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GIAMPIERO BRUNELLI



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Vienna, Monumento equestre al Principe Eugenio di Savoia, particolare.
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On the dating of the Trigonion Tower, Thessaloniki

by DIONYSIOS HATZOPOULOS & STATHIS BIRTACHAS

ABSTRACT: The question posed by the authors of this brief article is whether an iconic defensive structure of the city of Thessaloniki, which stands to this day and forms one of its most popular attractions, had already been erected during the final Siege of Thessaloniki by the Ottomans (1422–1430). In this context, the authors challenge popular notions and the prevailing view among scholars of both architecture and archaeology, that the cylindrical Trigonion Tower (known in Ottoman times as Zincirli Kule [Chain Tower] or Kuşaklı Kule [Belted Tower]), occupying the north-eastern corner of the fortification enclosure of Thessaloniki, dates broadly to the Ottoman times or more specifically either from the first years of Ottoman rule (1430s onwards) or from the second half of the fifteenth up until the end of the sixteenth centuries. Contrary to those estimates, the authors present evidence that this cylindrical defensive tower was erected in pre-Ottoman times, thus lending credence to an earlier view expressed by the historian Apostolos Vacalopoulos.

KEYWORDS: Thessaloniki; dating of the Trigonion Tower; late fourteenth – late sixteenth centuries (?); Byzantine rule; Venetian rule; Ottoman rule; Ottoman Sieges of Thessaloniki.

According to an Ottoman legend engraved on a marble slab above the Letaean Gate (Yeni Kapu), which up until 1874 was the main entrance to the walled city of Thessaloniki from the west, God appeared to the young Ottoman Sultan Murad II, in a dream. Early in his reign, Murad II was determined to restore the Empire following its crushing defeat in 1402 by the Mongol Khan Timur (Tamerlane) and the ensuing civil war that had rocked its foundation for almost twenty years. In the dream, God offered a beautiful fragrant rose for Murad II to smell. The young sultan asked if he could keep it, to which God revealed that the rose was Thessaloniki and that the city's destiny was al-

ready determined: it was to be his. All he had to do was conquer it.¹ Irrespective of lore, Murad II's design was clearly defined from the outset: wishing to consolidate his power in the Balkan peninsula, a year on from his ascent to the Ottoman throne (1422), Ottoman military forces were permanently stationed outside the walls of Thessaloniki. Thus began the protracted blockade and siege of the city, which would last until 1430. The question posed by the authors of this brief article is whether an iconic defensive structure that still stands to this day and forms one of Thessaloniki's most popular attractions, was built either during this aggressive Ottoman initiative against the Byzantines to begin with and then the Venetian overlords of Thessaloniki (since 1423), or in any case up until the final assault of Murad II's army (26–29 March 1430),² or whether it pre-existed. In

- 1 Apostolos E. VACALOPOULOS, *History of Macedonia, 1354–1833*, trans. Peter Megann, Thessaloniki, Institute for Balkan Studies, 1973, p. 97.
- 2 For a concise overview of the blockade and Siege of Thessaloniki, the Venetian policy of resistance against the Ottoman aggressors, who had already secured control of the hinterland and had surrounded the city by land, the disastrous ramifications of said policy of resistance for the local population, the repression of those among the Venetian subjects who disagreed with this policy and supported political change, as well as the overall political, economic, social and religious ambience since the earliest appearance of the Ottomans in the region, see for example the rich and comprehensive analysis of Mark MAZOWER, *Salonica, City of Ghosts: Christians, Muslims and Jews, 1430–1950*, New York, Alfred A. Knopf, 2005, pp. 24–31. Cf. the following select bibliography, as well as certain editions of Byzantine and Venetian sources (the rest are mentioned below): Konstantinos D. MERTZIOS, *Μνημεία Μακεδονικής Ιστορίας*, Thessaloniki, Society for Macedonian Studies, 2007 [1st ed.: 1947]; Giannis TSARAS, «Η Θεσσαλονίκη από τους Βυζαντινούς στους Βενετσιάνους (1423–1430)», *Makedonika*, 17, 1 (1977), pp. 85–123 (this article is largely a counter-argument to the study by Mertzios in regards to the manner and conditions of Thessaloniki's transition from Byzantine to Venetian rule); Apostolos E. VACALOPOULOS, «Συμβολή στην ιστορία της Θεσσαλονίκης επί βενετοκρατίας 1423–1430», in *Παγκαρπία Μακεδονικής γης. Μελέτες Α. Βακαλόπουλου*, Thessaloniki, Society for Macedonian Studies, 1980, pp. 31–52; Giannis TSARAS, *Η τελευταία άλωση της Θεσσαλονίκης (1430). Τα κείμενα μεταφρασμένα με εισαγωγικό σημείωμα και σχόλια*, Thessaloniki, Kyriakidi Bros Editions, 1985; Speros VRYONIS, «The Ottoman Conquest of Thessaloniki in 1430», in Anthony Bryer & Heath W. Lowry (eds.), *Continuity and Change in Late Byzantine and Early Ottoman Society*, Birmingham/Washington, DC, The University of Birmingham Centre for Byzantine Studies – Dumbarton Oaks Research Library and Collection, 1986, pp. 281–321; Apostolos E. VACALOPOULOS, *Ιστορία της Θεσσαλονίκης, 316 π.Χ. – 1983*, Thessaloniki: Kyriakidi Bros Editions, 1997, chs. 8 and 9; John R. MELVILLE-JONES, *Venice and Thessalonica 1423–1430: The Venetian Documents* [Archivio del Litorale Adriatico, VII], Padova, Unipress Padova, 2002; John R. MELVILLE-JONES, *Venice and Thessalonica 1423–1430: The Greek Accounts* [Archivio del Litorale Adriatico, VIII], Padova, Unipress Padova, 2006; Nevra NECİPOĞLU, *Byzantium between the Ottomans and the Latins: Politics and*

this context, the authors present evidence that challenges the prevailing view that the cylindrical Trigonion Tower (known during Ottoman times as Zincirli Kule [Chain Tower] or Kuşaklı Kule [Belted Tower]), occupying the north-eastern corner of the fortification enclosure of Thessaloniki (Figs 1–3), is to be dated broadly to the Ottoman period, either from the first years of Ottoman rule (1430s onwards) or from the second half of the fifteenth century onwards. Such a time span coincides roughly with the erection of the other cylindrical tower in Thessaloniki's fortifications, widely known today as the White Tower, and the hallmark of the city of Thessaloniki.³ This dating is shared by the overwhelming majority of architects and archaeologists who have studied the Trigonion Tower but is also very popular among a wider audience interested in architecture, archaeology and history since the early modern period and continuing strong well into the Information Age.

The specialised and well-documented study of this defensive structure by the architectural engineer and restoration specialist Stergios Stefanou stands out among all relevant literature, acting as reference to all subsequent work on the Tower.⁴ In his study, Stefanou presents an exhaustive description of the monument and firmly places it within its architectural, military and historical context. He draws his conclusions having examined in depth all available primary (travel writings, engravings, historiographical works) and secondary sources, as well

Society in the Late Empire, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2009, pp. 39–115 (part II: 'Thessalonike'); Stavroula SOLOMOU, *Ο πολιτικός ρόλος των μεγάλων οικογενειών κατά την παλαιολόγεια περίοδο. Τα πρόσωπα και τα κείμενα (1258–1453)*, Ph.D. thesis, National and Kapodistrian University of Athens, 2016, pp. 537–586, <https://www.didaktorika.gr/eadd/handle/10442/39415> (accessed 15 March 2026).

3 See, e.g. Stavroula TZEVENI, «The walls of Thessaloniki», in *From Macedonian to Thessalian Temp. From Rentina to Velika*, Thessaloniki, Museum of Byzantine Culture, 2019, pp. 49–61: 56–57, 61 nn. 75–78, with bibliography. Cf. Aikaterini KOUSSOULA, «The Trigonion Tower in Thessaloniki», in Paschalis ANDROUDIS, Aikaterini MARKOU, Dimitris LOUPIS (eds.), *The Ottoman Monuments in Greece Revisited: A Tribute in the Memory of Machiel Kiel*, Athens, Hellenic Ministry of Culture / Hellenic Organization of Cultural Resources Development, 2025, pp. 339–352: 339 and n. 3.

4 Stergios N. STEFANOY, «Ο Πύργος του Τριγωνίου. Συμβολή στη μελέτη των τουρκικών οχυρώσεων της Θεσσαλονίκης», *Byzantiaka*, 14 (1988), pp. 413–455. See also the subsequent study by the same author, «Ο Πύργος του Τριγωνίου και τα ανατολικά τείχη της Θεσσαλονίκης», in «Εκτός των τειχών». Πρακτικά επιστημονικής διημερίδας για την ιστορία του Δήμου Αγίου Παύλου, 26–29 Μαΐου 1994, Thessaloniki, Municipality of Agios Pavlos, 1995, pp. 19–34.

as through personal in-situ investigations and comparative analyses with other buildings of the period put to similar use. He lists all competing theories on the dating of the Trigonion Tower that had been put forward (from the late fourteenth century up until the last quarter of the sixteenth century)⁵ at the time of writing, and argues against them (pp. 441–452). Among those is the theory contending that the Tower was constructed either by Venetian craftsmen, or during the Venetian rule of Thessaloniki (1423–1430), particularly towards its end. This is based on the observations made by the Romanian historian Oreste Tafrali at the beginning of the twentieth century (p. 442 and nn. 74–75, 77)⁶ and has been reiterated by others, for example the German architect and urban planner Hans Högg in the 1930s, the archaeologist Lila Aspioti-Magra in the 1980s, and others (we will also be referring to the Venetian craftsmen theory later on).⁷

Stefanou embarks on his investigation noting that ‘the Tower is not dated by an inscription or any other element either written on or affixed to it’. He remains hopeful that future conservation works will shed light on the matter (p. 441). Then, by cross-referencing the sources, he concludes that ‘this structure is obviously inspired by and executed in the Turkish tradition’ (p. 444). Later on, he argues that ‘the examination of its exterior morphological elements [...] places the Trigonion Tower in the category of “transitional” fortification structures [meaning the transition from warfare through mechanical means to warfare using gunpowder and artillery] of the second half of the fifteenth century’. He draws the same conclusions for the White Tower (pp. 448–449; cf. p. 431). Summarising the main points of his argumentation, he notes the following: ‘The cylindrical Trigonion Tower, in its original form, was constructed in the second half of the fifteenth century, as a replacement of an earlier quadrangular tower standing in the same corner of the Byzantine fortification enclosure. This was incorporated

5 Cf. Jean-Pierre BRAUN, Nicolas FAUCHERRET, Jean-Michel SPIESER, «Deux tours turques de Thessalonique», *Makedonika*, 23 (1983), pp. 1–24, esp. pp. 15ff.

6 O. TAFRALI, *Topographie de Thessalonique*, preface Ch. Diehl, Paris, Librairie Paul Geuthner, 1913, pp. 50–51, 80–81.

7 HANS HÖGG, *Türkenburgen an Bosporus und Hellespond, ein Bild frühromanischen Wehrbaus bis zum Ausgang des 15. Jahrhunderts*, Dresden, Akademische Buchhandlung Focke & Oltmanns, 1932, p. 42; LILA ASPIOTI, *Ta káστρα της Θεσσαλονίκης*, Thessaloniki, self-published, 1985 [2nd ed.: Thessaloniki, Kyriakidi Bros Editions, 2003], pp. 27, 38. Cf. Charalambos BAKIRTZIS, «Η θαλάσσια οχύρωση της Θεσσαλονίκης», *Byzantiaka* 7 (1975), pp. 291–341: p. 311 and n. 99.

within [*sic*] the cylindrical tower, resulting in awkward adjustments in its interior in order to regulate flow. The original form of the cylindrical tower was modified into what we see today, probably around the middle of the sixteenth century (perhaps in 1546, during the reign of Suleiman the Magnificent)'. Finally, he underscores the fusion of Ottoman functional elements in terms of defensive design with external morphological features of Western (Italian) origin in both the Trigonion and the White Towers, which he explains as a by-product of Venetian–Ottoman competition in the region (pp. 451–452).

Stefanou's analysis further contributed to the dissemination and consolidation of the dating of the original construction of the cylindrical Trigonion Tower to the second half of the fifteenth century by the new Ottoman rulers of Thessaloniki. A plethora of scholarly works and websites reiterates this view. Suffices to mention three characteristic examples: a) a study by the professor of Byzantine archaeology Charalambos Bakirtzis on the urban continuity and size of Late Byzantine Thessaloniki, published on *Dumbarton Oaks Papers*, one of the most prestigious international academic journals in the field of Byzantine studies;⁸ b) the dating offered by the archaeologist Aikaterini Koussoula on the monument's webpage on *Odysseus*, the official portal of Monuments and Museums of Greece maintained by the Ministry of Culture;⁹ and c) a mention on the website *Kastrologos – Castles of Greece*.¹⁰ Beyond those, it is worth quoting the following extended

8 Charalambos BAKIRTZIS, «The Urban Continuity and Size of Late Byzantine Thessalonike», *Dumbarton Oaks Papers*, 57 (2003), pp. 35–64: 47 ('[...] the northeast round tower dated to the second half of the fifteenth century [...]') and nn. 94–95.

9 Aikaterini Koussoula, «Πύργος του Τριγωνίου. Περιγραφή [Trigonion Tower. Description]», http://odysseus.culture.gr/h/2/gh251.jsp?obj_id=28404 (accessed 15 March 2026): 'The construction of the cylindrical tower dates to the second half of the fifteenth century and was commissioned by the new Ottoman administration of Thessaloniki with the aim of strengthening the defence of a famously vulnerable spot in the fortifications. It is most probably the work of Venetian craftsmen.'

10 Manolis PAPATHANASSIOU, «Κάστρα Θεσσαλονίκης» / «Castles of Thessaloniki», on the website *Καστρολόγος – Κάστρα της Ελλάδας* / *Kastrologos – Castles of Greece*, <https://www.kastra.eu/castlegr.php?kastro=thesniki> (accessed 19 April 2026): 'Under Venetian rule (1423–1430), none of the necessary repairs to the fortifications of Thessaloniki were made, as evidenced by citizen letters of complaint to Venice. The indifference displayed by the Venetians can hardly be explained, given that Murad II and his vast army were permanently camped outside the city walls. The Turks stormed the city in 1430 and remained there for almost five centuries. Their own additions to the city's walls were the White Tower, the Trigonion Tower on the north-eastern corner and the central tower in Heptapyrgion [Yedi Kule]. All three were built in the fifteenth century, after 1430 [...].'

excerpt from a recent study by the archaeologist Aikaterini Koussoula, mentioned previously, first in regard to the dating of the original cylindrical defensive tower in question, based on morphological and archaeological finds that came to light during excavations and restoration works on the site, and second in regard to the identity of the craftspeople who completed the work:

The early dating of the construction of the tower in the transitional period of the mid-15th to the beginning of the 16th century, agrees with the morphological element of the coexistence of two types of arches on the western face of the entrance, i.e. semi-circular arches with an arch with a pointed arrangement of the covering stones, a choice that is not considered accidental, but deliberate, during the transitional period of the Early Ottoman rule, observed after 1431, in an attempt to coexist the old Byzantine building methods and the Ottoman interventions.

Furthermore, Trigonion Tower shows similarities with the semi-circular tower in the northeast corner of the Bembo bastion in the castle of Methoni, a work of the second half of the 15th century, which was named after the then Venetian governor of Methoni Giovanni Bembo, with the two-storied tower in the southwest corner of the Vivari fortress in Buthroto, Albania, a typical late 15th or early 16th-century Venetian military architecture, with the Rumeli Hisarı, a building of the Ottoman Sultan Mehmed II, in 1452, whose two circular strong towers of Saruca Pasa and Zaganos Pasa are “firengi”, that is, they do not belong to the Ottoman tradition, and with the two circular bastions of Yedikule, also the work of Mehmed II in 1457-1458 which was built at the citadel of Constantinople, to guard the state treasury.

Due to the absence of textual evidence concerning the building of the Trigonion Tower or other epigraphic testimony, deriving from the study of the morphological and archaeological evidence by the excavation and the restoration works, the typology and special features of the building comparing relevant structures, we suggest the date of the first construction of the round Trigonion Tower to the second half of 15th century, ordered by the new Ottoman rule of the city, and probably performed by Venetian craftsmen.¹¹

Against this background, the view of the historian and professor Apostolos Vacalopoulos is interesting in that it veers away from the *communis opinio*. In his work on the history of Thessaloniki, he argues that the Tower ‘is the product of the final years of Byzantium, perhaps of Manuel II [Palaeologus], falling within

11 KOUSSOULA, «The Trigonion Tower in Thessaloniki», op. cit., pp. 339-352 (with comprehensive bibliography on the Trigonion Tower): 350–351.

the wider plan for the defence of Macedonian lands'. According to him, the Tower was probably looked after and repaired by the Venetians, compelled by their urgent need to repel the Ottomans. It survived the Siege of Thessaloniki by the armies of Murad II intact.¹²

The authors of this brief article focus their attention on the presence of a particular element affixed on the monument, which favours – as also asserted by Vacalopoulos – a date of construction earlier than the second half of the fifteenth century (that is, during pre-Ottoman times). The object in question has been located by Stefanou during his investigations: '[...] slightly to the south of the external opening of area IV, roughly at the level of the sill, a stone sphere (Figs 6, 9) projects from the cylindrical surface of the tower, which along with the corresponding diameter of the tower is of a south-eastern orientation (possibly in the direction of Mecca)' (p. 421). While Stefanou located and recorded this stone sphere, he did not proceed to explain its presence on the structure.

According to the authors of the present paper, the stone sphere lodged in the fortification wall (see Figs 4a, 4b, 4c) frames the chronological period of construction of the Trigonion Tower. A pertinent reference exists in the chronicle of John Anagnostes (*Διήγησις περὶ τῆς τελευταίας ἀλώσεως τῆς Θεσσαλονίκης* [Account of the Last Capture of Thessaloniki]), who was an eyewitness of the Siege of 1430. Even though his account does not refer directly to events that took place at a particular time, it safely alludes to military practices that are relevant in this case, such as the use of stone-throwing machines or lithoboloi, still popular during that time in Thessaloniki and which were adopted by the Ottomans later on during the Siege (on this, see Ch. 12 of the chronicle of Anagnostes):

‘[...] πάντες γὰρ ἡμεῖς ὑπενοοῦμεν, τοσοῦτον στρατὸν βαρὺν θεασάμενοι καὶ τοσαύτας τὰς ἐλεπόλεις, [...] ὥς οὐκ ἂν φθάσειε καὶ μανικῶς αὐτίκα κατὰ τοῦ τείχους ὀρμήσει, παίειν μὲν αὐτὸ προστάζας [Sultan Murad II] τῇ χειροποιεῖτῳ τοῦ λίθου βροντῇ, τοὺς δ’ ἄνωθεν κωλύειν τῆς ἐπὶ τῶν τειχῶν στάσεως διὰ τῶν ἀφιεμένων βελῶν, καὶ παντὶ μηχανήματι πρὸς τὸ κρατῆσαι κεχρηῆσθαι τῆς πόλεως’ / ‘[...] nos enim omnes suspicabamur, tantam copiarum molem et machinarum, [...] conspicati, primo sui appulsu furenter iratum muros appetiturum, eosque lapidum manufacto tonitru diverberaturum, nec non et supra muros stantes sagitiis impulsis dimoturum, machinasque omnes ad urbem excidendam usurpaturum’.¹³

12 VACALOPOULOS, *Ιστορία της Θεσσαλονίκης*, 316 π.Χ. – 1983, op. cit., p. 189.

13 Ἰωάννου Ἀναγνώστου, *Διήγησις περὶ τῆς τελευταίας ἀλώσεως τῆς Θεσσαλονίκης συντεθεῖσα*

Given the absence of military encounters of the scale of the Siege of 1430 during the period of Ottoman rule that followed, the increasing use of artillery during siege warfare, as well as the fact that although artillery was already present in Anagnostes' description of the Siege, it was of markedly low effectiveness,¹⁴ it can be argued that the use of round-stone throwing machines during the Ottoman incursion of 1430 was evidently the last time that Thessaloniki had to suffer 'the man-made thunder of stone'. Prior to 1430, the city had repeatedly endured Ottoman pressure and presumably been exposed to attacks by Ottoman lithoboloi. Cases in point are the sieges of Musa Çelebi in 1411/12 and Mehmed I in 1416, as well as the culmination of Ottoman military operations in 1426 ('30,000 Turks encircle and besiege the city'), resulting from the deterioration of the city's food reserves and defence capabilities, and the attendant fragmentation of the domestic front.¹⁵ Finally, it must be noted that Thessaloniki had already

πρὸς τινὰ τῶν ἀξιολόγων, πολλάκις αἰτήσαντα περὶ ταύτης, ἐν ἐπιτόμῳ / Ioannis Anagnostae, *De extremo Thessalonicensi excidio narratio, in gratiam cuiusdam laudabilis viri, qui saepius eam efflagitavit, compendio concinnata*. Leone Allatio interprete, ed. Immanuel BEKKER, in *Corpus Scriptorum Historiae Byzantinae: Georgius Phrantzes. Ioannes Cananus. Ioannes Anagnostes*, Bonnae, Impensis Ed. Weberi, M.D.CCCXXXVIII. [= 1838], pp. 483–528: ch. 8, pp. 495 (lines 21–24) – 496 (lines 1–5) (on ch. 12, see pp. 503–506). Cf. TSARAS, *Η τελευταία άλωση της Θεσσαλονίκης (1430)*, op. cit., p. 47 (on ch. 12, see pp. 52–54); *Ιωάννης Καμινιάτης, Ευστάθιος Θεσσαλονίκης, Ιωάννης Αναγνώστης. Χρονικά των αλώσεων της Θεσσαλονίκης*, trans. Charis Messis, introd. and comm. Paolo Odorico, Athens, Agra Publications, 2009, p. 323 (on ch. 12, see pp. 330–332). For an English translation of the text see, MELVILLE-JONES, *Venice and Thessalonica 1423–1430: The Greek Accounts*, op. cit., pp. 143–179 ('The *Diegesis* of John Anagnostes'): p. 157 (ch. 8, lines 3–10): '[...] After we had seen an army of such size and impressiveness, and so many siege engines, [...] we all expected that he [Sultan Murad II] would not hesitate to make a frenzied assault upon the ramparts at once, ordering them to be smitten by the man-made thunder of stone to keep those above from standing on the ramparts because of the flying missiles, and that he would use every means to make himself master of the city'. For a translation of ch. 12 see, *ibid.*, pp. 163–165.

14 STEFANOY, «Ο Πύργος του Τριγωνίου. Συμβολή στη μελέτη των τουρκικών οχυρώσεων της Θεσσαλονίκης», op. cit., p. 437 and nn. 55–56: 'Amid this whole deadly mêlée, artillery was used by the Turks, but it could not even penetrate the wooden covers shielding the crenels. Those besieged also used firearms without, however, any greater success'. Cf. *Ιωάννου Αναγνώστου, Διήγησις περὶ τῆς τελευταίας αλώσεως τῆς Θεσσαλονίκης*, op. cit., ch. 9, p. 499 (lines 13–15); MELVILLE-JONES, *Venice and Thessalonica 1423–1430: The Greek Accounts*, op. cit., p. 160 (lines 3–5).

15 On the military events in question, see VACALOPOULOS, *Ιστορία της Θεσσαλονίκης*, 316 π.Χ. – 1983, op. cit., pp. 172 (for the source stating that, in 1417, the city was surrounded by 'barbaric hordes'), 180–181. More specifically, on the Sieges of 1411/12 and 1416, see re-

found itself under Ottoman control at the end of the previous century (from 1387 to 1403, with some tensions arising between the years 1389 and 1391), following a siege and the peaceful surrender of the population. In earlier periods (1369–1373, 1382–1387), the future emperor, Manuel II Palaeologus, mentioned above, served as commander of the city and the wider region.¹⁶

Given all of the above, it is the opinion of the authors that the stone sphere lodged in the façade of the Trigonion Tower originates, without a doubt, in one or other of the military confrontations that took place prior to 1430. In all eventualities, the cylindrical tower predates the Ottoman offensive of 1430. The exact date of construction and any possible repairs and reinforcements of the Tower, which replaced an earlier bastion, remain unknown. The suggestion by Vacalopoulos that its construction might have begun when Manuel II was in command of the city cannot be ruled out, with later work extending, possibly, to the eve of 1430 – including the period of the first Ottoman rule (1387–1403). Following the Ottoman occupation of the city, maintenance works on the fortification tower were ongoing, as is the case with all structures, military or otherwise. The spherical stone projectile, however, including its surrounding masonry, was left undisturbed, remaining fixed in place to this day.

spectively: Dimitris J. KASTRITSIS, *The Sons of Bayezid: Empire Building and Representation in the Ottoman Civil War of 1402–1413*, Leiden/Boston, Brill, 2007, pp. 169–170, 186–187; John W. BARKER, *Manuel II Palaeologus (1391–1425): A Study in Late Byzantine Statesmanship*, New Brunswick, NJ, Rutgers University Press, 1969, pp. 340–344. On the ultimately unsuccessful Ottoman offensive of 1426 and the concurrent domestic crisis, see Jonathan HARRIS, *The End of Byzantium*, New Haven/London, Yale University Press, 2010, pp. 122–123. Cf. Kenneth M. SETTON, *The Papacy and the Levant (1204–1571)*, vol. II: *The Fifteenth Century*, Philadelphia, American Philosophical Society, 1978, pp. 26–27; Athanasia STAVROU, *Socio-economic conditions in 14th and 15th century Thessalonike: a new approach*, Ph.D. thesis, University of Birmingham, 2011, p. 73, <https://etheses.bham.ac.uk/id/eprint/1630/> (accessed 15 March 2026).

16 On these events, see VACALOPOULOS, *Ιστορία της Θεσσαλονίκης*, 316 π.Χ. – 1983, op. cit., ch. 8; TSARAS, *Η τελευταία άλωση της Θεσσαλονίκης (1430)*, op. cit., pp. 13–25; MAZOWER, *Salonica, City of Ghosts*, op. cit., pp. 27–28; SOLOMOU, *Ο πολιτικός ρόλος των μεγάλων οικογενειών κατά την παλαιολόγεια περίοδο*, op. cit., pp. 547–548. Cf. NECİPOĞLU, *Byzantium between the Ottomans and the Latins*, op. cit., part II, for an overview of the political, social and military developments of the period in Thessaloniki.

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FIGURES



1 Thessaloniki, the Trigonion Tower. Photo by the authors.



2 Thessaloniki, Part of the Eastern Walls and the Trigonion Tower.
Source: Wikimedia Commons.



3 Thessaloniki, Part of the Eastern Walls. View from the Trigonion Tower.
Source: Wikimedia Commons.



4a South-eastern section of the Trigonion Tower, with embedded stone sphere.
View from the left. Photo and photo detail by the authors.



4b South-eastern section of the Trigonion Tower, with embedded stone sphere.
View from below. Photo and photo detail by the authors.



4c South-eastern section of the Trigonion Tower, with embedded stone sphere.
View from the right. Photo and photo detail by the authors.



Foundation inscription of the Heptapyrgion fortress, an Ottoman reconstruction of a Byzantine fort on the Thessaloniki acropolis (1431).

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Johann Georg Ziesenis (1716-1776). Portrait of Friedrich the Great (1763).
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