

Encroachment, Subdivision, and Expansion: a Cultural Interpretation of Byzantine Spatial Transformation (6th-9th Century)

Τὰ προειρημένα ἐπὶ τῶν ἐκ νέου κατασκευαζομένων εἴρηται· εἰ δὲ χάρται εἰσὶ παλαιοὶ ἢ καὶ δουλεία τις προλαβοῦσα, κεχρησθαι δεῖ τοῖς ἐξ ἀρχῆς συμπεφωνημένοις¹

»As intellectuals, we pay most attention to those kinds of activity in which we suppose people to know what they are doing, in which they put their plans into action, or theories into practice. But ... there are many other human activities in which – though we may be loath to admit it – we all remain deeply ignorant as to what we are doing, or why we are doing it. Not because the »ideas« or whatever, supposedly in us somewhere informing our actions, are too deeply buried to bring out into the light of day, but because the formative influences shaping our conduct are not wholly there, in our individual heads, to be brought out. Activity of this kind occurs in response to what others have already done, and we act just as much into the opportunities, or against the barriers and restrictions they offer or afford us, as out of any plans our desires of our own. Thus, the stony looks, the nods of agreement, the failures of interest, the asking of questions, these all go towards what it is one feels one can, or cannot, do or say in such situations. This is joint action: it is a spontaneous, unselfconscious, unknowing (although not unknowledgeable) kind of activity.«²

All that »one feels that one can, or cannot, do or say in a given situation«, all our »joint action« (our spontaneous, unselfconscious, unknowing – although not unknowledgeable – kind of activity, according to Shotter's definition, above) sums up into the social practices developed within a certain culture – practices which are always spatial and embodied. Therefore, one's insight into cultures goes through the scrutiny of both those social practices and the spaces they produce. This is the framework of this study which builds upon previous reflections on Byzantine productions of space from the 6th to the 9th century, and respective issues about urban-rural dichotomies³. It introduces an interdisciplinary point of view which combines a consideration of archaeo-

logical evidence and literary traditions, both dating to the 6th to 9th century, with modern cultural theoretical approaches in spatial studies. Its focus is the process by which changes in the use of spaces lead to spatial transformation: who were the agents of this process and what practices did they use?

According to the scholarship on the »production« and interpretation of space through cultural practices, we have to think of spatial transformations in three ways: a) as the expressions of social and cultural change, b) as a means for and agent of social and cultural change, and c) as the origin and the cause of further social and cultural change⁴. This conceptualization is important because the spatial transformation that archaeologists end up recording means more than the response of historical societies to natural and social transformations: we need to understand the ways in which living in a changing environment also provokes changes in that particular society's perceptions of space and these changes affect in return people's spatial conceptions, productions and practices, in a vicious circle, within a culture. Some central theoretical questions in the case of the Byzantine culture during the 6th to 9th century are:

a) How did changes in the use of spaces result into spatial transformation?

b) What could have been the cultural meaning of that spatial transformation?

In this study I will comment on the meaning of specific Byzantine practices which were used for changing the use of space from the 6th to the 9th century: encroachment, subdivision, expansion, and fortification. I will focus on the first three (encroachment, subdivision, expansion) because they seem closely related in the specific context, by discussing in detail two examples: a) the subdivision of residential buildings by squatting or intentional subletting of spaces, and b) the occupation of off-shore islands and islets. Both contemporaneous phenomena occurred all over the Byzantine world and they have been largely discussed from a socio-economic point of view; here they will be considered from a sociocultural point

1 »All that has been said above concerns new constructions: if, moreover, there are ancient maps (documents) and previous use (of the spaces), one has to conform to the original concluded agreements« (Julian of Ascalon, Treatise § 15).

2 Shotter, Cultural Politics 47.

3 Veikou, »Rural Towns«. – Veikou, »Urban« or »Rural«?.

4 Lefebvre, Production.

of view through a scrutiny of the meaning of the respective habitual spatial practices. The main set of questions is:

– Were these practices somehow centrally encouraged, imposed or coordinated, or did they fall into those »elements which unite contemporal societies, such as technology, materials, customs etc.«?⁵

– Both spatial practices reveal social and cultural transformation; how can they be interpreted within the Byzantine historical context?

– Also, all practices derive from interactions between structures and agencies – how can these be refined?

Hence, in what follows, I will discuss ways in which these practices transformed the Byzantine landscapes from the 6th to the 9th century as a response to one of this period's central challenges. My discussion will be based upon three different kinds of data, in a sort of multiple-factor analysis aiming to integrate different groups of variables describing the same observations:

– A bibliographical survey of archaeological evidence on the aforementioned social practices involving spatial subdivision, encroachment, and expansion in the specific historical context.

– A consideration of literary texts referring to the same practices in the same historical context.

– A consideration of the history and meaning of these spatial practices in modern times, within a theoretical framework of non-representational social theory from cultural geography.

I intend to show how these coincident spatial practices – and yet apparently different, since one takes place in cities and the other in the countryside – were in fact very much related. Their mutual relation refers to their cultural performative background, as inscribed in diachronic and global strategies in settlement, within their common historical context.

Archaeology: Fortifying, Encroaching, Subdividing, Expanding (or the transformation of settlement in Byzantium from the 6th to the 9th century)

John Haldon's contextualization of the changes seen in the East Roman empire between the 6th and the 9th century suggested some ways in which historical and archaeological evidence might be placed within a broader theoretical framework relating to pre-modern social systems. Archaeological evidence for the 6th and 7th century reveals a marked retreat from urban life towards more defensible (and now fortified)

sites, and a decline in inter-regional exchange; combined with the archaeological data, documentary sources suggest the survival of a society of some complexity, producing sufficient surplus to sustain the military and bureaucratic systems that evolved between the later 7th and 9th centuries⁶. Societal transformations that had been evolving since the end of late antiquity coalesced into stable forms from the late 9th to the 11th century⁷. From a theoretical perspective, Haldon suggested that Byzantine society should not be viewed as a »logical« hierarchical entity reminiscent of modern western administrative structures, but rather as the result of a multiplicity of interacting relationships and social structures⁸.

As far as settlement is concerned, during this period, archaeology supports an extensive transformation in the urban fabrics from the mid-6th century onwards and a retrenchment of urban life from ca. 620-640, with regional variations in pace and intensity, an increasing focus on a defensive capability, a fragmentation of local exchange and production, and a dislocation of population by means of forced and voluntary migration⁹. However, recent archaeological research diverts research from the narratives of a decline and demise of the classical city and a later emergence of a »proper« Byzantine city¹⁰. According to Enrico Zanini, the phenomenon of urban transformation »... should be studied in more complex conceptual categories, including: regional differences, possible synchrony between similar phenomena, if viewed in different geographic areas; close relationship between the transformation of the urban fabric and the parallel development of the human, social, economic and cultural fabric of the same cities«¹¹.

When it comes to demography, instead of mass depopulation or abandonment, archaeology leaves scope for the desertion or abandonment of the most marginal agricultural lands and for differentiated regional demographic decline¹², phenomena that have recently been connected to a major climatic change around 700¹³. These phenomena point to an economic diversity rather than economic decline according to recent reevaluations of available evidence¹⁴. In this context, when it comes to settlement: »Some of these phenomena had been identified long ago as a characteristic of this phase: for example (...) the greater role of defensive needs in urban planning, or the progressive alteration of a clear distinction between public and private spaces. But now they appear to us, more clearly than in the past, as the product of an interaction between the shape of the ancient city and the new needs of the men who now live, work and exercise power in that space; transforming it, enriching it with new buildings or even abandoning or eliminating parts of that space which are now perceived as unnecessary«¹⁵.

5 Haldon, Transformation 612.

6 Haldon, Transformation 603. – Brubaker/Haldon, Iconoclasm 453-530. 665-771.

7 Decker, Dark Ages 25.

8 Haldon, Transformation 603. 638.

9 Haldon, Transformation 628. – Brubaker/Haldon, Iconoclasm 531-572.

10 Zanini, End 131.

11 Zanini, End 131.

12 Haldon, Transformation 628.

13 Izdebski et al., Climatic changes.

14 Decker, Dark Ages 161-186.

15 Zanini, End 131.

In this direction, a first spatial practice, which is largely attested from the late 6th century onwards by both archaeology and texts, is fortification¹⁶. What Zanini defines as a »militarization of urban space between the 7th and 8th centuries«¹⁷ seems to have also expanded outside the late antique cities and into the Byzantine countryside, to key settlements of non-urban/civic status as well as to sites identified as episcopal seats for the first time during this period¹⁸.

Another set of spatial practices occurred during this period within the late antique cities where a transformation in the use and functions of spaces had already begun from the 5th century onwards. At first, the reuse of abandoned structures for new functions reflected a quite pragmatic rethinking of the use of urban facilities; but from the 6th century onwards, a relationship between artisanal production centres and church buildings suggests a possible central role for the church in re-structuring urban settlements¹⁹. Two central spatial practices, at this time, involved a fragmentation of public and private spaces and an encroachment of public spaces; new domestic areas mainly derived from the subdivision and refurbishment of older residential or public buildings²⁰.

Last but not least, a final notable feature in Byzantine habitation, after the 6th century, was a convergence of rural with urban activities in all kinds of settlements²¹. The development of this phenomenon shows an initial expansion of »urban« space in the countryside (e. g. on off-shore islets and islands which are discussed below) and concurrent expansion of the »rural« space within the towns and cities.

»Makeshift« Spaces: discussion of two distinctive practices

I will now look closer into two of these practices as examples that reveal aspects of the common cultural background behind all the phenomena of settlements already mentioned. These two exemplary practices are: a) in respect to the transformation of cities, the subdivision of residential buildings by squatting or intentional subletting of spaces, and b) in respect to the transformation of countryside, the occupation of off-shore islands and islets.

The Subdivision of Private Residences

The subdivision of residential buildings by squatting or intentional subletting of spaces has been described and discussed by several scholars, starting with Simon Ellis and Helen Saradi²². This practice consisted of a process whereby walls or small rooms were built inside earlier buildings (common in both private and public buildings), turning them into collections of communities or communities of small apartments and/or workshops²³. When it comes specifically to private residential buildings, usually from the mid-6th century onwards but with regional chronological variations, the old large aristocratic houses of the Roman peristyle type were being subdivided into smaller units to offer dwelling space to more families. The traditional architectural features of the earlier houses, such as the peristyle court and the triclinium, were converted into modest rooms. The phenomenon is ubiquitous, and the nature of these subdivisions is common everywhere²⁴. Simon Ellis showed as a key point of this practice that it represents a definitive architectural style, not a random distribution of walls above the building²⁵. Walls were built in specific locations that related to the architecture of the previous building (fig. 1). Thus, there was a definitive attempt to use the earlier architecture to create a new context and, in housing terms, new living space. Some of the principles involved were the following:

- The porticoes of the peristyle were closed up with walls built in the intercolumnar space, while other transverse walls inside the porticoes divided them into smaller rooms²⁶.
- Larger rooms, including the triclinia, were divided into smaller rooms by partition walls perpendicular to the entrance with a low wall topped with reused dressed stone²⁷.
- Walls were built of coarse unplastered rubble, reusing architectural fragments²⁸.
- Walls were built on top of existing mosaic floors rather than destroying them²⁹.
- There is no doubt that the economic and social life of the new dwellers was, in comparison, modest; the material remains offer a striking contrast with the earlier luxurious ornaments of these houses³⁰.
- Agricultural installations and workshops are often found in these small units, while an exclusively industrial use has followed at a later stage (fig. 2)³¹.

16 Haldon, Transformation 614. – Veikou, Epirus 51-56. 273-290. 331-362. – Brubaker/Haldon, Iconoclasm 549-559. – Zanini, Urban Ideal 214-220.
 17 Zanini, End 133-135.
 18 For a list and discussion of these sites see Veikou, Histories 177-188.
 19 Haldon, Transformation 617.
 20 Saradi, Subdivision 17-30. – Jacobs, Aesthetic 622-640.
 21 Haldon, Transformation 618. – Cf. Zanini, End 138. – Haldon, Transformation 614.
 22 Ellis, End. – Ellis, Housing. – Saradi, Subdivision. – Saradi, City.
 23 Ellis, End 567. – For a discussion of the legal framework of this practice see Baldini Lippolis, Private Space. – Saliou, Lois.
 24 Saradi, Subdivision 23. – Ellis, Housing 110-113. 186-187. – Ellis, Overview 12-13.

25 Ellis, End 567.
 26 Ellis, End 567.
 27 Saradi, Subdivision 23 and n. 19.
 28 Saradi, Subdivision 23 and n. 20.
 29 Ellis, End 567.
 30 Ellis, End 567.
 31 Saradi, Subdivision 23 and n. 21. – Characteristic examples of this process are the »Huilerie« at Salamis, Cyprus, the southeast villa at Delphi, and the Triconch Palace and Merchant's House at Butrint: see Argoud/Callot/Helly, Huilerie. – Déroche/Pétridis/Badié, Secteur sud-est. – Bowden, Urban Change 315-316. – Hodges, Medieval quarter 322.



Fig. 1 Tipasa, Plan of the House of the Frescoes. In color: outline of distinct apartments and main entrance arrangements. – (Base plan after Baradez, Tipasa plan V).

The Expansion of Urban Space through Selective Occupation of Off-Shore Islands

During the same period, inhabitants of cities performed yet another spatial practice, that of using nearby off-shore islands. The general practice of inhabiting off-shore islands is known from a number of sites around the coasts of southern Greece, which saw occupation during the 6th to the 8th centuries, or even later. The number of sites eventually grows through new investigations of insular archaeological sites, while many more locations await thorough investigation³². The archaeological evidence, consisting of secular and religious architecture, pottery, glass, coins, and seals of the 6th to 9th centuries, suggests that the formation of such settlements was a generalized phenomenon along the coast of the Ionian Sea and the coastlines of the Peloponnese, Euboea and Attica³³. Small off-shore islands round the coasts of southern Greece seem to have been settled, for a broad variety of reasons, in different areas and periods of time in a strategic relationship with the coastal settlements opposite them from Late Antiquity and throughout the Byzantine period. On the basis of available evidence, the following distinct uses of

specific islands at specific times between the 6th and the 10th century may be identified, while changes of use at different periods as well as combinations of the following uses are evident in the majority of cases:

1. as refuges at times of threat coming from the hinterland,
2. as loci of maritime traffic (emporía),
3. as areas for the production and distribution of industrial products,
4. as stations on the Byzantine navy supply routes,
5. as *kastra*, i.e. new, large fortified settlements of this period³⁴.

Among many possible uses, these different – yet occasionally combined uses – indicate the vital role of islands within the settlement network of the 6th to 10th centuries. Graves are often found on these islands; they either form part of a settlement or of isolated cemeteries, located here in an extra-muros analogy³⁵. A central administration and military presence are attested on many islands by evidence from coins and seals as well as by finds such as coin-weights and belt buckles³⁶.

A reappraisal of Byzantine insular archaeological sites seems a very interesting prospect in this respect in order to

32 Tzavella, Dhaskalio. – See also the excavations on Romvi (Byzantine Orovi): Athanasoulis, *Evolution*. – Athanasoulis/Vassiliou, *Argolis*.

33 Veikou, *Histories* 184 and n. 77.

34 Examples and previous literature in Veikou, *Histories* 179-180; see also Tzavella, Dhaskalio and Athanasoulis, *Evolution*.

35 Examples and previous literature in Veikou, *Histories* 180.

36 Examples and previous literature in Veikou, *Histories* 180.

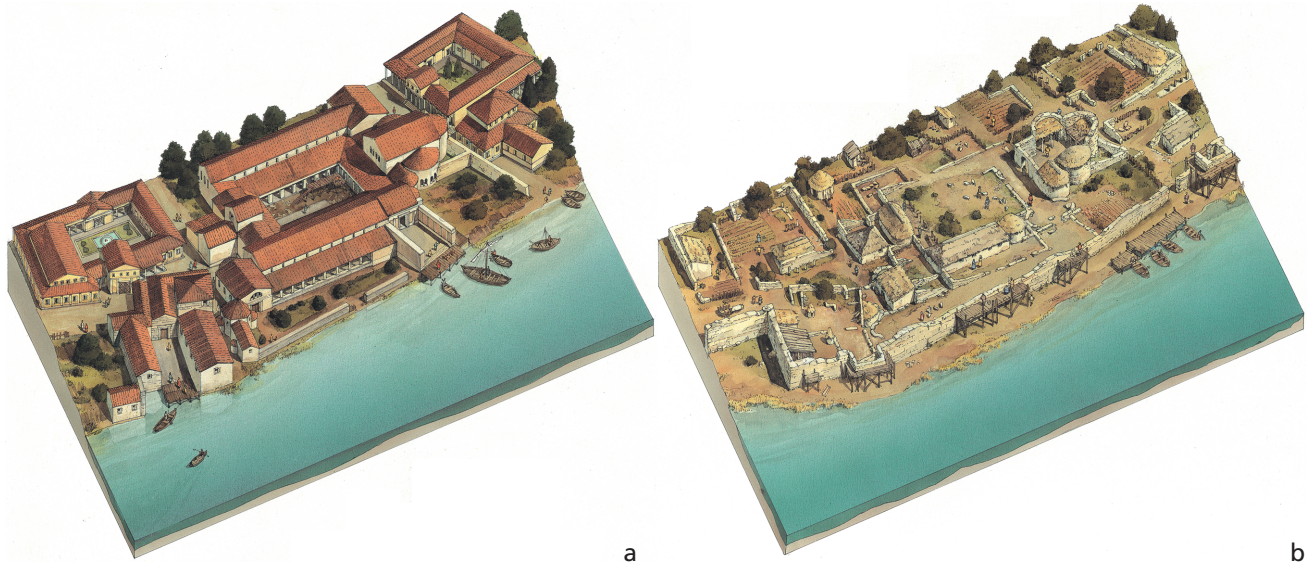


Fig. 2 Butrint, the Triconch Palace. Reconstruction after W. Bowden and R. Hodges: **a** second construction phase (420-480). – **b** third construction phase (early 6th-mid-7th century). – (Courtesy of the Butrint Foundation).

investigate the mechanisms by which settlement networks were shaped or modified in different periods of Late Antiquity and the early Middle Ages. Certainly, the scarcity of the archaeological evidence does not allow us to engage in a similar discussion at this point. However, it is clear that such settlements were, first of all, intended to have specific uses according to their particular geographical location, i.e. offshore, at a short distance from some urban centre. Secondly, they were intended to have proper uses according to their geomorphology, and thirdly, they do not seem to support the existence of an urban-rural dichotomy in settlement during this period but rather a practiced merge of urban and rural functions. Although they have previously been considered countryside, they obviously often had functions conceived within an urban setting: for example, they were centres for secondary production and surplus distribution or posts of military administration or settlements which functioned as a complementary part of an existing urban centre or as a substitute for a part of such a centre³⁷.

Indeed, a practice of expansion of an urban culture into the countryside is indicated by the following particular traits of these island settlements (**fig. 3**): a presence of infrastructures (such as fortifications, basilicas with baptistery, industrial infrastructures) whose size is both i) out of balance with the

sizes of the island and of the settlement it hosted or/and ii) unusual for the particular location in comparison to earlier and later periods of time³⁸, an equally disproportionate density of expensive material culture (glass vessels, jewels and metal artefacts, fine pottery)³⁹, an evidence for long-distance trade (abundance of transportation vessels) and sometimes industry (pottery workshop and local vessels)⁴⁰; a recurrence of lead seals and important coin finds (such as big hoards aside numerous stray coin finds) whose origin could not have been the island itself, but they derive from economic, administrative or military activity springing from nearby or distant urban centres⁴¹. A relation with a contemporary urban center has sometimes been confirmed by specific finds or artistic connections. For example, the same workshops of mosaic floors seem to have worked in basilica B of Kefalos and the basilicas of Nikopolis, and perhaps also Thyreion in the late 5th or early 6th century⁴². Also, the lead seals of Basileios, Bishop of Orovi, clearly speak of an insular settlement of urban status, something which agrees with the picture offered by recent excavations⁴³. It seems, then, that certain small islets located near urban centers – previously inhabited or not – received a stimulus during the 6th and 7th centuries from the presence of soldiers, bureaucrats, ecclesiastical administrators, and citizens with safety concerns⁴⁴.

37 Examples and previous literature in Veikou, *Histories* 181.

38 See for example the settlements on Kefalos, islet off the northeast coast of Zakynthos, Mitzela, Schiza, Agia Mariani, the islets in the bay of Galaxeidi, Dokos, Spetses (Palio Limani, Evangelistria and Zogeria), Kolona in Aegina, Rafti in Attica, Kastri at Kythera, Agios Georgios in Kythera; previous literature on these sites in Veikou, *Histories* 178-180.

39 The settlements on Kefalos and Romvi (Byzantine Orovi) are excellent examples. On Kefalos see Veikou, *Epirus* 440-441, with previous literature. – Veikou, *Histories* 182 and n. 69. On Orovi see Athanasoulis, *Evolution*. – Athanasoulis/Vassiliou, *Argolis*. Other examples are Apsifia, Korakonissi, Spetses, Plateia, Ypsili, Gatza near Skroponeri; previous literature in Veikou, *Histories* 178-180.

40 See for example the settlement of Diporto on Makronissos, in the Gulf of Domvrena, Gregory, *Diporto* 287-304.

41 See for example the settlements on Chinita, Ypsili, Romvi, Soupia, Ai-Giannis by Vlychos at Hydra, Daskaleio, Kounoupi, Plateia, Kefalos, Kythera, Mitzela, Proti, and perhaps also Spetses (Old Harbour and Zogeria). For previous literature on these archaeological sites see Avraméa, *Peloponnese passim*. – Veikou, *Histories* 178-180.

42 Chalkia, Techni 174. – Chouliaras, *Mosaics* 211.

43 See Pennas, *Orovi*. – Athanasoulis, *Evolution*.

44 See also discussion by Brubaker/Haldon, *Iconoclasm* 561 f.

Subdivision and Occupation of Off-Shore Islands as Evidence of Social Transformation

The particular spatial practices – inhabiting subdivisions of old residences, and islets or islands which were largely ignored in earlier and later periods – are contemporaneous and contextual. What could have been the cultural meaning of these practices and what could they have had in common? In the first case, Saradi suggests that the inhabitants of subdivided dwellings were both squatters and tenants: either they occupied abandoned houses whose original owners had fled or they rented from owners who had converted their houses into income-producing properties as a response to the new economic needs, to the increased demand for accommodation and to cultural changes⁴⁵. By »cultural changes« Saradi refers to the similar phenomenon of subdivision of public buildings and porticoes flanking avenues of cities: those were also often rented to merchants and artisans by the municipalities in order to increase their revenues, or were appropriated by wealthy owners of houses behind the colonnades and turned into commercial, revenue-producing units, or squatted or simply inhabited by the poorest citizens who lived in the street⁴⁶. She provides an elaborate account of these developments which she interprets as »rapid disintegration of the urban space« due to abandonment and to an »invasion« by agricultural facilities and isolated burials⁴⁷.

In the second case of the off-shore islands use, these sites have commonly been known as »isles-of-refuge« in modern historiographic narratives and they must have indeed provided refuge during this period⁴⁸. However, I have discussed elsewhere at length that these sites seem, in fact, to have had multiple functions overall, which are all conceivable within an urban setting, despite the islets' obvious location outside of cities⁴⁹. For example, they were centres for secondary production and surplus distribution⁵⁰ or posts of military administration⁵¹, and anyway settlements which functioned as a complementary part of an existing urban centre⁵² a practice reflected in the Chronicle of Monemvasia (see below)⁵³.

So, in my opinion based on spatial theory and Byzantine texts (both discussed below), both cases simply reveal a brand new mentality around urbanism, manifested through practices of fragmentation, sharing and expansion of the urban space. These practices, which seem to have been very dynamic whether improvised or stately-coordinated or both, were obviously aiming to re-design the city and to transform the notion of the city into something new and yet unknown. How? The practice of privatization and subdivision of urban properties reveals »an economic dynamism no longer exclu-

sive to the upper class nor of the international caliber known from the Roman period, but one that is broadly based at the local level and of a rather limited economic strength« in Saradi's words⁵⁴. The same dynamism applies to the expansion of the city-space to nearby off-shore islands; this practice involved also a different kind of squatting than the first practice, i. e. outside the city, which was occasionally successful enough to be formalized in the official announcement as centres of secular and religious administration. But this urban culture must have been completely different from its late-antique predecessor, despite eventual continuity in urban identity (that led Saradi to distinguish between »two distinct models of 6th century city«)⁵⁵.

On the other hand, the interpretation of this kind of changes in the 6th-7th century urban fabrics through the ruralisation-argument is generally agreed upon. John Haldon has refined on that interpretation by suggesting instead that we must think of the 6th to 8th century cities as »progressively functioning like countrysides: »the great majority of urban centres now played a role which might be seen as peripheral to, and even derived from, the economic and social life of the countryside, and reflected, if anything, the needs of state and Church«⁵⁶.

On the other hand, if one looks to the culture of this spatial transformation, any analogies with the Byzantine countryside cannot really explain the two spatial social practices discussed here. Whoever subdivided the peristyle houses, either squatters or owners and their tenants, built smaller houses with poor materials and basic techniques and neglecting some aesthetic values; but their intentions were not to transform the peristyle houses into farmhouses. First of all, the pisé and rubble stone building techniques were simply more solid and typical all over the empire. Secondly, even if the squatters or tenants were in fact peasants, they had obviously come to the city for some other reason and with the intention to become citizens. Thirdly, the cities of this period must be understood as rather presenting »a functional life in which the sharp distinctions between the city and country had dulled ever since the invasion of the country in the city already in the fifth century« in Michael Decker's words⁵⁷. Thus, a clear bipolar »urban – rural« pattern in life-style and settlement is very questionable during this period⁵⁸. In the second case, of settling the off-shore islets, the evidence shows that inhabitants also transferred their urban material culture at the new locations with no real intention of adjusting to »rural life«. Instead, in both practices, people's main objective seems to have been to find refuge for their lives and belongings, and financial subsistence.

45 Saradi, Subdivision 42 f.

46 Saradi, City 442-448.

47 Saradi, City 442-459.

48 Hood, Isles of Refuge. – Rosser, Isles of Refuge.

49 Veikou, Histories 177-188.

50 Veikou, Histories 181 and n. 65.

51 Veikou, Histories 181 and n. 66.

52 Veikou, Histories 181 and n. 67.

53 Veikou, Histories 181 and n. 68.

54 Saradi, Subdivision 43.

55 Saradi, City 441-470.

56 Haldon, Transformation 613 f.

57 Decker, Dark Ages 121.

58 Veikou, From Urban to Rural. – Veikou, »Rural Towns«.



Fig. 3 Kefalos islet. Aerial view. View from the Southwest. Aspect of Byzantine chapel. Pottery sherds including big quantity of amphorae. Ceramic tile fragment preserving part of cruciform stamp. Coins, weight, metal cross, and sculpture fragment. – (Photos M. Veikou / Ch. Barla; aerial view Google Earth).

The Literary Texts: A Cultural Reading

While these are reasonable hypotheses, archaeology has limited capacity to identify the specific attributes of these practices, as has been also recently observed in relation to encroachment by Ine Jacobs⁵⁹. On the contrary, a set of texts deriving from the same context refer to the ways in which 6th to 9th century societies practiced the fragmentation and subdivision of urban spaces. Numerous leasing contracts, surviving in papyri from Egypt, and the architectural treatise by Julian of Askalon, originating from late antique Palestine, bring the very agents of these practices in front of us⁶⁰. In what follows, I will argue this point by discussing one of the various leasing contracts and certain entries of the treatise.

Papyrus, 6th century, Hermoupolis, Egypt

1 ἰνδι[κ](τίονος) τὰς ὑπαρχούσας αὐτῇ ἐξέδρας δύο ὄλο-
κλήρους, μίας μὲν ἐνδότερον τῆς ἄλλης, τὴν
μὲν ἔξωθεν νεύ[ο]υσαν εἰς βορρᾶν ἐπὶ τὴν αἶθραν,
τὴν δὲ ἔσωθεν νεύουσαν εἰς ἀπηλιώτην μετὰ το(ῦ)

5 μέρους αὐτῶν τοῦ φρέατος καὶ τῆς αὐλῆς καὶ
το(ῦ) δώματος καὶ καμάραν μίαν ἐν τῷ καταγαίω
νεύουσαν εἰς ἀπηλιώτην καὶ τὴν ἀχυροθήκην
καὶ παντοίων χρηστηρίων καὶ δικαίων ἀπὸ
οἰκίας διακειμένης ἐπὶ ταύτης τῆς Ἐρμου-
10 πολιτῶν ἐπ' ἀμφόδου Φρουρίου Λιβὸς ἐν ῥύμη
Πακοῦκ νεουούσης εἰς βορρᾶν πρὸς χρῆσιν
ἐμὴν καὶ οἰκήσιν ἐνοικεῖο(υ) τούτων
κατ' ἔτος κερατίων ἕξ, γίν(εται) κερ(άτια) ς, ὅπερ
ἐνοικεῖον ἀποδώσω σοι πρὸς λῆξιν
15 ἐκάστο(υ) ἔτους ἀνυπερθέτως κατὰ μίμησιν
τῶν ἄλλων ἐνοίκων καὶ ὁπότεν βουληθῆς
ἔχειν παραδώσω σοι τοὺς αὐτοὺς τόπους σὺν θύραις
ἐν τῇ αὐτῇ [ὄψει] ὡς π[α]ρ[ε]ιλῆφα. ἢ μίσθωσις
κυρία καὶ β[ε]βαία κ]αὶ ἐπ[ε]ρ[ω]τηθεῖς] ὠμολ[ό]γησα. †
Αὐρ(ήλιος) Ἥλιος
20 Πκυλίου ὁ π[ρ]οκ(είμενος) μ]εμισθῶμαι ὡς πρόκ(εται). †
† Αὐρ(ήλιος) Ἐρμ[... Μ]ηγᾶ ἀ[π]ὸ Ἐρ(μουπόλεως) ἀξιοθεῖς
ἔγραψα ὑπ[ὲρ] αὐτοῦ γράμ[μα]τ[α] μὴ εἰδότος. † † Αὐρ(ήλιος)
Ἰ(*)ωάννο(υ) Μην[ᾶ] ἀπὸ Ἐρ(μουπόλεως) μαρτυρῶ τ[ῆ]
μισθῶσει ἀκούσ[α]ς π[ρ]ο(α) τ]ο(ῦ)
θεμένου. † † [Αὐρ(ήλιος) Φοιβάμμων Ἀγάθο(υ)]

59 Jacobs, *Aesthetic Maintenance* 622.

60 The leasing contracts have been discussed in relation to the phenomenon of the subdivision of residences by Saradi, *Subdivision* 28-42. – For the treatise see Julian of Askalon, *Treatise*. – Hakim, Julian (lit.).

25 [ἀπὸ Ἐρ(μουπόλεως)] μαρτ[υρῶ τῆ μισθώσ]ει ἀκούσας παρὰ το(ῦ) θεμ(ένου).

Traces 1 line

v

[~ca.?-] Πικυλίου γεωργ() ἀπὸ Ἐρ(μουπόλεως) (ὑπὲρ) ἐνοικ(ίου) κ[ε]ρ[ατίων][ζ]⁶¹

»[...] Indictio, the existing two halls, one inside the other – one facing outwards to the north and one facing inwards to the east – together with the corresponding parts of the well, the court, the terrace, and a vaulted room in the basement looking east and a room for storing hay, as well as all kinds of things which can, fairly, be used from the house which lies in the quarter of the Western Citadel at Hermoupolis, on the Pakouk Road, facing north, for me to use and dwell inside, and the rent for these becomes six carats per year; and I will give you this rent at the end of each year no matter what, just like the other tenants; and whenever you will wish, I will hand over these same places to you, with their doors and in the same appearance they have when I am receiving them. The lease is valid and certain: I have been asked and confirmed. (Signatures of the tenant, the scribe and two witnesses.)⁶²«

This contract clearly presents a case of subdivision of a private property, which used to be a single residence. The result of this fragmentation is the emergence of a number of different apartments. The latter consist of: a) private rooms – in this case, two halls upstairs, and one room and a storeroom downstairs –, and b) shared spaces of common use by all residents – in this case, the court, a terrace, a well, and »things which is fair to use in the house« (l. 8) (figs 1-2).

The apartments are rented to several tenants (»just like the other tenants«, l. 15-16) for an annual obligation of six karats paid after the service has been complete⁶³. In this new communities of co-residents, the owner retains a central role: like nowadays, he has the right to reclaim his property any time he wants, and he is responsible for ensuring that the tenants have maintained their part of the building properly.

Another remarkable feature occurs at this point: the owner's claim of all his doors (l. 17) upon the tenant's check-out! The door is an architectural element not only susceptible to decay by time and usage; it is also vulnerable to spoiling. It is an expensive yet detachable part of a house, and one can expect people to have recycled the doors of destroyed buildings. Is this remark an indication of a practice where people stole the doors from their current homes and reused them in new constructions, when they changed residence? Judging from modern practices, this possibility cannot be discarded⁶⁴.

61 P.Lond. V 1768. Online at Heidelberger Gesamtverzeichnis der griechischen Papyrusurkunden Ägyptens [http://aquila.zaw.uni-heidelberg.de/hgv/36939 (03-11-2017)].

62 Author's English translation.

63 The carat (keration), at 1/24 of a solidus, in the papyri must be considered as an accounting unit rather than an actual coin (Bagnall, Practical 191).

The 6th-century architectural treatise by Julian of Askalon

This text reflects exactly the specific practices of fragmentation and encroachment of urban spaces, to which it responds by regulating private agency. This is clearly stated in paragraph 15:

Εἰδέναι δὲ χρὴ ὡς ταῦτα πάντα τὰ προειρημένα ἐπὶ τῶν ἐκ νέου κατασκευαζομένων εἴρηται εἰ δὲ χάρται εἰσὶ παλαιοὶ ἢ καὶ δουλεία τις προλαβοῦσα, κεκρῆσθαι δεῖ τοῖς ἐξ ἀρχῆς περὶ αὐτῶν συμπεφωνημένοις⁶⁵.

»It must be said that all that has been said above concerns new constructions: if, moreover, there are ancient maps (documents) and previous use (of the spaces), one has to conform to the original concluded agreements about them«⁶⁶.

So, there is a clear distinction between old and new practices in construction and use of urban space: the old ones have to be protected against the invasion of newly-established habits. The latter have to be controlled and regulated – hence the composition of this legal framework. In fact, there are plenty of descriptions of new practices in this text, involving numerous different acts of citizens' expansion into vacant urban spaces, which seemed to be available for use. Citizens seem to occupy empty space in order to install all kinds of business workshops: bakeries, pottery-, metalwork-, glass-, and plaster-kilns, workshops, and dyeing facilities⁶⁷. They also expand the use of their own properties way into the streets, for commercial purposes or for parking and feeding their animals!⁶⁸ Julian's general concern is that these acts must respect a certain grid – obviously because the ancient grid has long been neglected and forgotten – and the existence of some space for public use. Thus, Julian's effort is to define the distance that new constructions must have from the pre-existing ones, and the specific techniques to be used for some of these constructions.

Residence subdivision practices are also discussed in the text, as in the following extract:

Θύρας δὲ οὔσης ἐν οἴκῳ βαλλούσης εἰς μίαν αὐλήν, εἰ βουληθῆ ὁ τοῦ τοιοῦτου οἴκου δεσπότης διὰ ταύτης τῆς αὐλῆς πρὸς ἄλλην ἐπίκοινον αὐλήν, ἐν ἣ θύραν ἔχει, ποιῆσαι καὶ ἑτέραν θύραν, ἐξεῖναι αὐτῷ τοῦτο ποιεῖν πρότερον φράττοντι τὴν ἐξ ἀρχῆς. Ὅμοίως καὶ ἀποθήκης οὔσης ἐν ἐπίκοινῳ αὐλῇ καὶ μίαν ἐχούσης θύραν, εἴτε ἐν τῇ ἀγορᾷ, εἴτε ἐντὸς τῆς αὐλῆς, εἰ βουληθῆ ἑτέραν ὑπανοῖξαι θύραν, ἐξεῖναι αὐτῷ τοῦτο ποιεῖν φράττοντι πρότερον τὴν ἐξ ἀρχῆς· οὐ γὰρ δίκαιον, ἢ ἀφ' ἑτέρας αὐλῆς τῆ ἑτέρα ἐπιβουλήν διὰ τῆς αὐτῆς γίνεσθαι οἰκίας, ἢ ἀπὸ

64 KFYO, Door thieves.

65 Julian of Askalon, Treatise §15.

66 Author's English translation.

67 Julian of Askalon, Treatise § 4. 5. 8. 9. 10. 11.

68 Julian of Askalon, Treatise § 17. 20.3.

της ἀποθήκης ἢ τοῦ ἐργαστηρίου τῆ ἐπίκοινω αὐλῆ ἐπιβουλήν γίνεσθαι διὰ τῆς ἐπανοιγομένης θύρας⁶⁹.

»In the case of a house containing a door opening into a courtyard, if the owner of such a house, in order to access – through such a courtyard – another courtyard of common use to which he has a door, wishes to construct another door, he can do that under condition that he first closes off the pre-existing door. Equally, if there is a storeroom in a courtyard of common use, and it has a door opening either out of or into the courtyard, if he wishes to open another door, he can do that provided that he first closes off the original door. Indeed, it would be unjust, if he would be able to either fraudulently penetrate from one courtyard to the other through the house or fraudulently penetrate to the common courtyard passing through the storeroom or the store by means of the thus opened door«⁷⁰.

So, these practices of subdivision and cohabitation obviously caused problems as well! The new apartments, having once belonged to a single residence of a specific type (with rooms circumscribed around a central open courtyard) had not been planned as separate units. Thus previous doors allowed for unforeseen violations of privacy. Then, these new communities of co-residents needed to establish new rules for the protection of everyone’s privacy. Julian attempts such an intervention by his detailed instructions for the constructions around domestic spaces of common use. His effort is in fact continued for several paragraphs, where he offers very precise instructions regarding not only the construction of division walls and windows inside the common courtyards, but also regulations for the use of the courtyard by the tenants⁷¹.

On the other hand, doors come forward again – this time as tools which ensure the permeability of spaces, and allow them flexibility. As in the lease discussed above, here too, they have no specific identity of use, and they can easily change use and function, depending on the eventual needs.

Not only this passage but also the entire treatise speak of spatial flexibility and agility. The ongoing mobility through spaces – commercial and residential, public and private –, in the text, reflects the dynamism, creativity, improvisation and invention which lead to the intensive spatial transformation attested by the archaeological research previously discussed.

Unfortunately, we do not have comparable sources on the use of off-shore islets. However, the later Chronicle of Monemvasia (probably written in the 10th or 11th century) clearly presents the habitation of off-shore islands during the period in question as a practice connected with citizens’ migration from nearby urban centers:

Καὶ ἡ μὲν τῶν Πατρῶν πόλις μετωκίσθη ἐν τῆ τῶν Καλαυρῶν χώρα τοῦ Ῥηγίου, οἱ δὲ Ἀργεῖοι ἐν τῆ νήσῳ τῆ καλουμένη Ὀρόβη, οἱ δὲ Κορίνθιοι ἐν τῆ νήσῳ τῆ καλουμένη Αἰγίνη μετώκησαν. Τότε δὴ καὶ οἱ Λάκωνες τὸ πατρῶον ἔδαφος καταλιπόντες οἱ μὲν ἐν τῆ νήσῳ Σικελίας ἐξέπλευσαν, οἱ καὶ εἰς ἐτι εἰσὶν ἐν αὐτῇ ἐν τόπῳ καλουμένῳ Δέμενα καὶ Δεμενίται ἀντὶ Λακεδαιμονιῶν κατονομαζόμενοι καὶ τὴν ἰδίαν τῶν Λακῶνων διάλεκτον διασώζοντες. Οἱ δὲ δύσβατον τόπον παρὰ τὸν τῆς θαλάσσης αἰγιαλὸν εὐρόντες καὶ πόλιν ὄχυρᾶν οἰκοδομήσαντες καὶ Μονεμβασίαν ταύτην ὀνομάσαντες διὰ τὸ μίαν ἔχειν τῶν ἐν αὐτῷ εἰσπορευομένων τὴν εἴσοδον ἐν αὐτῇ τῆ πόλει κατώκησαν μετὰ καὶ τοῦ ἰδίου αὐτῶν ἐπισκόπου⁷².

»The city of Patras immigrated to the territory of Rhegium in Calabria; the Argives to the island called Orobe; and the Corinthians to the island called Aegina. The Lacones too abandoned their native soil at that time. Some sailed to the island of Sicily and they are still there in a place called Demena, call themselves Demenitae instead of Lacedaemonitae, and preserve their own Laconian dialect. Others found an inaccessible place by the seashore, built there a strong city which they called Monemvasia because there was only one way for those entering, and settled in it with their own bishop«⁷³.

The text offers a reconstruction of the settlement of off-shore islands in the Peloponnese as a response to the threat coming from the hinterland in the shape of the Slav invasions. If taken literally, as a historical document presenting a comprehensive and reliable picture of settlement change, the text presents serious problems of credibility, as discussed by previous researchers⁷⁴. Indeed, although the text speaks of a migration of residents from late antique cities, such as Corinth, Patras and Argos, archaeology has made clear that these sites were far from abandoned from 587 to 805⁷⁵. Yet, when it comes specifically to the relation of the off-shore island settlements with their contemporary urban centres, the text confirms the archaeological data discussed in Parts I and II above. At the same time, archaeological evidence, like the lead seals of the bishop of Orovei, and the manufacture of mosaic floors on Kefalos islet by Nicopolitan artists, really tempts us to believe the Chronicle’s narrative⁷⁶.

Theory: A Meaning of Practices

While this is as much as we can learn from archaeology about the reasons which led people in Byzantium to fortify, subdivide, sublet, squat, or expand their occupation to unsettled land, there is yet another way to look at these

69 Julian of Askalon, Treatise § 24.1-2.

70 Author’s English translation.

71 Julian of Askalon, Treatise § 27-29. 33. 38.

72 Chronicle of Monemvasia (Athos cod. Ivron 239) § 27-30.

73 English translation by Charanis, Chronicle 148.

74 Among several arguments against the Chronicle’s credibility are, for example, the fact that Monemvasia was founded before the Slav invasions and that set-

tlement patterns in Methana showed no evidence of any widespread disruption due to the raids. See discussion in Veikou, Histories 186 f. and n. 80.

75 Veikou, Histories 186 n. 81.

76 See the section »The Expansion of Urban Space through Selective Occupation of Off-Shore Islands« in Part II, above.

phenomena: by investigating the meaning of the very spatial practices used by those Byzantine citizens. Nigel Thrift with his non-representational social theory suggested this hermeneutic approach: instead of studying and representing social relationships, non-representational theory focuses upon practices – how human and nonhuman formations are enacted or performed – not simply on what is produced⁷⁷. Thus, it is not concerned with propositions and denials, but with insights; not with *what* was done, but with *how* it was done. Non-representational theory, then, is about practices, mundane everyday practices, that shape the conduct of human beings towards others and themselves in particular sites⁷⁸. The domain of investigation is the absorbed skillful coping of these practices and the concern is therefore »...not so much (...) with us seeing the supposedly true nature of what something is contemplatively, as with attempting to articulate how, moment by moment, we in fact conduct our practical everyday affairs – something we usually leave unacknowledged in the background to our lives«⁷⁹. Scrutiny of the particular practices reveals that subdivision, fragmentation, sharing, and expansion of the urban space are globally and historically established and recurrent social practices. Squatting, »hand-me-down« housing, purpose-built tenements, as well as informal forms of settlement from »pirated subdivisions« to irregular peri-urban townships represent a few examples of many different strategies of shelter adopted by the urban poor⁸⁰. They are the most basic ways to give form to the need for housing and shelter, they often result from countless every-day acts of adjustment, negotiation and improvisation and they have an informal, makeshift, provisional and even precarious character⁸¹.

From a cultural perspective, the hidden history of these practices is a global history. From European cities to *favela* in Brazil, *barriadas* in Peru, *kijiji* in Kenya and *jodpadpatti* in India, there is a history of makeshift cottages, precarious and informal settlements, experimental housing initiatives and radical autonomous communities (figs 4-5)⁸². It is a history shaped by a complex patchwork of customary beliefs and rights and epitomized in the widespread view »that if you can build a house between sunset and sunrise, then the owner of the land cannot expel you«⁸³. As for the fragmentation of urban space, by encroachment, subdivision, and even enclosing and gating, is also found in all continents from China to the Americas, in different forms, associated with intense social change⁸⁴. In Veronika Deffner and Johanna Hoerning's words »urban fragmentation has to be queried as both a process of

deconstructing the perception of a former urban »entirety« and of reconstructing a fragmentary urban space, as well as the fragmentary state of interwovenness of those parts that form urban societies and their space«⁸⁵.

Scholarly interpretations of these practices have traditionally seen them as expressions of proper housing precarity or as attempts to construct a radical alternative to more traditional forms of dwelling. However, more recent focalized research in cultural geography has shown a different meaning of these alternative housing practices in times of economic crises: in those times, life for a growing number of city-dwellers is reduced to a permanent state of emergency characterized by an inadequate supply of basic resources and absence of discernible infrastructures and institutions⁸⁶. This »state of emergency« also describes an unstable process of adaptation and improvisation that »enables a community to experience its life and realities in their own terms«⁸⁷. Housing construction and maintenance within informal settlements (such as the Byzantine islets) reveals how residents »learn« to operate in »contexts of profound urban inequality«. To encroach means, in this context, to open up a space for piecing together an alternative urban life through an endless adaptability and capacity for improvisation and invention. This process depends on the productive deployment of sensibilities, practices and materialities that are themselves »made possible by the very uncertainties incumbent within cities«⁸⁸. So, squatting, for example, is read as a makeshift urbanism where particular emphasis is placed on the dense matrix of practices that are central to how spaces and communities are pieced together, secured and lived⁸⁹. The fragmentation and subdivision of urban spaces, on the other hand, comes also as a sign of crises, as an expression of an increase of fear and distrust of central administration, usually accompanied by privatization of the economy⁹⁰.

These conditions fit well aspects of late antique societies in the Byzantine Empire, and especially those of the 6th to 8th centuries: fear of external enemies and of economic crises, privatization of economic sectors, distrust and restructuring of urban politics, improvisation and invention⁹¹. The spatial practices, considered in this study, seem to have sprung out of and depended upon social change and a provisional urban politics which was continuously made and remade; there, marginalization could be »read differently« as a zone of association and possibility, survival and subversion, within the general re-arrangement of available space and under the universal quest for reinvention of the »city« and of the overall

77 Thrift, Non-representational theory.

78 Thrift, Still Point 126-127.

79 Shotter, Wittgenstein 2. – Thrift, Still Point 127.

80 Vasudevan, Makeshift city passim, esp. 341.

81 Vasudevan, Makeshift city passim, esp. 340.

82 Vasudevan, Makeshift city 341-355.

83 Ward, Cotters and Squatters 5.

84 Bayon/Saravi, Urban Fragmentation. – Low, Theory. – Deffner/Hoerning, Fragmentation. – Cosacov/Perelman, Public Space.

85 Deffner/Hoerning, Fragmentation 1.

86 Simone, Yet to Come 4. 13.

87 Simone, Yet to Come 5.

88 Simone, Emergency 13.

89 Vasudevan, Makeshift city.

90 Bayon/Saravi, Urban Fragmentation. – Low, Theory. – Deffner/Hoerning, Fragmentation. – Carson/Koch, Divining.

91 Laiou/Morrisson, Economy 38-49. – Maas, Age of Justinian 34-38 (esp. 37), 107-110. 113-160. – Brubaker/Haldon, Iconoclasm 9-31. 482-530, esp. 506-511. – Ine Jacobs links the encroachment of public spaces in late antique cities with private economic activity (Jacobs, Aesthetic Maintenance 622-643).



Fig. 4 Favela Rocinha, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. – (Courtesy of VideoBlocks).

settlement patterns⁹². This need was manifested in people's claims of spaces as an exercise in place-making (where building one's own home meant creating his own world) or in people's acting through a »homebased entrepreneurialism«⁹³. These agencies are manifested both in material culture and in the narrative aspects of official texts considered in this study. Archaeology shows that this seeking for an alternative city in fact resulted in several alternatives of urbanism between the 6th and 9th century: »ruralised« city, »city in islands«, »transferred« or »shifted« city, and »continuous« cities⁹⁴. This experimentation with urban-settlement formations seems to close with the »alternative city« found in the type of the fortified Byzantine kastron⁹⁵. At the same time, overall settlement patterns were also radically transformed, as expressed by a dense habitation of the countryside which further developed at least until the 14th century⁹⁶.

Conclusions

This is probably as much as one can currently learn from archaeology and texts about the reasons which lead people in Byzantium to subdivide, sublet, squat and occupy unsettled land, thus practicing fragmentation and expansion of their ur-



Fig. 5 Berlin, squatted building. – (Courtesy of Interactivity – Place of Urban Space).

ban space. Archaeology, on the one hand, offers information on people's life when they no longer exist; texts, on the other hand, offer the very people's speaking voices at the time when they are handling their lives through a development of

92 Luca Zavagno has equally interpreted the general transformation of urban space as a process for re-construction of the city in a multi-functioning manner (Zavagno, Transformation 153-171).

93 Saradi, Subdivision 40-43. – Saradi, City 471.

94 Haldon, Transformation 612. – Zavagno, Transformation. – Zanini, End. – Decker, Dark Ages.

95 Haldon, Transformation 614. – Veikou, Epirus 331-362.

96 Lefort/Sodini/Morrisson, Villages. – For a discussion of settlement in the countryside during this period see Decker, Dark Ages 123-154.

practices. The further investigation of Byzantine spatial practices and their historical circumstances from a sociocultural perspective, can produce some modest conceptual signposts for building alternative approaches to shared city-life during that period, which resonate both within specific settlements and across a broader translocal landscape. I here tried to show that such transformations involved spatial practices whose cultural interpretation turns out central for our deciphering of

a profound social change from the decline of the old urban elite to the emergence of the new Byzantine upper class of a different social origin. Following the ancient instructions by Julian of Askalon, mentioned in the title of this study, the old uses and management rules of spaces allow us to strongly suggest that the investigation of spatial practices is important because it entails passing from a »topography of power« to a »geography of power« within the Byzantine studies.

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Zusammenfassung / Summary / Résumé

Übergriff, Unterteilung und Expansion: eine kulturelle Interpretation der byzantinischen Raumtransformation (6.-9. Jahrhundert)

Das Papier prüft Informationen über byzantinische säkulare und religiöse Räume (Gebäude, Siedlungen, Landschaften), die sich aus archäologischen Zeugnissen und Texten ableiten, um ihre Transformationen vom 6. bis zum 9. Jahrhundert zu definieren und interpretieren. Die Transformationen in städtischen, ländlichen und anderen Umgebungen werden vergleichend ausgewertet, sodass politische, wirtschaftliche und kulturelle Aspekte in eine Diskussion über: a) die Strukturen, die transformiert wurden, b) das menschliche Handlungen, die die Transformationen bewirkten, und c) die Probleme, die für diese Handlungen verantwortlich sind, einbezogen werden. Diese Entwicklungen werden mit Hilfe aktueller archäologischer Handlungstheorien und Non-representational theory (oder Praxeologie) der Kulturgeographie angegangen. Diese Theorien werden verwendet, um den Schwerpunkt von der Bedeutungen der Erzeugnisse menschlichen Handelns auf die Bedeutungen menschlicher, »gewöhnheitsmäßiger« Alltagspraktiken in Byzanz zu verlagern; das Hauptargument für diese Verlagerung ist, dass die Untersuchung sozialer Praktiken nicht-intentionalistische Darstellungen byzantinischer Transformationshandlungen ermöglicht.

Empiètement, subdivision et expansion: une interprétation culturelle de la transformation spatiale dans l'Empire byzantin (6^e-9^e siècle)

Cet article examine les informations provenant de témoins archéologiques et de textes concernant les espaces byzantins, séculiers et religieux (bâtiments, agglomérations, paysages), pour définir et interpréter leurs transformations du 6^e au 9^e siècle. On procède à une évaluation comparative des transformations en milieux urbains, ruraux et autres de manière à pouvoir intégrer les aspects politiques, économiques et culturels dans une discussion sur: a) les structures transfor-

Encroachment, Subdivision, and Expansion: a Cultural Interpretation of Byzantine Spatial Transformation (6th-9th Century)

The paper considers information on Byzantine secular and religious spaces (buildings, settlements, landscapes), deriving from archaeological evidence and texts, in order to define and interpret their transformations from the 6th to the 9th centuries. Transformations in urban, rural and other environments are comparatively evaluated so as to allow involving political, economic and cultural aspects in a discussion of: a) the structures, which were transformed, b) the human agencies, which produced the transformations, and c) the challenges responsible for these agencies. These developments are approached through contemporary archaeological theories of agency and non-representational theories (or theories of practices) in cultural geography. These theories are used to shift focus from the meanings of products of human agency into the meanings of human, »habitual« everyday practices in Byzantium; the main argument in favour of this shift is that the scrutiny of social practices allows non-intentionalist accounts of Byzantine transformation acts.

mées; b) les actes qui ont conduit à ces transformations; c) les défis responsables de ces actes. Ces développements sont abordés par le biais de théories de l'action archéologiques et de « non-representational theories » (ou praxéologie) de la géographie culturelle. On utilise ces théories pour déplacer l'accent mis sur le sens des produits des actes humains vers celui des activités quotidiennes « habituelles » dans l'Empire byzantin. L'étude des activités sociales, qui permet d'identifier des actes de transformation non-intentionnels dans l'Empire byzantin, fournit l'argument essentiel pour ce changement de perspective.

Traduction: Y. Gautier