

# The Pilgrimage near and within the Valley of Tempi in Thessaly during the Middle-Byzantine Period: Historical and Archaeological Data\*

Our paper deals with the presentation of new historical and archaeological data concerning the pilgrimage in the valley of Tempi in Thessaly during the middle-byzantine period (fig. 1).

Recent archaeological research was carried out in the site »Kokkonas hani« (not far from the modern pilgrimage center of Hagia Paraskevi)<sup>1</sup>. In 2008 and 2009, there were unearthed, near the ruins of an early Christian settlement and cemetery<sup>2</sup> and to the west, the remains of an important middle-byzantine complex of a byzantine church with graves (fig. 4, 5) and a monumental »inn«<sup>3</sup> (fig. 2, 3). The latter is a longitudinal (27 m × 6,70 m) building, of tripartite space organization (the central room is 14 m long), once adjoining other secondary and smaller structures. In a distance of 2,20 m from the northern wall were discovered the poor remains of six rectangular piers. These piers once incorporated in their upper parts the pair of beams which supported the wooden balcony of the second floor of the building. The balcony and the roof, should have been almost identical to analogue wooden structures of the traditional architecture of Northern Greece. Access to the upper floor was gained through wooden stairs under the floor of the balcony or adjacent to the northern wall of the building.

In the last building phase when the front piers and balcony were destroyed, access to the upper floor was possible via two stairs which were built over the rectangular structures adjoining the northern wall.

The absence of archaeological finds makes it difficult to date the building. Based on two coins of the Byzantine Emperor Basil I the Macedonian (867-886) found under the pavement of the first and main phase of the building and

could be considered as a *terminus post quem* for its construction, a dating to the 10<sup>th</sup> century is quite possible.

The longitudinal plan of this structure (fig. 3), as well its position in the western entrance of the valley of Tempi, in a distance of 10 m from the road which was the principal artery of mainland Greece, supports the hypothesis of its identification with an inn of the byzantine period, possibly built on the site of an older Roman station. Almost identical is the plan of the first phase of the byzantine inn of Pydna in the nearby Prefecture of Pieria<sup>4</sup> and other buildings of the same use<sup>5</sup>. Until now there are many hypotheses on the sites of the stations across the main road of the valley of Tempi, according to the *Tabula Peutingeriana*<sup>6</sup> and other roman itineraries<sup>7</sup>. The station *Stenon* or *Stenai* (*mansio Stenas*) is generally located to the eastern entrance of the Tempi, near the site »Palio-kklisi«, on the basis of the discovered *miliaria*<sup>8</sup>, while the station *Olympou* (*mansio Olympou*) to the western entrance, near *Evangelismos*<sup>9</sup>. In the above-mentioned itineraries are also mentioned smaller stations which were not identified. One of them, the *mutatio Thuris* could be probably identified to our building. It is important that it is located in the middle of the distance before the two first stations (which is 12 km) and directly just after the exit of the narrow part of the valley, where there was needed an urgent pause for rest, as it was described by travelers of the Ottoman period who stopped in the nearby Hani of Kokkona<sup>10</sup>.

This building was certainly an inn for pilgrims and other travelers on their way to central and southern Greece.

To the east of the inn the remains of a church with graves were excavated. The poor findings of the graves are dated to the 11<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup> century<sup>11</sup>, while the church could be attributed

\* I am deeply indebted to Mrs Stavroula Sdrolia, Director of the Ephorate for Antiquities of Larisa for giving me the permission to visit and study excavation sites in the valley of Tempi and for her kindness to provide me photographic material and plans from her excavations in the site »Kokkonas hani«.

1 See Rouskas/Stefanidou, *Periēgētika keimena* 1 and 2.

2 Sdrolia, *Palaiochristianika eurēmata* 591 fig. 1-7.

3 Sdrolia, *Anaskaphe byzantinou naou* 419-424.

4 See Marki, *Anaskaphē* 181.

5 Bakirtzis, *To Ergo* 428 (inn for the pilgrims of the basilica of Hagios Dimitrios in Thessaloniki, dating from the early Christian period). Related buildings from the early Christian period are constructed with a plan of shape Π. See Adam-Veleni, *Asprobalta* 109-114.

6 Miller, *Itineraria Romana* 575-576, map no 184. See also Drakoulis, *Peripheiakē organōsē* 381. 384.

7 *Itineraria Romana* 2. 4. 9. 12. 51. 109. 136.

8 Mottas/Decourt, *Dromoi kai rōmaikoi ododeiktēs* 82-83.

9 Kougoumztoglou, *Apokalypsē agroikias* 64.

10 Pikoulas, *Amaxelato* 143-146. See also Grigoriou, *Apo tē Larisa sto Papapouli* 113-116.

11 Sdrolia, *Anaskaphe byzantinou naou* 416. – Sdrolia/Androudis, *Archaiologikes ereynes* 120.





Fig. 1 Vale of Tempe. – (Engraving S. Pomardi, in: Dodwell, Tour pl. after p. 114).



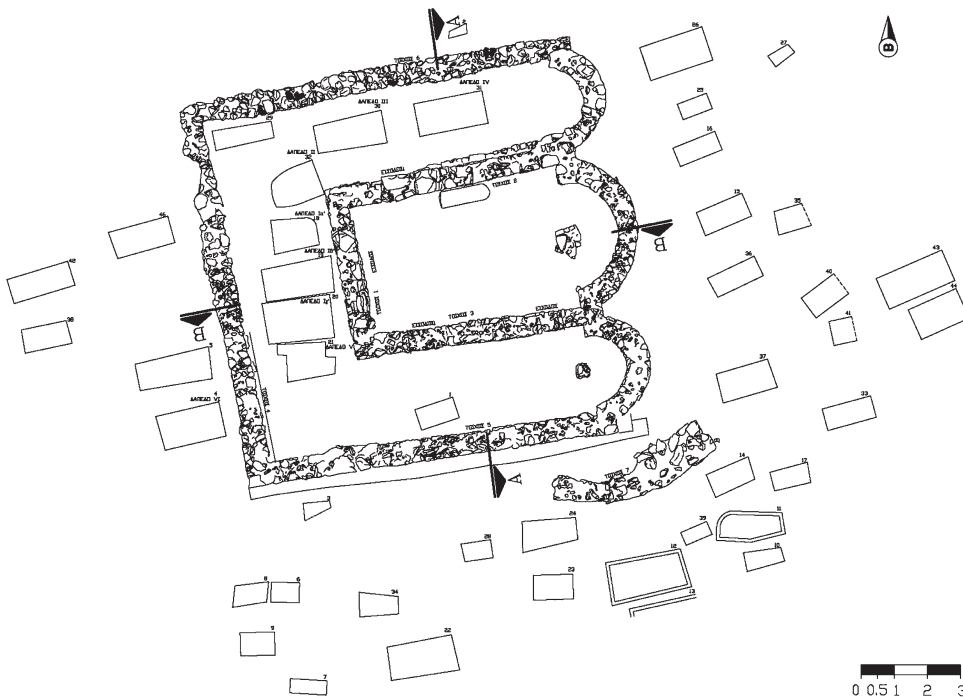
Fig. 2 Valley of Tempe, location »Hani tis Kokkonas«, aerial view of the excavation of the complex of the church and »inn«. – (Foto S. Sdrolia).







**Fig. 4** Aerial view of the excavation of the church. – (Foto S. Sdrolia).



**Fig. 5** Plan of the church with excavated graves. – (Plan S. Sdrolia).

to the period before<sup>12</sup>. The lack of any ceramic finds in the church do not enable its dating. Therefore, the structure could be attributed to the middle-byzantine period, possibly to the 9<sup>th</sup>-10<sup>th</sup> century, due to the resemblance of the masonry in its apses and southern wall with parts of the masonry of the »inn«. It is quite possible that the church and the »inn« were built in the same period. The type of the church with an ambulatory of Π shape can be found in the nearby Pieria<sup>13</sup>,

as well as to the church unearthed in the acropolis of Larisa<sup>14</sup> (fig. 6). The three semi-circular apses – a rather »archaic« feature in Middle Byzantine Ecclesiastical architecture – are also to be found in the church of Panagia in Vathyrema Agias, also in Thessaly<sup>15</sup>. We know that from the end of 11<sup>th</sup> century the semicircular apses of the churches are substituted by tripartite ones<sup>16</sup>. One more »archaic« element is also the almost square plan of the church (analogy 1 to 1). This type of the church

12 Sdrolia, *Anaskaphe byzantinou naou* 416. 417. Sdrolia/Androudis, *Archaiologikes ereynes* 120-121.

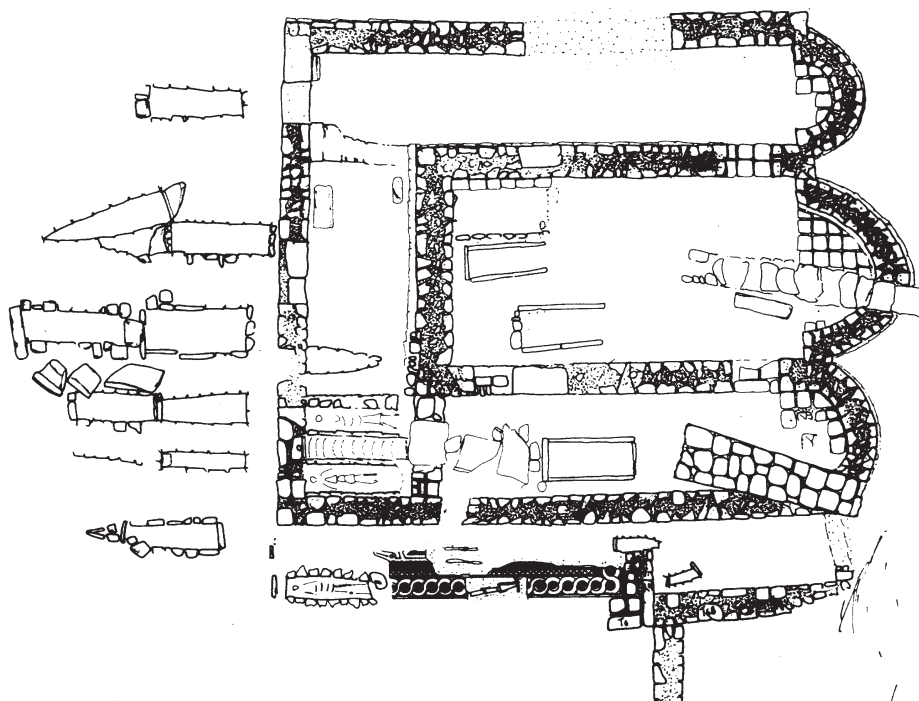
13 As in the church of Kountouriotissa and the episcopal basilica. See Hatzitriphonos, *To Peristōo* 125-127.

14 The latter had a funeral character. See Gialouri, *Byzantinē Larisa* 491-503.

15 Nikonanos, *Byzantinoi naoi* 27-34.

16 Nikonanos, *Byzantinoi naoi* 24.

**Fig. 6** Plan of the excavated middle-byzantine church and graves in the acropolis of Larisa. – (A. Gialouri).



with an ambulatory is probably not the first one, because it seems that it was built over older ruins.

Consequently, and based on our remarks, the initial phase of the church could be ascribed to the 10<sup>th</sup> century, while its destruction by fire could have been possibly related to some invasions of the 11<sup>th</sup> century, like those of the Normans that besieged the castle of Larisa<sup>17</sup>. Later on, the church was used as a cemetery church, while the southern aisle was transformed to a church. It seems that the church was abandoned to the end of 12<sup>th</sup> or during the first half of 13<sup>th</sup> century, judging by the discovery of a golden coin of the Latin Kingdom of Jerusalem which was unearthed over a simple grave above the other graves to the North of the church<sup>18</sup>. The abandoning of the site is possibly related to the capture of the region by the Latin troops of the Fourth Crusade in 1204.

The church was ecclesiastically placed under the jurisdiction of the Metropolis of Lykostomion or Thessalian Tempi which is mentioned in 10<sup>th</sup> century byzantine sources as being under the Metropolis of Thessaloniki<sup>19</sup>. The seat of this bishopric, which included settlements of southern Macedonia and northern Thessaly was transferred, before the middle of 14<sup>th</sup> century, from Lykostomion to the fortress of Platamona<sup>20</sup>. The settlement of Lykostomion and the homonymous bishopric were located by A. Vacalopoulos in the wider area of the Castle of Oria, in a distance of two kilometres to the north of our complex<sup>21</sup>. This opinion was also supported by N. Pa-

padimitriou<sup>22</sup>. In recent years scholars also supported that the Lykostomion was built not within the valley of Tempi, but near its northern exit, at the place of the present-day village of Pyrghetos<sup>23</sup>. As for the Castle of Oria<sup>24</sup>, I believe that we should exclude its identification with Lykostomion, since it is a narrow passage with many fortified posts, difficult to access. The Castle of Oria was certainly a military station or a fortress with a permanent garrison and a secure refuge for soldiers and travelers. In the vicinity of the lowest part of the castle there are some caves for hermits which are unexplored.

The character of our complex (church and inn) could be the one for the pilgrimage, due to the fact that it is located over a fully travelled main road artery and in the station of Tempi, as well its vicinity to a Hellenistic temple. It is certain that the church was visited not only by pilgrims but also by the numerous travelers in their way to southern Greece. The monumental character of the structures leads to the hypothesis of an important founder of our complex, probably under the state initiative, which aimed to the reorganization of the byzantine provinces and the mainland communications of the early 10<sup>th</sup> century.

A second site for pilgrimage, located near the northern »entrance« of the valley of Tempi, is to be found in the present-day village of Pyrghetos. The monumental, unpublished church of Hagios Georgios<sup>25</sup>, consists of the initial triconch church (fig. 7) and the 18<sup>th</sup> century monumental narthex.

17 On the raids of the Normans in Thessaly see Avramea, *byzantinē Thessalia* 83-84. – Glavinias, *Normandoi stēn Thessalia* 35-45. – Theotokis, *Campaigns* 242.  
 18 See Sdrolia, *Anaskaphe byzantinou naou* 421 and 424 fig. 10.  
 19 Papadimitriou, *Ē episkopē* 42-56. 57-66. 130. – Nerantzi-Varmazi, *To byzantino Lykostomion* 349-353.  
 20 Vacalopoulos, *Ta kastro tou Platamōna* 79. – Papadimitriou, *Ē episkopē* 42-56. 57-66. 130.  
 21 Vacalopoulos, *Ta kastro tou Platamōna* 79-82.

22 Papadimitriou, *Ē episkopē* 117-121.  
 23 Gouloulis/Xynogala, *Lykostomion tōn Tempōn* 470-471. 473-475.  
 24 The castle of Oria is not a single fortified unit. See Vacalopoulos, *Ta kastro tou Platamōna* 87-109. – Theodoropoulos, *Kastro tēs Ōrias* 90-105. See also Sdrolia/Androudis, *byzantines ochyrōseis*.  
 25 For the church see Dimitas, *Makedonia* 157. – Roussas, *Agios Geōrgios Pyrgtou*. – Gouloulis/Xynogala, *Lykostomion tōn Tempōn* 473-474 fig. 2, 3.





Fig. 7 Pyrghetos, the byzantine triconch church seen from the North. – (Foto P Androudis).

Based on the form with large semicircular apses and on other data, such the difference of one meter between the external level to the North and the internal level of the church, as well as the presence of a marble window mullion, serving today as a support for the altar of the church, we could possibly attribute the first phase of the building to the 9<sup>th</sup> or the early 10<sup>th</sup> century.

We strongly believe that this triconch church, which we plan to publish after the removal of some parts of its external plaster and the study of its masonry, was built probably as a *martyrium* (for the cult of St George) and served this purpose for a long time.

A Greek inscription of the byzantine period, immured in the south wall of the narthex (fig. 8) mentions the term *philoxeniēn*, certainly related to pilgrimage. The text is carved in four lines and reports:

Ἐκθύμως φιλέων δίδυμον κορυφὴν ἀρετῶν,  
εὐθυτάτην πίστιν ἠδὲ φιλοξενίην.  
τῶν μετὰ καὶ συναπήρην ἀπὸ χθονὸς ἐξ βίον ἄλλον,  
ξείνοισι προλιπῶν καὶ γε πένησι πόθον<sup>26</sup>.

Desiring with all his soul a twin peak of virtues,  
The straight faith and the hospitality,  
With them he left from the earth to the other life,  
Leaving desire to foreigners and poor people

This inscription which was discovered by Leon Heuzey<sup>27</sup>, was published by Margaritis Dimitrisas<sup>28</sup>, but it has not until now acquired all the importance that it deserves.



Fig. 8 Church of Hagios Georgios, the byzantine inscription. – (Foto P. Androudis).

The type of letters of the inscription could be possibly compared to those in the inscriptions on the mosaics of the church of Hagia Sophia in Thessaloniki. The value of the inscription of Pyrghetos is quite significant, if we consider that in the whole Prefecture of Pieria there were recorded no more than ten byzantine inscriptions<sup>29</sup>.

The spiritual work of this anonymous ecclesiastical man (a bishop?) honored here is certainly the faith (that means the ecclesiastical activity) and the hospitality towards ξένων (strangers) and πενήτων (poor people). Despite the fact that there are not mentioned any names or other historical data, this inscription could be relied to all the mobility on the public road or the port of Pineios (itinerary Thessaloniki-Thessaly), mainly during 9<sup>th</sup>-11<sup>th</sup> centuries, when many foreigners (pilgrims included) were passing through this area. The πένητες could possibly be identified to the poor people of the region or to the poor travelers.

The ancient main road to central mainland Greece served not only military, but also religious purposes. This main road artery for Thessaly and Macedonia acquired special importance in 9<sup>th</sup>-10<sup>th</sup> century<sup>30</sup>. It is noteworthy that in 9<sup>th</sup>-10<sup>th</sup> century the pilgrims from Italy or those who wanted to go to Italy used the main public road instead that of Via Egnatia (Dyrrachium-Constantinople), because of the danger of Bulgarian attacks<sup>31</sup>.

One important *desideratum* of the scientific research in Tempi remains the identification of the site of Lykostomion, seat of a bishop until the late byzantine period, when the bishopric was transferred to the more secure Castle of Platamon<sup>32</sup>. This identification could offer many responses to unsolved questions of local topography. Some scholars, like A. Vacalopoulos, tend to identify Lykostomion with the present-day village of Tempi, the former Turkish village of Baba, which was also a major place for pilgrimage for the *bektashi* tekke of Hasan Baba (and the *türbe* of this Ottoman dervish saint)<sup>33</sup>.

26 Gouloulis/Xynogala, Lykostomion tōn Tempōn 473-474 fig. 2.

27 Heuzey, Le mont Olympe 83-84. 478 no. 26.

28 Dimitrisas, Makedonia 156.

29 Gouloulis/Xynogala, Lykostomion tōn Tempōn 474. For the byzantine inscriptions of Pieria see Katsaros, Anankē 75-131.

30 On the main road artery which connected Thessaly with Macedonia see Avramea, byzantinē Thessalia 74-78.

31 Avramea, byzantinē Thessalia 74-78. Moustakas, To odiko diktuo 145-154. 146.

32 See above, note 20. For the Castle of Platamon see Vacalopoulos, To kastro tou Platamōna 58-76. – Vacalopoulos, Nouveaux renseignements 27-32. – Vacalopoulos, Ta kastro tou Platamōna 9-61.

33 Vacalopoulos, Ta kastro tou Platamōna 79-82. For the tekke of Hasan Baba see Vacalopoulos, Ta kastro tou Platamōna 63-84.



Fig. 9 Map of the unearthed monasteries on the »Mount of Cells«. – (S. Sdrolia).

We should also mention that pilgrimage routes and related sites in the region are not only limited within the valley of Tempi, but can be found in the nearby monastic community of the so-called »Mount of Cells« (Όρος των Κελλίων)<sup>34</sup>. In this area, monastic life evolved from 9<sup>th</sup> century onwards<sup>35</sup> and many monasteries of the 11<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup> centuries were unearthed by the excavations of Dr. S. Sdrolia<sup>36</sup> (fig. 9). The monastery of Panagia and Hagios Demetrios at Stomion (former Tsagezi) has retained its importance not only for pilgrims, but also for other believing Christians down to the present day<sup>37</sup> (fig. 10).



Fig. 10 The katholikon of the monastery of Stomion (Tsagezi). – (After A. Normand [1851]).

The hagiological writings of the Blessed Christodoulos inform us that in 1088, five years after his victorious campaign against the Normans of Bohemund who besieged Larisa<sup>38</sup>, the Greek emperor Alexios I Komnenos suggested to Christodoulos that he should undertake the administration of Cells, where there had been some slackening in the morals of the monastic community. Christodoulos had compiled a »Canon« or formal set of regulations, which Alexios described as an echo of the Holy Spirit itself, but the monks were not compliant<sup>39</sup>. Unfortunately, the monks of the Cells received Christodoulos's decrees with great bitterness and thus the man sought and received the post of *higoumenos* (abbot) on the island of Patmos.

Before Christodoulos the region was visited by the saints Varnavas and Sophronios, the ktitors of the monastery of Panagia Soumela, not far from Trebizond (in E. Pontus, Black Sea)<sup>40</sup>, as well as the Saints Symeon and Theodoros, the ktitors of the monastery of Mega Spilaion in Peloponnese<sup>41</sup>. In around 980, on his way from Athens to Thessaloniki, Hosios Fantinos from Calabria, Italy, stayed in the basilica of Saint Achillios at Larisa and also passed from Tempi<sup>42</sup>. Also in the third book of the Miracles of Saint Demetrios, pilgrims from Italy (Ιταλιώται) passed through Tempi on their way to Thessaloniki. There Saint Demetrios informed them in order to avoid the capture of the Saracens (904)<sup>43</sup>. The same book refers to the legendary »meeting« of the Saint Demetrios of Thessaloniki and Saint Achillios of Larisa in the northern »exit« of the

34 For the monastic community of the Mount of Cells see Gouloulis, Oros tōn Kelliōn 473-498. – Gouloulis/Sdrolia, Agios Dēmētrios Stomiou. – Sdrolia, Oros tōn Kelliōn. – Drosos, Oi episkopes Besainēs 236-337.

35 Gouloulis, Oros tōn Kelliōn 473-498. – Xynogalas, Anthrōpoi kai monastikes koinotētes 175-182. – Gouloulis, Anatolikē Ossa.

36 Sdrolia, Archaïologikes ereynes 197-204. – Mamaloukos/Sdrolia, To archiko katholiko. – Mamaloukos/Sdrolia, Archaïologika katalogia. – Drosos, Oi episkopes Besainēs 236-337.

37 See Sotiriou, Byzantina mnēmēia 349-375. – Bouras, Architektonikē. – Messis, Skepseis kai stoicheia 83-92. – Mamaloukos/Sdrolia, To archiko katholiko. – Drosos, Oi episkopes Besainēs 332-335. See also the already mentioned works

of Gouloulis, Agios Dēmētrios. – Gouloulis, Anatolikē Ossa. – Gouloulis/Sdrolia, Agios Dēmētrios Stomiou.

38 Avramea, byzantinē Thessalia 83-84. 88. – Sdrolia, Ē poreia. – Theotokis, Campaigns 243-246.

39 See Gouloulis, Oros tōn Kelliōn 490-495.

40 Gouloulis, Oros tōn Kelliōn 485-488. – Gouloulis, Kentra Latreias 401 note 25. Their Life was compiled in 13<sup>th</sup> century.

41 Gouloulis, Oros tōn Kelliōn 485-486. – Gouloulis, Kentra Latreias 401 note 26.

42 Gouloulis, Kentra Latreias 401 note 27 with reference to the written sources.

43 Avramea, byzantinē Thessalia 78. – Gouloulis, Kentra Latreias 402 note 33.

valley of Tempi in the beginning of 10<sup>th</sup> century, when their cities were captured<sup>44</sup>. According to S. Gouloulis, the »presence« of Saint Demetrios in the valley of Tempi had a symbolic role: the saint aimed to be the protector not only of the city of Thessaloniki (against the Sklavanoi), but also of the rest of mainland Greece, against the new enemy, the Bulgarians<sup>45</sup>.

In our paper we presented some new archaeological data on sites related to pilgrimage and monastic sites within and just outside the valley of Tempi in Thessaly. There are im-

portant buildings (church and inn in Hani Kokkonas, an old triconch church in Pyrghetos) and an also important byzantine inscription related to hospitality. We hope that in the future new data will come to light and, in our opinion, it should be examined the relationship of the pilgrimage in the wider region of Tempi and the oriental coast of Thessaly with Thessaloniki where the monastic community of the Mount of Cells evolved in 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> centuries.

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## Zusammenfassung / Summary / Résumé

### Pilgerschaft in und um das Tempi-Tal, Thessalien, in mittelbyzantinischer Zeit: historische und archäologische Daten

Unser Beitrag befasst sich mit der Präsentation historischer und archäologischer Daten über die Wallfahrt in und um das Tempi-Tal in Thessalien/GR in mittelbyzantinischer Zeit. Archäologische Untersuchungen bei »Kokkonas hani« resultierten in der Ausgrabung von Überresten eines mittelbyzantinischen Komplexes einschließlich einer Kirche mit dazugehörigen Gräbern sowie einer Längsstruktur. Der Plan der letzteren und seine Lage in der Nähe einer häufig benutzten Hauptverkehrsader Griechenlands stützen die Hypothese seiner Identifizierung als ein byzantinisches Gasthaus für Pilger und andere Reisende auf ihrem Weg zum zentralen und südlichen Festland. Die Kirche dürfte dem 9.-10. Jahrhundert zugeschrieben werden.

Der Charakter der Strukturen lässt einen bedeutenden Gründer vermuten, wahrscheinlich verbunden mit der staatlichen Initiative, die darauf abzielte, die byzantinischen Provinzen und die Festlandskommunikation des frühen 10. Jahrhunderts zu reorganisieren. Ein zweiter Wallfahrtsort in der Nähe des nördlichen »Eingangs« von Tempi ist die monumentale Dreikonchenkirche von Hagios Georgios im Dorf Pyrghetos, die wahrscheinlich als Martyrium (des hl. Georg) erbaut wurde und diesem Zweck lange diente. Eine byzantinische Inschrift im Narthex nennt das Wort *philoxeniēn* (Gastfreundschaft), das mit dem Begriff Wallfahrt in Beziehung gebracht werden kann. Die Haupttugenden des anonymen Kirchenmanns, der hier geehrt wird, sind Glaube und Fremdenliebe. Diese Inschrift könnte mit allen Personen in Verbindung stehen (einschließlich Pilgern), die auf der öffentlichen Straße oder zum Hafen von Pineios (Route Thessaloniki-Thessalien) unterwegs waren, hauptsächlich im 9.-11. Jahrhundert.

Die alte Hauptstraße nach Mittelgriechenland diente nicht nur militärischen, sondern auch religiösen Zwecken. Diese Hauptverkehrsader für Thessalien und Makedonien erhielt im 9.-10. Jahrhundert eine besondere Bedeutung, da sie sowohl von Heiligen als auch von Pilgern genutzt wurde, die diese Route anstelle der Via Egnatia gewählt hatten. Wir sollten auch erwähnen, dass die Wallfahrtsorte in der Region nicht nur auf Tempi beschränkt sind, sondern sie sind auch auf dem nahe gelegenen Berg Kissavos, dem »Oros tōn Kelliōn« zu finden, wo sich seit dem 9. Jahrhundert das monastische Leben entwickelte. Hier wurden viele Klöster des 11. und 12. Jahrhunderts durch Ausgrabungen freigelegt.

### Pilgrimage Within and Around the Valley of Tempi in Thessaly During the Middle-Byzantine Period: Historical and Archaeological Data

Our paper deals with the presentation of historical and archaeological data concerning pilgrimage within and around the valley of Tempi in Thessaly/GR, during the middle-Byzantine period. Archaeological research at the site »Kokkonas

hani« unearthed the remains of a middle-Byzantine complex, including a church with associated graves as well as a longitudinal structure. The plan of the latter, and its position near a frequently travelled principal artery of Greece, support the hypothesis of its identification as a Byzantine inn for pilgrims and other travellers on their way to the central and southern mainland. The church should be ascribed to the 9<sup>th</sup>-10<sup>th</sup> century.

The character of the structures leads to the hypothesis of an important founder, probably associated with the state initiative that aimed to reorganise the Byzantine provinces and mainland communications of the early 10<sup>th</sup> century. A second site for pilgrimage, near the northern »entrance« to Tempi, is the monumental triconch church of Hagios Georgios in the village of Pyrghetos, probably built as a martyrion (of St George) and which served this purpose for a long time. A Byzantine inscription in its narthex mentions the term *philoxeniēn* (hospitality), certainly related to pilgrimage. The main virtues of the anonymous churchman who is honoured here are faith and hospitality. This inscription could be related to all those who travelled (pilgrims included) on the public road or to the port of Pineios (itinerary Thessaloniki-Thessaly), mainly during the 9<sup>th</sup>-11<sup>th</sup> centuries.

The ancient main road to central Greece served not only military, but also religious purposes. This principal road artery for Thessaly and Macedonia acquired special importance in the 9<sup>th</sup>-10<sup>th</sup> century, since it was used both by saints and pilgrims who chose this route instead of the Via Egnatia. We should also mention that pilgrimage sites in the region are not only limited to those within Tempi, but can be found on the nearby »Mount of Cells«, Mount Kissavos, where monastic life evolved from the 9<sup>th</sup> century onwards, and many monasteries of the 11<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup> centuries were unearthed by excavations.

### Le pèlerinage aux alentours et dans la vallée de Tempi, Thessalie, à l'époque méso-byzantine : données historiques et archéologiques

Cet article se penche sur les données historiques et archéologiques concernant les pèlerinages tout autour et dans la vallée de Tempi en Thessalie (Grèce) durant l'époque méso-byzantine.

Des fouilles archéologiques sur le site de »Kokkonas hani« ont mis au jour les vestiges d'un complexe de l'époque méso-byzantine comprenant une église, des tombes et une structure longitudinale. Le plan de celle-ci et sa position à proximité de l'axe principal et très fréquenté de la Grèce renforce l'hypothèse d'une auberge byzantine pour les pèlerins et autres voyageurs en route vers le Centre ou le Sud de la Grèce continentale. L'église devrait dater des 9<sup>e</sup>/10<sup>e</sup> siècles. Le caractère des structures suggère un fondateur important, probablement à l'initiative de l'État qui voulait réorganiser les provinces byzantines et les voies de communication du continent au début du 10<sup>e</sup> siècle.



Près de l'« entrée » nord de Tempi se situe un deuxième lieu de pèlerinage, l'église triconque monumentale d'Agios Georgios dans le village de Pyrghetos qui fut probablement construite comme martyrium (de saint Georges) et garda cette fonction pendant longtemps. Une inscription byzantine dans le narthex mentionne le terme de *philoxeniën*, certainement lié au pèlerinage. Le travail spirituel de cet ecclésiastique anonyme honoré ici consiste à vivre sa foi et accueillir les étrangers et les démunis. Cette inscription pourrait renvoyer à tout voyageur en route (pèlerins inclus) sur les voies publiques ou sur le port de Pineios (itinéraire Thessalonique – Thessalie), particulièrement du 9<sup>e</sup> au 11<sup>e</sup> siècle.

L'ancienne route principale menant à la Grèce centrale ne répondait pas seulement à des besoins militaires, mais également religieux. L'artère principale pour la Thessalie et la Macédoine acquit une importance toute spéciale aux 9<sup>e</sup> et 10<sup>e</sup> siècles, non seulement pour les saints, mais aussi pour les pèlerins qui l'utilisèrent comme alternative à la via Egnatia. Il faut également mentionner que les lieux de pèlerinage ne se limitent pas à la vallée de Tempi, mais existaient aussi non loin sur les flancs du « Mount of Cells », la montagne de Kissavos, où la vie monastique s'épanouit à partir du 9<sup>e</sup> siècle et où furent fouillés de nombreux monastères des 11<sup>e</sup> et 12<sup>e</sup> siècles.