianic *dekanoummion*, followed by the bedrock on which the basilica had on which the basilica had been founded. On the *diakonikon*'s surface, finds were slightly more conclusive. While cleaning the side-room's eastern conch, investigators discovered 21 bronze *folles* from the period 1118-1282, including 1 of John I and 10 of Manuel I. They were accompanied by dozens of copper objects, iron nails, and sherds from glass lamps.<sup>781</sup> Lastly, the rest of the *diakonikon* yielded 4 coins of John I, 23 coins of Manuel I, 5 of Isaac Angelos, and 1 of Alexios Angelos, all of them bronze.

*Nave.* On the nave's northern wall, near the sanctuary (2 m. above the pavement), is an inscription. It is noteworthy for bearing very crude, sketchy handwriting, and for consisting almost exclusively of one one-letter abbreviations (for example, *K* instead of *ΚΥΡΙΕ*).<sup>782</sup>

*Narthex.* After the north part of the narthex had been cleaned (its three doors were filled up), excavators exposed a series of sepulchers in the pavement. It is difficult to know the total number of corpses that the sepulchers accommodated during their years of function, because most of them have no identification. This means they might well have been used more than once. This much we can say, that 28 skeletons were found shattered or reduced to a skull, while 18 were intact. Of those in the former category, 9 were accompanied by 13 bronze *folles* – one or two per tomb. As Table 2 shows, 7 of the coins belonged to the 12<sup>th</sup> century. Where the door between the narthex and the nave formerly stood, nine iron objects were found. Pieced together, they compare closely in shape and fabric compares to a lock (of a wooden door) in Agios Nikolaos of Kastoria.<sup>783</sup>

*Southern aisle.* There were four sarcophagi in the middle of the aisle, arranged in a single file. The third sarcophagus yielded the largely intact skeleton of an elderly man, who we have reason to think was none other than Tsar Samuel.<sup>784</sup> Our reasons are three-fold. First, the bone of the left elbow bore signs of a fracture and was bent at an angle of 140°. This is consistent with what happened to Samuel after the Battle of Spercheios (996). He was grievously injured in the arm during the affair, and was one of the few Bulgarians to survive. As a result, he set out for home almost unaccompanied, and was unable to obtain treatment until he reached Prespa. By then it was too late – the bones in his arm had healed at an odd

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781 Moutsopoulos, 1989b, p.415.

782 Moutsopoulos, 1989b, pp.364-365. We may suppose the inscription was carved by a pilgrim. Though 2 m. is a considerable height, this difficulty could have been surmounted with the aid of a footstool. Another similar inscription has been found in the northwest corner of the *diakonikon*, 1.10 m. from the ground.

783 Moutsopoulos, 1989b, pp.195-196.

784 Moutsopoulos, 1989b, pp.1008-1010.

angle, and Samuel was left crippled. Second, the ornaments present were indicative of a non-ecclesiastical person of high stature. Pieces of bronze chainmail rings lay strewn about an auxiliary bone <sup>785</sup>, and the pelvis was surrounded by a silk garment embroidered with gold. Third, forensic anthropologists A. Poulianos and P. Boev, who studied the bones, estimated the individual to have been 69 at his time of death. We do not know the year of Samuel's birth, but Samuel's son Radomir remarried in 988 <sup>786</sup>, which suggests he had reached maturity by then. Let us therefore suppose that he was born in 970. If Samuel himself had only married nine months earlier, and at the same age as his son, he would have been approximately 64 years old in 1014.

*History.* Towards the end of the uprising of Constantine Bodin, Roman "Frankish and Alemanni" mercenaries plundered Agios Achillios and took all of its clergymen into captivity. <sup>787</sup> Hence the basilica clearly existed by this point. We know too, that after sacking Larissa ca. 979 Samuel transferred the remains of the late Agios Achillios from the Thessalian archbishopric to Prespa. There he placed the relics in his palace, and proceeded to construct "a most beautiful and large church in his [Agios Achillios'] name." <sup>788</sup> Moutsopoulos takes Skylitzes' citation as proof that the basilica was erected in the years following Samuel's arrival, and I agree with him. Pelekanidis and Sotiriou support the idea that Samuel contented himself with an existing building, but unconvincingly. <sup>789</sup> Therefore, we can be fairly confident that the original construction took place between 979 and 1014, the year of Samuel's demise. <sup>790</sup>

*Conclusions.* The triple apse and triple aisle arrangements, being standard characteristics among Middle Byzantine Greek churches, furnish a general point of reference. A similar intimation can be gleaned from the cloisonée masonry, which was highly popular in the 11<sup>th</sup>-13<sup>th</sup> centuries. Beyond that, a plausible outline of Agios Achillios' seminal events are as follows. The Basilica was founded between 986 and 1014. This contention is supported by Samuel's place of death and his initial storing of Agios Achillios' remains in his Prespan palace, but also by the class of the aisle dividers and the corpse in one of the southern aisle's sarcophagi. Many generations later, the Greek metropolitan of Prespa oversaw a comprehensive renovation. The three apses and the *prothesis*' pavement were replaced from top to bottom. This explains the apses' distinct masonry and their semicylindrical shape – of which we have very few comparable examples before the late 11<sup>th</sup> century. And yet, it is fair to ask why the restoration's patron would have wanted to knock down the apses' walls, when such an action could have inflicted serious damage on

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<sup>785</sup> One isolated from the rest of the body.

<sup>786</sup> Skylitzes, 1973, pp.292-293.

<sup>787</sup> Skylitzes-Kedrenos, 1838b, pp.718-719, Zonaras, 1897, pp.718-719.

<sup>788</sup> Skylitzes, 2010, p.313.

<sup>789</sup> Sotiriou, 1945, p.14, Pelekanidis, 1960, p.64.

<sup>790</sup> A local legend has it that Agios Achillios doubled as Samuel's summer palace. But this does not mean that the basilica existed at the time of the fall of Larissa.

adjacent parts of the building. I propose that the apses were knocked down by an earthquake, or by the Roman mercenaries who pillaged Prespa in 1073. Lastly, I contend that the *prothesis*' altar was possibly replaced in the 12<sup>th</sup> century. On the basis of the four coins found in the uppermost stratigraphic layer, the altar can be assigned a *terminus post quem* of 1143/1180 or 1185/1195. I will not propose a date for the sanctuary's two frescoes. Moutsopoulos and Grabar's stand on this issue, being based on a single comparative example, is unconvincing.

As regards the coins, there were 52 in total, mostly *folles*. Whether their owners were clergymen, churchgoers, or pilgrims, they (and the two inscriptions in the nave and diakonikon) testify to a modest surge of activity for the Basilica in the 12<sup>th</sup> century. They also lend further credence to the idea of a contemporary renovation.

### C. Evidence beyond the Basilica

The presence of a Bulgarian palace by ca. 979 has been noted above. Its existence is loosely confirmed by Zonaras and Skylitzes, according to whom the Prespan palaces left by the Bulgarians were destroyed by Frankish mercenaries during the 1072 sack of Prespa: "...καθαροῦσι...των βουλγάρων ὑπολελειμμένα βασιλεια..." <sup>791</sup> There is also proof that Prespa's roots predate Tsar Samuel's reign by almost a century, if not more: a Bulgarian bishop from Prespa attended the Council of 879-880 and (in a letter written after the sack of 1072) Theophylaktos of Ohrid writes that Tsar Boris founded seven churches in Prespa and Devol. <sup>792</sup> Apart the island of Agios Achillios, there is another candidate for Medieval Prespa's setting: the village of Agios Germanos, 6.2 km northeast of Mikri Prespa's northeast bank. It is home to a cruciform, four-pillared church (dimensions: 5.10 m. x 5.62 m.) endowed with the same name. <sup>793</sup> Because the monument was extensively renovated in the early 18<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries, its pre-Modern past is virtually undetectable from the outside. Inside, however, it is a different matter. The masonry consists of irregularly positioned and shaped stones, with one exception. In the sanctuary, we find limestone, whose vertical joints are filled by double, horizontally-positioned rows of terra-cotta (set in abundant mortar). <sup>794</sup> It seems reasonable to assume that these elements were originally part of a *templon* parapet. The walls and dome of Agios Germanos are decorated with a number of thematically and technically elaborate frescoes. One of them, a depiction of the individual Agios Germanos above the former south entrance, has been dated by Pelekanidis to the 12<sup>th</sup>-13<sup>th</sup> centuries. This presents a problem, for an inscription in the dome states that the church was built (Ἀνωκοδομήθη) in the year ΑΨΜΓ'. Given that in

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<sup>791</sup> Zonaras, *ibid.*

<sup>792</sup> Siamakis, 1985, p. 48, Migne, 126, p.529. Theophylaktos' testimony should be treated with caution, because he was writing more than one hundred and forty years after events.

<sup>793</sup> Moutsopoulos, 1967, pp.31-49.

<sup>794</sup> The uniformity of the sanctuary's masonry is broken up only by two stone slabs bearing painted crosses.

the 16<sup>th</sup> century Greece was still using the Julian calendar, I believe the translation to be 1543. That said, Agios Germanos may have been rebuilt rather than founded in 1543 – ανωκοδομήθη can also mean rebuilt. Moreover, the probable *templon* fragments suggest a pre-14<sup>th</sup> century origin, and the four-pillared cross-in-square church became popular beginning in the early 10<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>795</sup> Nevertheless, even if Agios Germanos and Agios Achillios were contemporaneous, it is doubtful they both formed part of Prespa.<sup>796</sup> Then again, maybe Prespa fell into the proposed ‘intermediate’ category of settlements (see Chapter 1.II). Agios Germanos, the island of Agios Achillios, or both? For the moment, the question hangs in the balance.

## 14. Sisani

### A. History

Sisani is located in a lowland pocket, approximately 20 km. from the Kastoria-Kozani highway. Presently a tiny village, it was supposedly classified as a dependency of the Archbishopric of Ohrid by a document of the Monastery of Iviron. Unfortunately the document, once believed to be of 10<sup>th</sup> century origin, was dated to the 17<sup>th</sup> century by A. Dadras.<sup>797</sup> Gelzer, on the basis of a codex stored in the National Library of Athens, made a case for a pre-13<sup>th</sup> century date.<sup>798</sup> But the codex has reportedly been lost since Gelzer accessed it.<sup>799</sup> As a result, no one has been able to assess the accurateness of the scholar’s claim. Nevertheless, Sisani’s basilica (namely its high-quality artwork and masonry and its large dimensions) is reflective of a bishop’s headquarters.

### B. Archaeology

The basilica is approximately 1.5 km. outside the modern village, adjacent to the Monastery of Panagia. It possessed three vaulted aisles, a cross-in-square shape, and was most likely domed. Its masonry consisted of small, roughly cut limestone blocks, framed by horizontal/vertical terra-cotta. Additionally, the stone blocks’ horizontal joints are separated by white plaster. The monument is

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795 Pelakinidis also claims, though without any evidence, that the murals on the first layer of the sanctuary probably date to the 11th-12th centuries. Pelekanidis, 1960, p.50. For a short discussion on when *templons* were prevalent in Byzantium, see Appendix, chapter two Part 4.

796 They were widely separated. 6.2 km. is too great a distance for a single Middle Rhomanian or Bulgarian urban settlement to have been spread over. Even Thessaloniki, the largest city in Rhomania in terms of wall length, did not exceed 2-2.5 km.

797 Dadras, 1989, pp.37-40.

798 Gelzer, 1980, p.134.

799 Petkos, 2000, p.321.

deserving of our attention not just because of its dimensions (34.50 m. x 18.50 m.) but also its artwork, morphology, and support elements.

The dome is supported by four massive piers, at least two of which are decorated with elaborate fresco paintings. For the southwest pier, one side is adorned with two birds flying between an omphalos. Another side featured an enthroned Theotokos, with a bishop at her feet in deep veneration. On the northeast pier, one can distinguish a figure standing on a jeweled footstool – possibly Christ or the basileus (unfortunately the upper part of the figure is missing). In the same vein, both sides of the central aisle and the south aisle were covered in frescoes. In the case of the former, this entailed representations of military saints, and in the case of the latter, holy women, sacred hierarchs, and a boar under a cross. A few frescos represent angels and prelates from the waist up, and lower down some geometric figures (whose quality is wildly inconsistent). Equally worth mentioning are some glazed tiles around the south wall – specifically in a buttress and a floor outside the wall. The tiles are adorned with engraved griffin representations and further geometric compositions – namely interspersed circles and triangles.<sup>800</sup>

One cannot help but be awestruck by the artwork's sheer attention to detail. For instance, the figure on the jeweled footstool is dressed in a garment presenting meticulously defined embroidery patterns. The human faces all bear creases around their eyes, noses, and chins, although hair does appear somewhat one-dimensional.<sup>801</sup> Less than 2 m. west from the western entrance, sections of an exonarthex were discovered – possible proof of more than one construction phase. At the eastern end were three semi-circular recesses, no doubt the sanctuary and its *parabemata*. The side rooms are distinguished by a pentagonal outline on the outside, whereas the sanctuary's corresponding shape is a decagon. On the inside, the sanctuary also yielded the foundations of a semicircular built throne.

On the basis of the morphology (namely the side rooms and cross-in-square shape), masonry style, painted and engraved decorations, several traits mirrored by the basilicas of Servia and Serres, and exterior exonarthex, Petkos advances that the basilica was built in two phases. One dates to the 5<sup>th</sup> - 6<sup>th</sup> centuries, and the second to 1150-1200.<sup>802</sup> I take a slightly divergent point of view, one that puts more emphasis on the military saints' paintings. The artistic cult of warrior saints became extremely popular in Byzantium in the 10<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> centuries. C. Walter has compiled a substantial percentage of the known artistic depictions of military saints. The number of his representations rises from 34 in the 6<sup>th</sup>-9<sup>th</sup> centuries to 90 in the 10<sup>th</sup>-11<sup>th</sup> centuries. The overall number of depictions, including those not addressed in Walter's book, include every conceivable type of visual media: mural paintings, mosaics, church icons,

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800 Petkos, 2000, p.315.

801 It is also interesting to note the presence of the omphalos. After the figurine from Demetrias, here is another case of the Byzantine Greek people's unofficial appreciation for Hellenistic artwork.

802 Petkos, 2000, pp.313, 314, 318, 319.

reliquaries, coins, and even seals.<sup>803</sup> Frescoes of warrior saints therefore give us a 10<sup>th</sup> century *terminus post quem* for the basilica, even though they continued to be popular in the 13th-15th centuries. When combined with the masonry, morphology, and parallels with Servia and Serres, I believe we are looking at a construction date in the 11<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup> centuries.

On a related note, Petkos' dating for the first phase deserves more scrutiny. It is true that paintings and mosaics of geometric figures and wild animals (such as griffins) were prevalent in Late Antique Roman churches.<sup>804</sup> Representations of angels, while rare, were not unheard of. But this is insufficient to make a compelling case for a 5<sup>th</sup>-6<sup>th</sup> century origin. Savopoulou-Katsiki and Mauropoulos-Tsioumi argue for a 950-1050 foundation date, mainly on the basis of the attitude of the bishop worshipping the Theotokos. But they also assert that most of the other frescoes could have originated at any point between the 12<sup>th</sup> to late-14<sup>th</sup> centuries. I am unsure what to make of these points, since they are not expounded on.

#### IV. Sigillographic data

Twenty-six seals are accounted for, twenty of which date to the 11th century (table 3). Quite possibly there are more seals – from Veroia – in the possession of the Ephorate of Imathia. However, I was unable to secure access to them. One 11<sup>th</sup> century specimen belongs to John Doukitzes, *strategos* of Kastoria. It is noteworthy for being the only irrefutable material proof of Kastoria's contemporaneous Thematic status. The specimen belonging to a private owner – Peter Moschos, *archon* and *spatharokandidatos* of Drougouviteia – perhaps reflects the Drogouvitei tribe's barbarian heritage (see II.3). Conversely, the occupation of the owner of a certain other Drougouviteian seal (dated to 995), might be taken as proof that the inhabitants were being absorbed into Rhoanian society. The owner, N. Chryselios, was "...judge of the Hippodrome and of Drougouviteia."<sup>805</sup> Judges of the Hippodrome were based in Constantinople. The numismatic discoveries do not allow for any spectacular inferences either. We have 52 coins (chiefly *folles*) from Prespa, 27 *folles* from Veroia, three *folles* or *half-tetartera* coins from Kitros, 4 *folles* from Voenas, 9 *hyperpyra* and *trachea* from Kastoria<sup>806</sup>, and 1 gold *tetarteron* from Pella. Practically all the specimens – except the ones at Veroia – are posterior to 1081.

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803 Some of them reach colossal proportions, like the *parakklesion* of the Chora Church in Constantinople. Walter, 1977.

804 Petkos does not actually make this argument, but I assume he has it in mind.

805 Oikonomides and Nesbitt, 1991, p. 85.

806 Touratsoglou, 1974, pp.94-95, Metcalf, 1966, p.100.



**Table 1.** Later-middle Rhomanian seals for Western Macedonia

	Court	Private	Ecclesiastical	Administrative
8 <sup>th</sup> /9 <sup>th</sup> century				
9 <sup>th</sup> century				
9 <sup>th</sup> /10 <sup>th</sup> century			1	
10 <sup>th</sup> century				1
10 <sup>th</sup> /11 <sup>th</sup> century				1
11 <sup>th</sup> century	2	3 (1 also a courtier, 2 also judges)	1	12 (including 5 judges, 3 of whom are also courtiers)
11 <sup>th</sup> /12 <sup>th</sup> century			3	
12 <sup>th</sup> century				

**Table 2.** Coin finds from Western Macedonia. Moutsopoulos, 1989b, p.188, Touratsoglou, 1974, pp.94, 99-100, Marki, 1991.

<b>Veroia, five-room structure on western slope of acropolis</b>	
<b>Denomination and quantity</b>	<b>Chronological period</b>
27 <i>folles</i>	Leo the Wise
<b>Agios Achillios of Prespa, sepulchres of narthex</b>	
<b>Denomination and quantity</b>	<b>Chronological period</b>
1 <i>folles</i>	John I
3 <i>folles</i>	Manuel I
2 <i>folles</i>	Isaac Angelos
2 <i>folles</i>	Alexios Angelos

<b>Agios Achillios of Prespa, conch of <i>diakonikon</i></b>	
<b>Denomination and quantity</b>	<b>Chronological period</b>
1 <i>follis</i>	John I
10 <i>folles</i>	Manuel I
<b>Agios Achillios of Prespa, remainder of <i>diakonikon</i></b>	
<b>Denomination and quantity</b>	<b>Chronological period</b>
1 <i>follis</i>	Alexios I
4 <i>folles</i>	John I
23 <i>folles</i>	Manuel I
1 <i>follis</i>	Alexios Angelos
<b>Agios Achillios of Prespa, stratigraphic layer under prothesis altar</b>	
<b>Denomination and quantity</b>	<b>Chronological period</b>
2 copper <i>noummia</i>	Manuel I
1 bronze <i>follis</i>	Manuel I
1 bronze <i>follis</i>	Isaac Angelos
<b>Pella, ground floor of one of the towers</b>	
<b>Denomination and quantity</b>	<b>Chronological period</b>
1 gold <i>tetarteron</i>	Alexios I
<b>Castle of Voenas, southwestern sector</b>	
<b>Denomination and quantity</b>	<b>Chronological period</b>
1 <i>follis</i>	Romanos Lekapenos
1 <i>follis</i>	Nikephoros Phokas

2 <i>folles</i>	John Tzimiskes/Basil II
<b>Inn at Kitros</b>	
<b>Denomination and quantity</b>	<b>Chronological period</b>
1 <i>folles</i>	1030-1042
1 <i>folles</i>	Alexios I, 1081-1092
1 <i>half-tetarteron</i>	Manuel I
<b>Kastoria</b>	
<b>Backfill outside tower southeast of Koubelidiki</b>	
<b>Denomination and quantity</b>	<b>Chronological period</b>
1 <i>trachy</i>	Isaac Angelos
<b>Denomination and quantity</b>	<b>Chronological period</b>
1 <i>hyperpyra</i>	Romanos Diogenes
5 <i>hyperpyra</i>	Alexios I
3 <i>hyperpyra</i>	Manuel I

## V. Conclusions

The first genuine signs of urban activity in Western Macedonia is provided by the Council of 879-880. Among the Council's participants were the Bishops of Kitros and Drougouviteia. This short list was bolstered by four new ones – Veroia, Servia, Petras, Likostomo<sup>807</sup> - by the time of the *Notitia 7*'s compilation (901-907). The number of bishoprics remained almost the same in the *Notitia 9* (ca. 934-968/970). Between the 970s and the 1020s, there was a second flurry of expansion. Edessa and Drougouviteia became the seat of themes, Kastoria was brought back into the Rhomanian fold, and Prespa and Moglena are mentioned for the first time (though they were in Bulgarian hands until the

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<sup>807</sup> All four appearing in history for the first time since the 7th century. Petras is absent from the subsequent *Notitia 9* (934-968/970\_ but it reappear in the *Notitia 10* (968/970-1019/1020). Similarly, Lykostomo is absent from the *Notitia 9* and *10*, but reappears in the *Notitia 13* (end of reign of Manuel I).

1010s). Additionally, two new places gained episcopal status: Kampanias and Kippou. The fourth and last stage in Western Macedonia's economic evolution lasted all the way to 1204. It was then that the majority of Middle Rhomanian Kastoria's churches were built, Moglena gained Thematic status (in 1086), and Kitros, Dovrokouvistis, Platamon and Kastoria opened their markets to Venetian merchants (as seen in the Chrysobull of 1198). Meanwhile, the towns that figured on the *Notitia 10* retained their positions in the *Notitia 13* (end of reign of Manuel I). The distribution of settlements probably existing by 1204 was noticeably unbalanced in favour of the Western Plain of Thessaloniki. There were seven in that geographic space, compared to four west of Mount Vermion and the Pierian Mountains. There was also a conspicuous absence of settlements in the Axios Valley. Arguably these patterns reflect the greater availability of cultivable land east of the mountains, but also the harsh winters provoked by the Vardaris wind.

Did Western Macedonia's geopolitical status have negative repercussions on its economic health? In terms of the cost of importing comestibles, it is possible to respond in the negative (see section III). But in terms of economic activity in general, I am tempted to answer yes. Living in fear – believing that at any time one's community could come under attack by a band of organized and trained belligerents – was not conducive to long-term economic expansion. Perhaps one could argue the permanent threat of the Bulgarians would have been a boon, in that it would have guaranteed part-time jobs as Thematic soldiers for able-bodied men (and the farmers, tanners, and blacksmiths who supplied Thematic soldiers' rations, saddles, shields, chainmail armor, and other equipment). But I suspect that on the whole, the danger from the north would have had a negative effect. It probably did not impact food imports (see 4.II), but can it hardly have been conducive to renovating church building, expanding one's agricultural holdings (and by extension the number of non-farmers who could be fed), purchasing high-quality goods, having children, or making pilgrimages. To be sure, we have to reason to believe the residents of Veroia, Kastoria, Edessa, Moglena, Kitros, and Servia were protected by stone walls.<sup>808</sup> But this was no guarantee of safety against the Bulgarians, who by the 10<sup>th</sup> century had acquired advanced methods of siege craft. The lack of security would have been compounded by the unreliable nature of Western Macedonia's natural defences. Both the Western Plain of Thessaloniki and the territory beyond the Voras-Vermion line are ringed by steep, vegetation-covered mountains, but only partially. There are at least two wide gaps – consisting of plains or gentle hills – which could have afforded easy access to invaders not dependent on wheeled vehicles.<sup>809</sup>

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808 All five settlements were fortified. In Edessa, fortifications have been found, but a siege took place in 1001.

809 I am thinking of the Axios Valley and the gap between the Pierian Mountains and Lake Limni. While there are mountains east of the Valley, stretching from Chalkidiki to the modern Bulgarian border, they are discontinuous and traversed by many trails.

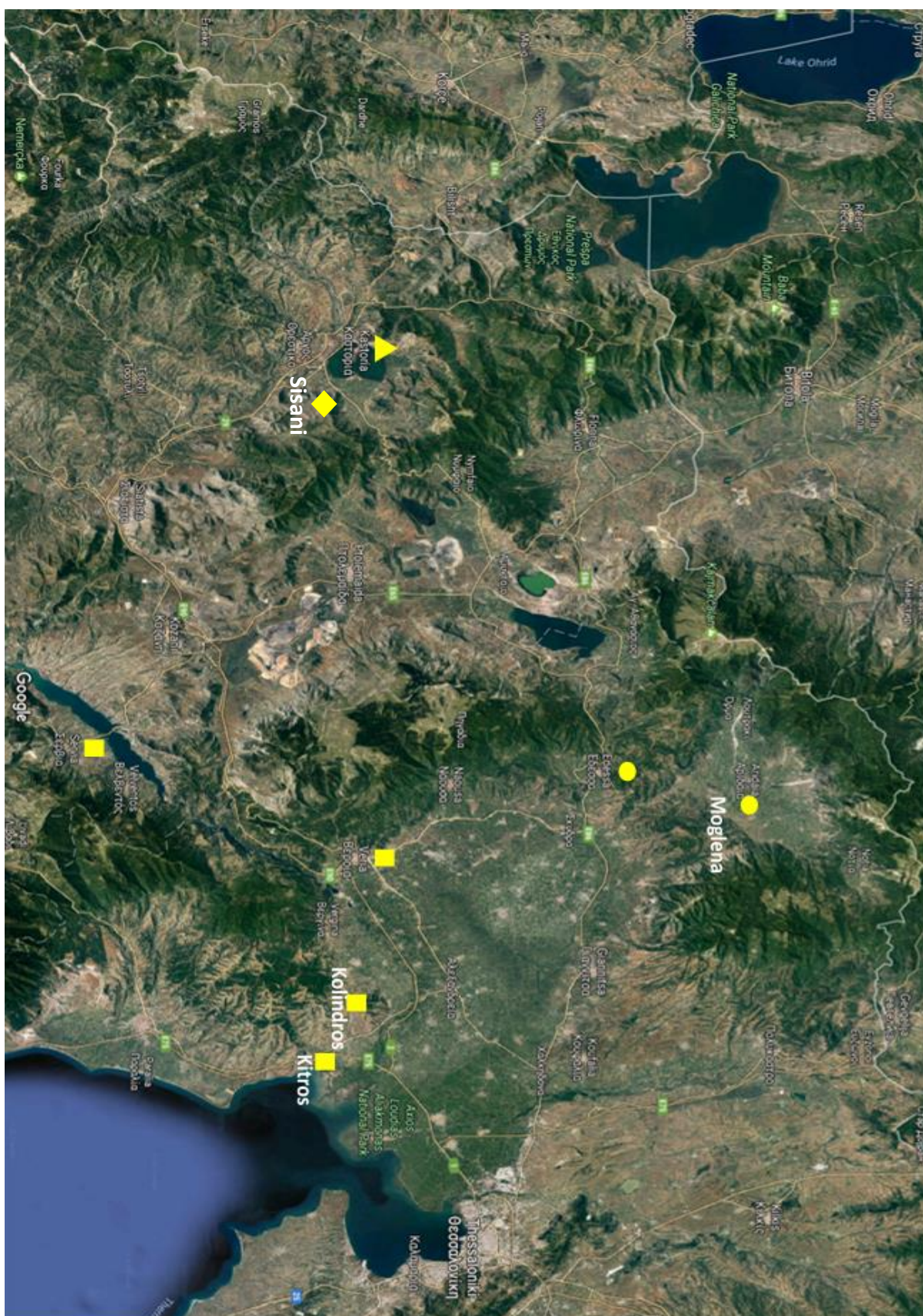
If we accept my argument, it might appear strange that the end of the First Bulgarian Empire (in 1018) does not seem to have caused a soaring of demographic numbers, commercial productivity, administrative importance, the quantity and quality of architectural projects, or purchasing power. But then the post-1018 years had their share of disturbances. One event after another shook the peace of Western Macedonian lowlands: the uprising of Peter Delyan (in 1040-1041), the sweeping raid of the Uzes in 1064-1065<sup>810</sup>, the revolt of Constantine Bodin in 1072-1073, Robert Guiscard's invasion of the Balkans, and the passage of the First Crusade. Admittedly, the Norman occupation probably did not cause long-term disruptions. No acts of destruction or rapacity are reported, and occupied Moglena became a Thematic capital a mere three years later. Likewise, while the First Crusaders' behaviour in Kastoria (taking what food they needed by force – in December – as noted in III.12.A), potentially had dire consequences, there are no accounts of similar incidents occurring elsewhere in Western Macedonia. But the other aggressions left a considerably darker legacy.

Could one make the case that only after Constantine Bodin's revolt did a measure of new prosperity manifest itself in Western Macedonia? After all, only then do we hear of settlements receiving administrative promotions (except maybe Kastoria, which was a Thematic capital by the reign of Michael VII) and/or becoming home to Venetian merchants.<sup>811</sup> The problem is that in order to assess the gravity of psychological damage for Western Macedonian settlements, we would need to know the time they required for physical recovery – not information easily obtained.

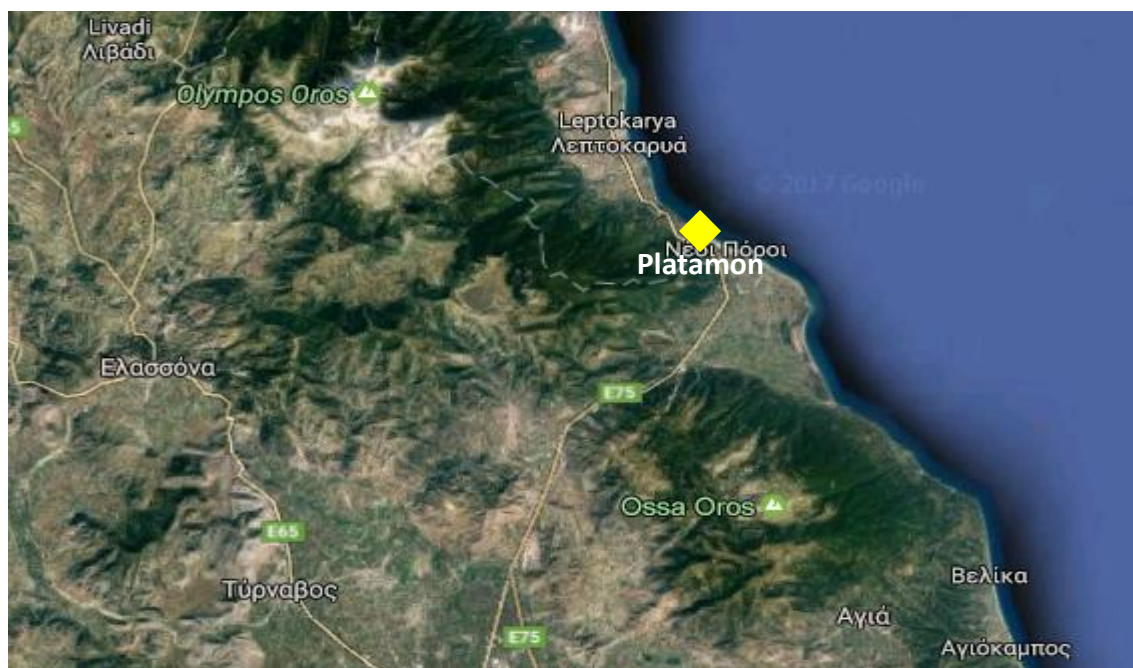
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810 McQueen, 1986, p.436, no.30. The Uzes are not explicitly said to have raided Western Macedonia. But they reached Central Greece, which would have required passing through the former region.

811 I am excluding Platamon from the discussion, since there is no evidence for its existence before the mid-12th century.







**Figure 32-33.** Distribution of urban settlements in Western Macedonia during the period 783-1204.

**Figure 34. Chronology for figs. 32-33**

- Settlements in existence by early 10th century
- Settlements probably in existence by early 10th century
- Settlements in existence by late 10th-early 11th century
- Settlements in existence by mid-late 12<sup>th</sup> century





## Chapter 5: conclusions. Diverse and common economic fates

### I. When did economic resurgence in Greece begin, what form did it take, and why did it happen

In 783, Stavrakios campaigned in Hellas (see chapter 2.II). The chief minister was probably not motivated by altruism: rather, he and the regent Empress Irene needed to raise their political credit after a miserably unsuccessful war against the Arabs (in 782-783). Nevertheless, it is my belief that his actions had profound consequences – that they planted the seeds of economic recovery for Boeotian and Thessalian urban settlements. The restoration of Rhomanian authority convinced many Rhomaioi whose ancestors had dwelt in Central Greece that it was safe to return (see chapter 2.II). Livadia, Davlia, Amfissa, and Farsala constitute prime potential examples of such sites. The surge in Helladic administrative seal finds from the 8<sup>th</sup>/9<sup>th</sup> century onwards (see chapter 3.VI), the splitting of the Theme of Hellas into two districts ca.800 (see chapter 3.VI), and the fact that a Slavic revolt occurred in the Peloponnese in 805<sup>812</sup>, and are strongly suggestive of reinforced Rhomanian authority, even though direct evidence of contemporary resettlement in Central Greece is in short supply). It might be, too – though I cannot prove it – that some Rhomaioi were able to venture out from fortified hilltop sites (where they had previously been holed up) and reclaim the adjacent lowlands.<sup>12</sup> It is in this context that the appearance of the *Notitia* 3's Central Greek bishoprics can be seen (bearing in mind that the *Notitia* was compiled not very long after 783, between 787 and 800). In Western Macedonia, the first urban settlements do not reappear until much later, in the 870. I have not identified the factors which made this event possible, but the Stavrakian campaign is a plausible answer. So we may say with reasonable confidence that economic recovery in my regions began between the late 8<sup>th</sup> and the mid-late 9<sup>th</sup> centuries (see chapters 2.IV, 3.VIII, and 4.V). The phenomenon more or less continued until the end of my period of study. Its running theme was the growth of affluence – an affluence which manifested itself through silk production, agriculture, demography, Italian commercial activity, and religious architectural projects.

First then, a silk industry of tremendous renown developed in Boeotia in the 12<sup>th</sup> century. We cannot be sure that the profits derived from the sale of silk garments to well-to-do Constantinopolitans trickled

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812 Meaning the Slavs had previously been compelled to accept Rhomanian overlordship. Constantine Porphyrogenetos, 1993, ch.49, p.229.

12 About we all know is that in 809-810, a *droungos* was settled in Boeotia. Treadgold, 1988, p.161. In this context the term *droungos* (also known as a *moira*) referred to a subdivision of a *tourma*, a military regiment. In addition, *droungos* eventually came to designate certain mountainous areas of Attica, Lakonia, and Epiros, and to be interchangeable with *zygos* ("mountain range" or "pass"), though only at the end of the 12th century. Treadgold, 1988, p.161, Treadgold, 1995, pp.104-105, Kazhdan, 1991, p.664.

down to Boeotian weavers, reelers, dyers, purple murex fishermen, and silkworm raisers. But every man and woman in Thebes and Kastorion who did not grow their own food (because they worked year-round in the silk industry) would have meant more profits for tenants, landowners, and merchants, and more jobs for agricultural labourers. Can the industry be linked to growing numismatic circulation? The question is worth asking. Venetian merchants who did business in Thebes paid for their expenses in cash (see chapter 2.IV), and they were purchasing and exporting local precious silk as of 1171.

At the moment I am restricted from making any further conclusions on coinage trends by the difficulties I encountered during my research. The number of coins to which I was given access by the Greek Ephorates (682, all of them *folles* and *tetartera*) is ludicrously small, considering the chronological and geographic scope of my thesis. Worse, I was unable to study any coins from Western Macedonia. In a similar vein, there is much work to be done before we can settle the question raised by Sanders and Vroom, namely how widespread did high-quality ceramic become in the 12<sup>th</sup> century. There are thousands of sherds and vessels in Thebes and Chalkis that are unpublished, and so unavailable for study. They include the 12<sup>th</sup>-13<sup>th</sup> century sherds found during the Thebes Archaeological Museum's expansion and the specimens recovered from Anthedon's old harbour by the 1968 German excavation (see chapter 2.III.7). Then there is the surveyed and excavated pottery from Kouveli and Almyros. It has not been published, although I am told by Professor Gregory that his material should become available in the next few years. In the meantime, I have had to make do with less than twelve dozen sherds. This problem is not confined to my regions: Veikou's study of Epirus/Aetolia-Akarnania accounts for a mere 51 urban coins, and, Tzavella's dissertation on Attica for only 61 Middle Rhomanian urban pottery sherds.<sup>813</sup> On a preliminary note, this much I will note: that by the 12<sup>th</sup>/early 13<sup>th</sup> century, Thebans were no longer dependent on extra-regional pottery imports, as they had been until then. And their purchasing power can be said to have remained more or less stable from ca.950-1050 onwards. For the latter time interval, we have 25 high-quality sherds. For the 12<sup>th</sup>/early 13<sup>th</sup> century interval, 27 medium-quality sherds are accounted for (see chapter 2.III.12). My data from Larissa conveys a similar message.

Fortunately, there are other potential demonstrations of affluence to examine. One of them is agriculture. After all, the Warm-Summer Mediterranean climate of Boeotia, the vaguely Warm-Summer Mediterranean climate of Thessaly, and the Humid Subtropical climate of Western Macedonia would have been conducive to a swelling in scale of the agricultural economy. Research by Sivignon (together with accounts from 19<sup>th</sup> century and Antique geographers, and a 12<sup>th</sup> century ecclesiastical letter) essentially depicts Thessaly as a bountiful garden. The lowlands – but also the Revenia Hills and the slopes of the Pindus and Olympus – could support wheat, barley, olives, onion, garlic, lentils, lucerne, grape vines, chestnuts, mulberries, and the Kermes oak (see chapter 3.II). Such a diverse array of crops would

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813 Veikou, 2012, p.544, Tzavella, 2012, pp.211-232.

not only have reduced the risk of plants being consumed by insects and diseases, but would have potentially been good insurance against droughts. True, the Thessalian plains are hydrologically better suited for agriculture (see chapter 3.II). But the produce of Boeotia's lowlands seems to have been only slightly less wide-ranging (it excluded chestnut trees).<sup>814</sup> The same general assessment can be made for Western Macedonia. The crops and animals we can reasonably expect local people to have exploited include bees, the Terebinth, cherry, game, and a variety of cereals.

Perhaps the Axios Valley was shunned by agriculturalists in the winter, on account of the Vardaris wind (see chapter 4.I). Likewise, the climate west of the Western Plain of Thessaloniki (beyond Voras and Vermion) is not as favorable as that of Veroia, Moglena, and Kitros. Winters are harsher: for example, the mean January temperature is 1 °C, compared to 4.6 °C further east. I believe this partly explains why horse pastures (and Couman and Pecheneg populations) are not historically attested in this section of Western Macedonia. Still, these disadvantages were surely offset by the exceptional fertility of the Moglena Basin, where the volcanic soil can support an exceptionally high variety of fruits and vegetables.<sup>815</sup> On a more general note, Theophrastus', Rackham's, Philippson's, and the British Naval Intelligence Division's comments on climate (they speak of bouts of frost on the plains of Boeotia and Western Macedonia, as noted in chapter 2.I and chapter 4.I) suggest that sub-zero temperatures may have been the norm in Medieval times.

I am hopeful that we will be able shed more light on the connection between climate and agriculture once the state of the evidence improves. For now, our information is essentially confined to that which J. Turner and N. Athanasiades produced in the 1970s.<sup>816</sup> Turner revealed that arboreal pollen values at Khimaditis, in Western Macedonia, were declining by ca. 850. Concomitantly, agricultural plants were becoming more prevalent. Athanasiades concluded that an identical trend was in effect at Pertouli and Litokoro (in Thessaly and Western Macedonia, respectively) by ca. 900 and ca. 1000. The phenomenon is especially stimulating because palynological and archaeological research has demonstrated it also held true in 9<sup>th</sup>-10<sup>th</sup> century southern Anatolia.<sup>817</sup> A sweeping palynological chronology for Northwestern and Central Greece is long overdue. In that regard, there is cause for optimism. The Cornell Tree-Ring Laboratory's Aegean Dendrochronology Project is working to build a chronology for Central and Northern Greece for the second millennium A.D. Their existing data goes as far back as the mid-11<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>818</sup> Its

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814 Gifted as the Kifissian Plain is in loam (a type of soil that contains much more nutrients and moisture than clay, sandy, or silt-rich soil), this is no surprising.

815 See Chapter 4.IV.2. For seismic and geological evidence of volcanic activity in the basin, see Koukouzas et al., 2015.

816 Turner, 1978, and Athanasiades, 1975. Their findings are helpfully conveyed by Dunn in his article on woodland and scrubland in the Middle Rhomanian world. Dunn, 1993, p.244.

817 Dunn, 1993, p.247, Roberts, 1990, p.59-64.

818 Also worth mentioning is a recently published article by Xoplaki et al. The authors provide a table of Greece displaying sites where pollen samples have been collected, with the period of study being 800-1300. Seven sites are situated in Western Macedonia and

publication (which I have been told will happen within a year) should open up some fascinating possibilities – measuring the frequency of frost events in Boetia and Western Macedonia (as noted above), whether the famine of 927 affected Greece (see chapter 1.III), the cause of the epidemic which reportedly struck Lidoriki in 1054, and more generally the relationship of farmland to woodland (namely when the former expanded at the latter's expense, and vice-versa). Yet even now, we have at our disposal a number of examples of a large-scale agricultural economy in Hellas: the Cadaster of Thebes, the Bishop of Stagoi's ownership of 85 mulberry trees in the 1160s (see chapter 2.III.8), the (ostensible) creation of a *kouratoria* in Velestinos ca. 1204 (see chapter 3.IV.6.A), and Thessaly's regular supplying of grain to Constantinople in the late 12<sup>th</sup> century (see chapter 3.II). There are a few indirect examples, too, such as the creation of four new Western Macedonian Themes between the 1070s and 1198 (Moglena, Kastoria, Veroia, and Servia) the appearance of three new Larissan sees in the *Notitia 10* (968/970-1019/1020), and the doubling of the number of bishoprics under Thebes' jurisdiction in the 12<sup>th</sup> century. If more administrative and ecclesiastical districts were needed, it was surely for demographic reasons. Perhaps in some towns food production failed to keep up with the demand. But this was almost certainly not the case in Demetrias (in the 1070s), Larissa (in the 970s and the 1080s), and Kitros, Platamon, Trikala and Kastoria (in the 1160s). The aforesaid five communities are described by Kekaumenos, William of Apulia, and Idrisi as being rich or agriculturally important (see chapter 3.IV.1.A, 2.A.,<sup>10</sup> and chapter 4.III.9, 10.A, 12.A). Nor was it the case in those communities which eventually became home to Italian merchants.

This brings me to my next sub-section. I believe another manifestation of affluence was the establishing of Italian merchants in urban centres across Greece, from Thebes and Zitounion to Kastoria and Prespa. The arriving foreigners would have required (among other things) houses, churches, spare parts for their ships and wagons, horses and fodder, wood and charcoal for keeping warm, parchment for making contracts with literate suppliers<sup>819</sup>, food for their sustenance, and of course, agricultural produce for business purposes. In all likelihood their necessities would have boosted purchasing power and helped create jobs across the professional spectrum of the town in question. The only native people who possibly suffered were merchants who formerly controlled the Greece-Constantinople market. Their profits must have declined in the short-term, as Venice, Pisa, and Genoa rapidly became major players on the aforementioned market (I say "rapidly" because the chrysobulls granted to the three republics took effect immediately). Even so, it does not necessarily follow that the natives' profits declined to 'unhealthy' levels. As I observed in chapter 3.IV.6.A, there are no 11<sup>th</sup> or 12<sup>th</sup> century sources which suggests that a Rhomios merchant was driven to financial ruin as a result of Italian competition (except arguably Kinnamos, and his reliability on the subject is dubious).

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Thessaly. Yet oddly, they go unaddressed in the text. Xoplaki et al., 2016, p.232.

819 Unless they regularly shipped in parchment from Italy.

One might even ask whether the Italians were responsible for bringing prosperity to the communities they set up shop in, or whether they were attracted by prosperity. Some of my relevant towns – namely Thebes, Demetrias, Veroia, Kastoria, and Platamon – present genuine traces of commercial dynamism well before their names ended up on the imperial chrysobulls to the Italians. But others – Dovrokouvistis, Almyros, Farsala, and Ezeros-on-Olympos – did not present dynamism. Farsala was a bishopric in the *Notitiae* 3, 7, 9, and 10 (787-800, 901-907, 934-968/970, and 968/970-1019/1020) and a market town for the Venetians in 1198. In between the *Notitia* 10 and the Venetian arrival, though, Farsala apparently did not experience any economic activity that meets my urban criteria. It was a stop on the *demosia leophoros* by the 1060s (see chapter 3.I), but this position could have amounted to nothing more than an inn, a few stables, a house for officials from the *demosios dromos*, and a barrack. This is not to underestimate the importance of heavy road traffic – I simply do not believe that by itself it could confer urban status upon a community, that it could substitute for other, equally important causes of growth, such as employment, trade, and security.

The mere fact that the Italians clearly wanted to do business in the towns listed in their chrysobulls is not irrefutable proof of previous prosperity. They may have seen potential in towns which hitherto had demonstrated no interest in supplying Constantinople (or Alexandria, in the case of Kitros), or which lacked the capital to carry out essential improvements to communication infrastructure and agrarian land in a state of disrepair. I consulted the debates of the Venetian Parliament, numerous Venetian *colleganze*, and the correspondence of Genoa's Constantinopolitan ambassadors with their governments. None of these sources discuss the economic health of the towns featuring in the chrysobulls. The chicken or the egg, then? The best solution is probably systematically working our way through the sources which describe the commercial life of the aforementioned non-dynamic towns. Though my research was comprehensive, I did not look for chrysobulls granted to the Archbishoprics of Larissa and Thessaloniki, or praktikons regarding the same archbishoprics. Both types of sources might mention Farsala, Dovrokouvistis, and Ezeros-on-Olympos. In addition, I may have failed to consult all relevant hagiographical sources.

It is debatable how much maritime and land infrastructure and contributed to the rise in prosperity. We know that over my period of study, many long-distance trade, communication, and pilgrimage routes were established – or re-established: Otranto-Nikopolis-modern Antikyra (by the mid-9<sup>th</sup> century <sup>820</sup>), very possibly Preveza-Trikala-Larissa-Thessaloniki (by the 9<sup>th</sup>/late century <sup>821</sup>), Vathys-Rome (by the early

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820 See chapter 2.I.

821 Three contemporary *kommerkiarioi* pulled double duty between the Themes of Kephallonia and Thessaloniki. See chapter 3.II and Veikou, 2012, p.244. The most direct land itinerary would have gone through Preveza, the Pass of Pyli, Trikala, Larissa, and the *demosia leophoros* to Thessaloniki.

10<sup>th</sup> century <sup>822</sup>), Thebes-Euripos-Constantinople (by the late 11<sup>th</sup> century <sup>823</sup>), Trikala-Larissa-Almyros-Constantinople (by the early 12<sup>th</sup> century <sup>824</sup>), Constantinople-Kitros-Alexandria (by the 1160s) <sup>825</sup> and Kastoria-Thessaloniki-Constantinople (by the end of the 12<sup>th</sup> century). <sup>826</sup> These links to the 'outside world' would not have been possible without the existence of a comprehensive and well-maintained public road system. The system itself owed its existence in no small part to the supervision of a trained, professional bureaucracy, the permanent existence of a reservoir of forced labourers (see chapter 2.I), and the absence of opposition to *angareia* by non-monastic people. It was partly the *demosiai hodoi* which allowed Almyros to become an emporium, Romano Maraino to ship his oil cargoes from Thebes to Constantinople, Benjamin of Tudela to move from Jewish-populated town to Jewish-populated town without harm or delay (in the 1160s), and (very probably) Alexios to rescue Larissa before it surrendered to the Normans (in 1083). <sup>827</sup> Nevertheless, we have little specific information on how much money travellers pumped into the stations and ports they passed through, and what kind of profits merchants made thanks to the infrastructure network. Only with the arrival of the Italians, in the 1080s, do we find a few precise figures (they concern the overall cost of exports). <sup>828</sup>

The mention of the 1080s leads me to another important issue. The notion of the late 11<sup>th</sup> century as a turning point, which I emphasized in chapter 2.IV, chapter 3.IX, and chapter 4.V, should not be overstated. This is demonstrated by the history of my religious architecture. Of the 25 religious buildings I have accounted for in Boeotia, Thessaly, and Western Macedonia, we have cause to believe that 11 date to the late 8<sup>th</sup>-mid-11<sup>th</sup> century, 11 to the late 11<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup> centuries, and three to the 11<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup> centuries. Additionally, three basilicas founded in the 9<sup>th</sup> or 10<sup>th</sup> centuries were restored or expanded in the latest time bracket. If we break down the figures by region (excluding the 3 11<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup> centuries projects) we find 11 buildings in Boeotia, 4 in Thessaly, and 10 in Western Macedonia. As it happens, 7 out of 11 Boeotian monuments, and 5 out of 10 Western Macedonian monuments come from the late 8<sup>th</sup>-mid 11<sup>th</sup> centuries. These numbers suggest that the pace of religious building construction did not at all intensify after the late 11<sup>th</sup> century. Incidentally, it had been my intention to assess the spatial and qualitative evolution of the monuments, but (owing to the exceedingly expeditious character of the field reports I used <sup>829</sup>), I could only adequately describe 6 of the 11 late 8<sup>th</sup>-mid 11<sup>th</sup> century buildings. So there was little sense in attempting to create a chronology, because the potential inaccuracy would have been too high.

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822 See chapter 2.III.3

823 See chapter 2.I.

824 See chapter 3.III.6 and Idrisi, 1999, p.409.

825 See chapter 4.III.10.

826 See chapter 4.I and chapter 4.III.12.A.

827 Anna Komnene, 1969, p.128.

828 See chapter 2.III.9.

829 Chiefly the *Archaïologikon Deltion* and the *Archaïologiko Ergo sti Makedonia*.

There is no evidence of imperial patronage for any the projects (except Agios Grigorios of Thebes). I suspect this is symptomatic of a broad attitude. Throughout the Middle Rhomanian period, the central government seldom rarely a pro-active interest in the Themes of Hellas, Thessaloniki (at least the Western Macedonian portion of the latter Theme), Veroia, Moglena, Kastoria, and Servia. Stavrakios' campaign was almost certainly conducted for self-seeking reasons, only one member of the imperial family ever willingly visited Central or Northwestern Greece<sup>830</sup>, Michael Psellos considers Hellas to be a decrepit land<sup>831</sup>, and the naval and terrestrial protection assigned to Hellas seems to have remained skeletal after the Norman raid of 1147 (see chapter 3.VII). Perhaps Hellas<sup>832</sup> never entirely shed its reputation for barbarism (see chapter 3.IX), despite the popularity of a local style of religious architecture<sup>833</sup>, the comprehensive nature of the public road network, and the vivid association which must have existed in the 12<sup>th</sup> century between a certain sophisticated export commodity (high-quality silk) and Boeotia.

So far in this chapter I have looked at affluence on a multi-regional level. Yet this does not mean that wealth was evenly distributed within the three regions. Some settlements were more economically powerful than others. In this regard, we can make a case for the existence of a basic urban hierarchy. Thematic capitals, along with communities of regional and international status, stood at the top. Then came archbishoprics and bishoprics (in the order of the ranks they held in the *Notitiae Episcopatum*). I have based this hierarchy chiefly on the positions which clergymen held in Constantinopolitan ceremonies, the typical size of a bishop and an archbishop's staff, the logistical burden presented by the Helladic *paitor's* 'court' at the end of the 12<sup>th</sup> century, and the fact that ecclesiastical and administrative officials' authority varied directly with the size of the populations they supervised. But it must be emphasized that the hierarchy could be distorted by physical geography, and that sometimes it does not work. In Thessaly, contemporary authors focus far more on Larissa, Almyros, and Demetrias than other settlements. All the relevant authors note the three towns' richness and vitality. On that basis, it is reasonable to say that Larissa, Almyros and Demetrias meet my criteria for the upper rank of the hierarchy. And it is evident that in Boeotia, the importance of Thebes – a Thematic center – dwarfed that of other towns. But Thebes had the supplementary advantage of possessing a source of high-quality water, and an abundant one at that (see chapter 2.IV). Nor is this all. Moglena and Servia are virtually absent from post-1020 writings – even though Moglena was a Thematic capital from 1086 onwards and Servia is mentioned

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830 This was Basil II, who campaigned on several reprises in Western Macedonia and crossed Thessaly and Boeotia on his way to Athens, in 1018. Even then, it is evident that the emperor's interest in Western Macedonia was purely reactive. Manuel I overwintered in a village near Veroia in 1148, but only because he had been prevented by the weather from taking a ship to Kerkyra.

831 Michael Psellos, 2017, letters 26, 33.

832 Of which Western Macedonia may have been part, since Kaminiates implies that Thessaloniki was part of Hellas. See chapter 2.II.

833 Namely the Helladic School. Arguably, some of the better preserved architectural examples include Agios Stephanos, the Taxiarchis Metropolis, the Basilica of Dormition, and the Katikoumenon of Servia.



as the seat of a Theme in 1163. Also, the basilica of Kitros is slightly smaller than Servia's and Stagoi's. The three buildings' respective dimensions are 23.20 m x. 16.60 m., 30 m. x 12 m., and 30 m. x 13 m.). Yet Kitros was a significantly higher-ranking see than both Servia and Stagoi, even though the latter community belonged to a different archbishopric (that of Larissa).<sup>834</sup>

For what my hierarchy is worth, it is fair to ask what factors allowed towns to ascend in economic importance, and what factors caused them to fall (or to remain at the lower echelon). I suspect, as I asserted in chapter 4.V, that one of the biggest potential enemies of prosperity was the damage caused by covetous and unscrupulous 'barbarians'. This is not to say that the relatively high proportion of fortified towns in my regions of my study (in the 12<sup>th</sup> century, up to five out of eight Boeotian towns and seven out of eleven Western Macedonian towns possessed fortifications) was proof of insecurity. Stone walls and gates were not necessarily there for protection purposes – they may have been intended to control who got in and out of a town and who used the *demosiai hodoi*. Livadia's castle (which had a triple enclosure, suggesting a highly dangerous external environment) is an exception. Besides, my datings for most of the fortified sites are provisional (see section II for more detail). But it is a fact that the durability of the economy of Central and Northwestern Greece was tested on many occasions by foreign raids, conquests, and military marches. For instance, Demetrias was sacked in 897, then again in 902 (see chapter 3.IV.2.A). Central Greece experienced four large-scale raids in the 10<sup>th</sup> century: in ca. 918, 943, ca. 976-ca. 979, and 996 (see chapter 2.III.12). In 1147, the Normans sacked Thebes, Galaxidi, and Euripos (the largest port serving Boeotia). Eleven years later, they did the same thing to Almyros and Euripos. Western Macedonia suffered three raids or passages of hostile armies in little more than thirty years: the revolt of Peter Delyan, the Uzes invasion of 1064-1065, and the uprising of Constantine Bodin in 1072-1073. Ironically, the rich soil of my regions may have helped terrestrial aggressors live off the land, and thus augment the scope and duration of their campaigns. Equally, the aggressors could have availed themselves of the road network. In 1083, the Normans blocked the Vale of Tempe against Alexios I's army, suggesting that they were aware that a major road ran through it. Likewise, the Bulgarians must have made some use of the *demosia leophoros* in ca. 918 and 996. On both occasions they passed through Boeotia, and in that region the *demosia* followed the most convenient topographical path. A community could have bought some mercy by submitting at once, but that mercy would have been of limited proportions if the enemy was campaigning to seize booty and slaves (as Muslim pirates usually did) or happen to be in an unmerciful mood.

The question arises as to whether foreign aggression psychologically stifled the economic potential of the regions which were victimized. We cannot hope to give an educated answer without calculating physical damage. Can this be done? Can we claim that in terms of physical recovery, and by Medieval

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834 For the ranks of the bishoprics, see appendices E and F.

standards, the urban economy was resilient? To be frank, I think the answer is elusive, regardless of which region we are talking about. As I observed in chapter 2.III.11, Rhomaioi sources are generally indifferent to towns and cities' handling of the aftermath of sacks and raids. Osios Loukas' account of the occupation of Hellas (either of the Theme or the geographic space) by Tsar Symeon's soldiers is a case in point of this deficiency. The saint does not say what happened to Hellas upon the return of peace, except that the people who had fled in the wake of the Bulgarian invasion returned to their homes. Likewise, Michael Psellos bestows praise on Constantine X for dealing with the Uzes raid which attended his reign, but the specific damage that the barbarians caused is beneath Psellos' notice.<sup>835</sup>

This much I will say, that Rhomaioi civilians could plausibly have expected their lives to be no safer if they committed treason – whether by emigrating to, say, Bulgarian Macedonia, Egypt, or Norman Apulia, or by taking a leading role in a rebellion. The task of moving to Macedonia or Apulia would have been difficult to keep secret (unless the Rhomios in question was willing to leave behind all their possessions and relations, or they had nothing and nobody to leave behind). If the plan became public knowledge, the offender would surely have risked arrest by Rhomaioi authorities. For what kind of precedent would letting someone emigrate set? How many subjects could the emperor afford to lose before Rhomania was swallowed by one its ravenous rivals? Even assuming that the dissident escaped to Bulgaria and could speak the native language, even assuming they did not take to heart the state's rhetoric on the 'barbarian' nature of non-Rhomaioi, they would henceforth have been on the receiving end of Rhomaioi military operations. This was no trivial consideration, for Rhomaioi soldiers campaigning on enemy soil were not known for their moderation. They were wont to commit acts which they themselves would have described as savage, had the shoe been on the other foot. The Bulgarian campaigns of Nikephoros I, Nikephoros Phokas the Elder, and Basil II are cases in point. Apulia and Egypt would doubtless have been safer destinations, given their relative inaccessibility to the Rhomaioi and the invasion of 1155-1158<sup>836</sup>, but again, the challenge was getting there.

The lack of feasible alternatives to imperial rule would help explain why no Rhomios living in Bulgarian-occupied Western Macedonia seems to have expressed a yearning for restoration of Rhomanian rule, there were no manifestations of local 'patriotism' as the Franks marched through Thessaly and Boeotia, in 1204-1205, there are no accounts of Middle Rhomanian Greeks emigrating<sup>837</sup>, we have so few cases of Rhomaioi openly welcoming a conquering army (as the Kerkyrans did with King Roger II's Normans), and no Rhomios military aristocrat, *archon*, or local lord from the Themes of Hellas, Veroia, Servia,

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835 Michael Psellos, 1985, pp.10, 15.

836 The invading Rhomaioi troops were ordered to display exemplary conduct, because it was important they win the support of the populace (as they were outnumbered) and retain the support of the Pope. Kinnamos, 1976, pp.156-157.

837 In fact, to my knowledge, emigrants from the Middle Rhomanian Empire in general are unheard of, except for those who were planning to usurp the throne.

Moglena, Kastoria, and Thessaloniki ever willingly raised the banner of rebellion. Nikoulitzas Delphinas, a Larissan *archon*, did make history as the leader of the Vlach rebellion of 1066.<sup>838</sup> But he heartily disapproved of the affair. He warned Constantine X of the revolt before it began, was bullied by the Vlachs into becoming its leader, and made sure that the Vlachs laid down their arms as soon as the emperor granted their demands.<sup>839</sup> In 1201, Leo Sgouros certainly rebelled of his own free will. But he was from the Peloponnese, not Central Greece. What I am getting at is, even if psychological and physical recovery from foreign attacks was a drawn-out process, even if the state's record in providing protection from the above attacks was a dubious return for a Greek subject's taxes (as I believe it was, especially in the 12<sup>th</sup> century<sup>840</sup>), one could make a case that the Rhomaioi of Hellas and the Western Macedonian Themes were largely resigned to their lot as imperial subjects. They might support a foreign incursion or a revolt if presented with the opportunity: the Theme of Nikopolis made common cause with Peter Delyan's men and Manuel Kamytzes' rebellion "created disturbances" in the Theme of Hellas.<sup>841</sup> But they would not go so far as to initiate an insurrection, and they did not consider that the rewards of emigration were commensurate with the efforts involved.

If consistency may have been a running theme for urbanites' acceptance of the broader political status quo, it was definitely a running theme for the relationship of towns to one another. For from the beginning of my period of study to its end, towns were simultaneously closely linked and distinct. Closely linked by land and maritime infrastructure, as I have previously asserted, but also by faith, language, allegiance to the emperor, and the shallow nature of the relationship between them and the state. By this last point I meant that there was no discernible emotional bond between the two parties – the towns could arguably get by comfortably without the heavy hand of the emperor and his bureaucracy. The protection they received was undoubtedly welcome, but a foreign power might have protected them just as efficiently, if not more so. Besides, there is evidence that their living standards did not deteriorate when they came under foreign occupation (see chapter 4.II and V).

In terms of distinctiveness, the economies of the three regions evolved at different paces, and to different levels. This topic will be the focus of the remainder of section I. In Boeotia, at least four towns experienced a revival (they may have been abandoned previously) and four others were founded. For Thessaly, the corresponding figures are six and thirteen, and for Western Macedonia, four and seven.<sup>842</sup>

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838 Kekaumenos, 1998, p.226.

839 He even had his Vlach lieutenants – who refused to accept the emperor's offer – arrested.

840 See chapter 3.VII.

841 For Delyan, see John Skylitzes, 1973, 411. For Kamytzes, see Niketas Khoniates, 1975, p.293. There are also two cases of rebellions affecting Central Greece and yet failing to excite any commotion among local Rhomaioi – those of Nikoulitzas Delphinas and Leo Sgouros.

842 If we include Sisani, whose basilica I have dated to the 11th-12th centuries.

Thus, by the Fourth Crusade, it was possible to speak of nineteen urban centres in Thessaly, eight in Boeotia and eleven in Western Macedonia. The comparisons might be misleading, however, because the three regions were not equal in terms of physical and human geography. Now, this is not true with regard to rivers and geopolitics. The main rivers of the Western Plain of Thessaloniki were explicitly said to be navigable by Kaminiates (see chapter 4.I), in contrast to the Pinios, the Lithaios, the Kifissos, or the Asopos. But none of them definitely served urban settlements (with the exception of the Aliakmon, which flowed approximately 6 km. to the west of Veroia). Furthermore, while Thessaly and Macedonia were rarely part of the Rhomanian northern borderland, the Bulgarians, the Magyars, and the Uzes penetrated far beyond the borderland on a number of occasions (and with little difficulty). So this must have been a meagre assistance to the economy and feeble reassurance. Additionally, for much of the 9<sup>th</sup>-10<sup>th</sup> centuries, the people settled on the northern coast of the Gulf of Corinth and the eastern Aegean coast (see chapter 2.III.11) were constantly in danger of being despoiled or enslaved by pirates. And there were factors other than foreign dangers at play during the 9<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup> centuries. Away from the coast, security appears to have been more or less satisfactory in the 800s, yet the contemporary intensity of economic activity did not match that of the late 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> centuries.

On the other hand, agricultural potential was very much a game-breaker. The cultivable land of Thessaly covers a little less than 14,645 km<sup>2</sup>. By contrast, the total cultivable land in Boeotia is approximately 984 km.<sup>2</sup>, and that of the Western Plain of Thessaloniki approximately 900 km.<sup>2</sup> <sup>843</sup> In other words, there was more land fit for urban habitation and agriculture in Thessaly, even if we exclude the Revenia Hills and the slopes of Kissavos and Mount Pelion (see chapter 3.II). And while the perimeter of Lake Karla (surface area: 37 km<sup>2</sup>), on the Larissan Plain and the Spercheios estuary were potentially burdened by malaria <sup>844</sup>, Lakes Copais and Giannitsa were conceivably just as insalubrious (see chapter 2.I and Chapter 4.I). The two water bodies' perimeters were devoid of any urban centres during my period of study, there were marshes adjacent to Giannitsa in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century, and a secondary motive for draining Copais in the 1890s was the lake's state as a breeding ground for malaria.

Infrastructure-wise, each region could count on at least two ports by the 12<sup>th</sup> century. Boeotia had Vathys and Kouveli, Livadostro, and Euripos. Thessaly had Almyros and Demetrias, and Western

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843 These statistics were arrived at by me. I calculated them by consulting 1:1,000,000 scale maps (with contour lines every 200 m.) For Thessaly and Boeotia, I included the cultivable land on mountain slopes, since we know which slopes and to what altitude they can support crops. Sivignon and Bintliff propose different figures for Thessaly and Boeotia: 15,000 km.<sup>2</sup> and 850 km.<sup>2</sup>, respectively. Sivignon, 1975, pp.22-23, Bintliff, 1985, p.210. Bintliff's statistic concerns 5th-4th B.C. century Boeotia. He uses the estimated cultivable land of the region in 1961 (he does not give the source of the estimate), allowing for the different coastal boundaries of Ancient Boeotia and the existence of Lake Copais. I am unsure how Sivignon obtained his figures.

844 This was certainly true of the estuary in 1805-1806 and of Lake Karla in the 1870s. Sivignon, *ibid.*, p.118, De Vogüé, 1879. Dodwdell remarked that the air in the territory of Zetoun (Lamia) was rendered unwholesome by the vicinity of the marshes, and that the inhabitants had a yellow and sickly appearance. Dodwdell, 1819, p.78.

Macedonia Thessaloniki <sup>845</sup>, Kitros, and Platamon (see chapter 4.III.10-11). In this case, sheer numbers do not tell the whole story. Vathys and Kouveli must have had limited capacity (see chapter 2.I). Livadostro was better off, but its seaboard was still cramped compared to those of Demetrias and Almyros (if we accept, as I think we should, that Medieval Almyros' location lay between Nea Anchialos and New Halos <sup>846</sup>). Meanwhile, Thessaloniki's port was of enormous size, as befitted Rhomania's second city. Lastly, the Thessalian network I have assembled was less convenient than its Boeotian and Macedonian counterparts, in the sense that it was heavily centralized (see fig. 10 for chapter 2, figs. 3-4 for chapter 3, and fig. 21 for chapter 4). The majority of the roads radiated outward from Larissa, meaning that people heading northwest-west, east-southwest, or southeast-west would have been obliged to employ highly circuitous itineraries. In the event the Thessalian archbishopric was occupied or besieged, as it was in ca.979-996 and 1083, it is likely that regional trade would have been virtually paralyzed.

Taking the previous three paragraphs into consideration (along with the impact of climate, discussed earlier on) did geographic particularities help trigger flurries of large-scale economic growth, and did it affect their duration and character? I do not feel I can give an informed answer at this moment, in part because geopolitics by itself was not a decisive factor in Hellas and because a favourable geography is not necessarily a decisive agent of positive change. Hence, throughout my period of study there were significantly more urban settlements in Southern Epirus and Aetolia than in Western Macedonia. This was despite the latter region having a wider range of crops, more cultivable land, a better developed road network (as far we can tell), and being at peace for the vast majority of the period 1018-1204. The same general conclusion applies to Attica and Boeotia. For the moment, therefore, I believe we must be content with very broad explanations on the distinct evolutions of Boeotia, Thessaly, and Western Macedonia, using both physical and human geographic factors.

## II. Objectives for future research

There are still a number of major gaps in the study of the economy of Middle Rhomanian Central and Northwestern Greece – gaps which are relatively straightforward to fill. For example, there is a strong possibility that the Rhomaioi graves east of Loukisia, which the American School of Classical Studies excavated (and reburied) in 1889 are still in place (see chapter 2.III.7). Next, the possibility that Livadia's castle doubled as a town – with everyone residing within the walls – has yet to be proven. It is essential that someone reconnoitre the treacherous part of the space between the first and second enclosures of

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<sup>845</sup> Which, moreover, enjoyed good land connections to the landlocked settlements of Edessa, Kastoria, and Servia.

<sup>846</sup> See chapter 3.III.6.B.

the castle – ideally with some company in the event of an accident. Likewise, in Amfissa, an updated description of the masonry is overdue. In addition, my chronological conclusions for the masonries of Livadia, Farsala, Zitounion, Veroia, Servia, and Kitros (see chapter 2.III.2.B, chapter 3.IV.5, 7 and chapter 4.III.4, 10, 11) must be confirmed with contiguous numismatic and pottery finds.

The other research questions I set out in chapter 1.II. For the Middle Rhomaioi definition of urban settlements, my original interpretation remains unchanged. That said, readers may have noticed that none of my primary sources [which give an explicit definition for urban settlements] date to the 10<sup>th</sup> century. While Skylitzes' chronicle spans the 10<sup>th</sup> century, he himself lived from ca. 1040 to 1101. I have not managed to fill this gap, but will continue trying to do so.

Of equal concern is determining whether the rural: urban bipolar approach is in need of an overhaul, as Veikou suggests. Were the 'intermediate' settlements in Epirus anomalies, or reflective of a comprehensive trend? The question's importance should not be underestimated. If our current classification scheme is inadequate, then we will experience serious difficulty integrating historical sources on Rhoanian settlements with archaeological ones (and vice-versa). I have concluded that Veroia might qualify as intermediate (in Veikou's sense), since two of the sites on the stadium's slopes are non-military in character and broadly synchronous with the Old Metropolis (approximately 1.5 km. distant). Furthermore, both the stadium sites and the basilica were considered by contemporaries to be part of Veroia (see chapter 4.III.4.B). The problem is, we do not know whether the buildings excavated were merely an extension of the citadel – if they existed to meet the citadel's needs – or if they were part of an independent settlement (whether a farmstead, monastery, hamlet, village, or town). In the former eventuality, we could make a case for Veroia being a dispersed settlement, but only until the citadel ceased to be required (e.g. after the passage of the First Crusade, in all probability). Initially I thought Thebes was a promising candidate for intermediate status, because there were occupations on the peripheral hills (see chapter 2.III.11). But the hills are so near to the Kadmeia (about 200 m.) that they were surely regarded as being part of the confirmed settlement. None of the seventeen other communities for which I have significant archaeological evidence can be described as intermediate. As for Almyros and Prespa, their exact locations have not been determined (see chapter 3.IV.6.B and 4.III.13). Even so, Veikou's framework may still be relevant on a multi-regional or empire-wide scale. To find out whether it is, I believe our next step should be to consult chronicles or military manuals – such as Skylitzes, Attaleiates, Kekaumenos, Syrianus Magister (the author of *De Re Strategica*), and Theophanes. Khoniates' comments on Laodikeia, and Kantakouzenos' on Servia, show that this method has great potential.<sup>847</sup>

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847 The two authors explicitly describe the spatial configuration of Laodikeia and Servia (respectively). See Chapter 1.II and Chapter 4.III.11.A.

Here I will end my thesis. It is my hope that it will one day serve as an important source in an academic work synthesizing the history of all Rhomanian Greece.

## Appendix

I have created seven appendices. Appendices 1-3 chiefly on those artifacts and settlements in my regions of study which are unclassifiable (the former in terms of function). On several occasions I elaborate on the function or infrastructure of a site, having been unable to do so in the main chapters for lack of space. Appendices 4-7 feature illustrations and tables which I found too difficult to include in the main chapters.

### Appendix A: Boeotia

#### I. Thebes

##### A. Marble slabs

1. Seventeen historically relevant pieces of marble artwork reside in the Byzantine Museum of Thebes. Our literary information on them derives entirely from the eminent archaeologist A. Orlandos. In this section, then, I will present Orlandos' descriptions of the artwork and update them with my own opinions. In most cases the finds contexts have apparently not been recorded. Six of the relics were almost certainly components of church architecture (either *templons* or gargoyles).
  - A plaque of blueish marble. It is crowned by a roughly cut band and bears a moulding of a bearded man holds a bird over a restless sea. At the plaque's left edge is a tower-like object. Although its left half is truncated, it appears to be a tree. The bearded man is almost certainly either Poseidon or



Triton.<sup>848</sup> For he is clearly performing a supernatural act of some sort. There is no other way to explain the bird's presence. As for the bird itself, it could correspond to Alkyone or Keyx, from Greek mythology. These individuals, originally human, were eventually transformed into birds. They presided over the halcyon days, a period of calm seas propitious for sailing. Orlandos has tentatively dated the artwork to the 10<sup>th</sup> century, an idea supported by the man's lack of royal features (which a Greek or Antique Roman sculptor would not have seen proper). I had originally thought that blue marble could only have come from places very distant to Thebes. In other words, it ought to be associated with aristocratic or imperial patronage. But in fact, there is good reason to believe blue marble was obtainable from Greek quarries. For one thing, blue marble pendants are widely available in modern-day Greece, and for a token sum. For another, the quarries of Hymettos<sup>849</sup>, which have been in use since Antiquity, are famous for their blueish-grey marble.<sup>850</sup>

- A white marble architrave, overhung by a band of coarser stone. The bulk of its space is taken up by two moulded, squatting sphinxes, whose heads are turned towards the onlooker (although the rest of their bodies are in profile). The two creatures are separated by a short, thin tree, quite possibly a cypress. Given that the Sphinx was a popular theme on Medieval Roman sculptures and tapestries, the architrave could date to any point between the 4<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> centuries.
- Marble lionhead, deprived of its muzzle and moustache. Such heads were employed by the Medieval Romans either in reliefs or as door decorations.<sup>851</sup>
- Gargoyle of polygonal piece of white marble. It is concave on the inside, at the front it becomes a round-shaped head entirely of popular conception and execution. Such gargoyles were commonly placed in churches between the angles of arched cornices (albeit on a smaller scale).
- White marble plaque, incomplete at the bottom.<sup>852</sup> Found 50 meters to the north of the Church of Agios Kaloktenis. There is a tree at the centre, from

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848 Orlandos, 1939-1940, pp.136-137.

849 A mountain range just east of Athens.

850 Frazer, 2012, p.424, Goette et al., 1999.

851 As shown, among other examples, by the doorframe of the Athonite monastery of Hilandar.

852 Orlandos, 1939-1940, p.138.

which sprouts wavy branches and leaves. On top of the leaves is a fowl. The two large birds are probably peacocks; their tails are highly voluminous. The artist doesn't really represent what a peacock's tail looks like (the tail would not be upright unless deployed) but this could be due to lack of space. The careful execution of the birds and the tree's foliage is (according to Orlandos) a product of Komnenian times, as is the concept of the trees being behind the birds' tails. The latter concept, in particular, occurs frequently on surrounding textiles.

- Large square plaque of white marble, probably a *templon*. The remains of an inscription are carved into the stone, bearing the number 181. Similar complex eagles are a common sight in the Church of Akdamar Island, on Lake Van.<sup>853</sup> The theme of a bird attacking another animal is a product of Anatolia, but it became far-reaching in the rest of the Medieval Roman realm in the 9<sup>th</sup> century and after, in templons, marble floors, manuscript drawings, pottery representations, and fabrics. It can be seen, for example, in the *templon* of the Monastery of Osios Loukas and on a 12<sup>th</sup> century slipware bowl from Corinth.<sup>854</sup>
- Another interesting sculpture is fitted on the ground floor of a residence at the junction of Kadmos and Dikri streets. In this position there used to be a spring: there is a hole in the middle of the sculpture through which water flowed. The sculpture has the shape of a rectangle it depicts on the inside a prominent animal walking to the right and turning its head backwards. Next to one of his right legs there is a figure which Orlandos describes as a tree<sup>855</sup>, but is more reminiscent of a human. The whole thing is estimated to date to the 11<sup>th</sup> century.
- A slanted plaque of blue marble, found on 57 Kadmos Street. Inside the framework are illustrated in relief work two relatively small birds hanging from the ground on either side of a ciborium. Most of the ciborium's interior space is taken up by a cross and some twisted acanthus leaves. Acanthus leaves were apparently a prevalent type of decoration from Iconoclastic times onwards. The birds look to be carrying the *ciborium* on

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853 Orlandos, 1939-1940, pg. 140.

854 Evans, 1997, p.1883.

855 Orlandos, 1939-1940, pp.143.

their beaks, given that one animal is lower down than the other. Orlandos dates the plaque to the early Komnenian period. According to Orlandos, too, the upper rim of the frame constitutes proof that the plaque came from a sarcophagus. The historian does not elaborate on his view.<sup>856</sup> For my part, given the prominent round hole at the top of the *ciborium*, I would say we are looking at a fountain rather than a sarcophagus slab.

- A window capital of hard brown stone, in the shape of an inverted, truncated pyramid. It originated from an inclined sidewall and features a relief work of a canine-like animal walking to the right and turning his head the other way. The position is common among animals of Eastern decoration. Also, similar sculptures were found in the courtyard of the museum
- A rectangular plaque of blue-grey marble, one which is fragmented on three sides. It bears an illustration of two griffins with the eyes facing frontward. They are separated by a fountain on a column itself resting on a three-level podium. The animals have open mouths, and are rushing towards the fountain. The work is probably of the 10<sup>th</sup> century. A similar theme (griffins at the sides of a blooming tree) can be seen on an outer sidewall of the Athenian Monastery of Panagia Gorgoepikoos and at St. Mark's Basilica in Venice.<sup>857</sup>
- Capital of white marble with an abacus, inverted and truncated pyramid.
- Another relief work from an inclined sidewall. It features a winged dragon walking towards to the left with his mouth open and a serpentine tail, and widely separated, crooked feet. The use of dragons is very popular in Medieval Roman mural decorations. The *Continuates* of Theophanes mention that in the Nea Ekklesia of Basil I one of the fountains was equipped with a relief work dragon. On textiles, metals, pottery vessels, mural and stone works are often encountered representations of Persian dragons (which possessed the tail of a fowl). The dragon from Thebes, on the other possesses the the tail of a serpent. There is another dragon in the museum endowed with a similar, albeit thicker tail. The "reptilian" variety can be seen on a woodcut door from the Bulgarian monastery of Rila, and on a window

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856 Orlandos, 1939-1940, p.143.

857 Orlandos, 1939-1940, p.130.

of the Church of Kalenic, in Skopje. It is also a frequent sight at the Byzantine Museum of Athens and at the museum of Sofia.

- Relief work on a semi-circular drum of white marble, surrounded by a beveled frame. Orlandos suggest that it formed part of the arch of a gateway.<sup>858</sup>
- Relief work of the Theotokos in a position of supplication. The figure is wearing the *maphorion* (a thin mantle traditionally covering the head and shoulders of the Theotokos). To the left and right of its head is the following epigraphic inscription: Μ(ητ)ΗΠ - Θ(εο)Υ. Apart from the mouth, most of the figure's face is missing. The work is estimated to be from the 10<sup>th</sup> century by Orlandos.<sup>859</sup> The latter's judgment deserves scrutiny, however; I have not found any relief works of the Virgin within the Byzantine *oikoumene* anterior to the 14<sup>th</sup> century.
- Arched plaque of white marble; place of origin unknown. It bears the index number 258. It depicts a forward facing female figure. Only the upper half survives. The figure's head is surrounded by a plain nimbus, and bears a semi-spherical crown adorned with four small pendants and long flaps. The pendants undoubtedly correspond to *prependoulia*, an element of regalia reserved for member of the imperial family.<sup>860</sup> The figure wears a *loros* that goes around the neck. According to Orlandos, both the shape of the crown and the *loros* are common in 12<sup>th</sup> century relief works. This claim, like the one concerning the previous sculpture, is undercut by lack of material evidence. In addition, the "new" *loros* was already popular by the 11<sup>th</sup> century. What is singular is that the figure's head appears to be hooded. Among Medieval Roman female cultural icons, such a dress item was reserved exclusively for the Theotokos. Conversely, depictions of the Theotokos with a crown are non-existent. Either the patron had very arcane and esoteric tastes, or the plaque is not Medieval Roman at all.
- Fragment of a templon architrave of green-veined marble, with bevelled shape.<sup>861</sup> It contains a hollow cavity in its left section – most likely the former position of the column's capital. The fragment's surface is almost completely

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858 Orlandos, 1939-1940, p.132.

859 Orlandos, 1939-1940, pp.133-134.

860 *Prependoulia* usually dangled from the crown, though in this case they are embedded into it. Jones, 2007, p.37.

861 Orlandos, 1939-1940, pp.127-128.

covered in artwork. We can divide them into two categories. The sloped surface bears a relief work consisting of three eight-petaled roses within circles. As for the vertical surface, it bears some relief stone medallions in a neat horizontal row- five and a small part of a sixth, to be precise. Within each medallion<sup>862</sup> is inscribed the head of human figure, surrounded by a nimbus. Although three of the heads are so lacking in detail as to be undecipherable, the second and third figures (going from left to right) are quite clearly the Virgin and Christ. The Virgin wears the traditional *maphorion*, and Christ has a beard.<sup>863</sup> The other figures must then be Apostles, and the medallions as a whole a rendition of the Last Supper. The relief roses on the sloped surface have equivalents on all of the museum's sculptures reliably dated to the 9<sup>th</sup> century. The width of the medallions, and the fact that the original templon presumably included all twelve Apostles, suggests that the width of the church's middle aisle was about 2.38 m.

- Small, greenish, marble pillar attached to section of octagonal stanchion and door frame with apple-shaped handle (fig.21). The vertical surface of the pillar is engraved with a cross and painted with a series of spheres. Each sphere is formed by a tessellation of eights and contains a five-petaled rose. The tessellations are somewhat reminiscent of the Nea Ekklesia in Constantinople, built around 880. The only difference, but it is a significant one, is that in the New Ekklesia painted tessellations occur on the slabs making up the floor.<sup>864</sup> By contrast, the fragment from Thebes was certainly part of a templon, given its characteristic configuration.<sup>865</sup> Its belonging to a templon most likely puts the fragment's date some point between the 9<sup>th</sup> and mid-13<sup>th</sup> centuries.<sup>866</sup>

## II. Kastorion

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862 Diameter for each: 0,127 cm.

863 Which Orlandos classifies as "Palestinian". Orlandos, 1939-1940, p.126.

864 I am not relying on archaeological evidence, of which we have none, but on the *Vita Basilii*. The relevant section of the *Vita* is conveyed by Osterhout in *Master Builders of Byzantium*. Osterhout, 2008, pp.34-35.

865 E.g. pillar overhung by a stanchion, and adjacent to entrance frame possessing a spherical handle.

866 Epstein, 1981.

### A. Agios Loukas

The only truly well preserved piece of architecture in the area of Thisve was the church known as Agios Loukas.<sup>867</sup> It is a triple-apse, cross-in-square building with *spolia* in all its parts. The character of the masonry in the central apse (carefully reveted *spolia*) and some evidence for a *parakklesion* and an *arcosolium* makes it probable that Agios Loukas was the seat of Kastorion's bishop.

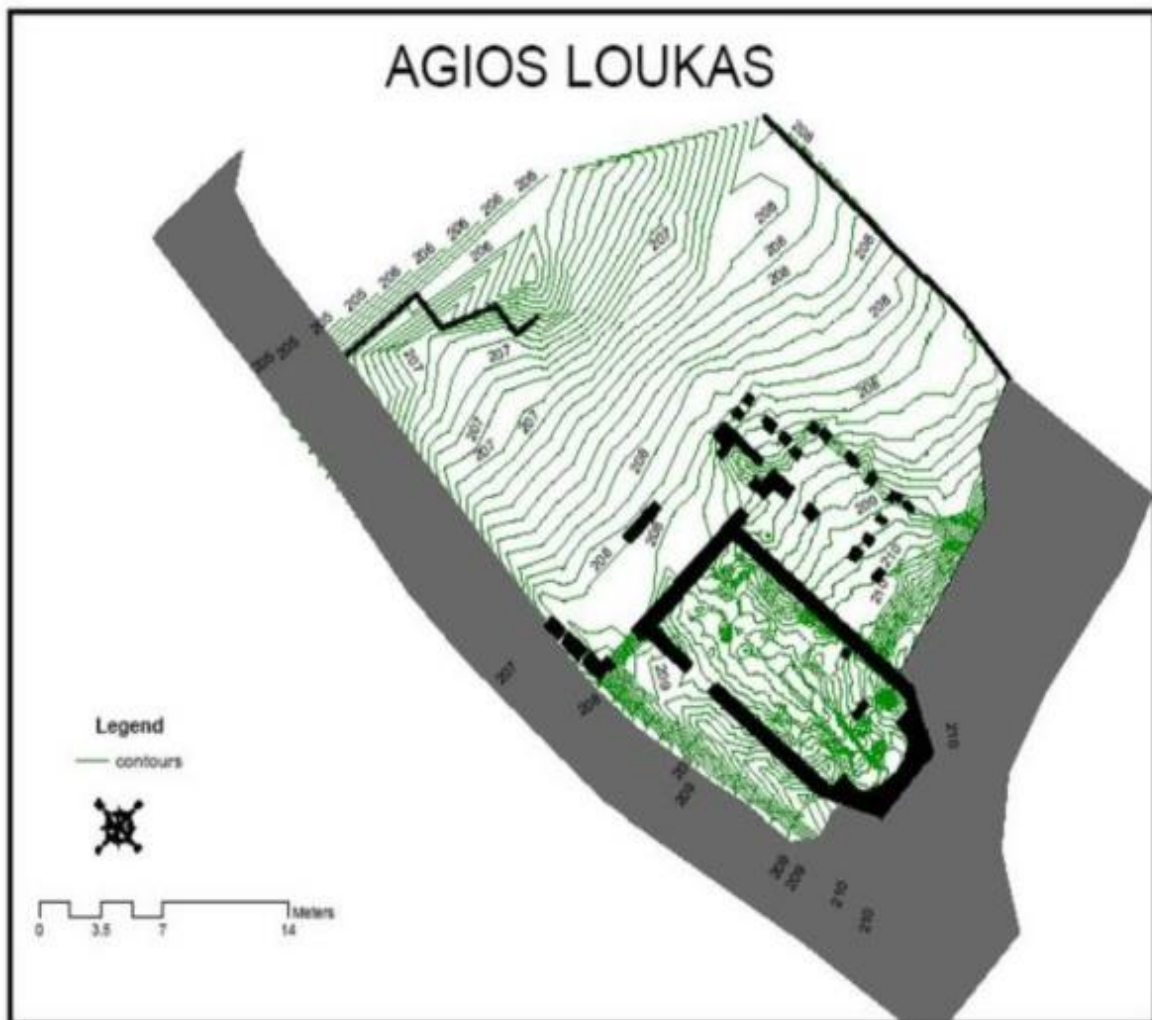


Fig 1. Agios Loukas, ground plan. Dunn, 2008-2009.

<sup>867</sup> The name is not based on a dedicatory inscription to Osios Loukas. Its name, which is a common title for churches in the Thisvi area, was given to it by locals. Dunn, 2012-2013.

### III. Domvraina

In Domvraina, a partially intact stronghold dominates the village.<sup>168</sup> It consists of two interconnected circular towers (resulting in an eight-like shape) whose walls are made of rubble bonded with rough mortar. Both towers were once crowned by battlements, indicating that the place functioned as a watch-post or garrison. Although the stronghold has been described as Byzantine by Koilakou, the evidence tells a different story. The problem is the tower's morphology. Eight-shaped towers were characteristic of Latin and Ottoman military architecture, but were non-existent in the Medieval Roman Empire. It is also telling that the walls do not feature a single piece of integral terra-cotta. Such terra-cotta does not postdate Medieval Roman and Latin fortifications. On a more general point, no Medieval vestiges have been located by the Thisve-Kastorion project, which surveyed Domvraina (as it was part of Kastorion's local hinterland). This much may be said: that Domvraina probably existed in some form during the Transition Period. Its name has been traced by Vasmer to the Slavic word for tree, *dobrena*.<sup>868</sup> But there is no reason to think that Domvraina existed in the 9th-12th centuries.

### IV. Akraiphnio

A rescue dig began in the early 1960s, on the south side of the National Road Athens-Lamia.<sup>869</sup> Following an extended hiatus, the dig resumed apace in the 1990s. Workers unearthed a series of late 10<sup>th</sup>-11<sup>th</sup> century buildings, which had partially replaced a cemetery founded in the same location. One of the buildings was a small chapel named Agios Basileus, approximately 11 m. long and 5 m. wide.<sup>870</sup> The perimeter of the building was intact, allowing us to see that its nave was of the triconch category. Its construction was of uneven quality: although a handful of finely-carved stone slabs (fig.8) lay strewn around the floor, the walls were made of rubble masonry and the floor of irregular slabs. Through examination of the apses' niches, the masonry, and the stone slabs, the sanctuary was assigned a date between the end of the 9<sup>th</sup> and the 11<sup>th</sup> centuries. A few years after this assessment was made, investigators discovered a Komnenian coin and a bronze pot handle in the floor's stratigraphy.<sup>871</sup> This could be taken evidence that Agios Basileus became a private residence in the 12<sup>th</sup> century. But more likely, the bronze pot was a religious article abandoned at the same time as the chapel.

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<sup>868</sup> Vasmer, 1941, p.118.

<sup>869</sup> Koilakou, 1998, pp.106, 108.

<sup>870</sup> Koilakou, 1997, p.125.

<sup>871</sup> Koilakou, 2001-2004, p.21.

Mention should be made of Agios Giorgos, a cross-in-square church at the western extremity of the site (dimensions: 13.40 m. x 9.73 m.). According W. Miller, Agios Basileus was founded in 1311 by Anthony le Flamenc, the Duke of Athen's *bailli* (deputy) of Thessaly.<sup>872</sup> In the same vein, Koilakou associates the frescoes with a very similar, early 14<sup>th</sup> century mural from the Chora Church. However, Agios Giorgos could have been endowed with frescoes decades or centuries after being founded. In fact, an inscription above one of the south wall's windows states that Anthony merely renovated the building. This is effectively what happened with the Chora: it was built in 1077-1081, but many of its frescoes and mosaics were added between 1315 and 1321.<sup>873</sup> Overall then, it is possible that that the church was founded in Later-middle Roman times, the more so since plaster tiles were characteristic of 9<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup> century religious architecture. And there is a slim chance, given Agios Giorgos' slightly larger-than-average dimensions (by the standards of the religious building in my zone of study) and its elaborate decorations, that we are looking at an episcopal basilica.

Work between the north side of Agios Giorgos and a walled, neighbouring garden revealed three makeshift burials.<sup>874</sup> One burial contained a bronze *folli*s of Romanos IV Diogenes (1068-1071) and a small zoomorphic column. The foundation of the garden's wall concealed some sherds of late 12<sup>th</sup> and early 13<sup>th</sup> century pottery, along with an iron *dikeli* (hoe). Several very broadly contemporary sources indicate that the *dikeli* was a common tool of the 12<sup>th</sup> century farmer's arsenal: the *praktikon* of Patmos, the Farmer's Law, the inventory of Panteleimon Monastery on Mount Athos, and a description by Skylitzes of Manzikert. I cannot make anything of the burials, the more so because the economic implications of the improvised designs and of the zoomorphic column are contradictory. But the zone under the walls could plausibly have been the site of a dwelling for vineyard workers. The other buildings on the site were purportedly too fragmented to be described. I confess to not understanding why the fragments could not be summarized. Presumably in this situation the word 'fragmented' means destroyed. However, the settlement's ceramic and currency evidence suggest that it remained inhabited until the end of the 13<sup>th</sup> century.

## V. Tanagra

Thanks to a systematic survey by the Leiden-Ljubljana Project, we have reason to believe Tanagra was very much an urban settlement in Late Antique times. Its fate during the Transition Period is unknown. It may have been abandoned or taken over by Slavic tribes, but since we do not know if the Slavs were

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872 Miller, 1909, p.198.

873 Schopen and Bekker, 1829, I, 303, 309.

874 Koilakou, 1988, p.102.



present in Boeotia this is mere speculation. Tanagra eventually resurfaces in the 10<sup>th</sup> century, in a seemingly much reduced form and 1 km. east of the old walls.

Only two buildings are attested for the Medieval settlement, both of them churches. The first, Agios Thomas stands in the village of the same name.<sup>875</sup> It is a cruciformed, two-columned, domed chapel (dimensions: 7.88 m. x 7.76 m.). In the northern aisle one finds the standard triple-apse configuration, with all three apses being pierced by windows. There is a demarcating iconostasis, but it originated in the 20<sup>th</sup> century – the Byzantine one was apparently dismantled by the Turks. There are two further two mono-lobed windows on the west side, though one has been filled up. To the left of the entrance is fitted an ancient inscription on a block of dark-grey marble. It is not contemporaneous with the rest of the chapel, being written in Classical Greek.<sup>876</sup> The chapel's walls are made from a mixture of *spolia* – in the lower half and corners – and incomplete masonry – everywhere else.<sup>877</sup> On the basis of the cloisonné, the interior configuration, and the bi-lobed windows, we can date Agios Thomas with a high degree of certainty to the 11<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup> centuries.

The second structure, Agios Polykratos, is a more complicated matter. For one thing, it was 0.6 km. northwest of Roman/Classical Tanagra, so it might not have been part of the Medieval Roman settlement.<sup>878</sup> For another, the sanctuary barrier may have been of the iconostastis type. Mamaloukos reasons that iconostases were typical of 13<sup>th</sup>-century ecclesiastical architecture, and that therefore the church was probably built in the middle of the 13<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>879</sup> But I would argue, that on the contrary, the transition from *templon* to iconostasis did not begin until the 14<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>880</sup> The majority of intact or partially sanctuary barriers dated to the 6<sup>th</sup>-13<sup>th</sup> centuries can be classified as *templons*. Among the numerous cases in point include the Church of St. Demetrius in Thessaloniki, the Church of the Virgin at Skripou, the church at Sebastia in Phrygia, the Church of the Holy Apostles in Athens, and the church of Theotokos at Osios Loukas Monastery.<sup>881</sup> And even if we were to accept Mamaloukos' evolution-related interpretation, there is no way of reliably determining the character of Agios Polykratos' sanctuary barrier. Nearly all the surviving components of the barrier were found separated from their original

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875 Simatou and Christodolopoulou, 2003.

876 In addition, the upper half of the inscription mentions the "games of Zeus", while the lower half concerns a decree of a Proxenia, a socio-diplomatic tradition unique to Classical/Hellenistic Greece. Leake, 1835, p.120).

877 By incomplete masonry, I mean that no vertical terra-cotta blocks are used. Also, curiously, it appears that at some point horizontal terra-cotta was incorporated into much of the northern side's external *spolia* fig. 22.

878 Bintliff, 2004-2005, p.578.

879 Mamaloukos, 2004, pp.127-140.

880 Epstein, 1981.

881 The estimated foundation dates for these five monuments are, respectively: 7th century, 873-874, 10th century, late 10th-early 11th century, and 10th century.

positions, on the ground. More, they do not include panel paintings, an epistyle<sup>882</sup>, or curtains.<sup>883</sup> Consequently, we are denied access to the two criteria vital to distinguishing templons from iconostases: the degree of opacity<sup>884</sup> and the level decorativeness of the epistyle and column.<sup>885</sup> Another important point, as Mamaloukos himself acknowledges, concerns the external masonry.<sup>886</sup> With the exception of the western façade (which makes copious use of *spolia*) it consists essentially of rough stones with terracotta inserted into the vertical and horizontal gaps. This style, which may be described as unfinished cloisonné, occurs in many churches of the 12<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup> century, such as the Omorphi Ekklesia at Galatsi, the church of Agia Paraskevi in Pournari, and the church of the Taxiarchoi of Kalyvia in Karystos. Not only that, but the east window's is crowned by a limestone lintel. Likewise, the arches of the (former) east window are made of carved limestone. The use of limestone in window architecture is fairly common in 12<sup>th</sup>-13<sup>th</sup> century churches of Boeotia and Attica.<sup>887</sup> Cases in point include nearby Agios Thomas, Agios Ioannou Prodromos in Schimatari<sup>888</sup>, Agios Nikolaos in Exarchos, Agios Sozon in Orchomenos, Panagia Varamba in Markopoulo, the Church of Panagitsas in Vatheia.<sup>889</sup> To make a long story short, the debate on Agios Polykratos' date remains open. Bintliff, Vionis, and their colleagues refer to Medieval Tanagra as a village rather than a town.<sup>890</sup> However, there is some room for debate on this point. It would be unwise to categorize the settlement on the basis of the quantity of pottery sherds that have been found.<sup>891</sup> But the majority of the sherds identified were glazed wares and not coarse wares. In Middle Rhomania, glazed wares tended to occur more frequently in urban communities. Also, while there were several beehive fragments in the pottery assemblage (suggesting some degree of culinary self-sufficiency in Tanagra) the latter trait was by no means unique to rural municipalities. But more importantly, the survey conducted by the Leiden-Ljubljana Project's was by nature superficial. We do not know what lies deep below the surfaces combed and photographed. In short, the evidence is not complete enough to draw conclusions on Tanagra's settlement classification. The reduced size of Agios Thomas (7.88 m. x 7.76 m.) comforts Bintliff's rural hypothesis. But it would be rash to categorize the Medieval settlement on the basis of a single building.

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882 Except for two rectangular fragments, respective dimensions 0.85 x 0.20 m. and 0.20 x 0.20 m.

883 There is some slim evidence that the gaps in templons were filled with curtains rather than icons. The use of curtains is attested by one individual, the 11th century theologian Nicholas of Andida. Doig, 2008, p.77, Terzopoulos, 2008, 171.

884 Nearly every gap between the columns of iconostases was filled with panel paintings. For templons, the gaps tended to be left bare.

885 Epstein, 1981, p.27.

886 Mamaloukos, 2004, p.133.

887 Bouras, 2002, p.424.

888 The church of Agios Ioannou Prodromou was integrally restored in 2002-2003. On this occasion ceramic material from a previous on-site excavation was found to belong to the second half of the 12th and the early 13th century. See Koilakou, 2001-2004, p.19.

889 Located on Evia, approximately 29 km. southeast of Euripos. Not in Boeotia, certainly, but on its periphery.

890 Bintliff et al., 2004-2005, p.575.

891 Even though the number of finds reaches into the thousands.

## Appendix B: Thessaly

### I. Larissa, the Basilica of Agios Achillios

The Basilica's connection with the eponymous saint has been reinforced by the excavating of a marble well-head and three stamped bricks. These fragments bore the inscription *Achillios archbishop + and this work* and *Achillios*, respectively.<sup>892</sup> The saint's grave is believed to have lain in a vaulted tomb at the east edge of the north aisle.

### II. Stagoi

#### A. The Basilica of The Dormition

1. *The floor of the sanctuary.* More recently, Voyadjis and Sythiakakis-Kritsimallis have dismissed the mainstream school of thought entirely. They assert that the mosaic's geometric patterns remain extremely common into the Later-middle Roman period and that the two door openings on the external wall of the southern aisles have their bases at the same level as the mosaic floor.<sup>893</sup> They contend the pavement cannot have belonged to an Early Christian basilica, because 0.10 m. is not enough space to

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<sup>892</sup> Gialouri, 2013, p.15.

<sup>893</sup> Voyadjis and Sythiakakis-Kritsimallis, 2011, p.206.

have built the floor of the present basilica.<sup>894</sup> I accept Voyadjis and Sythiakakis-Kritsimallis' first reasoning, but not the second or the third. If 0.10 m. was sufficient for the construction of the sanctuary's floor, surely it was sufficient in the rest of the basilica. As for the door openings, they could have been erected in the Early Christian and reused in a later phase. Further excavating is required to ascertain whether the mosaic floor extends throughout the entire basilica.

2. *Narthex*. This kind of door frame bears a close similarity to examples in the church of Theotokos at Osios Loukas Monastery (foundation: 10<sup>th</sup> century), the *katholikon* at Vatopedi Monastery (foundation: early 11<sup>th</sup> century), the Lips Monastery in Constantinople (foundation: 908), the Pantokrator Monastery (foundation: 1118-1124), and the Chora Church in Constantinople (foundation: 1077-1081).<sup>895</sup>
3. *Synthronon*. Within the sanctuary's apse. The back of the upper step is formed by a row of upright slabs, of which four are inscribed with Latin crosses (see fig. 5).
4. *The ambon's staircase parapets*. Each of the marble slabs forming the parapets are inscribed with crosses. In addition, they have the same plane of relief, their vertical surfaces are perfectly aligned with each other, and the grooves between them are roughly carved. These traits are representative of ambon parapet slabs dating to the Middle period.<sup>896</sup> More specifically, the type of cross used on the panels – the Patriarchal cross – made its appearance (in the world of architecture) during the early 9<sup>th</sup> century and became popular during the 11<sup>th</sup> century. In addition, two of the southeastern parapet's slabs (there are three) are decorated with interlocking geometric patterns: lozenges, circles, and rectangles. These patterns gained popularity at the same time as the Patriarchal cross did, as shown by parallels in the church of Agios Gregorios in Dramesi, the basilica of St. Donatos at Gliki, and the Monastery of Kato Panagia at Arta.<sup>897</sup>
5. *Nave's connection with side aisles*. The wall-column arrangement is in evidence at the Old Metropolis of Veroia, the Basilica of Kalabaka, the Basilica of Pliska<sup>898</sup>, Agios

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894 Voyadjis and Sythiakakis-Kritsimallis, 2011, p.218.

895 Bouras, 1980, pp.109-110, Pasaras, 2001, pp.47-58, Macridy, 1964, p.259, Millingen, 1912, fig.74.

896 Peschlow, 1994, pp.255-260, tables 148-150.

897 Vanderheyde, 2005a, no.13. figs. 5 and 12, Vanderheyde, 2005b, pp.27-28. Also of note is a marble slab in the Byzantine Museum of Athens dated to the 11th century.

898 Vlasto, 1970, p.167. It appears that the Basilica was originally a Roman military camp and was partially restored to use by Tsar Boris in the 9th century.

Achillios of Prespa, and the Kastorian churches of Agios Stephanos, Agios Anargyroi and the Taxiarchis Metropoleos.

## Appendix C: Western Macedonia

### I. Voenas

A survey from 2007 revealed that Voenas consisted of a single-enclosure fort on a hill. In no way did it qualify as a town.<sup>899</sup> But it still should be discussed, inasmuch as it affords clues on one of the secondary Macedonia-Thessaly roads' period of activity (the one running through the Petra Pass). In the southwest corner of Voenas – in the highest archaeological strata – investigators uncovered a brick, broken in half and bearing an 11-line foundation inscription. The founders were a certain βασιλίας Κωνσταντίνου and a *strategos* named Λέοντος τοῦ Διαβατηνο. The forms Διαβατηνῶν, Διαβατηνός, and Διαβατηνῶν occur multiple times between the second half of the 11<sup>th</sup> and the middle of the 13<sup>th</sup> centuries. And two mentions during the period 1062-1104 are accompanied by the baptismal name “Λέων.” One was *vestarkhis* and *doux* of Mesopotamian Edessa under Michael VII. The other – entitled *protovestis*, but quite possibly the same man – was bequeathed land in 1098, in the suburb of Soudaga. This place was located “τὸ ἐν τῷ πετίτῳ τῆς Μακεδονίας τυγχάνον.”<sup>900</sup> The castle's official title, Βοηνάς, has Old Slavic roots, either вѡдъ (army, blowing) вѡйна (war), or вѡйн (soldier, fighter, warrior).<sup>901</sup> In the same strata as the foundation brick a handful of coins were found: 1 *folles* of

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899 Velenis and Papathanassiou, 2008.

900 According to Ivron's archives. Lefort et al., Ivron 1, no.47, pp.25-26, 40, 56, 171, 172, 173.

901 Staroslověnskéo, 1966, p.1.

Romanos Lekapenos, a *folles* of Nikephoros Phokas, and two anonymous *folles* of John Tzismikes or Basil II. The striking dates of these coins do not deserve too much emphasis, since (according to numismatist K. Doukas) they were still in circulation by the 1090s. On the basis of all our information, especially the bequeathal of Soudaga to Leon Diavatinos, I would prudently assign Voenas an end-of-the-11<sup>th</sup> century foundation date.

## II. Servia

### A. The Katikoumenon

1. On the walls of the nave, the southern wall of the northern aisle, and the narthex are two layers of frescos, fully superimposed over each other. We know very little about the older layer. It is possible to distinguish some upright saints and the Virgin cradling an infant, swaddled Christ at the eastern edge of the nave's northern wall. But this is because the second layer's coating happens to be exceptionally thin in that area. The state of preservation of the second layer is more satisfactory. Its artwork may be roughly divided into two successive strata <sup>902</sup> :
  - The upper zone. It can be further subdivided into four parts.
    - ✓ On the eastern and southern walls of the narthex, a painting of the Second Coming.
    - ✓ Between the openings of the nave's walls, a series of scenes from the Passion, including the Last Supper, the Washing of the Feet, the Prayer at Gethsemane, and the betrayal.
    - ✓ Further west, the Falling Asleep of the Virgin.
    - ✓ Within the sanctuary, the birth of the Virgin, the Communion of the Apostles, and the Presentation of the Virgin.
    - ✓ Above the two officiating prelates, a part of the Annunciation.
  - The lower zone. Here are painted dozens of upright prelates and saints, the Annunciation of Joachim, depictions of the birth and childhood of the Virgin. Due to the passage of time and vandalism, few of the individuals can be identified with reasonable certainty. One of the few exceptions, on the south wall of the nave (between the first and second openings) is St. Demetrios. The saint is wearing a *chiton* and a purple *chlamys*. In his right hand he holds a cross. Demetrios is flanked by a flying angel and Jesus. The former is extending a sword towards him, while the latter is blessing him. There are two fifteen-line inscriptions on both sides of Demetrios,

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<sup>902</sup> There is a third stratum, but too little of it has survived to allow for a discussion.

written in white on a dark black surface. Six lines are still partially readable today. They appear to consist of an invocation to Demetrios by Servia's then bishop, a certain Michael.<sup>903</sup> Two of the prelates are wearing cross-adorned *pheloni* (a special sleeveless vestment reserved for bishops). A slight connection can be drawn to the Basilica of the Dormition in Kalabaka. In that basilica, six out of eight mural figures are arrayed in *phelonia*, and two of them in the *chlamys*. It is possible that the figures on the lower zone's murals were formerly in clad in *phelonia* and *chlamyses*, but most of the figures are in seriously deteriorated condition. Therefore, we cannot tell what type of garments they wore. For the northern aisle's southern wall, it is not really appropriate to speak of two strata, since too few frescoes have survived.

#### B. The Taxiarchis Metropolis and Agios Stephanos

The Taxiarchis' narthex features arches in its inner gallery walls.<sup>904</sup> The masonry is cloisonné, with some of the vertical terra-cotta taking the shape of k's or double k's. The horizontal bands are generally two rows thick. The stones are roughly dressed and heavily submerged in mortar. Toothed brickwork decorates the bases of the roofs. Agios Stephanos is pierced by numerous mono-lobed windows: five in the middle dome, two in each of the side domes, and three in the sanctuary apse. Despite this relatively apparently generous allowance, the windows are far too small to have allowed for adequate lighting. Most of them average 0.60 cm. x 15 cm. (though the dimensions of the middle dome windows are marginally greater: 0.60 cm. x 0.30 cm.). Therefore, the function of these apertures was probably decorative rather than practical. There is a truncated epigraph on the wall of the narthex's first floor, adjacent to a fresco of a bearded man's face.<sup>905</sup> Deciphered, the inscription's symbols (which are coloured in white and placed on a blue background) read "Εκοιμηθη ὁ δουλός του θεοῦ Θεόδωρος ἱερεὺς ὁ Λυμνεωτῆς μηνὶ Ἰαννουαρίῳ ἐτους ...". The verb *Εκοιμηθη* and the mention of a date tell (although unfortunately the inscription stops just short of the year) tell us Theodoros Limneotis was buried in Agios Stephanos. Clearly we are dealing with an important benefactor. It is likely that Limneotis was buried inside the church, but the notion has not been confirmed. Not that this is particularly surprising. From what I have gathered, no excavations of the

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903 Xyngopoulos, 1957, p.45.

904 Orlandos refers to the "outer" walls, and not the inner ones. However, this is a surely a mistake on his part. Orlandos, 1937, p.106.

905 Orlandos, 1938, p.115.

ground floors of Kastoria's medieval churches have been conducted (perhaps because the excellent condition of the buildings create too many obstacles).

### III. Prespa

#### A. Agios Achillios

1. *Monogram in diakonikon*. Located in the diakonikon's northeast corner, 1.10 m. above the floor. It consists of cross bounded by an inscription at each of its arm's ends.<sup>906</sup> The arms of the cross end in triangles and the incisions are very sharp. In these respects, the cross (and another one featured on the northeastern corner of the prothesis' apse) compares closely to a monogram in the burial chamber of the Round Church of Preslav.<sup>907</sup> That monument is thought to have been established in 893-907.<sup>908</sup> Nonetheless I would not put too much emphasis on the association, since we are unsure when the Preslavian inscription was made.
2. *Domes of diakonikon and prothesis*. Sotiriou remarks that the domes of the diakonikon and prothesis are replicated in the Church of Agia Sophia in Nicaea.<sup>909</sup> Such small domes were also apparently common in Macedonia during the 11<sup>th</sup>-14<sup>th</sup> centuries. Examples include Pantanassis Philippiados in Epirus. Sotiriou concluded that Agios Achilleios' Palaeochristian elements constitute proof of a resurgence of interest in Hellenistic architecture throughout Macedonia during the Macedonian and Komnenian periods.<sup>910</sup> His premise hinges mainly on the idea that Middle Byzantine and Paleochristian churches shared broadly identical masonry designs, and that the wooden roofs of many Macedonian ecclesiastical buildings were of Palaeochristian inspiration. Neither argument carries much conviction for me. The masonry design in question (bands of vividly coloured, square/rectangular-shaped brick and stone) was prevalent in Middle Byzantine churches, but not their ancestors. As for wooden roofs, they were such indispensable structural components that it is pointless to reflect on their fashionability.
3. *Sanctuary epigraph*. At the base of the dome Milioukof noted the presence of a badly mutilated painted epigraph (fig.9 and fig.26). It currently reads:

“ - - - Τ ΩΥΚ(?)--Ι--Γ ; Α--”

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906 Moutsopoulos, 1989b, p.365.

907 Gosev, 1961, fig.83.

908 Kostova, 2009, p.113.

909 Both of which are now thought to have been added in the 14th century. Sotiriou, 1929, p.570.

910 Sotiriou, 1929, pp.570-571.



In Milioukof's generation, the painting was slightly better preserved, so that its appearance was as follows: "ΤΩΥΚC(?) --Ι--ΠΙ ΕΙC ΙΑΚΡΩΤΙ (this letter is different from the original character, in that its protuberance is reversed. It was the closest-looking electronic character I could find)." It should be noted that the dome of the sanctuary of Agia Sophia of Nicaea bears the following, similar epigraph:

"ΤΩ ΟΙΚΩ CΟΝ ΠΡΕΠΕΙ ΑΓΙΑCΜΑ ΚΕ ΕΙC ΜΑΚΡΟΤΗΤΑ ΗΜΕΡΩΝ"

Such a text also occurs in the Monastery of Osios Loukas in standard Medieval Greek. Using this template, Moutsopoulos proposes the following complete inscription for Agios Achillios:

"Τῷ υχο σου πρέπει αγύασμα κύριε εἰς μακρότητα ἡμερῶν."

#### IV. Sisani

##### A. The Basilica's interior decoration

There are further decorative vestiges beyond the ones I have already mentioned: templon stanchions, tables, marble columns, etc. However, they are found outside the basilica: in the Monastery of Panagia, the parish church of Agios Dimitrios in Sisani, and beyond the archaeological site.

#### V. On the positions held by *chartoularioi*

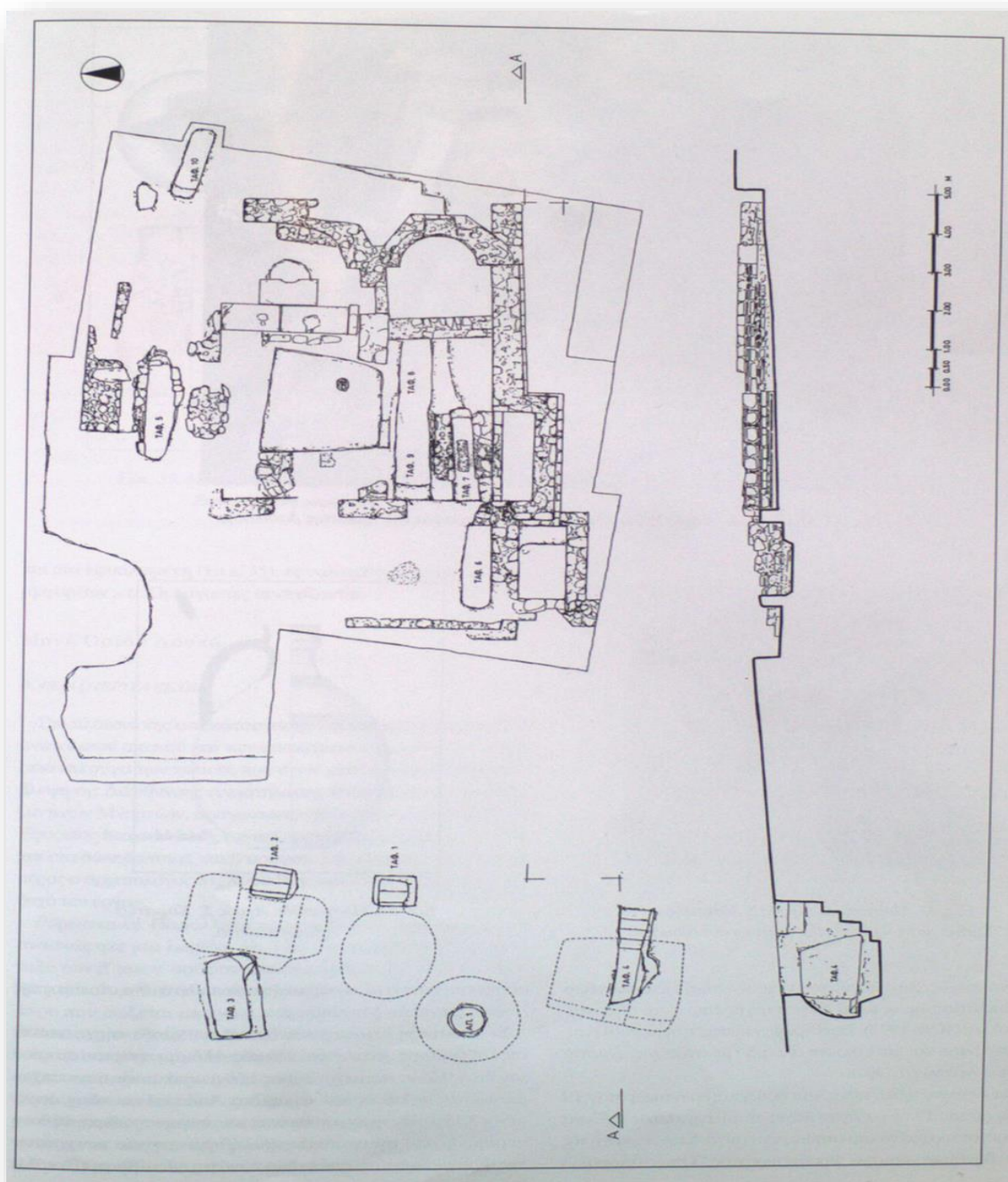
Originally, *chartoularioi* worked for the *strator* of one of Constantinople's circus factions, the *strator* of the logothete of the army, or as head of the imperial stables. But they also commanded half of the *scholai*, the most senior of the *tagmata*, and they enjoyed a rise in importance in the late 11<sup>th</sup>- 12<sup>th</sup> centuries, since a number of contemporary *chartoularioi* were closely affiliated with the emperor.<sup>911</sup> Thus, in 1094-1098 Eusthatios Kamytzes held the twin titles of *proedros* and *chartoularios tou stavlou* (and possibly before). He then became *strategos* of Lampe – near Edremit, in Western Anatolia – and *sebastos*.<sup>912</sup> The *chartoularios* Basil Zinzilukes was dispatched by Manuel (along with John Axouch) to secure the new Emperor's hold on the throne in 1143. Later in Manuel's reign Zinzilukes became an army commander. A certain Andronikos Lapardas, *chartoularios* and *oikeios vestiarites*, commanded regiment-sized army detachments on multiple occasions.<sup>913</sup> Under Andronikos Komnenos, the task of disposing of Alexios II's body was delegated to a prefect and to Theodore Choumnos, ὃς τετιμητο χαρτουλάριος. The same Choumnos was a corps commander under Andronikos.

<sup>911</sup> Guillard, 1971, XVII.405-418, Magdalino, 1992, p.32.

<sup>912</sup> Kotzabassi, 2013, pp.73-74.

<sup>913</sup> For example, at the battle of Sirmium in 1167, he co-led the Greek army's elite units and Turkish/German mercenaries.

***APPENDIX D*****Illustrations for Chapter 2**



**Figure 23.** Church adjacent to Agia Poteini. Kelios, 1999, pp.132-133.



**Figure 27.** The northern façade of Agios Thomas, Tanagra. Simatou and Christodolopoulou, 2003.



**Figure 28.** The church of Agios Giorgos, Akraiphnio. Exeismima, 2016.

**Table 7.** *Notitiae Episcopatum* for Boeotia. Opous is attested as a mid-11<sup>th</sup> century bishopric by a seal, but does not appear on any episcopal lists after the *Notitia* 3.

<b>Notitia 3 (787-800)</b>	
<b>Metropolis of Athens</b>	
<b>Town</b>	<b>Rank (out of 39)</b>
Opous	14 <sup>th</sup>
Thebes	18 <sup>th</sup>
Chaeronea	21 <sup>st</sup>
Livadia	26 <sup>th</sup>
Plataea	27 <sup>th</sup>
Amfissa	31 <sup>st</sup>
Delphi	32 <sup>nd</sup>
Amvrossos	33 <sup>rd</sup>
Aigosthena	37 <sup>th</sup>
<b>Notitia 7 (901-907)</b>	
<b>Archbishopric of Thebes (autocephalic)</b>	
Town	
Thebes	
<b>Metropolis of Athens</b>	
Town	Rank
Davleia	2 <sup>nd</sup>
Koroneia	3 <sup>rd</sup>
<b>Notitia 9. Date: ca. 934-968/970</b>	
<b>Archbishopric of Thebes</b>	
Thebes	
<b>Metropolis of Athens</b>	
Town	Rank
Davleia	2 <sup>nd</sup>
Koroneia	3 <sup>rd</sup>
<b>Notitia 10 (968/970-1019/1020)</b>	
<b>Archbishopric of Thebes (autocephalic)</b>	
Thebes	
<b>Metropolis of Athens</b>	
Town	Rank
Davleia	Koroneia
<b>Notitia 13 (end of reign of Manuel I)</b>	
<b>Metropolis of Athens</b>	
Town	Rank
Davleia	2 <sup>nd</sup>
Koroneia	3 <sup>rd</sup>
<b>Archbishopric of Thebes</b>	

Town	Ranks unclear (apart from Thebes)
Thebes	
<b>Notitia from the Codex Atheniensis 1371 (mid-to-late 12<sup>th</sup> century)</b>	
Towns	Ranks unclear
Kastorion	
Zaratova	
Trikhia	
Kanala	
Platana	

## APPENDIX E

### Illustrations for Chapter 3

**Table 6.** *Notitiae Episcopatum* for Thessaly

<b>Notitia 3 (787-800)</b>	
<b>Metropolis of Athens</b>	
Town	Rank (out of 39)
Thermopylae	10 <sup>th</sup>
<b>Metropolis of Larissa</b>	
Town	Rank (out of 18)
Dion	1 <sup>st</sup>
Demetrias	2 <sup>nd</sup>
Skineos	3 <sup>rd</sup>
Gievas	4 <sup>th</sup>
Lamia	5 <sup>th</sup>
Saltoumionis	6 <sup>th</sup>
Kaisareia	7 <sup>th</sup>
Saltouvorgis	8 <sup>th</sup>
Farsala	9 <sup>th</sup>



Metropoleos	10 <sup>th</sup>
Gomfeas	11 <sup>th</sup>
Trikala	12 <sup>th</sup>
Ipati	13 <sup>th</sup>
Dioklitianoupoleos	14 <sup>th</sup>
Piktos	15 <sup>th</sup>
Skiathos	16 <sup>th</sup>
Skopelos	17 <sup>th</sup>
Esparistos	18 <sup>th</sup>
<b>Notitia 5 (814)</b>	
<b>Archbishopric of Larissa</b>	
<b>Notitia 6 (805/814-827/828)</b>	
<b>Archbishopric of Larissa</b>	
<b>Notitia 7 (901-907 AD)</b>	
<b>Archbishopric of Larissa</b>	
<b>Town</b>	<b>Rank</b>
Demetrias	1 <sup>st</sup>
Farsala	2 <sup>nd</sup>
Thavmakos	3 <sup>rd</sup>
Zitounion	4 <sup>th</sup>
Ezeros	5 <sup>th</sup>
Lidoriki	6 <sup>th</sup>
Trikala (exact name Trikkis)	7 <sup>th</sup>
Echinos	8 <sup>th</sup>
Kolindros	9 <sup>th</sup>
Stagoi	10 <sup>th</sup>
<b>Notitia 9 (ca. 934-968/970)</b>	
<b>Archbishopric of Larissa</b>	
<b>Town</b>	<b>Rank</b>
Demetrias	1 <sup>st</sup>
Farsala	2 <sup>nd</sup>
Thavmakos	3 <sup>rd</sup>
Zitounion	4 <sup>th</sup>
Ezeros	5 <sup>th</sup>
Lidoriki	6 <sup>th</sup>
Trikala (exact name Trikkis)	7 <sup>th</sup>
Echinos	8 <sup>th</sup>
Stagoi	9 <sup>th</sup>
<b>Notitia 10 (968/970-1019/1020)</b>	
<b>Town</b>	<b>Rank</b>
Demetrias	1 <sup>st</sup>
Farsala	2 <sup>nd</sup>
Thavmakos	3 <sup>rd</sup>
Zitounion	4 <sup>th</sup>
Ezeros	5 <sup>th</sup>
Lidoriki	6 <sup>th</sup>
Ezeros	7 <sup>th</sup>
Trikala (exact name Trikkis)	8 <sup>th</sup>

Echinos	9 <sup>th</sup>
Kolindros	10 <sup>th</sup>
Stagoi	11 <sup>th</sup>
Vesaina	12 <sup>th</sup>
Kapoulionon	13 <sup>th</sup>
Gardiki	14 <sup>th</sup>
Lestinos	15 <sup>th</sup>
Karmenon	16 <sup>th</sup>
Peristeras	17 <sup>th</sup>
<b>Notitia 13 (end of reign of Manuel I)</b>	
<b>Town</b>	<b>Rank</b>
Skopilon	1 <sup>st</sup>
Demetrias	2 <sup>nd</sup>
Vesaina	3 <sup>rd</sup>
Thavmakos	4 <sup>th</sup>
Zitounion	5 <sup>th</sup>
Gardiki	6 <sup>th</sup>
Ezeros	7 <sup>th</sup>
Lidoriki	8 <sup>th</sup>
Trikala	9 <sup>th</sup>
Kolindros	10 <sup>th</sup>
Stagoi	11 <sup>th</sup>
Domenikos	12 <sup>th</sup>
Kapouis	13 <sup>th</sup>
Peristeras	14 <sup>th</sup>
Harmenous	15 <sup>th</sup>
Velas	16 <sup>th</sup>
Velestinos	17 <sup>th</sup>
Echinos	18 <sup>th</sup>





**Figure 20.** Aerial shot of the Basilica of Agios Achillios. Gialouri, 2013, p.31.

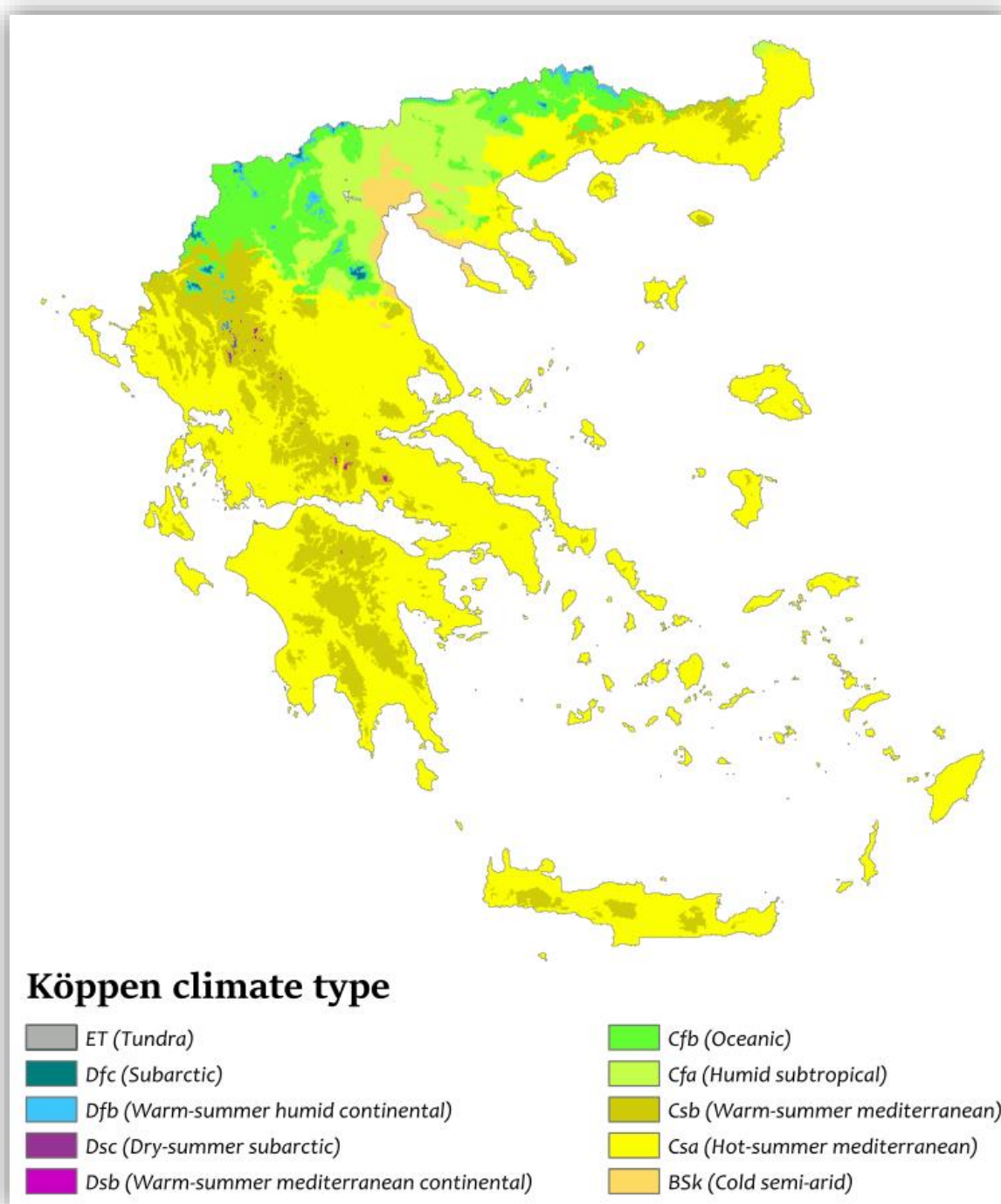
## ***APPENDIX F***

### **Illustrations for Chapter 4**

**Table 3. *Notitiae Episcopatum* for Western Macedonia**

<b><i>Notitia 7 (901-907 AD)</i></b>	
<b>Metropolis of Thessaloniki</b>	
<b>Town</b>	<b>Rank (out of 13)</b>
Kitros	2 <sup>nd</sup>
Veroia	3 <sup>rd</sup>
Drougouviteia	4 <sup>th</sup>
Servia	5 <sup>th</sup>
Petras	8 <sup>th</sup>
Likostomo	12 <sup>th</sup>
<b><i>Notitia 9 (ca. 934-968/970)</i></b>	
<b>Metropolis of Thessaloniki</b>	
<b>Town</b>	<b>Rank (out of 6)</b>
Kitros	2 <sup>nd</sup>
Veroia	3 <sup>rd</sup>
Drougouviteia	4 <sup>th</sup>
Servia	5 <sup>th</sup>
<b><i>Notitia 10 (968/970-1019/1020)</i></b>	
<b>Metropolis of Thessaloniki</b>	
<b>Town</b>	<b>Rank (out of 13)</b>
Kitros	2 <sup>nd</sup>
Veroia	4 <sup>th</sup>
Drougouviteia	3 <sup>rd</sup>
Servia	5 <sup>th</sup>
Petras	8 <sup>th</sup>
Kampanias	9 <sup>th</sup>
Kippou	10 <sup>th</sup>
<b><i>Notitiae 13 (end of reign of Manuel I)</i></b>	
<b>Metropolis of Thessaloniki</b>	
<b>Town</b>	<b>Rank (out of 10)</b>
Kitros	2 <sup>nd</sup>
Veroia	4 <sup>th</sup>
Drougouviteia	5 <sup>th</sup>
Servia	6 <sup>th</sup>
Likostomo	10 <sup>th</sup>
Kampanias	9 <sup>th</sup>
Kippou	10 <sup>th</sup>

**APPENDIX G**



**Figure 1.** The climate of Greece. Peel et al, 2007. The regime of areas affected by the Vardaris wind is classified as "BSk." There are some inaccuracies: Alpine Mediterranean areas – classified as "Csb" – are not all shown. In addition, Thessaly's inland climate is presented as fully identical to Boeotia's, and the influence of the sea on the Thessalian coast is not depicted.

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