Imports, exports and autarky in Byzantine Thessalonike from the seventh to the tenth century

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Byzantine Thessalonike from the seventh to the tenth century offers an example of the continuity of urban life between late antiquity and the Middle Ages. I use the term ‘Byzantine’ because I am not sure that ‘Post-Roman’, as per the title of the conference, covers all the different conditions and different processes prevailing in Western Europe, Byzantium and the Near East between the seventh and the tenth century.

My account is based on information gleaned from texts and on archaeological comments in their regard. The primary text is the Miracles of St Demetrios, which concerns events that took place in the second half of the sixth and the seventh century. I have also used John Kaminiates’ account of the capture of Thessalonike by the Saracens in 904, together with eighth-, ninth- and tenth-century lives of saints connected with Thessalonike.1

These texts mention trade and commerce in Thessalonike in a somewhat indirect and spasmodic manner. Being written by churchmen accustomed to an ecclesiastical and monastic life, they are informed by a spirit of autarky, which seems to pervade

1 P. Lemerle’s critical edition of the Miracles of St Demetrios (1979) was followed by two more annotated editions with a modern Greek translation (1994 and 1997). G. Böllig’s critical edition and German translation of Kaminiates (1973 and 1975) was followed by an annotated modern Greek translation (1987) and a republication of the text with a translation into modern Greek (2000). However, it is matter of some debate whether and how far these texts describe a contemporary situation. Later revisions and additions have overlain the ‘reality’, which is thus viewed through a distorting glass. Speck 1993 and 1994 questioned the historicity of the Miracles of St Demetrios detecting various writers at various levels in the composition of these hagiological texts, and suggests that they were worked on for the last time in the ninth, not the seventh, century. Kazhdan 1978 posited that Kaminiates’ text was composed in the late Byzantine period. Konstantakopoulou 1996, 45-94, discusses the debate and analyses the way in which Kaminiates perceived ‘real’ space.
events and situations, though we do not know how far this autarky reflects reality.² All the same, it is quite apparent in these same texts that the state, the church and private citizens did not refuse to import and export commodities, though the extent of these dealings escapes us.³

The Miracles of Saint Demetrios

Social organisation

The Miracles of St Demetrios depicts a civil society constructed on principles, rules and laws. The citizens were governed by the eparchs, who were not local men, but appointed by the basileus. Purely local administrative influence was wielded by the Archbishop of Thessalonike, who, unlike the eparchs, was favoured by the demos and the city’s powerful families, who also took part in governance.⁴ One gathers that the eparchs were not liked by the people, nor yet by St Demetrios himself, because rather than the social justice ensured by the city’s autarky in terms of commodities, they were more interested in lucrative free trade.⁵

Apart from the citizens, an important part in the economic life of Thessalonike was played by its foreign residents. The foreign refugees or emigrants who came flocking into the city at this time wanted to settle inside it and their presence created a housing crisis. Many of them squatted in the public baths.⁶ They were a source of cheap labour and would certainly have been involved in some of the city’s major projects, such as the restoration of the Basilica of St Demetrios after the fire of ca 620 and the building of the Hagia Sophia in 688-690.⁷ This is why I believe they were supported by the

² Laiou 2001/2002, 13 and 15: ‘As an ideological norm, autarky, or self-sufficiency, has its origins in classical times, and was subsequently reinforced by the normal teachings of Christianity. . .The most interesting example of the relative role of ideology in the reality is to be found in the case of monasteries’. See also Laiou 2002d, 1123, 1125-1130. For the cities as monasteries, see 1999, 7.
³ Laiou 2002d, 1129.
⁵ See note 39.
⁷ Opinions vary as to the dating of Hagia Sophia in Thessalonike. I have proposed a date of 688–690 (Bakirtzis 1982, 165-180).
city’s ruling class. In the votive inscription on a seventh-century mosaic in the Basilica of St Demetrios, the Church of Thessalonike actually prays for its citizens and its foreigners together, confirming that both these categories of inhabitants contributed to the development of the city: ‘Most happy martyr of Christ, you who love the city, take care of both citizens and foreigners.’

However, the vast majority of the foreigners, who were of varied descent and were not allowed into the city, resided outside it and earned their living as farmers, stockbreeders and labourers, enhancing the city’s self-sufficiency in terms of commodities. Their leaders (Chatzon, Perboundos, Kouver and Mauros) were taken care of and provided for, but also kept under observation by the city. When they were dissatisfied with what the city gave them, they stirred up the various population groups who then tried either to settle inside the city, or to seize the citizens’ property. In an attempt to control their exploitation and not wishing to see more of them inside the city and, at the same time, keen to see a workforce settled in an agricultural area, the authorities organised the newcomers into a ghetto, first in the Keramesios kampos on the western plain near Thessalonike and later just outside the western wall. Refugees of Greek descent were allowed into the city and the eparchs sent them on to Constantinople to serve as manpower.

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8 Miracles 2:1 § 193: ‘τινὲς δὲ τῶν τὰ πρῶτα φερόντων τῆς καθ’ ἡµᾶς πόλεως οἴκοι τούτων [Chatzon, the leader of the foreigners living outside the city] κατέκρυπτον, κέρδους τινὸς καὶ τρόπων ύπον εὐλόγων χάριν.’ 2:4 § 232: ‘σταλέντων ἐκ τῶν ἑγγείων κατ’ εὐλογίαν ἐμπείρων ἀνδρῶν, μετὰ καὶ τῶν ἐκλεκτῶν σκλαβίνων πρεσβευτῶν, πρὸς τὸν παγαλάλην βασιλέα…τὸν αὐτὸν Περβοῦνδον [Perboundos, the leader of the foreigners called Sklabinoi] μετὰ τὸν πόλεμον ἀπολυεῖν.’

9 ‘Πανόλβιαι Χριστοῦ µάρτυς φιλόπολις φροντίδα τίθη κ(αὶ) πολιτῶν κ(αὶ) ξένων.’ Soteriou 1952, 196 read ‘Πανολβίε τοῦ Χριστοῦ.’


11 Miracles 2:5 § 288: ‘_requires a reanalysis of the original text. See note 65.

12 Miracles 2:5 § 290: ‘οἱ ἐκ τῶν Ρωμαίων ὄντες µετὰ γυναικῶν καὶ τέκνων ἐν τῇ θεοωσώσῳ ταύτῃ ἡµῶν εἰσιέναι πόλεις οὐσίνας αὐτίκα οἱ τὴν ὑπάρχον ἑχόντες φροντίδα ἐν τῇ βασιλεύσει διὰ τῶν πλωίμων ἀπέπεμπον πόλει.’
Agriculture and stockbreeding

There were vegetable gardens and olive trees for private use inside the city, in people’s courtyards and on waste land near the walls.\(^{13}\) Grain and cereals, grapes and other agricultural products were systematically cultivated on the plain outside the walls and stored \textit{in situ}, together with farming implements, in storehouses, alongside the harvests of the previous year.\(^{14}\) One such early Christian storehouse (from the fourth-seventh

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\(^{13}\) Miracles 2:4 § 252: ‘ἐν τοῖς ἐνδον τῆς πόλεως κήποις.’

\(^{14}\) \textit{Ibid.}, 2:2 § 199: ‘τοὺς ἐν ἀμητῷ πάντας, τοὺς μὲν κατέσφαξαν, ἑτέρους δὲ αἰχμαλώτους ἔλαβον, μεθ’ ὧνπερ εὗρον ἀγελαίων πλείστων ζῴων καὶ λοιπῶν τῶν ἐπὶ ἐργασία του ἀμητου σκευών.’ Miracles 1:14 § 137: ‘ἀπαντα γὰρ τότε τὰ γεωργηθέντα καὶ πρότερων ἐτῶν ἀπόθετα ἐξ ἐν ἐπιγραφήν.’ There was absolutely no practical reason for farmers to keep agricultural produce from previous years in the storehouses. It is explained by I. Karayannopoulou’s suggestion (1982, 961-970) that the state bound the rural population to the land in order to secure taxation.
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century) with large storage jars *in situ*, wells for drinking water and water-storage cisterns in the rooms, has been found outside the east city walls, near the sea (Fig. 1).\(^\text{15}\)

The agricultural work, the reaping and the harvesting of grapes were done by people who stayed in the suburbs and on the farmland. When danger threatened, if they were residents of the city they would take refuge within the walls and if they lived in the hilly areas to the north they would flee to the ‘outer parts’.\(^\text{16}\) A luxurious early Christian farmhouse with a defensive wall has recently been excavated in the foothills outside the west city wall (Fig. 2).\(^\text{17}\) It had a beautiful mosaic floor with scenes from mythology, including the personification of the River *Echedoros*.  

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15 Toska et al. 1999, 419-423.
16 Miracles 1:13 § 127: ‘πολλῶν µὲν ἔξω ἐν προαστείοις καὶ ἀγροῖς ἐναποκλεισθέντων ὡσπερ καὶ µὴ ὄνυνθέντων εἰσβαλεῖν τῇ πόλει, διὰ τὸ τρύγης εἶναι καίρον, καὶ ἄθροις καὶ ἀπροσδοκήτως ἔχεκολλα τῷ τείχει τοὺς πολεµίους περικαθισαι-ἀµέλει µάλλον οἱ πρὸς τὰ ἔξω µέρη διαφυγόντων ἐσωζόντο, ἤπερ οἱ εἰς τὴν πόλιν καταφυγεῖν βουληθέλτες».
There were also stockbreeders with their flocks and herds in the area outside the city.\textsuperscript{18} The men in charge of the siege engines\textsuperscript{19} and the men who rowed the dugouts\textsuperscript{20} protected themselves with ox- and camel-hides, which were also used for making footwear and belts.\textsuperscript{21}

In the hills to the north of the city and around Lete were the \textit{Sklabinoi}, who were self-sufficient as farmers and, in their semisubterranean houses, had all the commodities they needed (grain, pulses and other foodstuffs), utensils, receptacles and implements with which they tried to capture Thessalonike.\textsuperscript{22} The neighbouring \textit{Drougoubitai} to the west who were also farmers, stored their produce in tents and received orders from the emperor to supply food to Kouber’s refugees who, according to Lemerle, arrived on the plain of Thessalonike and settled in the \textit{Keramesios kampos} in 682-684.\textsuperscript{23}

\textbf{The port}

Ever since it was founded, Thessalonike has enjoyed the geopolitical advantages conferred by its position as a Balkan port communicating via the Aegean with the Black Sea and, especially, with the Levant. At this time, the main harbour was still the one created by Constantine the Great in the south-west corner of the city.\textsuperscript{24} It was the site of the dockyard, the state granaries and the customs services under the control of \textit{kom-}

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{18} See note 14.
\item \textsuperscript{19} \textit{Miracles} 1:14 § 139: ‘τὰς καλουμένας χελώνας, ἁστῖνας σὺν τοῖς πετροβόλοις δέρρειν ἐπισκεπάσαντες ἥραις, μεταβουλευνόμενοι πάλιν διὰ τὸ μὴ ὑπὸ πυρὸς ἢ πίσσης αἰχμαλώσεσθαι, δέρρεις νεοσφαγῶν βοῶν καὶ καµήλων ἠμαγµένας ἐτι τοῖς ὀργάνοις ἐκείνοις ἐνήλωσαν.’ 1:14 § 147: ‘ταῖς βυρσοφόρεις χελώναις ὑποδύντες...ταῖς χελώναις, ως ἱστε, καὶ ταῦτα δέρρεινεσφαγῶν βοῶν καὶ καµήλων καταστεγασµέναις.’
\item \textsuperscript{20} \textit{Ibid.}, 2:1 § 182: ‘οἱ ἐν ταῖς ναυσίς Ἀπολλωνίας καὶ Σκλάβων σκέψιν ταύτην ἐποιήσαντο ἐφ ὅ ταύτας ἐπάνωθεν σανίσι τε καὶ ταῖς λεγοµέναις βύρσαις σκεπάσασα.’
\item \textsuperscript{21} \textit{Ibid.}, 1:1 § 22: ‘ἐχρήσαντο στιχάριον καὶ χλαῖναν καὶ ὑποδήµατα.’
\item \textsuperscript{22} \textit{Ibid.}, 2:4 § 280: ‘ἐπὶ τῶν περὶ τὴν Λητὴν καὶ λοιπῶν πλησιαζόντων τόπων ἀπόστασις (τοὺς πολίτας), καὶ φέρειν σῖτον, ὀσμέα, ἄλλας ἀποσκευὰς καὶ τὰ λοιπὰ τὰ πρὸς ἀποτροφὴν ἐπὶ ὁμονὸν ἀποκοµίζοντας.’ \textit{Ibid.}, 1997, 425-426.
\item \textsuperscript{24} Bakirtzis 1975, 315–20; Odorico 2003, 121-141.
\end{itemize}
merkiarioi or abydikoi and was also a naval port, for which reason it was closed to some categories of ships and was surrounded by a fortifying wall, which prevented free movement.25

Two other harbours were the Ekklesiastike skala (Ecclesiastical landing-place) and the Kellarion.26 The first was in the south-east corner of the city, on the site of the Roman harbour that had served the palace of Galerius.27 The fact that it was termed ‘ecclesiastical’ and was differentiated from the main harbour suggests that it was used exclusively by the Church of Thessalonike, probably exempt from the normal customs procedures. The second harbour was further to the east.28 On this side, the Gulf of Thessalonike formed a number of coves suitable for landing-stages for sailors and passengers, ship’s planks for short-distance trade within the Gulf, fishing anchorages and market-places.29 It was at one of these, at Embolos (Megalo Karaburnu?), that Theodore of Stoudios and his brother Joseph landed in 797 and entered the city through the eastern, the so-called Kassandra Gate.30

The city’s food supply

As long as Egypt was under Byzantine control (until 618/619) Thessalonike continued to receive, under the management of the state, a regular supply of grain to supplement the food its population cultivated locally.31 After the loss of Egypt (640-642), the state sought to increase local agricultural production by several mechanisms and by allowing refugees and immigrants of various provenance to settle in the area of Thessalonike.32

27 Bakirtzis 1975, 320-321; Spieser 1984, 34, thinks that the Ekklesiastike skala would have been inside Thessalonike’s main harbour.
28 Bakirtzis 1975, 321-322: at Karabournaki; Toska et al., 426: in the bay to the east of the White Tower, see note 97.
29 Ancient Ports, 36-39.
32 The state mechanisms are described by Dagron 2002, 450-452. For the stocking of the countryside around Thessalonike with an agrarian workforce of varied provenance in late sixth and seventh century see E. Zachos Papazachariou, Τά µνηµεια τῆς Κεντρικῆς Μακεδονίας καὶ ἡ παραγωγική βάση, project “Central Macedonia: Image and Character” conducted by the Ephoreia of Byzantine Antiquities of Thessaloniki under the direction of Ch. Bakirtzis.
The city (governors and citizens) also kept itself supplied with quantities of grain and pulses, which it obtained by sea from the Belegezitai, who were farmers in the area of Thebes and Demetrias in the Pagasitic Gulf. Expeditions to procure food from distant places, such as Sicily, were undertaken only at the instigation of the state, which also reserved itself the right to control them.

When the public storehouses and private granaries were full, local production was sufficient to feed the city. The lowest permissible reserve of grain in the state granaries was deemed to be 5,000 measures (modius, equal to 17.084 l or 12.8 kg). When it was impossible to obtain grain from anywhere and social unrest was feared, a state of famine was declared in the city. In these cases, at the request of the local authorities, the state would take the matter in hand and efficient state mechanisms and state action would supply the city with as much as 60,000 measures of grain. It was brought on cargo-ships escorted by warships via Chios – which was a supply station for Constantinople and Thessalonike – under the supervision of the komes of Abydos. St Demetrios’ intervention consisted in hastening the arrival of the aid by


34 Ibid., 1:9 § 79: ‘οὔδε πέπομφε τίνα ἐπὶ τούτω—πλὴν ἐν µόνῃ Σικελία κατὰ κέλευσιν βασιλικῆν’.


36 Miracles 1:9 § 73: ‘εἰ δὲ µὴ εὔπορον ἔσοιτο ὅτι καὶ τοῦ σίτου καὶ τῶν λοιπῶν εἰδῶν, καὶ καράβων ἐπὶ τῶν πλοίων παραφυλακῇ καταπλεύσαντων.’

37 Ibid., 1:8 § 72: ‘τὴν ἐπάνοδον τῶν πρὸς βασιλέα τῆς πόλεως προσβεβηκτὼν περὶ τῆς ἀνάγκης τοῦ λιµοῦ φοιτήσαντος.’ 2:4 § 281: ‘σιτιφόρα σκάφη καὶ πρὸ τῆς ἡµῶν αἰτήσεως ἐντάνθη ἀπέστειλε (basileus).’

38 See note 35.

39 Miracles 2:4 § 281: ‘µετὰ τὴν τοῦ σίτου ἐκποµφὴν καὶ τῶν λοιπῶν εἰδῶν, καὶ καράβων ἐπὶ τούτων παραφυλακῇ καταπλεύσαντος.’

skirting administrative structures and bureaucratic processes; the captains of the cargo-ships “from many different regions” and the saint himself are presented as supporters of ‘modernism’ in the economy.

Saving and trade in the city

In 67641 the city governors made an irregular sale of grain from the public granaries to the ships’ merchants for the special price of 1/7 nomisma (gold coin) per modius (12.8 kg) earning them 7,857 nomismata.42 It is conjectured that 55,000 modioi of grain, equal to 939,629 l or 704 t, were sold out of the 60,000 modioi with which the emperor had filled the public granaries.43 That is 55,000 modioi X : 1/7 gold coin = 7,857 gold coins. This commercial transaction took place shortly before the city was besieged and the prescribed procedures were not observed. The Miracles regards it as a blow against the city’s autarky. But there is no mention, neither of where the grain was transported,44 nor whether those responsible were ever censured by the government services. The grain was not sold cheaply of proteering by the city governors, as the Miracles implies. On the contrary, it was sold at very good price, at a time when the price of grain, from 1/15 and 1/12 of a gold coin per modius at the end of the sixth century, had risen to 1/3 to 1/4 gold coin per modius in 655, owing to the loss of the very fertile province of Egypt.45 So in fact, with this commercial trasaction, the city governors secured a significant quantity of gold coins for the defence of the city (to pay soldiers’ wages, buy ammunition and so forth). As for the city’s self-sufficiency (autarky) in grain, they were not worried, but relied on receiving a supply by sea, as they were not expecting a blockade of the port.

41 According to Lemerle 1981, 132.
42 Miracles 2:4 § 244: ‘Κέρδους γὰρ ἑνεκα καὶ λήµµατος, ὡς οἶµαι, καὶ οὐ κατὰ τρόπον ἐτερον, ὥσει ἢ αλῆθεία ἀποδείκνυσιν, ἡ πλείστη ὑπεισῆλθε τῇ πόλει λιµός. Τοῦ γὰρ τὴν πρόνοιαν πάντων ἀναδευμένον πιστού βασιλέως διὰ θείων αὐτοῦ κεραιων κελευσάντος τοῦ ἐναποθέτου τῆς πόλεως φροντίσαι, καίτοι ὅτι της κινήσεως τῶν βαρβάρων καταδήλου αὐτοῖς γεγενηµένης. τῇ πρὸ µιᾶς γὰρ τῶν κοῦρσα γενέσθαι τῇ ἑσπέρᾳ διέγνων τὰ τοιαῦτα πλοῖα σιτοφόρα αποπέµψαι ἐκ τοῦ ἐνταύθα λιµένος, µηδέπω ἐκφορίου ἐκ τῶν ἐνταύθα γεγοµένου’.
43 See note 35. The annual demand of grain for 100,000 inhabitants should be 20,000 tons or a little more, explains Koder 2002, 116.
45 Morrisson-Cheynet 2002, 822, t. 5
However, eminent citizens, like the rentier Menas, the retired lawyer John and others, had no confidence in the currency and saved in gold and silver; as did the eparch Marianos, whose salary was, of course, paid in cash.

In times of famine, private individuals would buy food from sailors on the black market and exchange it for gold items, mattresses, clothing and women's earrings, objects, that is, that had some value, were not easily available on the market and for which there was also a market outside Thessalonike. Also, in times of a siege, the city exchanged everyday utensils and equipment with the Belegezitai farmers for agricultural produce.

Salt monopoly

In September 689, Justinian II gave the proceeds from the sale of salt from a government salt-works on the coast near Thessalonike to the Basilica of St Demetrios to help its running costs.

Household equipment

In a time of war, the crenelles in the battlements were blocked with old pieces of cloth and discarded clothing that had been woven on the loom and with goat-hair banqueting mattresses. The infirmary of the Basilica of St Demetrios provided its patients with floor-mattresses. In the houses there were mattresses and formal attire in the form

46 See note 59.
47 Miracles 1:1 § 23: ‘κάτεισιν εἰς τὸ πραιτώριον αὐτοῦ· καὶ ἄρας ὃν ἔχρηζεν, ἀνεισ πάλιν εἰθὺς ἐπὶ τὸ σεβάσμον οἶκον τοῦ μάρτυρος καὶ προσκοµίσας αὐτόθι χρυσεά τε καὶ ἀργυρεά εἰδή πολύτιµα καὶ πολλά, καὶ ἐν χρυσόεις στατῆρσιν οὐκ ὀλίγον ποσόν.’
48 Ibid., 2:4 § 251: ‘τινὲς δὲ φέροντες πρὸς αὐτοὺς ὃν μόνον ἄπερ εἶχον πρὸς κόσµον χρυσέα εἴδη, ἀλλὰ καὶ τὰς αὐτῶν στρωµάς καὶ πάσαν ἀµφίασιν, καὶ πάσαν ἀµφίασιν, καὶ τὰ ἐνώτια τῶν γυναικῶν αὐτῶν ἐξελόντες ἀπέδοντο.’
49 See note 33. The meaning of this sentence is not clear. A. Sideri translates the term ‘σκευή’ as ‘σκευή (καθηµερινής ζωῆς),’ ‘(everyday) utensils’. Miracles 1997, 289, 422.
50 Spieser 1973, No. 8, pp. 156-159. There is an old salt-works operating today on the south shore of Megalos Embolos (Megalo Karaburnu). See note 30.
51 Miracles 1:14 § 152: ‘ἔβουλεύσαντο πρὸς τῶν ἐπάλλελων ἀρτήσαι ἐκ παπύρου καὶ σάκκου στρωµάς.’
52 Ibid., 1:1 § 20: ‘προσέταξε τοὺς παιδίς ἄρας καὶ θείι τινὰ ἀπὸ τῆς χαµαιστρῶτος τοῦ ἐτοιµασθεὶ τινὰ ἀυτὸν ἔκαθισε, 1:1 § 22: ‘ἐκάθισεν ἐπὶ τῆς χαµαιστρῶτος εἴνης ἐν ἡ κατέκειτο.’
53 Ibid., 1:1 § 34: ‘τὴν μίαν στρωµὰν τεθεάµεθα φέρουσαν.’
of sleeved tunics (sticharia) and woollen cloaks (chlainai). This offers evidence of weaving on a domestic or light industrial basis, as also of importation.

Copper- and silver-smithing

Coppersmithery is mentioned in the *Passio altera* of the St Demetrios legend. The saint is said to have preached the Christian faith in the western portico of the main *agora* (Megaloforos), where there were coppersmiths’ shops.55

With his salary, the eparch Marianos bought many gold and silver objects in the Thessalonike *agora*, though, naturally, it is not specified which of these were imported.56 Certainly, Thessalonike had a long tradition of silversmithing, judging by the *missorium* of Theodosios I, made in Thessalonike in 388 and now in Madrid, the paten made by Pausilypos of Thessalonike, now in Augst and the silver reliquary (380-410) found at Nea Herakleia in Chalkidike, now in the Museum of Byzantine Culture in Thessalonike.57

In the middle of the nave of the Basilica of St Demetrios stood a hexagonal *ciborium* made of wood rivetted with silver. Within the *ciborium* was a silver pseudo-sarcophagus decorated with a repoussé figure of St Demetrios.58 One night the *ciborium* caught fire and the silver melted and, perhaps owing to theft, was reduced in quantity.59 The remaining silver was insufficient to re-cover the *ciborium* and the Archbishop of Thessalonike was minded to melt down the bishop’s throne, which was also of wood.

54  See note 21.
55  Passio altera γ’ in Miracles 1997, 36: ἐκ δυσµῶν τοῦ τῆς πόλεως µεγαλοφόρου ἐν τῇ ἔκεισε Χαλκευτικῇ λεγοµένῃ στοᾷ.’ There are coppersmiths’ shops operating today on the same part of Thessalonike (Hadzi Ioannou 1880, 95).
56  See note 46.
57  For the connection of these works of minor art with Thessalonike, see Tsitouridou 1972, 187-196; Bakalakis 1968, 3-5; Buschausen 1971, 234-239, 7.
59  Ibid., 1:5 § 55: ‘Συνέβη, φησι, τὸ ἐν τῷ παναγιῳ αὐτοῦ τεµένει κιβώριον, ὅλον ὑπάρχον εἰς ἀργυρῷ, λειµφασµένῳ, ἐμπορηθήναι νυκτός ως διαλυθήναι πάντα τὸν ἄργυρον, καὶ τι µέρος αὐτοῦ µειωθήναι. Ο γοῦν εἰρήµενος ὡσιτατος ἀρχιεπίσκοπος, σπευσόν ἐκ καὶνῆς κατασκευάσαι τὸ προλεχθὲν ἀγιὸν κιβώριον, καὶ µη εὑρίσκων ἀναλογούσαν τὴν ὅλην τοῦ χωνευθέντος ἀργύρου πρὸς τὴν τοῦ παντὸς ἔργου συµπλήρωσαι, ἐβουλεύετο τὸν ἐν τῷ αὐτῶ πανσέπτῳ ναῦν ἄργυρους ὥρον λύσαι.’
rivetted with silver. St Demetrios did not agree with this plan to dispose of his property and due to his intervention it was not carried out; and when more than 115 *litrai* of silver had been collected from donations, a local silversmith undertook the task of making a new *ciborium*. Throughout this entire process, there is no mention of any state control over trade in precious metals, nor do we know whether the silversmith was paid with a quantity of silver or in cash.

When the Church of Thessalonike adroitly avoided allowing St Demetrios’s relics to be divided up, a quantity of fragrant earth from the traditional site of the tomb of Thessalonike’s patron saint was taken to the sacristy of the metropolitan church. I believe that the reliquary containing the soil, like the reliquaries in which the Church of Thessalonike subsequently sent some of it to Justinian I and Maurice, were replicas of the *ciborium* and were made by local silversmiths. These gift-reliquaries were kept in the imperial treasury in Constantinople and the eleventh-century Moscow reliquary (1059-1067) is a copy of them.

Candlemaking

The candles lit inside the *ciborium* were of three sizes and corresponding value: ‘small’ or ‘slender’, ‘great’ and ‘greatest’, the last being, I suppose, as tall as a person. Onesiphoros, the caretaker (*paramonarios*) of the *ciborium*, extinguished the candles before they were spent and sold the wax. He believed that this was also to the advantage of St Demetrios, presumably because the chandlery to which he sold the wax was owned by the Basilica of St Demetrios. The making of candles of course presupposes

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60 Miracles 1:5 § 60: ‘προσήγαγεν (ὁ κύρις Μηνᾶς) ἑβδοµήκοντα πέντε λίτρας ἀργύρου,’ § 61: ‘Ἰωάννην, ἓνα τῶν παλαιῶν δικολόγων τῆς περιφανοῦς Θεσσαλονικῆς τυγχάνοντα . . . προσάγοντα ὑπὲρ τῆς αὐτῆς τοῦ ἡγιασµένου κιβωρίου αἴτιας ἀργῦρου λίτρας τεσσαράκοντα. Καὶ ἄλλοι . . . προσήγαγον.’ The donations to St Demetrios’ were meagre in comparison with those made to St Peter’s in Rome in 625-638: revetments and chandeliers 9.224 pounds of silver, in 687-701 cross 20 pounds, silver dais weighing 120 pounds and six silver lamps weighing 170 pounds (Morrison/Cheynet 2002, 856, t. 15).


62 Miracles 1:5 § 53: ‘όν (χοῦν) καὶ ἐν τῷ ἁγίῳ σκευοφυλακίῳ τῆς μεγάλης ἡµῶν ἐκκλησίας δεόντως ἄπεθεντο, μέρος εἰς αὐτούς τετείλαντες τῶν ἑυσεβῶς αἰτησαµένου,’ §54: ‘Καὶ ἡµεῖς . . . ἐστείλαµεν ὑµῖν ἐκ τῆς αὐτῆς τοῦ ἁγίου χοὸς εὐλογίας.’

63 Bakirtzis 2002, 179.

64 Miracles 1:7 § 64: ‘μικροῖς ἢ μεγάλους αὐτόθι προσφέρει κηροῦς . . . νοµίσας χρηµατικωτέρον περιποιεῖν τι καὶ τῷ ἁγίῳ καὶ ἐµαυτῷ . . . τοὺς μὲν μεγάλους τῶν προσφερόµενων κηρῶν παραχρήµια εσβέννυον, λεπτοὺς δὲ ἀντ’ αὐτῶν καὶ μικροῖς ἐπήγγυννον καΐεσθαι.’ § 66: ‘ἡκὲ τις µεγιστοῦς λίαν προσάγων κηροῦς.’

65 Hagia Sophia in Constantinople was owner of a chandlery (Eparchenbuch § 11.1).
apiculture, which was practised by the local farmers who sold the honey in the market and the wax to the basilica’s chandlery.

**Pottery**

*Keramesios kampos* (pottery plain) was the name given to an area just to the west of Thessalonike, where bricks and roof-tiles were manufactured to meet the city’s considerable needs in the fifth and sixth centuries. After the grain supply from Egypt dried up and the Drougoubitai farmers were settled in this area in the seventh century for the purpose of increasing local agricultural production, the potteries ceased operating in the *Keramesios kampos* and were relocated closer to the city.

As well as bricks and roof-tiles, the Thessalonike potteries also manufactured receptacles for special purposes, such as the water vessels that were used to extinguish the fire that broke out in the roof of the Basilica of St Demetrios when the *ciborium* was set alight. My own view is that these were specially constructed medium-sized amphoras with thin walls that made them light to carry and easy to smash and with two handles so that they could easily be passed from one person to another. Being disposable, they were not very well fired. These are the characteristics of the amphora-like vessels that were used to fill in the vaults over the north and south porticos and the apse of Hagia Sophia in Thessalonike (Fig. 3). Although they resemble amphoras, these were not transportation vessels because they have extremely thin walls, had not been used before and had been fired in large quantities in open, not closed kilns.

St Demetrios, who expressed the clerical views both of the local church, the ruling families and the *demos*, did not favour exports, but he did intervene on behalf of imports; albeit certainly not in order to aid the merchants in acquiring wealth, but in the case of the imports stabilising the city’s autarky. This attitude towards the city’s

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66 Miracles 2:5 § 288: ‘ἐλθεῖν εἰς τὰ πρὸς ἡµᾶς µέρη, καὶ κρατῆσαι τὸν Κεραµήσιον κάµπον.’ Scholars have variously located the *Keramesios kampos* in places as far afield as Prilep, Stobi, and Heraklea Lynkestis (see bibliography collected by Gregoriou-Ioannidou 1981, 70, n. 4), as also in the area of the drained lake of Genitsa (Theocharides 1980, 182-183), or on the site of the modern village of Paliokastro, between Skydra and Genitsa (Liakos 1965, 145). If the potteries in the *Keramesios kampos* manufactured building materials for Thessalonike, as I believe they did, thus safeguarding the city’s autarky, then they must have been located closer to the city.

67 See note 106.

68 Miracles 2:5 § 104: ‘τὸ πῦρ ἀνανεµηθὲν φθάσαι τὴν ὀροφὴν καὶ τοὺς καλοµένους καλάθους ἀρέσσαι περιτεφρούν, δὴ τότε τινές, ἀεροδροµήσαντες εὐσκύλτως κατὰ τῶν δοκῶν σὺν ἀγγείως πλείοσιν ἱδατοφόρους, θεοῦ συνεργεία περιεγένοντο τοῦ φλογµοῦ.’
economic affairs also accounts for his patriotism, i.e. as a support for Thessalonike’s self-sufficiency in all sectors and at all levels.

Through the eparchs and the government services the state employed various processes that enhanced the measures implemented by the city to maintain its autarky and its survival. Unfortunately, the administrative acts by which the measures were implemented and the steps taken by the government, which lie behind the events recounted in the *Miracles*, are not preserved in any official record. The account of the events and the analysis of the situations in the *Miracles* is thus one-sided and slightly biased towards the church.

**Ioannes Kaminiates**

John Kaminiates’ account of late ninth- and early tenth-century Thessalonike and its environs traces the development of maritime trade and agricultural production. The narrative begins in chapter four, with a description of the city from the sea and of the Thermaic Gulf, indicating the major role which the port and maritime communications played in the life of the city. 69 Kaminiates attributes Thessalonike’s progress to

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69 Kaminiates § 4.1-2: ἀπανταχόθεν εἰσρεούσαι εἰσερχόμενοι τινὶ πρὸς αὐτὴν πορείαν παρέχεται ὑποκοιλαίνεται γὰρ τὶς ἐκείσε θαυμαστὸς λίμην, ἄσφαλῶς ὑπτιάζων τοῖς πλωτήρισι τὴν εἴσοδον.'
the development of agriculture on land and of trade by sea and ascribes this development to the peaceful conditions which prevailed after the Bulgars were converted to Christianity in 885.  

The countryside

Chapter five describes the area of Mount Chortiates and its foothills to the north and north-east of Thessalonike, inhabited by hermits. During this period, old churches were repaired and new monasteries were being built in the mountainous countryside to the east. The monks from this area visited Thessalonike not only to pray but also to shop for supplies.

There follows a description of lowland Kalamaria and the Mygdonian basin, with much praise for the local villagers' productive activities, which helped the city to be self-sufficient. The cultivation methods would not have been any different from those described in the Geoponika. The Thessalonian farmers’ interest in diversified agriculture and highly marketable crops is demonstrated by the way they heeded the agricultural advice of their Metropolitan, Leo the Mathematician (840-843).

Chapter six offers a description of the extensive alluvial plain to the west of the city, which Kaminiates divides into two parts. Vines, fruit-trees and gardens were cultivated in the part nearer the city which was studded with farmsteads and monasteries. In this area and also in the corresponding area to the east of the city, not very far from

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70 Kaminiates § 9.2-4: ‘ἐξ ὅτου γὰρ ἡ κολυµβήθρα τοῦ θείου βαπτίσµατος τὸ τῶν Σκυθῶν ἔθνος τῷ χριστωνύµῳ λαοῦ συνεµόρφωσε καὶ τὸ τῆς εὐσεβείας γαλα κοινὸς ἄµφοτερος διείλετο, πέπαιντο μὲν ἡ τῶν πολέµων στάσις, ἀνεῖτο δὲ τῆς ἐνεργείας ἦ τάς σφαγὰς ἐπιτηδεύουσα μάχαιρα, καὶ τὰ προλεχθέντα τῶ μεγαλοφωνοτάτῳ τῶν προφητῶν Ἡσαΐα ἐναργῶς ἐφ᾿ ἡµῖν ἐπληροῦτο· αἱ µάχαιραι γὰρ ἡµῶν µετῆλθον εἰς δρέπανα καὶ αἱ ζιβύνες εἰς ἄροτρα, καὶ πόλεµος ἦν οὐδαµοῦ, καὶ τὴν περίχωρον ἀπαύγασε εἰρήνη κατεπρυτάνευε, καὶ οὐδεµία ἦν ἐνδείκτης ἀφορµή ἡ γῆ γὰρ ἔχουσα πρὸς καρπογονίαν ἠδύνησαν καὶ ἀδάπαναν τὴν περὶ ἱκανόν ἐνδείκτης καὶ ἀνεπιτηδείως εὑροῦσα πρὸς καρπογονίαν ἡ γῆ, τούτων παρ᾿ ἐκείνης ἡ θάλασσα τὴν κτίσθην µηχανωµένη καὶ ταῖς ὁλκάσι συνεισκοµίζουσα άνενδεξε τὸ λεῖπον τοῖς χρῄζουσι.’


72 The Monastery of St Andreas at Peristera, Chortaite Monastery (Lefort 1982, s.w.).

73 Konstantakopoulou 1996, 68; for diversified agriculture, see Laiou 2002d, 1129.
the city itself, independent growers held cheap markets, where the inhabitants of the city were able to shop for produce. As these markets became institutionalised and production increased, the Demetria international fair came into existence, described in the twelfth-century dialogue *Timarion*.

Beyond this area there was also a large expanse of scrubland suitable for growing all kinds of crops. This lowland area extended as far as the foothills of Upper Macedonia and the town of Berroia. It was cultivated by the inhabitants of various large villages, some of which had a mixed immigrant population of varied provenance, namely Drougoubitai and Sagoudatoi. Through the agency of such merchants as Staurakios and Kosmas, who exploited them, the inhabitants of some villages, mainly those near the Bulgarian border, exchanged goods from Thessalonike’s workshops with the neighbouring Bulgars for products and raw materials from the Balkan hinterland, which they then sold to workshops in the city. Leo VI tried in vain to incorporate the resulting profits (which were not under state control) into the customs revenues by transferring the Bulgar merchants from Constantinople to Thessalonike in 894. Apart from irrigation and fishing, the rivers which crossed this plain to the west of Thessalonike, being navigable, were also used for maritime trade with the hinterland and the Balkan interior.

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74 St Theodora, Life § 23.16-17: ‘ἐπὶ τὴν ἀγορὰν ἐξιοῦσα καὶ ἐξω μακράν ποιο τῆς πόλεως διὰ τὴν τῶν ὡνίων εὐθυνίαν.’

75 Kaminiates 6.5: ‘διήκει δὲ τὴν ἡλιου δύσιν ἀποσκοποῦν, ἐως τινὸν ἄλλων ὄρεων ὑψηλῶν καὶ μεγάλων παρατεινόμενων, ἕνθα καὶ πόλεις τις Βέρροια καλούμενη κατωκισταὶ.’

76 Ibid., 6.6: ‘ἐµπεριέχει δὲ τῷ διὰ µέσου χώρῳ τὸ πεδίον τοῦτο καὶ ἀµφιµίκτους τινὰς κώµας, ὧν αἱ µὲν πρὸς τῇ πόλει τελοῦσι, Δρουγουβῖταί τινες καὶ Σαγουδάτοι τὴν κλῆσιν ὀνοµαζόµενοι, αἱ δὲ τῷ συνοµοροῦντι τῶν Σκυθῶν ἐθνεῖ σὺ µακράν ὄντι τοὺς φόρους ἀποδιδόσαιν.’ Drougoubitai and Sagoudatoi had settled on the Thessalonian plain (Tsaras 1985, 182).

77 Eparchenbuch 108, 9.6: ‘ἐὰν διὰ ἐθνῶν τυχὸν Βουλγάρων ἢ καὶ λοιπῶν εἰσέλθη πραγματεία λινῶν ἢ μέλιτος καὶ ὀφείλωσι δι’ ἑτέρων εἰδῶν πραθῆναι.’ For the activity of Staurakios and Kosmas see Theophanes Continuatus, 357-358: «οἴτινες . . κερδαίνειν βουλοῦμενοι, τὴν μετὰ Βουλγάρων πραγματείαν ἐ τῇ πόλει ἐν Θεσσαλονίκη μετέστησαν, κακῶς κουµηρεύουσες τοὺς Βουλγάρους». The area between ‘Romaioi and Bulgaroi’ where these exchanges were conducted is attested by a ProtoBulgarian inscription, which dates to the very early years of the tenth century, before Thessalonike was captured in 904 and was found 22 km to the north of Thessalonike (Oikonomidès 1995, 239-243).

under the control of a *vardarios*. The Thessalonike-Belgrade route is attested in the middle of the tenth century.

The city

The early Christian fortifications of Thessalonike enclosed a large area. However, the city had shrunk in size in the flat, lowland part owing to the significant demographic decline that occurred in Byzantium and began in 541/542 until the ninth century. It was as densely populated ‘as the sands of the sea’. The upper city was uninhabited, occupied only by monasteries. The area between the modern Kassandrou and Olymbiados Streets, north of the Basilica of St Demetrios, with large late Roman and early Christian houses laid out on the Hippodamean grid system, ceased to be inhabited after the early Christian period and was not inhabited again until after Thessalonike fell to the Turks in 1430. After the early Christian dwellings were abandoned, their sites were taken over by churches with adjacent structures, probably monasteries. Poor neighbourhoods, refuse dumps and ruins of earlier buildings appeared on the edges of the lower city. A stylite is said to have lived atop a Roman or early Christian column in the west part of...
the city. A gift of three pigs for charitable purposes was no small offering and attests the existence of piggeries outside the densely populated city.

Excavations within the city have ascertained that the main construction activity at this time consisted not so much in building as in adapting older structures to new purposes and dividing spaces up into smaller ones. The rooms of the former Graeco-Roman-style houses were converted into separate households and their atria into shared courtyards. This type of conversion is clearly apparent in the extensive excavation in Diikitiriou Square, on the south side of the decumanus of what is now Ayiou Dimitriou Street. The rooms of a large house that was occupied in the late Roman and early Christian period were divided into smaller spaces by walls, some of which took up part of the atrium, which was converted into a courtyard. In the Life of St Gregory of Dekapolis (first half of ninth century) the word ‘room’ (domation) actually means ‘house’.

The private houses needed modifications and some of them had upper storeys and several rooms, wine cellars and their own bathrooms, as did the monasteries. Fragile water-supply and drainage systems, wells in the courtyard of houses, water cisterns and rainwater pits found at all levels of rescue excavations in Thessalonike required frequent maintenance and repairs. Kaminiates mentions a large wastepipe that carried away the household waste and the water that had been brought into the city. It emptied into the sea and it is evident that the city was responsible for maintaining its regular function with special teams of workers.

The three large non-parochial churches (the Basilica of St Demetrios, the Acheiropoietos and the Hagia Sophia) and the Rotunda of Asomatoi were in need of repair and conservation. This was specialised work, requiring special technical staff, labourers and large quantities of building materials.

88 St Gregory of Dekapolis 60.8-11.
89 Ibid. 59.16-17: ‘ἄδελφος τις διακονεῖν τοῖς πένησιν ἑπιτηδείως ἔχων, εἴληφε παρά τινος λόγω μεταδόσεως χοίρους τρεῖς.’ The price of a pig was 2/3-1 gold coin in the seventh-eighth century (Morrison/Cheynet 2002, 840, t. 11).
90 St Gregory of Dekapolis, 59.7: ‘δωµάτιον πρὸς σκέπην ἐτύγχανεν.’ See also 63.22-27; Suidae Lexicon: ‘δωµάτιον, οἰκηµάτιον’.
92 Ibid., § 57.7.
93 Velenis 2003.
The city had nunneries, like that of St Luke and St Stephen, where St Theodora was a nun, and men’s monasteries founded by imperial and private benefactions; Constantine VII Porphyrogennetos, for instance, founded Pantokrator Monastery in Thessalonike in 946. On the north-western edge of the inhabited city, a certain Zacharias converted his property into a monastery of St Mark, in which each monk built his own cell.

As far as building activity is concerned, people often constructed buildings themselves or offered their services for the purpose, though of course professional builders were essential for specialised work. A spirit of self-sufficiency led many people to do their own building work, using *spolia* and mud as construction materials, like, for instance, the neighbour of the monk Zacharias and Antonios’ companion monks. Because of this voluntary work, Antonios himself suffered from chronic lumbago, a common complaint among builders.

The material for building the walls and towers and monasteries in the city and in the countryside came from older buildings, like brick and stone *spolia*, and from quarries inside and outside the city, while manpower was supplied by the people. There were no large pine forests in the Thessalonike area. The area supplied the city with

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94 St Theodora, Life § 43.2-3: ‘βραχὺς μοναζουσῶν ἀριθµὸς ἐκ τῶν γειτνιαζόντων μοναστηρίων’.
95 Ibid., § 5.2-4.
96 Ibid., § 60.7: ‘εἰς τὸ ἑαυτῆς ὑπέστρεψεν µοναστήριον’.
97 Theocharides 1978, 7-77.
98 St Gregory of Dekapolis 60.8-11. Mr I. Papangelos thinks that the existing metochion of St Charalamboi in Thessalonike gives us an idea of what the Monastery of St Mark must have looked like: a courtyard with a church and a building on one side.
100 St Theodora, Life § 58, p. 184.23-25: ‘πάθος χρόνων κατὰ τὰ ἱσχία ἔχων καὶ μήτε ἐξω ἐπικαθίσαι δυνάµενος, μήτε µην δρθίος ἐπὶ πολὺ στῆναι.’
101 Ousterhout 1999, 140-145. The use of *spolia* was common after the seventh century (Sodini 2002, 138-142). Early Christian bricks were used to repair Acheiropoietos (Raptis 1999, 221-222) and Hagia Sophia (Theocharidou 1994, 172). In his account of Latomou Monastery in Thessalonike, Ignatios, the abbot, mentions old stone quarries inside the city: ‘περὶ τὰ βορειότερά ποικὶ καὶ ἀνωφερέστερα µέρη τῆς πόλεως, ἀ δὴ Λατόµια ἐγχωρίως ὑποµάζονται, διὰ τὸ τοὺς λίθους ἐκείδεσκεν (οἶµαι) λατοµεῖσθαι τοὺς χρησίµους εἰς οἰκοδοµὰς’ (Kaltsogianni/Kotzabassi/Paraskevopoulo 2002, 134). Kaminiates § 18.4: ‘ἐνθὸς τὸν δήµον ἂπαντα τὸν εἰς τούτο τεταγµένον πρὸς τὸ ἐκεῖνον ἱεροπρεπές καὶ τῆς τῶν δεόντων δαψιλέως ἀρχηγία τὸ σπουδαζόµενον εἰς ἐργὸν ἄγοτο.’
firewood for winter heating and for the many baths.\textsuperscript{102} This was why the Saracens did not construct their catapults on the spot, but used timber from Thasos (Thasian pine).\textsuperscript{103} Therefore, the massive timbers with which the Thessalonians built wooden towers must have come from older buildings.\textsuperscript{104}

Specialised construction materials were rare and therefore expensive. A quantity of pitch, which provided effective insulation against the damp, was found by chance when the foundations were being dug for the ‘room’ of the monk Zacharias’ neighbour. Having sought the advice of St Gregory of Dekapolis, she sold the pitch and with the money she got for it not only paid for her house to be built, but also easily kept herself fed.\textsuperscript{105}

After the Keramesios kampos had been abandoned, the potteries moved closer to Thessalonike. Apart from everyday wares, they manufactured receptacles for special purposes, such as amphoras for extinguishing fires and incendiary clay grenades.\textsuperscript{106} Pottery workshops of this period and kilns for firing building materials have recently been excavated outside the east city wall, near the Kassandra Gate and the White Tower (Fig. 4).\textsuperscript{107} The subsoil here is argillaceous and a river flowed alongside the city’s east wall, serving also as a moat. The building materials manufactured in the potteries were not only for the local market, but were probably also exported by sea, as we may gather from the fact that the workshops were situated at the head of a cove, which would also have served as a little harbour. The site was known as Kaminia (kilns) in 903. The potteries were private enterprises for a document relating to the sale of one of them (workshop for tiles) survives from 952.\textsuperscript{108}

\textsuperscript{102} St Theodora, Life, § 23.17-19: ‘καὶ µέγα φορτίον ξύλων ἢ τινων ἄλλων ἐπὶ τοῖς ύμιοις φέροσα διὰ τῆς ἀγορᾶς µέσον ἐβάδιζεν.’ In 862/863 St Euthymios the Younger of Galatia brought his ailing spiritual father, Theodoros, from Olympus in Bithynia to Thessalonike because of the city’s many baths (Kaltsogianni/Kotzabassi/Paraskevopoulos 2002, 111) and because of its tolerance of bathing.

\textsuperscript{103} Kaminiates § 29.5: ‘οὗς (πετροβόλους) διερχόµενοι τὴν Θάσον πρὸς τὴν τοιαύτην χρείαν προπαρεσκεύασαν.’

\textsuperscript{104} Ibid., § 19.12: ‘πῦργους τινας ξυλοσυνθέτους τῷ διερρυηκότι µέρει τοῦ τείχους ἑµεις δοµησάµενοι τε’. When dating old buildings, dendrochronologists should bear this practice in mind.

\textsuperscript{105} St Gregory of Dekapolites 59.12-14: ‘ἐργον εἴχετα, καὶ τοὺς θεµελίους διορύσσεν ἀπηρέατο. Ἐν οἷς πλήθος ἀνεικάστου πίσσης ἐξαπίνης φανὲν ἀνεδίδοτο, ἐξ ἧς τὸν οἶκον ἐδοµήσατο, καὶ τὰ πρὸς τροφήν δαψιλῶς ἐπορίσατο.’ Pitch is manufactured from resinous trees (Orlando/Travlos, Lexikon, p. 211), which flourish in Chalkidike. So it is very likely that that pitch was manufactured in Chalkidike.

\textsuperscript{106} Kaminiates § 31.8: ‘ὑδατὰ τε ταῖς ἐπάλξεσιν ἐν τιαὶ προαποθέμενοι σκευεῖς.’ § 32.10: ‘ἄλλους πυρὶ τινι, κατ’οὐς τετεχνηµένου καὶ τοῖς ὅστρακίνοις σκευαὶ προηυτρεπισµένου.’ § 33.7: ‘σκευεῖς ὅστρακίνοις ἐπιτηδευµέναι.’ § 34.7: ‘πῦρ τε διὰ τῶν σιφώνων τῷ ἀέρι φύσησαιντες, καὶ τίνα ἄλλα σκευὴ καὶ αὐτὰ πυρὸς ἀνάμεστα εἰσὶν τοῦ τείχους ἐξακοντισαντες’. Pitch was manufactured from resinous trees (Orlando/Travlos, Lexikon, p. 211), which flourish in Chalkidike. So it is very likely that that pitch was manufactured in Chalkidike.

\textsuperscript{107} Thessaloniki Rescue Excavations 2002, 11.

\textsuperscript{108} Actes de Lavra I , 101. I owe the information to Ms Styliane Sabanopoulou.
The city had all it needed to live, voluntary labour, builders, stone and marble masons,\textsuperscript{109} local stone,\textsuperscript{110} and marble available from Roman monolithic sarcophagi in the cemeteries, though there is no mention of any trade in spolia.\textsuperscript{111} Judging by the war operations, which were also the most serious to date and undertaken in anticipation of the city’s siege at the hands of the Saracens, the government mechanisms consisted in providing technical know-how and sending experts to help the city meet its needs.\textsuperscript{112}

Import and export trade involved commodities that were not produced in or near Thessalonike and was carried out by merchants and foreign visitors, though it is not

\begin{figure}[h]
\centering
\includegraphics[width=\textwidth]{pottery_workshops_kilns.jpg}
\caption{Pottery workshops and kilns for firing building materials}
\end{figure}

\begin{figure}[h]
\centering
\includegraphics[width=\textwidth]{sarcophagus.jpg}
\caption{Marble sarcophagus with decoration}
\end{figure}

\textsuperscript{109} Mention is made in 893 of the construction of a marble sarcophagus with decoration, in which St Theodora was buried (St Theodora, Translation § 3.7-8: ‘λάρνακα κατασκευάσασα ἐν αὐτῇ κατέθετο τῆς ὁσίας τὸ λείψανον,’ § 3. 20-21: ‘ποικίλως γλυφίσιν ἔξωθεν ταύτην διακοσμήσαντες’), and of a stone mason who was also a priest (St Theodora, Translation § 3.17-24: ‘καὶ δὴ τινα λιθοξόον προσκαλεσάμενοι, τῇ τοῦ πρεσβυτέρου τετιµηµένων αξία’). St Hilarion of Iberia, too, was buried in Thessalonike in a marble sarcophagus (†875, Kaltsogianni/Kotzabassi/Paraskevopoulo 2002, 107). But it is not clear whether it was newly constructed or an old sarcophagus (see Ayios Nikolaos Orphanos, 121 (Styl. Vasileiadou) pl. 35).

\textsuperscript{110} See note 100.

\textsuperscript{111} Kaminiates § 17.6: ‘πολλοὶ γὰρ ἦσαν ἐκ µονολίθου γεγλυµµένοι τύµβοι κατὰ τα το πρὸς ἀνατολήν και ὅσιαν µέρος τῆς πόλεως, ἐν οἶς πάλαι τοὺς ἑαυτῶν νεκροὺς οἱ τήνδε κατοικοῦντες ἐτελείοµαι Ελληνες’.

\textsuperscript{112} Ibid., § 16.2 (messenger), § 17.2 (protospatharios Petronas), § 18.2 (strategos Leo Chitzilakes, see also Spieser 1973, No. 12, p. 162), § 19.2 (strategos Niketas).
always clear what was actually imported and exported.\(^{113}\) On the one hand grain was transported on short-distance ships loaned by the city to the merchants,\(^ {114}\) but on the other we do not know what kind of trade occupied the Monemvasiots who came en masse to Thessalonike at the beginning of the tenth century.\(^ {115}\)

Refugees from other parts of Greece also came to Thessalonike, attracted by the city’s seemingly impregnable position, conditions and peaceful way of life and they brought their goods and chattel with them.\(^ {116}\) After Iconoclasm, pilgrims and monks travelled to and from Thessalonike by road or by sea because of the city’s key position and large population.\(^ {117}\) They brought new ideas, propaganda and money and influenced not only the city’s ecclesiastical life, but its social and economic life as well. For instance, St Euthymios the Younger of Galatia came to Thessalonike in 862/863. He lived as a stylite on two occasions outside the city walls and built a men’s and a women’s monastery and a number of churches at Peristerai on the other side of Mount Chortiates.\(^ {118}\)

Gold and silver, precious stones, bronze, iron, tin, lead and glass, both silken, linen and woollen fabrics were bought and sold in the city.\(^ {119}\) The main street, the Leophoros, was lined with workshops like the Mese in Constantinople.\(^ {120}\) Kaminiates mentions an agora as the centre of the city’s urban and commercial life, probably referring to the

\(^{113}\) Kaminiates § 9.7: ‘ἐνθεν καὶ παµµιγής τις ἀεὶ περιεστοίχει τάς ἀγυιὰς τῶν τε αὐτοχθόνων καὶ τῶν ἄλλως ἐπιδειξαγόμενων, ὡς εὐχερετερόν εἶναι ψάµµον παράλιον ἐξαριθµεῖν ἢ τοὺς τὴν ἀγορὰν διοδεύοντας καὶ τῶν συναλλαγµάτων ποιουµένων τὴν µέθοδον.’ § 9.5: ‘τὶ δὲ τῶν ἀπανταχοῦν ἐπιδηµούµενον ἐναµµὴ πρωτόν, καὶ µάλιστα οίς ἐφιλοτιµοῦντο τοὺς πολίτας ἡµᾶς, τα παρ’ ἐαντών διόντες καὶ τα παρ’ ἡµῶν ἀντιλαµβάνοντες’.

\(^{114}\) Ibid., § 61.3: ‘οἱ οὖν βαρβάροι συναγαγόντες τάς νήσας τῆς πόλεως, αῖς ἑχρῶντο ποτὲ πρὸς τὸ τὸν σῖτον ἐπικοµίζειν οἰ καθ’ ἡµᾶς ἐµποροί.’.

\(^{115}\) Kaltsogianni/Kotzabassi/Paraskevopoulo 2002, 128-129.

\(^{116}\) St Theodora, Life § 7.3-7: ‘τὴν τῆς πόλεως θέσιν τε καὶ κατάστασιν καὶ τὸ τῆς ζωῆς ἄριστον θεασάµενοι καὶ ὅτι. . .διαφυλαττόµενη ἐκ πάντων τῶν ἐπιτιθεµένων κακῶν ἀνάλωτος δεικνυται’.

\(^{117}\) Konstantakopoulou 1996, 62.

\(^{118}\) Kaltsogianni/Kotzabassi/Paraskevopoulo 2002, 111-114.

\(^{119}\) Kaminiates § 9.8-9: ‘ἐντεῦθεν διὰ χρυσοῦ καὶ ἄργυρου καὶ λίθων καὶ χρωμάτων παµµαλαζηκεῖς ὑθεαυοί τοῖς πολλοῖς ἐγίνοντο, καὶ τα ἐκ Σηρῶν ψάµµατα ἀπὸ τὰ ἐξ ἐρίων τοίς ἄλλοις ἐπεινανηκα. Περὶ γὰρ τῶν ἄλλων τῶν ἀλλατείων, ἠλευχα καὶ άσηµα καὶ διάκρισιν τὰ ἄλλα ἕτοιµα πειρήσασθαι τοῖς καὶ µολυβδὸν καὶ τὸν γούµα, καὶ µηδενὶ ἡνακλῖσθαι καὶ µηδενὶ ἡνακλῖσθαι τοῖς παρέλκοντι ἡµῶν, καὶ τα µέτρα ἐκαρποῦντο διὰ τὰ ἐξ ἐρίων τῶν ἐπιτιθεµένων κακῶν ἀνάλωτος δεικνυται’.

\(^{120}\) Ibid., § 9.6: ‘Λεωφόρου γὰρ δηµοσίας τῆς πρὸς ἀνατολὴν ἄγονος ὧς απὸ τῆς δύσεως διὰ µέσου τρόδο χωρούσις τῆς πόλεως καὶ ἀναγκαίως πειθοῦντον τοῖς παραδεδοµένονται πρὸς ἡµᾶς ἐνδιατριβεῖν καὶ τὰ πρὸς τὴν χρείαν πορίζεσθαι, παν ὦτον ἀν ἐπὶ τῖς τῶν καλῶν ἐξ αὐτῶν ἐκαρποῦµεθα τε καὶ προσεκτωµέθα’. 
area of the Roman forum (Megaloforos) beside the main street.\textsuperscript{121} There was also an agora, in the sense of a fair rather than a market, for reasons of safety and practicality inside the Kassandra Gate at the west end of the main street.\textsuperscript{122} It was a place of local trade in agricultural products, raw materials and light industrial and commercial supplies between the inhabitants of Kalamaria and those of Thessalonike.

The workshops included chandleries in the monasteries or in the city,\textsuperscript{123} copper-smiths’ workshops for hot-water boilers\textsuperscript{124} and those of basket-makers and tanners.\textsuperscript{125} There were also carpentry workshops making beds and couches, moreover carts for farmers and boats for fishermen,\textsuperscript{126} ironsmiths’ workshops, which manufactured and repaired the ironclad doors of the city gates,\textsuperscript{127} weapons, which private citizens kept in their houses\textsuperscript{128} and fine locks.\textsuperscript{129} A ninth century glass-works has been excavated in Diikitiriou Square, in an area that showed signs of abandonment after the seventh century.\textsuperscript{130} In the monasteries, in keeping with the spirit of autarky, the monks and nuns used scraps of cloth to make bags and rag rugs, wove rush mats and baked bread in order not to have any need of a baker.\textsuperscript{131} The monastery of St Stephen probably had a

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\item \textsuperscript{121} Kameniates § 9.7: ’τοὺς τὴν ἀγορὰν διοδεύοντας καὶ τῶν συναλλαγμάτων ποιούμενος τὴν μέθοδον,’ § 38.4: ’ὅημε τῆς ἀγορᾶς ἐν μέσῳ.’ The area of the Roman agora of Thessalonike was an open square in the late Byzantine period, see Bakirtzis 2003, 57.
\item \textsuperscript{123} St Theodora, Life § 6.3-4: ’τὰς ἐκ κηροῦ λαµπάδας χερσὶ κατέχων κατέχαν· ἐκαθενε’.
\item \textsuperscript{124} Ibid., § 31.5-7: ’ὁποιοὶ τὸν θερµὸν λέβητα στῆσαι τὰς ἀδελφὰς ἐν τῷ τόπῳ, ἐνθα η μακαρία τὸ ψιάθιον ἐπ’ ἐδάφους ἁπλώσασα ἐκάθευδεν’.
\item \textsuperscript{125} Ibid., § 31.9-10: ’ἐπὶ ἄριστα γης τῷ ψιαθιῷ καὶ τῷ κώδιῳ διαναπαντετο’, § 32.30: ’τὸ ἐν ὧ καθενείς κώδιον’.
\item \textsuperscript{126} Kaminiates § 31.2: ’ἀμάξας ἐφευρόντες ἐπέθηκαν ἐν αὐταῖς πρηνεῖς τὰς βραχυτάτας νῆας, αἷς πρὸς τὴν θήραν τῶν ἵππων ὁι καδ’ ἡμᾶς ἀλλιεὶς ἐκεχρητο’.
\item \textsuperscript{127} Ibid., § 31.4: ’τὴν μὲν ἔξω τῶν πυλῶν ἑπιβάναι ἕπασι, ὅτι ἦν ἄτα σεσειδηρομένη’.
\item \textsuperscript{128} Ibid., § 23.2: ’ὀπλιζοµένων τε πάντων ὡς οἶον τε ἤν’.
\item \textsuperscript{129} St Theodora, Translation § 4.1: ’προσέφερε τις θαυµασίαν κλειδα, ὀποῖαι ὀψεῖς τῶν τῆς καθ’ ἡμᾶς πόλεως θεσασάµενος ἦν’. See a fine lock in Ayios Nikolaos Orphanos, 123-125 (St. Tzevreni), pl. 35.
\item \textsuperscript{130} Kanonidis 2002, 143-152.
\item \textsuperscript{131} St Theodora, Life § 41.14-17: ’τὰς χεῖρας αὐτῆς εἰς ἀτράκτον ἐπερείσασα, τὰ ἀποθεδοκισµένα τραχύτατα τῶν στυππείων καὶ τὰ ἐπὶ κορίας ἁχρηστὰ ἐρριµένα ἐρία φιλοκαλουσα καὶ ἑρθονα, σάκκους εἰργάζετο.’ § 23.14-15: ’ἀλῆθονα, καὶ ταῖς οἰκείαις χερσὶ τὸν ἄρτον ἐργαζοµένην.’
\end{itemize}
bakehouse, even though it was in the city centre and it was considered dangerous to operate ovens in densely populated districts.\textsuperscript{132}

Judging by the Saracens’ preferences, the various commodities were categorised as either luxury goods or cheap goods: the former included wares and jewellery of precious metals and silken and fine-woven linen fabrics; the latter included copper and iron wares and woollen fabrics, such as the blankets used in the monasteries.\textsuperscript{133} The citizens, however, took a different view and, corresponding to the spirit of autarky, hoarded luxurious and cheap objects indiscriminately – though not coins.\textsuperscript{134}

Coins of this period are rarely reported among the finds from excavations in Thessalonike. An excavational trench dug along Ayiou Dimitriou Street in Thessalonikí’s old town was investigated before a new water main was laid.\textsuperscript{135} It yielded 285 identified bronze coins, of which 15 were minted between the seventh and tenth centuries. The hoard discovered near the harbour in 1959 contained luxurious jewellery only of the ninth to the tenth century.\textsuperscript{136} Gold coins weighing two talents, which were brought from Constantinople by a special delegate to pay the salaries of an army on the Bulgarian frontier, were given to the Saracens to dissuade them from burning the city down.\textsuperscript{137} Coins are also mentioned among the assets of visitors to the city or refugees. Early in the ninth century, a young man who had come to study in Thessalonike lent a monk a gold coin.\textsuperscript{138} St Theodora, a refugee from the isle of Aegina in the Saronic Gulf,
had a hundred gold coins among her assets. Later on, when the circulation of coins increased, we find hoards of coins, such as gold issues of the first half of the eleventh century, in the area of the harbour.

If the ship loaded with grain that was sailing in the northern Sporades in August 904 was making for Thessalonike, this means that food supplies to the city began immediately after the departure of the Saracens. Just a few months later, Metropolitan Plotinos described Thessalonike as a ‘most fortunate metropolis’, being blessed with abundance and much wealth. This means that despite reduced exports and imports owing to the war, the city continued to operate as a port and the productive sources of its autarky were not destroyed.

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139 St Theodora, Life § 20.10–14: ‘καταλαμβάνει τὸ εὐαγές μοναστήριον καὶ εἰς ὅνομα τιμωμένον τοῦ ἀγίου πρωτομάρτυρος καὶ πρωτοδικαίων Στεφάνου, ἐπιφυλάξθη ἐκατόν ἐν χαράγματι χρυσός (μετὰ τὸ ἀποκαρῆναι καὶ τρεῖς θεραπαινίδας καὶ τὴν ἄλλην ἄπασαν κτήσιν προσεκύρωσεν τῷ μοναστηρίῳ).’

140 Touratsoglou 2003, 523–41.

141 Kaminiates § 67.8.

142 ‘πανενδαίμων μητρόπολις’ (Kaltsogianni/Kotzabassi/Paraskevopoulo 2002, 118).


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