

The Rhetoric of Christianization in Thessaloniki: Saint Demetrios

Research Thesis

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by

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## Introduction

Within Thessaloniki, a large but unassuming church looms over the central part of the city, dedicated to the patron, Saint Demetrios (figures 1 and 2).<sup>1</sup> The stone facade of the building is sparsely decorated, though it may have been at one point during the building's long history. Stepping inside the building transports the viewer from the cityscape around them into an awe-inspiring other world (figure 3). While much of the original decoration has been destroyed due to various disasters, the glittering mosaics and colorful wall paintings attest to the skill and wealth within both the city and the church. Several churches are located surrounding the old city with newer sections built beyond the structures, enveloping the churches and integrating them into the modern city. Hagios Demetrios has a prominent position within the city, emphasizing the status of the patron saint. Devotion to the saint has become an intrinsic part of Thessaloniki, but how did this Saint and the church gain such power and prestige? Examining the beginnings of the cult of Saint Demetrios provides the most complete picture of how religion and aesthetics converge to construct the strategies that conferred Christian power on the Saint and the city. While I do not have the space to consider nearly 1600 years of history and worship, I will consider how early Byzantine history and rhetoric shaped the fabric of Saint Demetrios' cult, examining the Christianization of Thessaloniki through Late Antique cults, the establishment of Hagios Demetrios, the changing depictions of Saint Demetrios, and the relics related to the Saint. Beginning with the pre-Christian city, I will explore the religious background that allows for the

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<sup>1</sup> For more information on the construction of Hagios Demetrios and background information on Thessaloniki, see Dimitriadis, E.P. "Thessaloniki: 2300 Years of Continuous Urban Life." *Ekistics* 53, no. 316/317 (1986): 111–20. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/43620707>. And Bakirtzis, Charalambos. "Late Antiquity and Christianity in Thessalonike: Aspects of a Transformation," in *From Roman to Early Christian Thessalonike Studies in Religion and Archaeology*, edited by Laura Nasrullah, Charalambos Bakirtzis, and Steven J. Friesen, 397–426. Cambridge: Harvard Theological Studies, 2010.

cult of Saint Demetrios to develop before examining the history of the Saint and the church dedicated to him. Going into the church, I will survey the early depictions of the saint before discussing an image change seen within the church and relics that spread beyond Thessaloniki.

With scant evidence of the early cult of Saint Demetrios, the way in which I will examine the effects of the growing following focuses on the changing fabric of the city, from urban spaces to religious rhetoric; the findings may offer broader implications for the development of the early Christian city. When discussing rhetoric, I will focus on the practices and strategies employed to further Christianize Thessaloniki, while the cult of Saint Demetrios refers to the amassing followers of the saint and their practices. The discourse surrounding the saint, his relics, and his church form the core of the cult throughout the ages, but this rhetoric is nowhere as intense as in the cult's earliest development. Hagios Demetrios, though reconstructed several times in its history, served as the focal point of cult devotion, housing relics and dispersing a few relics now housed in several locations.<sup>2</sup> While much discussion of Saint Demetrios focuses on his historical status, we must examine how the saint's power was focused within the city and the broader Mediterranean region in relation to other saints and the power the church had. New strategies were emerging to establish the dominance of Christianity, such as a focus on salvation and a more tactile approach to worship, leading people to seek out Christian martyrs instead of the older pagan gods.

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<sup>2</sup> To examine the span of relics of the cult of Saint Demetrios, see McCormack, Robin. *Writing in Gold Byzantine Society and Its Icons*. London: George Philip, 1985. And Veneskey, Laura. "Truth and Mimesis in Byzantium: A Speaking Reliquary of Saint Demetrios of Thessaloniki," in *Art History* 42, no. 1 (2019): 16-39. <https://doi.org/10.1111/1467-8365.12412>

## Pre-Christian Thessaloniki

Within late Antique Thessaloniki, several cults of Roman and Egyptian gods existed but were slowly overtaken during the Christianization of the city beginning with the reign of Constantine. As outlined through archaeological evidence, a pervasive religious scene with a polytheistic approach encompassed the city, with one of the most notable locations being the Sarapeion, dedicated to the Greco-Egyptian god Serapis.<sup>3</sup> Many religions appeared within the city, with a larger amount of evidence attesting to the prevalence of the cults of the Egyptian goddess Isis, the Greek god Asclepios, and the Romanized god Bacchus.<sup>4</sup> Votives to Osiris, dedicated by initiates of the cult were found dated to the late second century B.C.E<sup>5</sup> The language of the inscriptions on many of the votives found throughout the city were mimicked in later Christian inscriptions on donated objects, though later Byzantine donors would insert themselves into the grand mosaics in a church, through name or image.<sup>6</sup>

While the interactions between donor or devotee and votive is similar in both pagan and Christian contexts, within Thessaloniki, the Christians took their self-insertion and grandeur further. The majority of the votives recovered from late Antique Egyptian cults in Thessaloniki were straightforward, with simple iconography, such as a relief of ears with an inscription stating, “according to a vow, Phouphikia to Isis for hearing.”<sup>7</sup> However, Christian donors, usually bishops or wealthy church members, would place themselves in positions of prominence,

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<sup>3</sup> Helmut Koester. “Egyptian religion in Thessalonike: Regulation for the Cult,” in *From Roman to Early Christian Thessalonike Studies in Religion and Archaeology*, ed. Laura Nasrullah, Charalambos Bakirtzis, and Steven J.Friesen (Cambridge: Harvard Theological Studies, 2010), 134.

<sup>4</sup> Koester, “Egyptian religion in Thessalonike: Regulation for the Cult,” 133.

<sup>5</sup> Koester, “Egyptian religion in Thessalonike: Regulation for the Cult,” 141.

<sup>6</sup> Annemarie Weyl Carr. “Donors in the Frames of Icons: Living in the Borders of Byzantine Art.” *Gesta* 45, no. 2 (2006): 191-192.

<sup>7</sup> Koester, “Egyptian religion in Thessalonike: Regulation for the Cult,” 144.

such as next to a saint as can be seen in Hagios Demetrios where Saint Demetrios stands flanked by a bishop and eparch who are encapsulated by the saint's arms (figure 4 ).<sup>8</sup> With similar rhetoric, the Christian saints could take the place of the pagan cults, especially with the rapid spread of the homogenizing religion taking over much of the Mediterranean .

Previously used buildings like the Asklepieion and Sarapeion, both of which served as healing temples within the city, were frequented less in favor of the hospital attached to Hagios Demetrios, an effect of the Christianization of the city and break away from the traditional pagan gods.<sup>9</sup> Miracles performed by the saint, later accounted for in the *Miracula* further drove Thessalonians to seek out Christianity and its sites rather than the traditional pagan ones. The saint's *Miracula* can be split between healing miracles and protection focused on the city of Thessaloniki.<sup>10</sup> Earlier miracles performed by Saint Demetrios focused on healing others and protecting children while later miracles involved protecting Thessaloniki entirely from invaders, both of which would have cultivated intense loyalty to the saint protecting one's city and people. However, the early depiction of Saint Demetrios as a healer does not align with the later warrior saint seen after 600 C.E, except for the continued thread of protection of the people, indicating a reshaping of the persona of the saint.<sup>11</sup>

Christian saints were divine people who were martyred or suffered for their staunch belief in Christianity, interestingly however Greco-Roman religions had similar figures. While

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<sup>8</sup> Robin McCormack. *Writing in Gold Byzantine Society and Its Icons* (London: George Philip, 1985), 52-53.

<sup>9</sup> Charalambos Bakirtzis. "Late Antiquity and Christianity in Thessalonike: Aspects of a Transformation," in *From Roman to Early Christian Thessalonike Studies in Religion and Archaeology*, ed. Laura Nasrullah, Charalambos Bakirtzis, and Steven J. Friesen (Cambridge: Harvard Theological Studies, 2010), 400-402.

<sup>10</sup> James C Skedros. "Response to David Woods." *The Harvard Theological Review* 93, no. 3 (2000): 237.

Charalambos Bakirtzis. "Pilgrimage to Thessalonike: The Tomb of St. Demetrios." *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 56 (2002): 191.

<sup>11</sup> Warren T. Woodfin. "An Officer and a Gentleman: Transformations in the Iconography of a Warrior Saint." *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 60 (2006): 112.

we cannot call these non-Christians Saints, people who gained a larger cult following like Apollonius of Tyana, were considered divinely touched and had a possibility for apotheosis, becoming a god.<sup>12</sup> Christian saints also had this divinity seen with the Greco-Roman cult figures, yet they were not to become God, as Christ was the embodiment of God, instead they remained as divinely touched figures close to God for their unwavering belief in him. Using this divide between newly emerging Christian tradition and older precedent, Christianity made divinity more accessible as strong faith and suffering seemed to be the prerequisite for Sainthood, while Greco-Roman culture raised great thinkers and miracle workers already divinely touched to such a prominent position within cult worship. While sanctity elevates the chosen person into a higher status and increases their power, however changing the definition of sanctity can shake the foundation of one person's divinity while strengthening another's, as later Christian writers did with respect to Greco-Roman "saints."<sup>13</sup> While continuity exists between the older, "lived" religions of the Mediterranean, Christianity employed new rhetoric to solidify the religion's hold while destabilizing others.

Christianity's Holy Trinity enforces a tradition that relies on the intangible Holy Spirit to guide morality, however prior to the emergence of the religion, spirits and supernatural entities had more complex relationships within religion.<sup>14</sup> Death and the afterlife becomes an extreme focus within Christianity, just as in Egyptian culture, however Christianity offers salvation for the soul while other religions offer a life after death. Rather than extending mortal life to the souls of the dead, Christianity focuses on the redemption of the soul and entering a space,

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<sup>12</sup> Jas' Elsner. "Beyond Compare: Pagan Saint and Christian God in Late Antiquity." *Critical Inquiry* 35, no. 3 (2009): 656.

<sup>13</sup> Elsner. "Beyond Compare: Pagan Saint and Christian God in Late Antiquity." 661.

<sup>14</sup> For more on the relationship between supernatural entities in religions, see David Frankfurter. "Where the Spirits Dwell: Possession, Christianization, and Saints' Shrines in Late Antiquity." *The Harvard Theological Review* 103, no. 1 (2010):27-48.

heaven, without the struggles of mortal life. Within Thessaloniki, Egyptian cults to Isis and Osiris existed, with Osiris being the god of the dead and the afterlife, judging the heart of the deceased and allowing the *ka*, soul, to continue into its life after death. The presence of these cults within the city denotes an interest in death and life after death, which Christianity heavily focused on by offering the salvation of a soul and forgiveness of sin that taints the soul. Salvation for Christians also mimics the transactional relationships of Greco-Roman human-God relations, with an offering being made in return for the agreed upon item. Miracles from Saints were granted to those who would make the trek to the shrine but beyond the devotee being of Christian faith and praying at the shrine no offering was strictly necessary, creating a powerful shift that no longer required a sacrifice beyond belief. Associated with the saving or damnation of a soul, angels and demons became the Christian version of helpful and hurtful spirits who influence humans. However, spirits within different religions serve purposes beyond influencing the morality of living, usually existing as the souls of the dead who may watch over their living relatives without interaction or live their own lives after death. Christianity takes the idea of spirits and souls to enforce a moral code of a new design to shape devotees of the religion.

With the phasing out of these pagan gods under Christian worship, the cults of saints began to fill the religious need left open. Across several Christian cities, especially Greco-Roman ones, local martyrs became elevated to patrons of the city, similar to the patron gods of old. Keeping to tradition, the patron would bless and protect their cities. Athens, under the protection of Athena, flourished as a center of wisdom and learning in Ancient Greece, while Thessaloniki under Saint Demetrios was protected in battles against several enemies during the

middle and late Byzantine period, as recorded in the *Miracula*.<sup>15</sup> As the structure of religion began to change in the city, having a dedicated local saint not only filled the open niche left by the pagan gods but focused power and worship on an approved Christian martyr, lending power to those in the Christian church also. Worshipping gods in cult-like devotion was already part of Thessalonian civic identity, so the transfer of worship from an Egyptian god to a Christian Saint was not a difficult one.

### **Saint Demetrios: History and Fiction**

Contentions surround many Saints historical personhood, with Saint Demetrios being a prominent example of the uncertainty of historicism. James Skedros asserts that the earliest extant martyrologies like the *Syriac Martyrology* or the *Hieronymian Martyrology* do not contain full accounts of all saints—a point that is not contested—with a specific lack of mention of several of the Thessalonian martyrs that appear in the mosaic program of the Rotunda.<sup>16</sup> As these martyrologies help us to determine which saints were historical instead of created, the incomplete nature of the accounts draws us to consider whether Saint Demetrios ever even existed. While my argument does not rely on Demetrios a historical person, much of the scholarship on the saint revolves around his historical personhood.

For example, David Woods argues that Saint Demetrios was a fabricated saint derived from a mistranslation of another saint, Saint Emeterius, whose relics were likely translocated from Spain to Thessaloniki by Emperor Theodosius I.<sup>17</sup> The similarities between Saints

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<sup>15</sup> Alice-Mary Talbot. "Pilgrimage to Healing Shrines: The Evidence of Miracle Accounts." *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 56 (2002): 155.

<sup>16</sup> Skedros. "Response to David Woods." 231.

<sup>17</sup>David Woods. "Thessalonica's Patron: Saint Demetrius or Emeterius?" *The Harvard Theological Review* 93, no. 3 (2000): 231.



Demetrios and Emeterius, as outlined by Woods, with similar relics and the connection of both as warrior saints, are notable.<sup>18</sup> As the early cult of Saint Demetrios remains shrouded in mystery, the early miracle of the saint preformed for Prefect Leontios circa 412/13, who found the dilapidated shrine of Demetrios, led to the building of Hagios Demetrios and a reinvigoration of the cult of the saint.<sup>19</sup> With such scant evidence of the Saint cult before the documented miracle with Leontios, Woods' argument of the translocation of a Saint from Spain holds some potential to explain the shrine found by the prefect. However, another possibility involves the translation of relics of Saint Demetrius of Sirmium to Thessaloniki, as proposed by the great Belgian translator and editor of hagiographies, Hippolyte Delehaye due to the similar name and absence of Saint Demetrios from the early martyrologies.<sup>20</sup> However, this theory has issues as Saint Demetrius of Sirmium is a warrior saint, while early Saint Demetrios was not.<sup>21</sup> Many of these competing theories focus on the movement of saints and their relics but with little resolution to the question of who Demetrios is or if he was a historical person.

Thus, there are several competing theories of who Demetrios was and where his cult originated from, with connections between Saint Demetrius of Sirmium, Saint Emeterius, and Saint Symeon the Younger.<sup>22</sup> The connections between these saints arise in the similarities of their relics, miracles, and martyrdoms, all of which increase the likelihood that Saint Demetrios was created and not a historical saint, with information pulled from many sources to build the rhetoric surrounding the patron Saint of Thessaloniki. The city had few well-known martyrs at the turn of the fifth century, allowing an opportunity for the newly and slowly Christianized city

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<sup>18</sup> Woods. "Thessalonica's Patron: Saint Demetrius or Emeterius?" 229-230.

<sup>19</sup> Woods. "Thessalonica's Patron: Saint Demetrius or Emeterius?" 233-234.

<sup>20</sup> Woods. "Thessalonica's Patron: Saint Demetrius or Emeterius?" 224.

<sup>21</sup> Skedros. "Response to David Woods." 239.

<sup>22</sup> Woods. "Thessalonica's Patron: Saint Demetrius or Emeterius?" 233.

Gary Vikan. "Art, Medicine, and Magic in Early Byzantium." *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 38 (1984): 68.

to elevate a Saint and develop a new focus on Christianity through a grand local tale. By giving the people a point of worship, the church that controls access to the saint, his relics, and mythology thereby can exert control over the population who worships the saint.

Using the later texts describing the martyrdom and *Miracula* of Saint Demetrios provides insight into the priorities of the archbishop who wrote the account and what the church desired from their congregations at this time. These accounts of the *Miracles* along with the *Passio altera*, which describes the life of the saint and his martyrdom dated from, can be viewed with a focus on the legitimization of Thessaloniki as a Christian city rather than as historical truth, though some truth may lie in the writing. Woods uses the *Passio altera* as a case study to compare Saint Demetrios and Saint Emeterius, both of whom have the same kinds of relics, which are exceedingly rare in a majority of martyrdom accounts.<sup>23</sup> Saint Emeterius was recorded having a ring and orarion as relics and as the *Passio altera* records “Demetrios’ slave, Loupos, collects the martyr’s *orarion* and ring, covered with his blood.”<sup>24</sup> This text also contains the longest form of Saint Demetrios’ mythology, with several more episodes than the other two shorter forms of the life of the saint.<sup>25</sup> Woods’ argument relies heavily on this version of the text but, the commonalities between the different forms become the focal point of his discussion, though for my purposes these commonalities are points for rhetorical dissection.

One of the main continuities between texts is the existence of the relics of Saint Demetrios. They focus the power of the saint posthumously, especially if direct contact with the saint’s body is not available.<sup>26</sup> Owning these relics creates exclusivity and the privatization of the

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<sup>23</sup> Woods. “Thessalonica’s Patron: Saint Demetrius or Emeterius?” 227.

<sup>24</sup> “Martyrdom of Demetrios of Thessalonike,” *Passio Altera* BHG 437, Accessed 10 April 2023, <http://esla.history.ox.ac.uk/record.php?recid=E01344>.

<sup>25</sup> Woods. “Thessalonica’s Patron: Saint Demetrius or Emeterius?” 226.

<sup>26</sup> Woods. “Thessalonica’s Patron: Saint Demetrius or Emeterius?” 226.

saint, which can control who has access and when, therefore commodifying the saint's power. The church held many of these objects, with later anecdotes about how any requests for relics from Constantinople were expertly rejected, as Thessaloniki was well-known for its late Byzantine intellectuals and their oration.<sup>27</sup> Another of the continuities between accounts focuses on the location of Saint Demetrios' martyrdom, the Roman bath in which he was imprisoned until his death. From the *Passio altera*, Saint Demetrios was imprisoned to the furnaces of the baths and Emperor Maximian ordered his death by spears in the place of imprisonment.<sup>28</sup> The location of the saint's martyrdom matters significantly when the church dedicated to the saint was built on top of the ruins of a Roman bath, supposedly the same one he was martyred at. While Saint Demetrios was not the only saint martyred here, as were other conspirators closely associated with Demetrios, several baths existed across the late Antique city with no true indication of which served as the martyrdom site.<sup>29</sup> Therefore, the choice of location for Hagios Demetrios becomes significant, especially when considering how close to the central section of the city the church is compared to the other churches built at the same time, like the Acheiropoietos.<sup>30</sup>

### **History of Hagios Demetrios**

Hagios Demetrios was deliberately placed in a central part of the city, over the ruins of the old Roman bath said to have held the saint during his imprisonment (figure 5). The Saint preached within the coppersmiths' portico before being brought to Maximian in the central

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<sup>27</sup> Franz Tinnefeld. "Intellectuals in Late Byzantine Thessalonike." *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 57 (2003): 168. Bakirtzis. "Pilgrimage to Thessalonike: The Tomb of St. Demetrios." 178.

<sup>28</sup> University of Oxford, "Martyrdom of Demetrios of Thessalonike."

<sup>29</sup> For more on the martyrdom of Saint Demetrios and his early followers, see Christopher Walter. *The Warrior Saints in Byzantine Art and Tradition*, published by Ashgate, England 2003.

<sup>30</sup> Sharon E.J. Gerstel., Kyriakakis, Chris, Raptis, Konstantinos T., Antonopoulos, Spyridon, and Donahue, James. "Soundscapes of Byzantium: The Acheiropoietos Basilica and the Cathedral of Hagia Sophis in Thessaloniki," *Hesperia: The Journal of the American School of Classical Studies at Athens* 87 no. 1 (Jan-March 2018): 180.

forum of the city for judgement and sentencing to imprisonment within the caldarium of the bath.<sup>31</sup> Saint Demetrios was held and martyred by the furnaces of the *caldarium* within the Roman baths, remains of which were discovered by archaeologists below Hagios Demetrios.<sup>32</sup> While connected to the historical site of the martyrdom of the Saint, the placement of the church in a prominent location cannot be ignored. Other churches built around the same time in the city were placed along the outskirts of the city with roads creating connections between them.<sup>33</sup> However, the centrality of Hagios Demetrios integrates the martyr into the everyday urban fabric of the city, localizing and legitimizing the power of the saint on the place of his prominent martyrdom.

Urban planning in Thessaloniki has a long history, with the uniting of several smaller groups by Cassander, one of the successors of Alexander the Great.<sup>34</sup> The city was essentially created in a grid according to different economic sectors. Once conquered by the Romans, during the Tetrarchy, a period where four emperors ruled the Empire, many of the Tetrarchs made their way to the city where only Galerius created a palatial complex, with the Rotunda that would later be transformed into Hagios Georgios.<sup>35</sup> Since the Tetrarchy, Thessaloniki was home to several higher-level officials and intellectuals, with emperors periodically seating themselves in the city, such as Emperor Theodosius I.<sup>36</sup> In the Early Christian period, Thessaloniki became home to the

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<sup>31</sup> University of Oxford, "Martyrdom of Demetrios of Thessalonike."

<sup>32</sup> Walter. *The Warrior Saints in Byzantine Art and Tradition*.

<sup>33</sup> Laura Nasrallah. "Empire and Apocalypse in Thessaloniki: Interpreting the Early Christian Rotunda." *Journal of Early Christian Studies* 13 no.4 (2005): 471-472.

<sup>34</sup> Michael Vickers. "Hellenistic Thessaloniki," *The Society for the Promotion of Hellenic Studies* 92 (1972): 169.

<sup>35</sup> Nasrallah. "Empire and Apocalypse in Thessaloniki: Interpreting the Early Christian Rotunda." 465-467.

<sup>36</sup> For more on the changing landscape of Byzantine Thessalonike, see Bakirtzis, Charalambos. "The Urban Continuity and Size of Late Byzantine Thessalonike." *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 57 (2003): 35-64. and Tinnefeld, Franz. "Intellectuals in Late Byzantine Thessalonike." *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 57 (2003): 153-72.

Byzantine army and the economy continued to thrive through trade and industry.<sup>37</sup> A multitude of factors led to the influential position Thessaloniki was acquiring within the empire, both as a political and industrial center and a Christian city. As the city was slowly Christianized, a particular focus on building projects, such as the Acheiropoietos and Hagios Demetrios, began bringing worship into the urban center.

Hagios Demetrios has been transformed many times throughout its long history. The original basilica was built by Leontios in the fifth century following a miraculous healing by the saint. “In the times after the triumph of Christianity, the Praetorian Prefect Leontios, on his way to Dacia, falls ill and is transported by his people to the shrine of Demetrios, where he is immediately healed. Giving thanks, he has a church built for the martyr, between the bathhouse and the stadium.”<sup>38</sup> Masonry and brick stamps in the building provide the dating for the basilica to the late fifth century.<sup>39</sup> The Theodosian capitals that appear along the aisles also help to date the construction of the original church, though *spolia* was common so these capitals alone are not enough to ascertain the date of the structure.<sup>40</sup> Incorporating columns, marble slabs from temples, and decorations from other monuments into a new church or memorial was not an uncommon practice, as evidenced by the Arch of Constantine in Rome, with reliefs dating from the reigns of Hadrian and Trajan.

*Spolia* reinforced the power of an emperor and the legitimacy of their reign, as seen in the case of Constantine, churches used this rhetoric also, but in pursuit of creating a heavenly space

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<sup>37</sup>Anastassios Ch. Antonaras. *Arts, Crafts and Trades in Ancient and Byzantine Thessaloniki Archaeological, Literary and Epigraphic Evidence*. Germany: Romisch-Germanischen Zentralmuseums, 2016, 15-21.

<sup>38</sup> University of Oxford, “Martyrdom of Demetrios of Thessalonike.”

<sup>39</sup> Eugene W. Kleinbauer. “Some Observations on the Dating of S. Demetrios in Thessaloniki.” *Byzantion* 40, no. 1 (1970): 38.

<sup>40</sup> Kleinbauer. “Some Observations on the Dating of S. Demetrios in Thessaloniki.” 39.

Cynthia Hahn. “Seeing and Believing: The Construction of Sanctity in Early-Medieval Saints’ Shrines.” *Speculum* 72, no. 4 (1997): 1082.

to honor the saints and God while legitimizing the power of the site.<sup>41</sup> Much of the marble adorning the walls of Hagios Demetrios came from older building projects, like temples, conferring the power of the older space to the new.<sup>42</sup> This church, along with a silver ciborium at the center and an icon of the Saint, stood until it was burned down following an earthquake in the early seventh century.<sup>43</sup> A new basilica was renewed under the archbishop of Thessaloniki, with an inscription in the nave marking the date.<sup>44</sup> The new structure is thought to retain the same form as the old. However, the ciborium was later moved from the center of the church to the northwest side of the church during the occupation by the Turks.<sup>45</sup> Following the end of the occupation of Thessaloniki by the Turks in 1912, Hagios Demetrios returned to Christian worship before it largely burnt down in 1917 (figure 6).<sup>46</sup> The church was rebuilt several times, incorporating the old structure, and retaining as much of the original plan as possible.

Hagios Demetrios became an important monument within Thessaloniki, indicative of the power and well-being of the city. Reconstructions following natural disasters affected not only the church but larger areas of the city, creating cyclical restructurings. As part of the central landscape, Hagios Demetrios provided not only a site for worship but a communal gathering space, as evidenced by the large sized basilica with a fairly open layout. The design of the basilica focuses on the experience of the church as a public and collective experience, where privacy is afforded to few people. Paintings and mosaics within the space are placed in an imposing position, out of reach of the people frequenting the church, but highly visible, making the depictions a removed and astounding but normalized part of everyday viewing. Power was

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<sup>41</sup> Hahn. "Seeing and Believing: The Construction of Sanctity in Early-Medieval Saints' Shrines." 1082.

<sup>42</sup> Hahn. "Seeing and Believing: The Construction of Sanctity in Early-Medieval Saints' Shrines." 1091.

<sup>43</sup> Kleinbauer. "Some Observations on the Dating of S. Demetrios in Thessaloniki." 37.

<sup>44</sup> Kleinbauer. "Some Observations on the Dating of S. Demetrios in Thessaloniki." 38.

<sup>45</sup> Bakirtzis. "Pilgrimage to Thessalonike: The Tomb of St. Demetrios." 176-178.

<sup>46</sup> Kleinbauer. "Some Observations on the Dating of S. Demetrios in Thessaloniki." 36.

directed through the space by sightlines, encouraging people to look upwards in submissive positions to engage with mosaics or drawing their gaze to the central aisle, leading to the ciborium and apse mosaic. While the church is dedicated to a single saint, similar to other martyria, which were burial places and shrines for saints, the scale of the space and the basilica layout of Hagios Demetrios changes how people would interact with the saint and the broader community.<sup>47</sup> Within martyria, the focal point was the relic or shrine of the saint, with power directed solely to the saint through focused sight on the objects. However, Hagios Demetrios expands the direction of power solely from the Saint to include the community of Thessaloniki, establishing a collective spatial experience. The variety of mosaics and panels within the church expand beyond the saint, further blending the communal space and divine martyrism.

### **Hagios Demetrios: Early Depictions and Their Strategies**

The current-day church has five aisles terminating in a protruding transept, forming the shape of a Latin cross (figure 7). The central section of the transept is raised, forming a sanctuary with an apse mosaic depicting the Virgin and child flanked by two angels, a later addition to the church's decoration. An early depiction of Saint Demetrios includes children approaching the Saint's ciborium to make offerings and pray, with this mosaic likely being one of the earlier points of worship and interest for pilgrims. The mosaic uses glittering silver and gold tesserae, particularly on the ciborium, to emphasize the divinity of the object and to radiate divine light from the supposed tomb of the saint with the Saint just behind his relic and out of reach, both

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<sup>47</sup> For more on sightlines in martyria, see Yasin, Ann Marie. (2012). "Sight Lines of Sanctity at Late Antique Martyria," in *Architecture of the Sacred: Space, Ritual, and Experience from Classical Greece to Byzantium*. pp. 248-80. New York, NY: Cambridge University

from the children and the viewer.<sup>48</sup> While the early depiction focuses on the saint as a protector of children, the inclusion of the children approaching the ciborium reinforces the idea of the saint's soul resting within his relic as an intermediate for his tomb. The mosaic also subtly suggests that the best or only way to commune with the saint was through interaction with his ciborium, which was owned by the church in which it rests, advising local pilgrims and church attendees to return to the church. Saint Demetrios as a protector grounds the saint in his community, reinforcing the specificity of the site of the cult and the Saint's martyrdom, continuously building the rhetoric of the Saint's legitimacy of power, and by extension Thessaloniki's.

Several other mosaic programs adorn the walls of Hagios Demetrios, with a set of votive panels along the northside of main aisle.<sup>49</sup> Though the panels are not completely intact, likely due to the fire occurred in the church in the seventh century and the later 1917 fire, which destroyed many of the mosaics some of which were redone later, though these remain incomplete. While some contention around the exact chronology of the mosaics exists, Robin McCormack suggests many of the votive panel mosaics were created in the fifth century alongside the construction of the church.<sup>50</sup> The iconography of these panels is consistent with other fifth-century depictions, especially the panel which associates Saint Demetrios and the Virgin as discussed in a homily delivered in Thessaloniki near the end of the fifth century.<sup>51</sup> Many of the mosaics in the Acheiropoietos basilica and the Rotunda contain similar iconographies, like in the tribelon mosaics in the aisle of the Acheiropoietos or the technical

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<sup>48</sup> Bente Kiilerich. "Color, Light and Luminosity in The Rotunda Mosaics," in *The Mosaics of Thessaloniki Revisited Papers from the 2014 Symposium at The Courtauld Institute of Art*, ed. Anthony Eastmond, Myrto HatzakiGreece: Kapon Editions, 2017, 56-59.

<sup>49</sup> Kleinbauer. "Some Observations on the Dating of S. Demetrios in Thessaloniki." 37.

<sup>50</sup> Kleinbauer. "Some Observations on the Dating of S. Demetrios in Thessaloniki." 39-40.

<sup>51</sup> Kleinbauer. "Some Observations on the Dating of S. Demetrios in Thessaloniki." 40-41.



devices in the Rotunda mosaics dated from the third quarter of the fifth century.<sup>52</sup> The tesserae of several mosaics inside Hagios Demetrios are tilted, which causes light to scatter at different angles, reflecting the earlier Greek aesthetic of color through the motion of light rather than the actual hue of a color.<sup>53</sup> Inside the Rotunda, a similar tilting can be seen in the early Christian mosaics.<sup>54</sup> While the similarities of the mosaics across the fifth-century buildings are notable, the rhetoric within Hagios Demetrios' votive panels combines the martyrology of saints seen in the Rotunda mosaics, using a series of roundel portraits, but includes several images of Saint Demetrios in prominent positions associating with other powerful figures.<sup>55</sup> Within the votive panels, an image of the Virgin surrounded by holy figures is juxtaposed with an image of Saint Demetrios surrounded by Saints and children. This interaction between images declares the power of Saint Demetrios to be of a similar caliber to the Virgin's, as an intercessor to Christ, thereby granting legitimacy to Demetrios' power as one favored by Mary. This favor creates a legitimate holy site of devotion and pilgrimage, building up a Christian legacy within Thessaloniki, aiding in the Christianization of the city and turning away from pre-established cults.

### **Change in Image**

By the middle and Late Byzantine Periods, Saint Demetrios evolved from a patron saint of children and healing to a warrior saint. This altered image demonstrates the changing desires of the city's people while subtly exhibiting the rhetorical strategies and power of the Christian church. Warrior saints became very popular during the mid to late Byzantine period, with the

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<sup>52</sup> Kleinbauer. "Some Observations on the Dating of S. Demetrios in Thessaloniki." 41-42.

<sup>53</sup> Eve Borsook. "Rhetoric or Reality: Mosaics as Expressions of a Metaphysical Idea." *Mitteilungen Des Kunsthistorischen Institutes in Florenz* 44, no. 1 (2000): 5-9.

<sup>54</sup> Kiilerich. "Color, Light and Luminosity in The Rotunda Mosaics," 56-58.

<sup>55</sup> Kiilerich. "Color, Light and Luminosity in The Rotunda Mosaics," 51-52.

construction of several new saints and the revival of older military saint cults.<sup>56</sup> Within Hagios Demetrios, different depictions of the saint visually exemplify this change in designation. Surviving iconography within the church shows Demetrios as an intercessor and protector of children until around 600 when the saint appears dressed in military garb with a mosaic depicting the saint in his consular wear above the narthex of Hagios Demetrios.<sup>57</sup> During the seventh century, as recorded in the *Miracula* written by the Archbishop in Thessaloniki, Saint Demetrios protected Thessaloniki several wars impacted the city.<sup>58</sup> Accounts of Saint Demetrios protecting Thessaloniki make up many of the miracles recounted by the Archbishop, likely leading to this change in image. However, this change in image occurred not even two hundred years after the establishment of Hagios Demetrios and Thessaloniki as a holy city. The ability to shift the image of the saint from a healer to a warrior suggests the solidified power of the Saint's cult and Thessaloniki's position as a Christian city within the Christian world.

As the desire for military saints grew in the seventh and eighth centuries due to the Persian wars, and rise of Islam, along with Iconoclasm in the eighth and ninth centuries, we begin to see the reshaping of the images of Saints, such as Saint Menas who underwent significant changes in his portrait type.<sup>59</sup> Demetrios' change in portrait type follows a similar pattern as Menas', refashioning a local hero into a fierce protector.<sup>60</sup> The saint's change in image likely had more influence within Thessaloniki than on the rest of Byzantium, as people still sought out Saint Demetrios' shrine for healing and protection rather than strictly strength in battle or protection in war. However, the rise of another Abrahamic religion would have

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<sup>56</sup> Woodfin. "An Officer and a Gentleman: Transformations in the Iconography of a Warrior Saint." 116.

<sup>57</sup> Skedros. "Response to David Woods." 239.

<sup>58</sup> Bakirtzis. "Pilgrimage to Thessalonike: The Tomb of St. Demetrios." 179-180.

<sup>59</sup> Blin, Arnaud. *War and Religion: Europe and the Mediterranean from the First through the Twenty-First Centuries*. 1st ed. University of California Press, 2019, 79-113.

<sup>60</sup> Woodfin. "An Officer and a Gentleman: Transformations in the Iconography of a Warrior Saint." 116.

threatened the pre-existing establishment of Christianity, pushing for the changes seen in some portrait types of local saints. Saint Demetrios continued to protect his locality, though the focus of protection changed.

The evolution of Demetrios as a patron saint of children and healing to the warrior saint of the middle and Late Byzantine periods demonstrates the changing desires of the city's people while subtly exhibiting the rhetorical strategies and power of the Christian church. Warrior saints became very popular during the mid to late Byzantine period, with several constructed saints and the revival of older military saints.<sup>61</sup> Within Hagios Demetrios, different depictions of the saint visually exemplify this change in designation. Surviving iconography within the church shows Demetrios as an intercessor and protector of children until around 600 when the saint appears dressed in military garb.<sup>62</sup> As the desire for militaristic saints rose in the seventh and eighth centuries, we begin to see the reshaping of the images of Saints, such as Saint Menas who underwent significant changes in his portrait type.<sup>63</sup> Demetrios' change in portrait type follows a similar pattern as Menas', refashioning a local hero into a fierce protector.<sup>64</sup> However, the core of the rhetoric surrounding Saint Demetrios appears not to change, with an emphasis on the city of Thessaloniki and its people, evoking a deep connection between saint and citizen which further lends to the deeply ingrained worship of the Saint within local civic identity.

### **Relics: Engagement and Access**

Several extant relics related to Saint Demetrios survive, though we cannot discuss each one within this paper, I shall focus on the transition of objects meant for large scale worship to

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<sup>61</sup> Woodfin. "An Officer and a Gentleman: Transformations in the Iconography of a Warrior Saint." 116.

<sup>62</sup> Skedros. "Response to David Woods." 239.

<sup>63</sup> Woodfin. "An Officer and a Gentleman: Transformations in the Iconography of a Warrior Saint." 112.

<sup>64</sup> Woodfin. "An Officer and a Gentleman: Transformations in the Iconography of a Warrior Saint." 112.

very personalized. Relics of Saint Demetrios are currently housed in Moscow, Thessaloniki, and the Museo Civico in Sassoferrato (figure 8 and 9). Inside Hagios Demetrios lies the most important of the relics, a ciborium with a local legend saying the structure stood over the tomb of the saint.<sup>65</sup> This large structure stands prominently within the church space, directing the viewer's attention and devotion towards the saint it's dedicated to. While the first ciborium cannot be dated, texts describe a silver ciborium while other accounts discuss a marble ciborium, leading to the likelihood of a silver structure standing within the church before being replaced by the marble one.<sup>66</sup> With the central ciborium, Hagios Demetrios creates a mimesis of the tomb of Christ within its walls, granting legitimacy to Saint Demetrios and by extent, Thessaloniki. The tomb of Christ within the Church of the Holy Sepulchre in Jerusalem is mimicked by Saint Demetrios' ciborium, with similar rhetoric of housing the spirit of the dedicated, acting as an intercessor between spirit and devotee.<sup>67</sup> This parallel between resting places grants a level of power to Saint Demetrios, as a martyr close to Christ, that establishes the saint and city as a Christian place of power. However, the size of the ciborium meant the devotees who would visit would experience devotion together, as a public spectacle more than a privatized event. Since the devotional object was central to the church and drew attention from nearly any place within the basilica, pilgrims stopping to visit the ciborium became part of the performance of the ciborium, on view for all. As the structure was tied to the site of Hagios Demetrios, the power of Saint Demetrios was inextricably tied to Thessaloniki, leading to the saint's cult following within the city. The ciborium drew pilgrims from around the world, however, leading to the later creation of a smaller, portable relic that traveled East.

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<sup>65</sup> Bakirtzis. "Pilgrimage to Thessalonike: The Tomb of St. Demetrios." 175-176.

<sup>66</sup> Bakirtzis. "Pilgrimage to Thessalonike: The Tomb of St. Demetrios." 181.

<sup>67</sup> Wilkinson, John. "The Church of The Holy Sepulchre." *Archaeology* 31, no. 4 (1978): 8.

An eleventh century reliquary, now in Moscow, was designed after the ciborium that was crafted in the sixth century made as an exact replica of the original ciborium that stood in Hagios Demetrios.<sup>68</sup> The Moscow reliquary gives an idea, albeit temporally removed, of what the early ciborium that stood in the center of Hagios Demetrios would have looked like. While great measures were taken to preserve the original structure of Hagios Demetrios through its history and keep the current-day church as close as possible to the first, we do not know how accurate the extant building is, the same can be said for the Moscow reliquary's connection to the original ciborium. However, the desire for a relic of Saint Demetrios' extended not only through the Mediterranean but also into Russia by the eleventh century. The existence of the object and its location describes how far the rhetoric of the saint's cult reached.

The reliquary in Sassoferrato is a contact relic, containing oil from the tomb of Saint Demetrios bringing direct contact with the saint to the owner of the relic, with a mosaic image of the saint, dating from the early fourteenth century. The reliquary was donated by Niccolo Perotti, with permission from Pope Sixtus IV, to S. Chiara in Sassoferrato in 1472.<sup>69</sup> While this relic comes significantly after the beginnings of the cult of Saint Demetrios, the transmission of this relic to Italy demonstrates the desire for this Greek saint in another part of the Mediterranean, along with a wider spread of influence and power associated with Demetrios. However, the depiction of the saint implicates him as a warrior saint and projects military strength, with a shield held aloft and a spear held at the ready in his other hand. Demetrios' complex armor contains streaks of gold, emphasizing the underlying musculature yet demonstrating the

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<sup>68</sup> For more information on the relics of Saint Demetrios, see Nelson, Robert S. "A Miniature Mosaic Icon of St. Demetrios in Byzantium and the Renaissance." *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 75 (2021): 41–84 and Veneskey, Laura. "Truth and Mimesis in Byzantium: A Speaking Reliquary of Saint Demetrios of Thessaloniki," in *Art History* 42, no. 1 (2019): 16-39.

<sup>69</sup> Nelson. "A Miniature Mosaic Icon of St. Demetrios in Byzantium and the Renaissance." 42.

differences between cloth and the hardened armor meant to protect him. While a depiction of Saint Demetrios as a warrior appears within Hagios Demetrios, this is also an early fourteenth-century image, which follows the surge of interest in warrior saints sweeping the Mediterranean.<sup>70</sup> Many saints, like Saint Menas, were reshaped to take on the warrior mantle to align with this growing desire that persisted through the late Byzantine period.<sup>71</sup> The appearance of this relic attests to the desire for a more portable warrior saint, with a smaller size corresponding with more private and personal devotion. Pilgrimage to these personal relics facilitated an individual connection with the Saint as opposed to the collective experience created by the ciborium within Hagios Demetrios.

One major way pilgrimage in Early Christian Thessaloniki manifested was through direct focus on contact with Saint Demetrios' relics. This strategy was essential to spatial planning. Inside Hagios Demetrios, the silver ciborium was the focal point of worship and pilgrimage.<sup>72</sup> Following the healing of Illyricum prefect Leontios, Saint Demetrios was sought after for healing miracles though later pilgrimage would slightly change focus, as recorded in the *Miracula*.<sup>73</sup> Local legend stated the ciborium was directly over the tomb of Saint Demetrios though this was never confirmed as the location of the saint's tomb was not confirmed until a later tomb was dedicated to the saint within the church.<sup>74</sup> Direct contact with a saint was the preferred method to ensure healing, but prayer or time around relics and tombs was what most pilgrims received.<sup>75</sup> Many sites, including Hagios Demetrios, restricted who could visit relics and when people could

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<sup>70</sup> Woodfin. "An Officer and a Gentleman: Transformations in the Iconography of a Warrior Saint." 116.

<sup>71</sup> Blin. *War and Religion: Europe and the Mediterranean from the First through the Twenty-First Centuries*. 151-182.

<sup>72</sup> Bakirtzis. "Pilgrimage to Thessalonike: The Tomb of St. Demetrios." 176.

<sup>73</sup> Talbot. "Pilgrimage to Healing Shrines: The Evidence of Miracle Accounts." 154.

<sup>74</sup> Bakirtzis. "Pilgrimage to Thessalonike: The Tomb of St. Demetrios." 177.

<sup>75</sup> Talbot. "Pilgrimage to Healing Shrines: The Evidence of Miracle Accounts." 159-160.

visit.<sup>76</sup> By restricting access, the churches created a sense of exclusivity surrounding the relics, creating a controllable commodity over which the church had complete power. The church could also decide who was worthy of the information and blessings from Saints, reinforcing societal norms, and resulting in many women not being allowed access.<sup>77</sup> While the exact limitations on who had the privilege of viewing Saint Demetrios' relics are not recorded, many similar sites had imposed restrictions.<sup>78</sup> Important pilgrims and emperors who desired contact with the saint were given fragrant earth from the place where the saint was buried, as the church did not want to distribute any relics.<sup>79</sup> Other pilgrims could pray at the ciborium or interact with the holy spring in the early period .

In Hagios Demetrios, a holy spring ran within the crypt where pilgrims could take water, as a blessing, but ampullae to transport the water have not been found that date to the early Christian period.<sup>80</sup> Ampullae from late Byzantine Thessaloniki have been found with traces of *myron*, a holy oil of myrrh used for healing, which began flowing from the empty tomb dedicated to Saint Demetrios in the crypt of the church in 1040.<sup>81</sup> The emergence of the flowing *myron* saw a resurgence of pilgrimage to Thessaloniki, though most pilgrims were local to Greece.<sup>82</sup> Pilgrimage was prominent following the legalization of Christianity, again after the Iconoclasm, and shortly before the Renaissance.<sup>83</sup> Long-distance pilgrimage occurred but at significantly lower rates than local pilgrimage, though several recorded accounts indicate these longer journeys were made by people to collect *myron* or holy water from pilgrimage sites to

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<sup>76</sup> Talbot. "Pilgrimage to Healing Shrines: The Evidence of Miracle Accounts." 162.

<sup>77</sup> Talbot. "Pilgrimage to Healing Shrines: The Evidence of Miracle Accounts." 163.

<sup>78</sup> Talbot. "Pilgrimage to Healing Shrines: The Evidence of Miracle Accounts." 164.

<sup>79</sup> Bakirtzis. "Pilgrimage to Thessalonike: The Tomb of St. Demetrios." 179.

<sup>80</sup> Bakirtzis. "Pilgrimage to Thessalonike: The Tomb of St. Demetrios." 183.

<sup>81</sup> Bakirtzis. "Pilgrimage to Thessalonike: The Tomb of St. Demetrios." 176.

<sup>82</sup> Talbot. "Pilgrimage to Healing Shrines: The Evidence of Miracle Accounts." 161.

<sup>83</sup> Talbot. "Pilgrimage to Healing Shrines: The Evidence of Miracle Accounts." 162.

take home usually for healing purposes.<sup>84</sup> Instead of going themselves, upper-class citizens would send others on their behalf to collect a token that came in contact with the Saint to aid in healing or protection, usually these ampullae.<sup>85</sup> The *myron* drew in more pilgrims, with evidence of ampullae discovered dating from later periods, but the substance was typically used for healing or as a keepsake, which contradicts Saint Demetrios as a warrior saint more than a healer. However, the healing miracles of Saint Demetrios date to before the construction of Hagios Demetrios, with more healing miracles recorded in the *miracula*, which would influence these foreign pilgrims to make their journeys. The desire for these healing miracles and transportable favors from contact with intercessors is not new, as evidenced by the existence of healing temples and shrines dating to earlier Greek periods.

With the phasing out of these pagan gods under Christian worship, the cults of saints began to fill the religious need left open. Across several Christian cities, especially Greco-Roman ones, local martyrs became elevated to patrons of the city, similar to the patron gods of old. Keeping to tradition, the patron would bless and protect their cities. Athens, under the protection of Athena, flourished as a center of wisdom and learning in Ancient Greece, while Thessaloniki under Saint Demetrios was protected in battles against several enemies during the middle and late Byzantine period, as recorded in the *Miracula*.<sup>86</sup> As the structure of religion began to change in the city, having a dedicated local saint not only filled the open niche left by the pagan gods but focused power and worship on an approved Christian martyr, lending power to those in the Christian church also. Worshipping gods in cult-like devotion was already

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<sup>84</sup> Talbot. "Pilgrimage to Healing Shrines: The Evidence of Miracle Accounts." 164-165.

<sup>85</sup> Talbot. "Pilgrimage to Healing Shrines: The Evidence of Miracle Accounts." 162.

<sup>86</sup> Talbot. "Pilgrimage to Healing Shrines: The Evidence of Miracle Accounts." 155.



part of Thessalonian culture, so the transfer of worship from an Egyptian god to a Christian Saint was not a difficult one.

## **Conclusion**

Though the early cult of Saint Demetrios remains in relative obscurity, the expanse of the cult reflects in the changing structure of Thessaloniki. Saint Demetrios may have been created by the Church to act as the focal point of local devotion, or may have been a historical figure, but the presence of the Saint within the city legitimized the Christian legacy being built. The rhetoric surrounding the Saint and his position within the city did allow for further Christianization of Thessaloniki, which had a plentiful pagan religious scene, leading to very little worship outside of the scopes of the Christian church.<sup>87</sup> Shifting from a polytheistic religion to a monotheistic one did not occur quickly, but using traditions and changing strategies to fit the rhetoric of Christianity repositioned the religion into a place of primacy. The homogenization of religion in many territories under the Byzantine Empire did not go smoothly, but the presence of the local saint dedicated to his city allowed for an easier transition to the new religion. By building up the accounts of Saint Demetrios' posthumous miracles, placing his church in a prominent location, and allowing limited access to the Saint's relics, the church reinforced the saint as a powerful religious figure while building their own power by convincing the city to take to worshipping the saint as part of their identity. In Thessaloniki, we see an expansive religious scene in the Late Antique city that transforms to one of the primary Christian cities within Byzantium that bridged past religious traditions to new Christian ones.

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<sup>87</sup> For more on the Christianization of Thessaloniki, see Curcic, Slobodan. "Christianization of Thessalonike: The Making of Christian Urban Iconography," in *From Roman to Early Christian Thessalonike Studies in Religion and Archaeology*, ed. Laura Nasrullah, Charalambos Bakirtzis, and Steven J. Friesen, 213-244. Cambridge: Harvard Theological Studies, 2010.

Examining Saint Demetrios' early cult and his image creates a baseline through which we can further consider the strategies that allowed the religion to become as successful as it remains. The change of Saint Demetrios' image we see in later centuries attests to the power the religion had to allow the flexibility to reimagine an already established and well-known saint. This plasticity complements the further gaining of power by matching the shifting desires of people, which draws in even more people who may not have already truly subscribed to religion. The change in image also corresponds to the privatization of religion and appearance of more personal, portable relics that engage single viewers rather than the masses. From material evidence, we see the cult of Saint Demetrios begin within the large basilica of Hagios Demetrios with a direct sightline on the ciborium, focusing power in the space on the object for a larger, collective experience of Christianity. However, by the sixth century, we already see a turn to a smaller ciborium relic that focuses more on individual experience than the collective, going further to the micro-mosaic reliquary from the fourteenth century. Following the shifts from public to private and healer to warrior, we can follow the growth of power and establishment of Christianity within Thessaloniki. These patterns of formation and maturation could be mimicked within the broader history of Christianity, with artistic and embodied psychosomatic strategies at the forefront of Christianization.

## Figures



Figure 1. Hagios Demetrios from Cyril Mango “Byzantine Architecture”



Figure 2 Hagios Demetrios, front facade, from Cyril Mango “Byzantine Architecture”



Figure 3. Interior of Hagios Demetrios from Gallery over Nave, from UNESCO photobank.





Fig. 17 Wall mosaic in Hagios Demetrios with Saint Demetrios and the founder of the church, 7th century, from Robin McCormack "Writing in Gold"



- |                                        |                                      |                                               |
|----------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------|
| 1. Leteia Gate                         | 20. Kassandreia or Kalamaria Gate    | 39. Byzantine bath                            |
| 2. Cistern                             | 21. Arch of Galerius                 | 40. Northern Gate                             |
| 3. Holy Apostles                       | 22. Hagios Panteleimon               | 41. Profitis Elias                            |
| 4. Gate of the Monastery               | 23. Rotunda                          | 42. Hagia Aikaterini (St. Catherine)          |
| 5. Early Byzantine Octagon             | 24. Asomatoi Gate(?)                 | 43. Roman bath                                |
| 6. Golden Gate                         | 25. New Golden Gate                  | 44. Hagios Demetrios (St. Demetrius Basilica) |
| 7. "Vardaris" fortress                 | 26. Hormisdas tower                  | 45. Roman agora                               |
| 8. Gate of Leo                         | 27. Hagios Nikolaos Orphanos         | 46. Roman odeion                              |
| 9. Constantinian harbor                | 28. Trigonion tower                  | 47. "Megaloforos"                             |
| 10. Yialos Gate                        | 29. Anna Palaiologina Gate           | 48. Panagia ton Chalkeon                      |
| 11. Hagios Menas                       | 30. Acropolis Gate                   | 49. Decumanus Maximus/Leophoros               |
| 12. Sea wall                           | 31. Cistern                          | 50. Episkopeion                               |
| 13. Cistern                            | 32. Heptapyrgion fortress            | 51. Early Byzantine Episcopal basilica        |
| 14. White Tower fortress               | 33. Acropolis                        | 52. Baptistery                                |
| 15. Roma Gate                          | 34. Cistern                          |                                               |
| 16. Hippodrome                         | 35. Vlatadon Monastery               |                                               |
| 17. Octagon                            | 36. Cistern                          |                                               |
| 18. Late Antique palatial complex      | 37. Latomou Monastery "Hosios David" |                                               |
| 19. Metamorphosis of the Savior Church | 38. Taxiarchs Church                 |                                               |



Figure 1. Plan of Thessaloniki.  
 Annotation K. T. Raptis; courtesy Hellenic  
 Ministry of Culture and Tourism, Ephorate  
 of Antiquities of Thessaloniki City

Figure 5 Plan of Early Christian Thessaloniki from Sharon Gerstel et al "Soundscapes of Byzantium"



Figure 6 Hagios Demetrios after the 1917 Fire, Photograph, Byzantine and Christian Museum

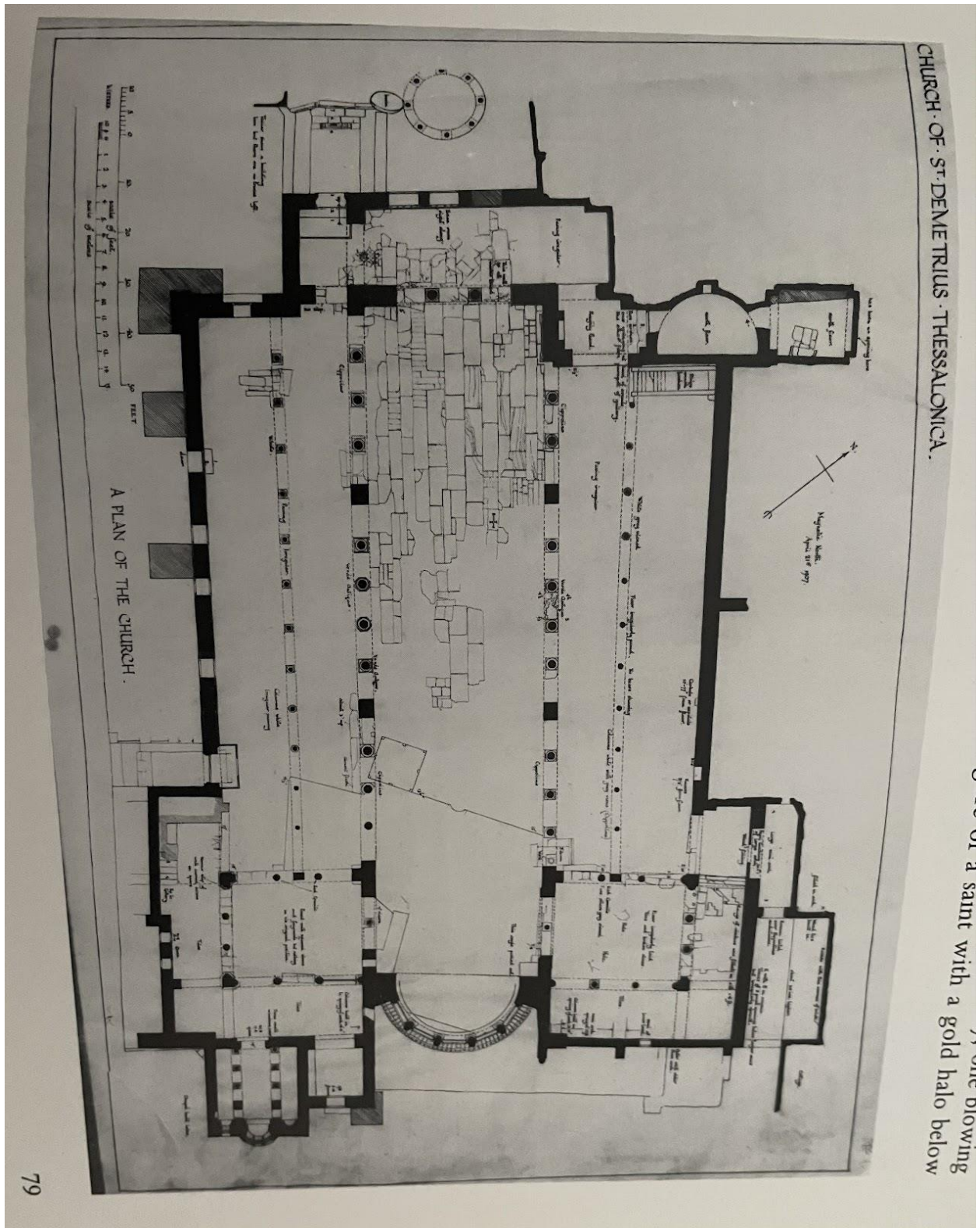


Figure 7 Floor plan of Hagios Demetrios in Thessaloniki, 5th century, from Robin McCormack "Writing in Gold"





Figure 8 Reliquary of St. Demetrios, 11th century, o. Thessaloniki c. Moscow, from Laura Veneskey "Truth and Mimesis in Byzantium: A Speaking Reliquary of Saint Demetrios of Thessaloniki"





Figure 9 Sassoferrato Icon of Saint Demetrios, c. Museo Civico o. Thessaloniki, 11th century, mosaic, from Robert Nelson "A Miniature Mosaic Icon of Saint Demetrios in Byzantium and the Renaissance"

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