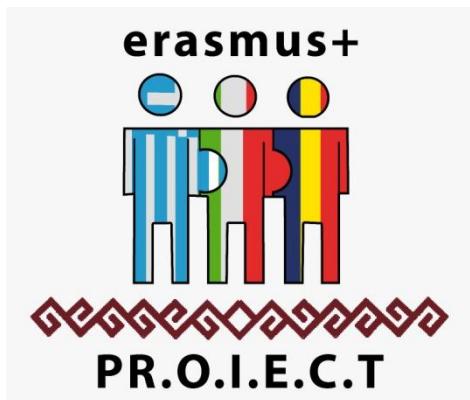


**2<sup>nd</sup> High School of Hortiatis**

ERASMUS+ 2018-2020

“PRomotion of Identity, European Culture and  
Tradition”



### **P6.2.1. Activity**

#### **Thessaloniki's Monuments Guide**

- **AGIOS DIMITRIOS CHURCH**

Agios (Saint) Dimitrios is the patron saint of Thessaloniki and his worship is connected with the history of the city. Agios Dimitrios was born in a noble family in Thessaloniki, he served in the Roman army, became a Christian, was arrested and martyred in 305 AD. According to tradition, the present temple is built in the place where he was killed by the Romans. In this area there were Roman baths, on which the first temple was built shortly after his death. In the 5th century a second larger temple was built but shortly after (620 AD) it was destroyed by a fire and an earthquake. Then a new church was built, in the form we see today, but it was also burned in the great fire of 1917. Eventually it got completely restored by copying the older one. The church of Agios Dimitrios is five-aisled with basilica style, which basically means that the interior is divided by four colonnades in five arches. From the original interior decoration, only a few mosaics are preserved, depicting the saint as a protector of the children and the religious, many marble columns and capitals on the ground floor, as well as the marbles decorating the walls were also preserved. Inside the temple was the tomb of the saint from which came myrrh. His remains were taken by the Crusaders in Italy when they conquered Thessaloniki in 1204. They were found a few years ago in San Lorenzo in Campo, Italy, and were returned back in 1980. The church was turned into a mosque by the Ottoman Turks after they had conquered Thessaloniki, but it eventually became Christian church again, after the liberation of Thessaloniki in 1912.



- **PANAGIA CHALKEON**

The Church of Panagia Chalkeon is situated in the heart of downtown historic centre between Aristotelous Square and the Roman Forum.

Built in 1028 A.D. as mentioned to the founder's inscription over the west entrance, it has a typical "cross in square form" having four main columns and three domes, something common to several other religious buildings constructed during the "*Macedonian*" period of the byzantine architecture. The interior is full of beautiful



frescoes. Some of them are dated back to the 11th century A.D, while there are modern ones as well. During the Ottoman occupation period it was converted into a mosque.

- **THE AGIA SOFIA CHURCH**

The Agia Sofia in Thessaloniki, is one of the oldest churches in the city, still standing today. It is one of the several monuments in Thessaloniki, included as a world Heritage Site on the UNESCO list. The church is dedicated to Jesus Christ and it was built in the early 8<sup>th</sup> century in the location of the great Palaiochristian royal church of 5<sup>th</sup> century. It is a typical example of a traditional cruciform temple with a dome, as it is the icon of St Sophia of Constantinople. The mosaic decoration inside the temples three-stage work reveals the height of the spiritual and artistic level of the city at different times. The decoration of the sanctuary is one of the most important and precisely dated paintings of the iconoclastic period.



- **THE ARCH OF GALERIUS (KAMARA)**

It was built in 305 AD after the definitive victory of the emperor Galerius against the Persians during the Roman era. This triumphal arch was situated vertically in the ancient Egnatia road. The arch of Galerius is a part of the Galerian complex. The arch in its present form is fragmentary.

The art of the engraved segments of the Arch is narrative and decorative at the same time. The craftsmen of the engraved parts must have been Greeks. The center of the scenes depicted is the emperor and the imperial family. Emperor Galerius (Gaius Galerius Valerius Maximianus Augustus) is presented mounted while attacking, as an eagle bearing a victory wreath approaches him. The panel expresses the power of the Roman Caesar, a basic and crucial element of the Roman political theory. The Persian soldiers are depicted significantly smaller in size while they can be easily distinguished by their oriental dressing. The emperor's figure is dominant and the majority of the scenes is referred to the battles and triumphs of the campaign.



The first restoration works took place during the Turkish domination of Thessaloniki. The tram line of Egnatia street run, from the late 19<sup>th</sup> century until the end of its operation, under the Arch. The arch is the most common meeting place in the city.

- **ROTONDA**



The emblematic monument of Thessaloniki was constructed in the early 4th century AD, on the turning point between the pagan with the Christian world, probably as a temple for ancient cult worship or as a mausoleum for Constantine the Great (306-337). This circular, domed building measures 29,80 meters in height, 24,50 meters in diameter, its walls are 6,30 meters thick and can only be compared architecturally to the Pantheon in Rome. It was erected north of the Arch of Galerius, with which it was linked by a processional road. Not long after it was built and during the early years of the long-lived Byzantine Empire (330-1453), the Rotonda was turned into a Christian church with the addition of a sanctuary on its eastern side. The interior was decorated with Early Byzantine (4th- 6th c. AD) wall mosaics of unique artistry and beauty. According to Byzantine texts, the church was dedicated to the Archangels. It was Thessaloniki's cathedral church (metropolis) between 1524 and 1591, the year in which it was converted to a mosque by the ottoman conquerors. It remained in use as a mosque until the city's liberation in 1912. Its dedication since that time to Saint George (Agios Georgios) is owing to the small neighboring church of this name.

- **THE PALACE COMPLEX OF GALERIUS**

The Galerius Complex was located in the heart of the Roman Thessaloniki. It was built on a straight axis ranging from the North to the South including buildings like the Rotonda, the Triumphant Arch (Kamara), the Palace, the Octagon and the Hippodrome. Having risen in power



as one of the Tetrarchy rulers and after his successful campaign against the Persians in 299 AD, Galerius chose Thessaloniki as one of the capitals of the province and he was aiming at transforming Thessaloniki into a well-organized administrative center.

The main area was surrounded by buildings that were incorporating typical Roman architecture of religious or monumental character like the Basilica or the Nymphaeum that was serving religious needs. The Northern section of the complex was connected at the height of Kamara to Via Egnatia, one of the most important trade Routes of the wider Roman region. The Atrium was surrounded by a magnificent colonnade while the elaborately decorated mosaic floors, the statues and the connected arcades were giving an impression of power and prosperity. The Octagon located at the Southwest side next to the Basilica was perhaps the most luxurious building of all! It is possible that it was the throne room of the Tetrarch ruler while it was beautifully decorated and several meters higher when compared to the rest architectural elements of the complex.

As a hall, the Palace Complex of Galerius was spreading over an area of 150.000 m<sup>2</sup> that today includes Rotonda, Navarino Plaza, the parallel streets and the temple of Agia Sofia to the west! Along with the Roman Forum (Ancient Agora) they were the center of daily life in Roman Thessaloniki!

#### • ROMAN FORUM (ANCIENT AGORA)

Just a few blocks away from Aristotelous square lies the roman heart of the ancient city, the Roman Forum, also known as "Ancient Agora".

The Forum (Agora) was constructed by the Romans in the late 1st century A.D. Along with the Galerian Palace Complex it was the center of political and public life in Thessaloniki.

The Forum was beautifully decorated with arches, cloisters and fountains. Inside the agora you will be able to visit the restored ancient amphitheater (Odeion) with its stands and scene, elements and parts of the Corinthian columns that used to form the imposive two-storey porticoes, and well-crafted mosaic floors. Several shops were located along the ancient trade route that was stretching along the direction of Philip's St today. The entire complex was organised around a rectangular paved open area that was used as a meeting or gathering place.



- **ANO POLI - THE BALCONY OF THESSALONIKI!**

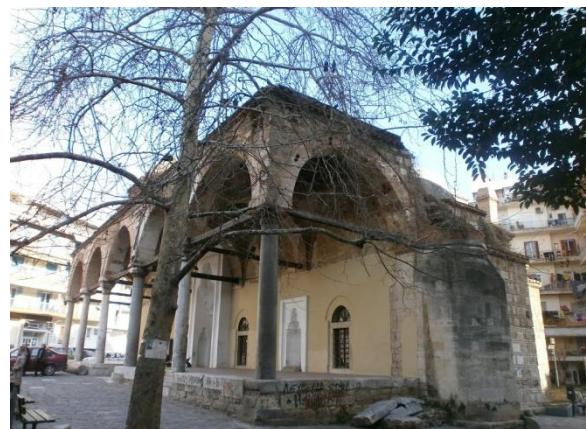
Walking up from the city's center, leaving behind the dense construction and apartment buildings a different Thessaloniki is discovered, a nostalgic city, something out of the past. On your walk you will pass by picturesque neighborhoods with small houses and beautiful mansions of Macedonian architecture, flower-filled gardens, narrow cobbled streets, winding alleys, squares with traditional cafes and taverns serving delicious local delicacies that will take you back in time and at the end of your path, you will face from above the amazing view of the sunset. Starting essentially from Agiou Dimitriou Str, you will pass by important monuments and churches, among them UNESCO World Heritage, such as the Vlatadon Monastery, The church of Agios Nikolaos Orfanos, Hosios David, the Alaca Imaret mosque, the mausoleum of Musa Baba.

In your route you will be accompanied by the walls of Thessaloniki, eternal defenders of security, the Eptapyrgio or Yedi Koule as was the Ottoman name, in the northeastern part of the Acropolis and the Trigoniou Tower (Triangle Tower), haughty and imposing while a panoramic image of the city hugging the sea will remain to you unforgettable

- **THE ALACA IMARET MOSQUE**

Alaca Imaret is a typical example of architectural heritage of Ottoman history. This is an excellent building of the 15th century and its name probably derived from the unique features colorful minaret that adorned the building (Alaca = Alatza = colored).

It was built by Ishak Pasha, the Grand Vizer and Governor of the city in 1484 aD. The dedicatory inscription can still be found at the entrance of the building offering detailed information to the visitors about the mosque and its creator. Throughout the centuries it was used as a mosque, a hieratical school (Medrese) and an imaret, a kind of public charity kitchen.



- **THE MAUSOLEUM OF MUSA BABA**

The mausoleum Musa Baba is an ottoman tomb (Tourbes in Turkish), which dates from the 16th



century. The Tourbes, situated in Terpsitheas square, has octagonal structure and Musa Baba, a Muslim saint member of the Bektashi Order, is buried there. Terpsitheas square used to be the courtyard of a tekke (monastery Bektashi) which was probably founded in 1527 during the time of Sultan Vajiazet II. In 2011 began restoration works of the monument, which is evolving today. The Christian refugees who settled in the area continued worship use of the monument. Like any monument of Thessaloniki, so the Tourbes has its own legend that follows it through the centuries. As they say, the dervish Mousa Baba was a servant of an Aga in the region. When the Aga decided to go on a journey to Mecca to pray, his wife made halva and told Musa that Dad would love to try. Then Musa told her to put a piece he would care to try. She did not believe him but nevertheless gave him the piece. When Aga returned home, the first thing he said to his wife was how much he liked the halvah, which he found in the backyard of Mecca.

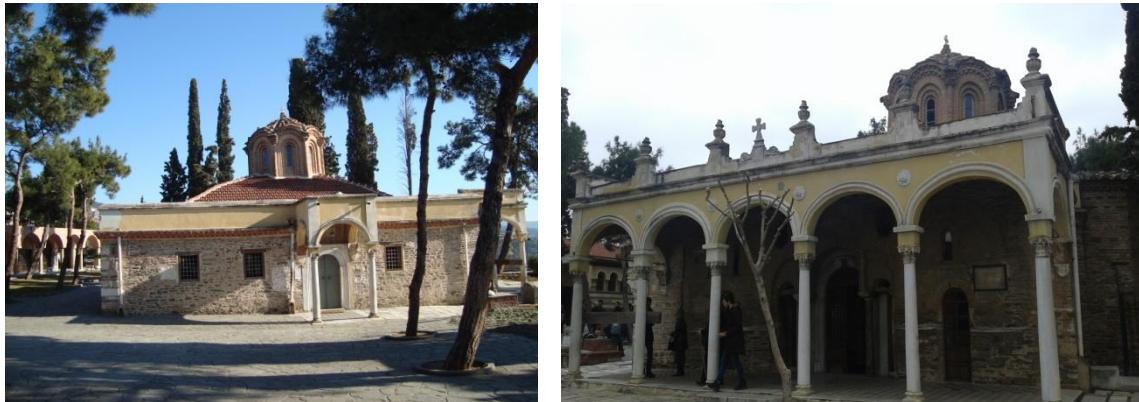
- **CHURCH OF HOSIOS DAVID**



Built in the 5th century as the "Katholikon" (main temple) of the Savior Christ Latomou Monastery, this sacred temple is located in the Upper Town of Thessaloniki, near to the Monastery Vlatadon. With the fall of Thessaloniki, in 1430, it was converted into a mosque and in the early 20th century, when it was returned to Christian worship, it was attributed the name Hosios David, to honor the important ascetic saint of Thessaloniki. The "Latomou" name is due to the quarries that existed in the region. According to the hagiographic testimony of the monk Ignatius in the 9th century, the monument was built by Theodora, the daughter of Emperor Maximian, persecutor of Christians. Theodora secretly embraced Christianity and asked her father to build a house with bath but instead of bath a temple was built. The apse of the church is decorated with the mosaic, which was covered with ox leather and plaster during the period of iconoclasm. The mosaic was discovered in an admirable way after the iconoclasm period, when during an earthquake the mortar and skin crashed. Originally the church was a square building with an apse on the east side,

divided into four apartments in a cross-in-square type. Today only the western part of the monument survives. The mosaic sanctuary belongs in the unique samples of early Christian art and depicts the prophet Ezekiel's vision of beardless Christ surrounded by celestial forces and prophets.

- **MONI VLATADON**



The Monastery of the Vlatades, also Moni Vlatadon, is a Holy Royal Patriarchal Monastery of the Church of Constantinople located in Thessalonica, Greece. At its founding in the fourteenth century the monastery was known as the Monastery of the Pantocrator. Tradition places the monastery at the site where Apostle Paul preached during his second missionary journey during the year 51. The monastery was founded as the Monastery of the Pantocrator by the brothers Dorotheus and Markus Vlatadon, who were students of Gregory Palamas, in the latter half of the fourteenth century. The brothers founded the Monastery of the Pantocrator of the Vlatadon in 1351. Among the benefactors of the monastery was empress Anna Palaiologos, the widowed wife of emperor Andronikos III, who had retired to Thessalonica in 1351 and gave the monastery its royal status. In 1387, Thessalonica and the monastery were occupied for the first time by the Ottoman Turks. While the monastic community held together, the monastery properties were sequestered as royal property and the main church was converted into a mosque and the frescoes of its interior were covered with plaster. In 1403, the Turks departed, to return for the second occupation in 1430. During this occupation the monastery was not molested and continued to function as the Turks honored its status. By the mid-twentieth century the monastery became a meeting place for scholars and academics of the city. In 1965, the Patriarchal Institute for Patristic Studies was established that has worked closely with the Aristotle University of Thessaloniki. In the recent years the Monastery of the Vlatades has been further renovated and expanded. It is also notable to say that today many foreign University students who are Christians (such as Romanians) are being accommodated in guestrooms of the monastery.

- **AGIOS NIKOLAOS ORFANOS**

In a quiet location in the North East side of Thessaloniki's walls is hidden one of the most exquisite temples of the city! Saint Nicholas the Orfanos is one of the tips of the old city. A small oasis that causes sensation to its visitors and manages magically to take the visitors back centuries ago. The temple was created in the early 14th century during the Paleologian Byzantine period from 1310 to 1320 AD. It is the "Katholikon" (main temple) of an older Byzantine monastery while it still remains a glebe of Vlatadon Monastery and belongs to the Ecumenical Patriarchate of Constantinople.



The initial form of the structure was a three aisled Basilica that hasn't been preserved. Today's building is a single aisled Basilica that features a wooden roof and an ambulatory that leads to two small chapels to the East side of the building. The interior is filled with beautiful Theodosian capitals along with a marble "templon" that is dated back to the construction date of the temple!

The walls are filled with wonderful 14th century wall paintings of unique style and quality! The colors are considered outstanding for the Byzantine standards and techniques while the featured themes are impressive! It is a remarkable set of frescoes that could be considered a masterpiece in terms of religious art.

- **THE WALLS OF THESSALONIKI**

The city was initially fortified right after its foundation in the late 4th century BC but the present walls are dated back to the early Byzantine period around 390 AD during the reign of emperor Theodosius, while they still incorporate some parts of the earlier constructions.



Their defensive characteristics are extremely impressive! They exceed the total length of 7 km, the height is reaching at several points up to 10m and the thickness is of 5m. They were decorated with various symbols like suns, crosses or carved marble inscriptions near the gates. A number of fortresses and defensive towers were added during different periods of history like the Seven Towers Fortress (Eptapyrgio) and the Tower of Trigoniou located

near the Acropolis. Several square, circle or polygon shaped towers were also built along the entire perimeter.

The Walls were still surrounding the city until the late 19th century when large parts including the entire seaward section were demolished as the Ottoman authorities were trying to change some of the city's urban features.

- **EPTAPYRGIO**

Built by the Byzantines during Paleologian imperial period (14th century AD) located on ancient building, probably of the 9th century AD. It was used guarding the safe refuge of the population in cases of assault and raids. Having purely defensive character, the main building oversees the



Acropolis of Thessaloniki, which were protected by strong walls and towers at various points. According to sources the name "Eptapyrgio" (Yedi Koule in Turkish) came from the seven towers that stood on the north side of the castle of Acropolis (disregarding the Mesopyrgos). Large Gate (Portares), that still exists today, led inside the Acropolis while the Triangle Tower is one of the strongest and most prominent points of the walls. The location was just where it met the Acropolis walls, which they continued to the sea. Along with the fortress of Vardar to the west, the top Hane and the White Tower, Eptapyrgio was one of the most important fortresses that were responsible for the defense of the city. The location was ideal for such a fortress due to the altitude, the view and the slope.

- **TRIGONIOU TOWER (TOWER CHAIN)**

Trigoniou (Triangle) Tower is perhaps the highlight of the walls and one of the busiest and most popular places throughout Thessaloniki. Trigoniou Tower on the eastern wall offers spectacular views and is a favorite destination for photographers and tourists.

Having probably been built in the 15<sup>th</sup> century, it was used as arsenal and artillery tower on one of the sites considered critical for addressing acts of war. The continuous fortification of the site indicates the importance given to this point as it



bordered the Acropolis which was the safest refuge for the population during the invasions. There are studies and approaches that support that the name "Trigoniou" is referring to another similar building with a triangular floor plan. In Ottoman times it was also known as the Tower Chain (Zincirli Kule) and belted Tower (Kusakli Kule), probably because of the decorative film bearing on its periphery.

- **WHITE TOWER**

The **White Tower** is the most commonly known monument of Thessaloniki and the symbol of the city because of its prominent position, long history and impressive architecture.

The tower was built in 15th century in order to replace an older 12th century Byzantine fortification while it was later reconstructed by the Ottomans. It was used as a fort enhancing the harbors defenses, as a garrison and a prison. Because of its fame as a notorious prison it was also known as "Tower of Blood" (Kanli Kule) or "Red Tower". It was renamed to White tower (Torre Blanca) after it was whitewashed possibly in 1891. It was surrounded by long defensive walls that were enclosing the area and were capable of supporting heavy guns. These walls were demolished at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, while it is unclear whether they were part of the original construction or a later addition destined to further enhance its defensive features.

Today the Tower is open to the public as a museum while the visitors will have a chance to enjoy a wonderful panoramic view from its highest level.



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