

HELLENISTIC THESSALONIKI

THE authors of several recent books on ancient town planning have tacitly assumed that the plan of the city of Thessaloniki was first laid out in Hellenistic times, but the reasons for this assumption have never been worked out in detail.¹ Indeed, the last scholar to work on the town planning of Thessaloniki, H. von Schoenebeck, came to the conclusion that the city was planned in the Roman period.² The purpose of this article is to examine such evidence as there is for Thessaloniki in Hellenistic times.



FIG. 1.—Plan of Thessaloniki before the fire of 1917

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¹ E.g., F. Castagnoli, *Ippodamo di Mileto e l'urbanistica a pianta ortogonale* (Rome, 1956) 77; R. Martin, *L'Urbanisme dans la Grèce antique* (Paris, 1956) 163; A. Giuliano, *Urbanistica delle città greche* (Milan, 1966) 200.

² H. von Schoenebeck, 'Die Stadtplanung des römischen Thessalonike' in *Bericht über den 6. internationalen Kongress für Archäologie* (Berlin, 1940) 480.

THE CITY PLAN

When one examines a plan of Thessaloniki as it was before the devastating fire of 1917 (FIG. 1),³ it is striking how many of the streets of the old city are laid out in a regular grid pattern. Most of these regularly planned streets lie in the centre of the city, either parallel with, or perpendicular to, the principal artery, the so-called Odos Egnatia.⁴ The more or less regular quarters just outside the Vardar Gate to the west (A on FIG. 1), and those to the south of Aghia Sophia (B) were laid out in the late nineteenth century, the latter after a fire which destroyed the whole quarter,⁵ and consequently are not relevant to a discussion of the original plan of the city. Also to be discounted are: the area to the south of Odos Frangon (C) (the harbour, which silted up in post-Byzantine times);⁶ the area to the north of the church of Prophitis Elias (the rather haphazard plan of which

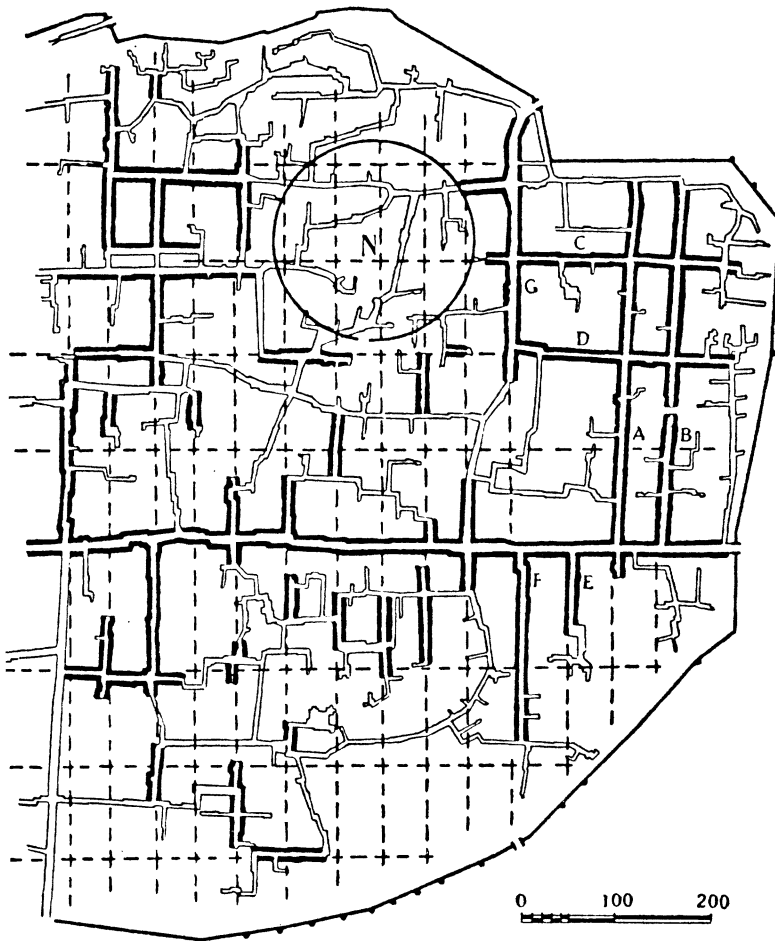


FIG. 2.—Plan of the eastern half of Damascus showing Hellenistic streets (after Sauvaget)

³ From *Town Planning Review* ix (1922) pl. 33. Similar plans are to be found in J. Ancel, *La Macédoine, son évolution contemporaine* (Paris, 1930) pl. 63 (opposite p. 296) and A. Strücker, *Byz. Zeit* xiv (1905) 545.

⁴ The present name is a misnomer based on the assumption that the ancient Via Egnatia ran through the centre of the town. Ch. Makaronas has clearly

demonstrated in 'Via Egnatia and Thessalonike', *Studies presented to D. M. Robinson* i (St Louis, 1951) 380-8, that this was not the case and that the Via Egnatia in effect by-passed Thessaloniki.

⁵ J. Ancel, *op. cit.* 286.

⁶ See the writer's 'The Byzantine Sea Walls of Thessaloniki', *Balkan Studies* xi (1970) 277, fig. 3 (cited below as 'Byzantine Sea Walls').

can be attributed to late Turkish period occupation)⁷ (D), and the area along the eastern side of the lower city which was planned around the year A.D. 300 (E).⁸

J. Sauvaget studied the modern plans of Lâdiqiyah (Laodicea ad Mare), Aleppo (Beroea) and Damascus,⁹ and as the result of a careful and sensitive analysis was able to reconstruct with a great degree of plausibility the plans of the Hellenistic and Roman cities that underlie them. The technique he adopted can best be illustrated by reference to his discussion of the plan of Damascus (FIG. 2 shows his plan of the eastern part of that city). Sauvaget points out that the streets A, B and E, F are clearly related to the main artery running from east to west (the 'Street called straight' of the New Testament).¹⁰ The points where the subsidiary streets meet the main street are 'rigoureusement équidistants,' and moreover, street F is remarkable for yet another reason: prolonged to the south it leads to an ancient gate in the city wall; prolonged to the north it meets street G which in turn leads to another gate of ancient origin. Only one quarter of Damascus displays this kind of planning in such an obvious fashion, but when the reticulation is reproduced over the rest of the city plan, straight stretches of other streets coincide closely with it. Also of interest is his location of the Agora in the encircled area (N) to the north. This area lacks any signs of a grid pattern, but has a few straggling streets running across it, one of which, significantly, is called *zqâq es-Sâha* = *Rue de la Place*.

FIGURE 3 shows the same principle applied to Thessaloniki. The main streets are clearly those that run between the gates in the later city wall; this is the case with streets A and B (equivalent to the modern Odos Egnatia and Odos Aghiou Dimitriou respectively). Street A linked what was subsequently known as the Golden or Vardar Gate in the west with the Cassandreotic or Calamaria Gate in the east, and street B the Litaia Gate with the Gate of the Archangels.¹¹ Other streets running from east to west are disposed at intervals of about 100 m. Most of them can be clearly distinguished, but the two most northerly ones indicated on my plan are somewhat uncertain, though the traces I have marked are about 100 m. apart. It is not possible to distinguish east-west streets south of Odos Egnatia; the apparent straight stretch north of Aghia Sophia came about as a result of the building of the church and is in any case well over 100 m. from Egnatia.

The series of streets running from north to south appears to begin and end at a distance of about 150 m. from the east and west walls. They are spaced about 50 m. apart and can be observed underlying the later plan except in two areas, one in the west and the other in the centre of the city. Both these areas have irregular streets which cut across groups of *insulae*, eight in one case and two in the other, in a way that is remarkably similar to the area at Damascus that Sauvaget reconstructed as the Agora. For the present let it suffice to say that these areas must at one time have been open spaces.

THE DATE OF THE PLAN

Even though the lines of the plan described above are not aligned precisely with the points of the compass, they were adopted by the architects of the Byzantine and early Christian churches at Thessaloniki, which indicates that they were making an accommoda-

⁷ Ancel, *op. cit.*, pl. 63, legend. For evidence that this area was not built up in the seventeenth or eighteenth centuries, see 'Byzantine Sea Walls', pls. 1b and 2b.

⁸ E. Dyggve, 'La région palatiale de Thessalonique' in *Acta Congressus Madvigiana* i (Copenhagen, 1958) 353-65, where earlier bibliography.

⁹ Laodicea, 'Le plan de Laodicée-sur-Mer' in *Bulletin d'études orientales* iv (1934) 81-114. Beroea,

'L'enceinte primitive de la ville d'Alep' in *Mélanges de l'Institut français de Damas* i (1929) 133-59 and *Alep, Essai sur le développement d'une grande ville syrienne, des origines au milieu du XIXe siècle* (Paris, 1941). Damascus, 'Le plan antique de Damas' in *Syria* xxvi (1949) 314-58.

¹⁰ *Acts* ix 10.

¹¹ O. Tafrali, *Topographie de Thessalonique* (Paris, 1913) 95-110.

tion with the pre-existing plan. The principal lines of the late-Roman palace complex (E on FIG. 1) are parallel to the series of north-south streets. Again we are dealing with a later addition which was merely fitted on to the earlier plan.

A Roman period street paved with marble slabs and which follows the line of one of the north-south streets (street C on FIG. 3) was found near the church of St Demetrius on Odos Aghiou Nikolaou.¹² The excavations in Plateia Dikasteriou have revealed part of a colonnaded agora and an odeion which again have the same alignments as the street plan.¹³ Other smaller excavations confirm that this plan was in use in the Roman period. Indeed, as has been noted above, it has been suggested that the rectangular city plan of Thessaloniki was Roman. H. von Schoenebeck thought that he could see signs of a Roman *Castrumanlage* which he attributed to an otherwise unknown Augustan re-foundation of the city.¹⁴

The only foundation of which we do know at Thessaloniki is that made by Cassander in c. 316 B.C.,¹⁵ and such a plan as the one we have seen to have existed there very likely goes back to him. I have suggested elsewhere that there might have been two periods of planning at Thessaloniki in the Hellenistic period: the first being in the area to the south which seems at first sight to be aligned with the sea and which I attributed to the foundation of the city in 316; as for the other area to the north (the grid-plan described above), I thought it to have been laid out by Philip V, who is known to have taken an interest in Thessaloniki.¹⁶ This explanation, however, is too complicated and a simpler one is called for. Very little sense can be made out of the quarters by the sea and it is probably safest to say that they have changed out of all recognition since they were originally planned.

Unfortunately, the plan of Cassander's only other foundation in Macedonia, at Cassandrea, has not yet been elucidated, so for parallels one must look to foundations made by other Hellenistic kings, especially those of Seleucus I in Syria.¹⁷ Two of the earliest foundations of Seleucus were Antioch and Dura Europos. At both these cities there were rectangular blocks of houses with an approximate ratio of 2 : 1 between the long and short sides. At Antioch the blocks were 112 m × 58 m.¹⁸ which provided either two rows of houses built back to back in the Olynthus manner,¹⁹ or extremely spacious ones which filled up the whole block as at Pella.²⁰ At Dura the proportions were the same but the size of the standard block, at 70·40 m. × 35·20 m., was smaller.²¹ The size of the blocks at Laodicea ad Mare is almost the same as those at Antioch (112 m. × 57 m.). Those at Damascus were 100 m. × 45 m., while at Beroea the blocks measure 124 m. × 48 m., giving proportions of 5 : 2.²²

¹² G. and M. Soteriou, *Ἡ Βασιλικὴ τοῦ Ἀγίου Δημητρίου Θεσσαλονίκης* (Athens, 1952) 35 and 85, 34, fig. 1; *BCH* lxxxiv (1960) 89, fig. 1; *Praktika* 1959, 38 and 39, fig. 1.

¹³ *BCH* xlv (1921) 541; *ADelt* xviii (1963) Chron., 196-9; xix (1964) Chron., 329-31; xxii (1967) Chron., 379-91; xxiii (1968) Chron., 328-30; *BCH* lxxxix (1965) 801-4.

¹⁴ *Op. cit.* 480, rightly criticised by Castagnoli, *op. cit.* 77, n. 20, and by G. Theocharides, *Τοπογραφία καὶ πολιτικὴ ἱστορία τῆς Θεσσαλονίκης κατὰ τὸν ΙΔ' αἰῶνα* (Thessaloniki, 1959) 12.

¹⁵ Strabo vii, frag. 21 (although Martin, *loc. cit.*, attributes the planning of Thessaloniki to Lysimachus but with little justification).

¹⁶ In 'Towards a reconstruction of the town planning of Roman Thessaloniki, in *Proceedings of the 1st International Symposium 'Ancient Macedonia', Thessaloniki, 1968* (Thessaloniki, 1970) 239-251 (cited below as *Ancient Macedonia*).

¹⁷ Best summarised by J. Lauffray, 'L'urbanisme antique en proche orient' in *Acta Congressus Madvigiani* iv (Copenhagen, 1958) 7-26. Cf. H. Seyrig, 'Seleucus I and the foundation of Hellenistic Syria', in W. A. Ward (ed.), *The Rôle of the Phoenicians in the Interaction of Mediterranean Civilisations* (Beirut, 1968) 53-63.

¹⁸ G. Downey, *A History of Antioch in Syria* (Princeton, 1961) 68-73.

¹⁹ *Olynthus* viii, 36, pl. 109.

²⁰ Ph. M. Petsas, 'Ten years at Pella' in *Archaeology* xvii (1964) plan, p. 76, reproduced in A. Garcia y Bellido, *Urbanística de las grandes ciudades del mundo antiguo* (Madrid, 1966) 84, fig. 50, and by E. Kirsten and W. Kraiker, *Griechenlandkunde*⁵ ii (Heidelberg, 1967) 612, fig. 163a.

²¹ *Excavations at Dura Europos, Ninth Season 1935-6* i, 24, plan, fig. 12.

²² Laodicea, Sauvaget, *Bulletin d'études orientales* iv (1934) 94. Damascus, *id.*, *Syria* xxvi (1949) 343. Beroea, *id.*, *Alep* 40, cf. 41, fig. 13. Seleucia on the

The plan of Thessaloniki (FIGS. 3 and 4) fits very well in this company. Blocks of approximately 100 m. \times 50 m. would give two rows of four houses in each block; i.e. slightly smaller than those which probably existed at Antioch and Laodicea and much the same as those of Damascus and Beroea—all this assuming that back to back houses were used in these places (recent discoveries at Pella make this less certain). But at all events, it is interesting to see a city in Macedonia itself displaying in its street plan the same characteristics as do so many Macedonian foundations of the Hellenistic east.

The regular arrangement of houses in these cities can be accounted for by the fact that it was much simpler to allot houses to new settlers in this way.²³ Administrative factors go a long way towards explaining the rigid street plans of these Hellenistic foundations, and they also partly explain why the Hellenistic plans survived so long without



FIG. 3.—Plan of Thessaloniki showing Hellenistic streets

Tigris, founded in the second century B.C., is now known to have had *insulae* of 144.70 m. \times 72.35 m., in the proportions of exactly 2 : 1 (G. Gullini, 'Un contributo alla storia dell'urbanistica: Seleucia sul Tigris' in *Mesopotamia* ii [1967] 141, figs 284-6), and much the same proportions are to be found at Apamea in Syria, where the *insulae* measure 105 or

110 m. \times 55 m. (J. and J. Ch. Balty, 'Le cadre topographique et historique' in J. Balty [ed.], 'Apamée de Syrie, bilan des recherches archéologiques 1965-1968' in *Fouilles d'Apamée de Syrie*, Misc. Fasc. 6 [Brussels, 1969] 33 [hereafter, *Apamée de Syrie*]).

²³ Martin, *op. cit.* 175.

much change. There was a Byzantine law to the effect that no-one could change the course of a street without official permission.²⁴ Another reason, of course, for the survival of ancient city plans is that it is easier to re-use the foundations of an earlier house than to make new ones.²⁵

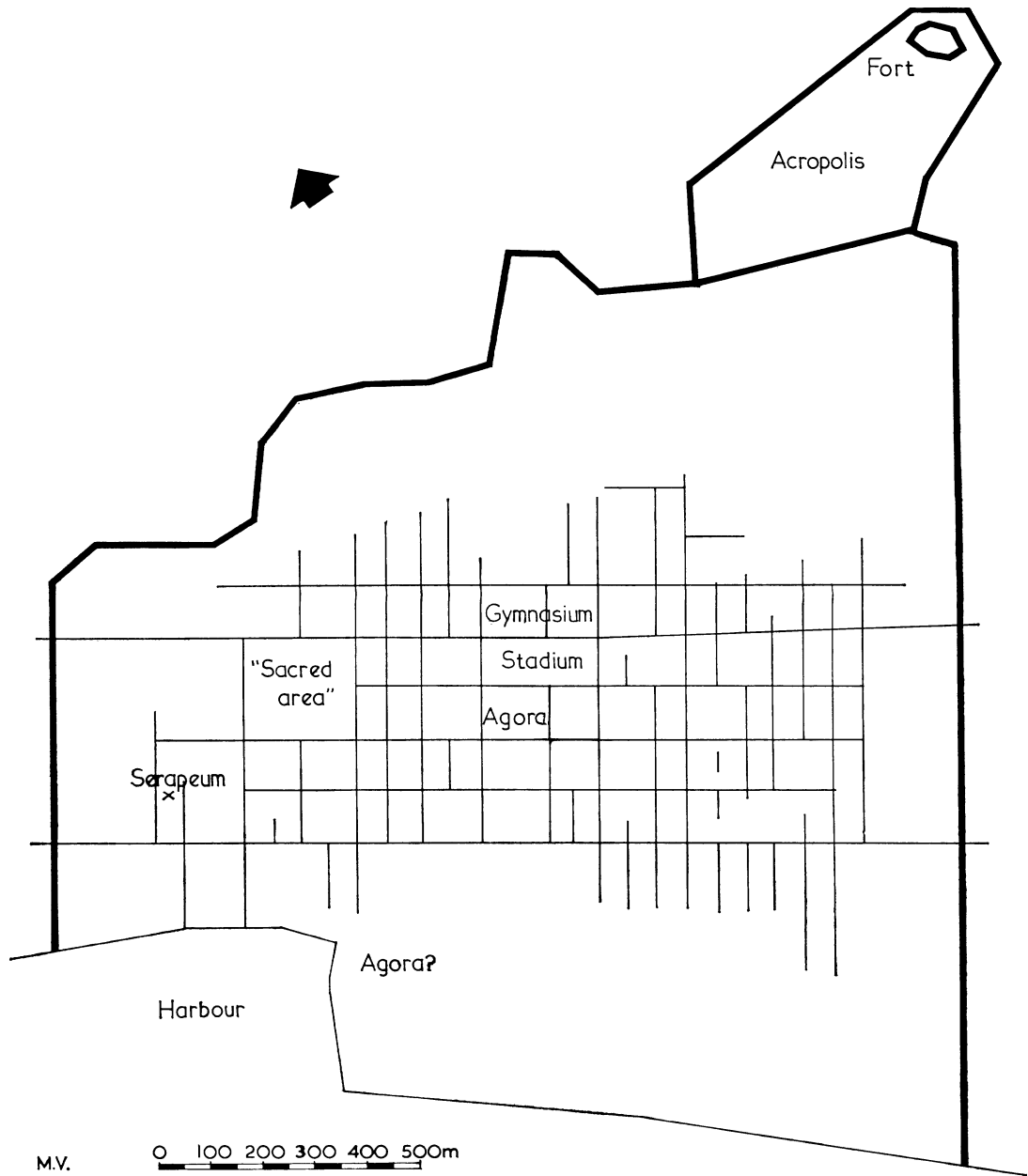


FIG. 4.—Plan to show probable Hellenistic features at Thessaloniki

²⁴ Just., *Dig.* xliii 8, 10 and 11. Cf. W. Liebenam, *Städteverwaltung im römischen Kaiserreiche* (Leipzig, 1900) 402. I am grateful to Professor John Kelly for these references.

²⁵ Cf. Sauvaget's remarks in connection with the

plan of Aleppo: 'il se sera perpétué jusqu'à nos jours avec une fidélité relative du fait que, pour profiter des fondations déjà assises, les habitants ont eu la tendance à maintenir sur les mêmes emplacements les murs extérieurs de leurs maisons' (*Alep* 40).

THE MAIN STREET

It is not possible to say conclusively whether the Hellenistic street which ultimately preceded the present Odos Egnatia (street A on Fig. 3) was always as important as it was in Roman times and later. The earliest indication we have of the relative importance of this street *vis-à-vis* the other streets of the city is a Roman arch (the 'Golden Gate' of the Byzantines)²⁶ which was built at the western end in the mid-second century A.D.²⁷ It was destroyed in 1874,²⁸ but was recorded by some of the early travellers who visited Thessaloniki.²⁹ A trapezoidal exedra of Antonine date abutted the street near the centre of the city,³⁰ and the Incantadas, part of a large building of similar date, were near by.³¹ Near the eastern extremity of the street, the Arch of Galerius was erected in *c.* 300.³² In Byzantine times the street was known as *ἡ λεωφόρος*,³³ and in the period of Turkish rule as *Cadde Yol* ('Main Road') by Turks,³⁴ and as *τὸ Φαρδύ* ('Broad Street') by Greeks.³⁵

The problem is whether it is possible to infer from all this that the street which we now know as Odos Egnatia has always, from the city's foundation in *c.* 316 B.C., been wider and generally more important than the other streets of the city. Many ancient cities of the eastern Mediterranean apart from Thessaloniki had imposing colonnaded streets, but it is becoming increasingly probable that they were developed as monumental thoroughfares only in the second century A.D. The only excavated Hellenistic town site that was not built over in Roman times, Oum el-Amed in the Lebanon, does not have a main street recognisable as such by virtue of its greater size.³⁶ Admittedly Oum el-Amed was never more than a large village,³⁷ and since it was not even a regularly planned Hellenistic town, hardly admits of all the inferences that writers on ancient town planning have drawn from it. Nevertheless, in cities where excavations have taken place, colonnaded streets of monumental proportions built before the Roman period have not been found.

The evidence from Seleucia on the Tigris is unfortunately inconclusive. Traces of what appeared to be a very wide street were observed from aerial photographs to run along the southern side of the city,³⁸ but although subsequent excavation showed that there had in fact been a street there, no evidence for dating it was discovered.³⁹ At Apamea in Syria, a trench was dug across half the width of the principal street and was

²⁶ E.g., Anonymus Vaticanus i (= Migne, *PG* cxvi 1180); J. Cameniat, *De excidio Thessalonicensi narratio anno 904*, ed. Bonn, 544; Eustathius, *De Thessalonica a Latinis capta narratio*, ed. Bonn, 451.

²⁷ Dated prosopographically by C. F. Edson. The relevant inscription will be discussed in *IG* x 1.

²⁸ L'Abbé Bayet, 'Mémoire sur une mission au Mont Athos' in *Bibliothèque des écoles françaises d'Athènes et Rome* lxxxvi (Paris, 1876) 7-8.

²⁹ E.g., F. de Beaujour, *Tableau du commerce de la Grèce* (Paris, 1800) 32-3; E. M. Cousinéry, *Voyage dans la Macédoine* i (Paris, 1831) 25-7, pl. 3 (reproduced in A. Letsas, *Ἱστορία τῆς Θεσσαλονίκης* i [*Thessaloniki*, 1961] 125, fig. 63); L. Heuzey and H. Daumet, *Mission archéologique de Macédoine* (Paris, 1876) 272, pl. 22 *bis*. The latter illustration is reproduced in Tafrafi, *op. cit.* 105, fig. 10, and in Letsas, *op. cit.* 124, fig. 62.

³⁰ L. Guerrini, "'Las Incantadas" di Salonicco' in *Archeologia classica* xiii (1961) 68-9, pl. 28, 2; Theocharides, *op. cit.* 16-17.

³¹ The sculpture from the Incantadas was removed to the Louvre in 1864, Guerrini, *op. cit.* 40-70, pls 13-28. *Cf.* J. Baker: 'On the left of the main street, and in a side alley there are four Corinthian

columns . . .' *Turkey in Europe*, 3rd edn (London, 1877) 405.

³² For details of the relationship between the Arch and the street, see E. Hébrard, 'Les travaux du service archéologique de l'Armée d'Orient à l'Arc de Triomphe "de Galere" et à l'église Saint-Georges de Salonique' in *BCH* xlv (1920) 9, fig. 3. Diocletian is thought to have attended the dedication of the Arch on his way west from Nicomedia to Rome in *c.* 303 (W. Seston, *Dioclétien et la Tétrarchie* i [Paris, 1946] 392 and C. H. V. Sutherland, *RIC* vi, 501).

³³ J. Cameniat, *op. cit.* 500; G. Palamas, *Homily* xliii (= Migne, *PG* cli 544).

³⁴ Theocharides, *op. cit.* 11.

³⁵ Theocharides, *loc. cit.*; A. Vacalopoulos, *A History of Thessaloniki* (Thessaloniki, 1963) 16.

³⁶ M. Dunand and R. Duru, *Oumm el 'Amed, une ville de l'époque hellénistique aux échelles de Tyre* (Paris, 1962) plan, fig. 89.

³⁷ As remarked by J. and J. Ch. Balty, *Apamée de Syrie* 34, n. 1.

³⁸ Gullini, *op. cit.* figs 284-5.

³⁹ G. Graziosi, 'Excavations in squares clxxi, 54/55/56/64/65/66 (Porticoed Street)' in *Mesopotamia* iii-iv (1968-9) 43-52.

taken down to virgin soil. It was found that a monumental portico was built some time in the second century A.D. and that the street was apparently first paved only around the middle of the first century A.D. Very little Hellenistic material indeed was discovered, just a few sherds in the lower levels.⁴⁰ The excavations conducted at Antioch on the Orontes before the last war are only just being published. Several soundings were made and a layer one and a half metres thick, of successive pavements of a narrow Hellenistic street, was discovered underlying a Roman street which had porticoes built around the time of the birth of Christ. This street was only fifteen metres wide, much narrower than its successor which was, in all, 37.50 m. wide, and which was driven through the city for a distance of nearly three and a half kilometres at some time in the second century A.D.⁴¹ Thus, while the evidence does not allow a definite conclusion, it might well be that the Antonine monuments known to have existed on or near the main street of Thessaloniki—the ‘Golden Gate’, the exedra, and the Incantadas—go back to a second century redevelopment as a result of which one of the Hellenistic streets was made wider.⁴²

THE AGORA

At least one of the open spaces mentioned above is known to have been in existence in the Roman period: the space in the centre of the city was occupied by a peristyle agora from Antonine or Severan times,⁴³ but there is very little evidence—as yet—for there having been a monumental agora in that part of the city in the Hellenistic period, apart from an inscription dated to 60 B.C. which clearly refers to an agora and which was actually found in the vicinity of the Roman agora.⁴⁴ This suggests that the Roman peristyle agora might have had a Hellenistic precursor as did, for example, the peristyle agora at Ephesus.⁴⁵ A late Hellenistic ‘Atlas’⁴⁶ and some Hellenistic pottery⁴⁷ which were found beneath the paving slabs of the Roman agora could well have come from the earlier agora. It had, moreover, at the period when Thessaloniki was founded, become customary for cities to have two agoras: at Priene, for example, the administrative and social centre is in one place and the Fish and Meat Market in another.⁴⁸ Aristotle, indeed, recommended this practice.⁴⁹ A city the size of Thessaloniki would surely have had at least one more agora, and though this other agora still remains to be found, it is tempting to suggest that it might be near the site of the harbour (FIG. 4),^{49a} a small square in that area was known

⁴⁰ J. Mertens, ‘Sondages dans la grande colonnade et sur l’enceinte’ in *Apamée de Syrie* 61–8.

⁴¹ J. Lassus, ‘Antioche, fouilles profondes 1934–1938’ in *CRAL*, 1967, 45–75; ‘Les portiques d’Antioche’ in *Antioch-on-the-Orontes* v, by the same author, was announced as being in the press in 1969 (J. and J. Ch. Balty, *loc. cit.*).

⁴² For other examples of second-century building activity see *Ancient Macedonia* 249–51. A slight indication that little was done by the Romans to develop Macedonia until the second century are the Trajanic milestones set up on the Via Egnatia, ‘longa intermissione neglectam’. (P. Collart, ‘Une refection de la via Egnatia sous Trajan’ in *BCH* lix [1935] 395–415). I am grateful to Professor Edson for pointing this out to me.

⁴³ See note 13 and *Ancient Macedonia*, *loc. cit.* What appears to have been an agora, with a *bouleuterion*, has been observed at Seleucia on the Tigris, occupying the space of ten insulae (5 × 2) (Gullini, *op. cit.* 148–50, figs 284–6), but despite

investigation, the date and function of this area is not yet certain (M. Negro Ponzi, ‘Excavations in Squares x6/xx96 “Agora”’ in *Mesopotamia* iii–iv [1968–9] 53–5).

⁴⁴ C. F. Edson, *Inscriptiones Graecae* x, fasc. 1 (forthcoming), No. 5. Found in a house on Odos Olympou, *ADelt* ix (1924–25) 121, *BCH* xlix (1924) 498.

⁴⁵ R. Martin, *Recherches sur l’Agora grecque* (Paris, 1951) 513–14.

⁴⁶ *ADelt* xxii (1967) Chron., 386; xxiii (1968) Chron., 325, pl. 280a; *Makedonika* ix (1969) 150, pl. 47.

⁴⁷ *ADelt* xxii (1967) Chron., 387, pl. 291 b–c; *Makedonika* ix (1969) 150.

⁴⁸ M. Schede, *Die Ruinen von Priene*² (Berlin, 1964) plan.

⁴⁹ *Pol.* vii 11. 2.

^{49a} Cf. R. E. Wycherley, *How the Greeks built Cities*² (London, 1962) 11, 53, 69.

before 1917 as Plateia Emporiou⁵⁰ and in the nineteenth century there was a Bazaar in that quarter.⁵¹

THE 'SACRED AREA'

The other open space in the west (FIGS. 3 and 4) can be shown to have been in all likelihood a sacred area in Hellenistic times. It displays the same topographical characteristics on the pre-1917 city plan as does the central space which, as has already been noted, goes back to the Roman period if not earlier. In 1957 a headless and armless statue of an emperor was found in this western area⁵² near where a statue of Augustus had been found in 1939,⁵³ and it thus seems possible that the municipal emperor cult was situated here.⁵⁴ It was in this area too that fragments and the foundations of an archaic temple of c. 500 B.C. were found shortly before the last war.⁵⁵ More *disiecta membra* of the same building have been found elsewhere in Thessaloniki, but the surface of nearly all the fragments is so well preserved that it is unlikely that the temple was standing for long. It has been suggested to me⁵⁶ that it might have been destroyed in the Persian wars. We know that Xerxes visited Therme (which almost certainly occupied the site of Thessaloniki) on his way to Greece⁵⁷ and though we do not hear of any violence being offered to the city on that occasion, the destruction of the temple could well have occurred during the Persians' retreat. Admittedly there is nothing known about this area of the city between the fifth century B.C. and the beginning of the Christian era, but since it appears that it was set aside for religious purposes in both these periods, it is at least possible, if not indeed likely, that it was a sacred area in Hellenistic times as well. Sanctuaries in Hellenistic towns did tend to have blocks to themselves. Oum el-Amed provides a particularly good example of this; there, two parallel streets enclose sanctuaries at each end of the city.⁵⁸

THE SERAPEUM

A Serapeum was situated to the south-west of the 'sacred area'. When one of the diagonal streets which are a feature of the plan of modern Thessaloniki was being laid out shortly after the fire of 1917, a rectangular building (about five metres long on the short side; no other dimensions are given in the extremely brief report)⁵⁹ was discovered with a substructure of masonry of Hellenistic type, above which parts of a Roman wall of alternating bands of brick and green schist were found.⁶⁰ In addition, there were several architectural and sculptural fragments including a sphinx in black stone (basalt?); a Hellenistic head probably of Isis was found in subsequent excavations in 1939.⁶¹ Only

⁵⁰ See 'Byzantine Sea Walls' fig. 6.

⁵¹ E. Zachariae, *Reise in der Orient in den Jahren 1837 und 1838* (Heidelberg, 1840) 190, and *BCH* xlv (1920) 403.

⁵² *BCH* lxxxi (1958) 759.

⁵³ *BCH* lxiii (1939) 315; *AA* 1940, 265-6, 261-2, figs 71-3; *Makedonika* i (1940) 476, 474, fig. 8. For the restored Augustus statue see *BCH* lxxvii (1954) 139, fig. 36, *Makedonika* ix (1969) pl. 1 and A. Rüschi, *JdI* lxxxiv (1969) 68, 131-3 (P38).

⁵⁴ As suggested in *BCH* lxxxi (1958) 759.

⁵⁵ G. Bakalakis, 'Therme-Thessalonike' in *Antike Kunst*, Beih. i (1963) 30-34. For a view of all the fragments of the archaic temple found so far see *Makedonika* ix (1969) pl. 16.

⁵⁶ By Professor Bakalakis.

⁵⁷ Hdt. vii 124, 128 and 183.

⁵⁸ Lauffray, *op. cit.* 18-19, whence Martin, *L'Urbanisme* 175. See now, Dunand and Duru, *op. cit.* fig. 89. Cf. the 'area sacra' which occupies the space of ten *insulae* (5 × 2) at Seleucia on the Tigris (Gullini, *op. cit.* 148-9, figs. 284-6).

⁵⁹ *BCH* xlv (1921) 540 and xlvi (1924) 497. von Schoenebeck, *op. cit.* 481, fig. 1, locates the Serapeum incorrectly; for the correct position see *BCH* xlv, 539, fig. 13.

⁶⁰ Hébrard, whose report is quoted *loc. cit.*, calls the later walls Byzantine, but that is impossible. Dr Laubscher kindly informs me that von Schoenebeck's notebooks indicate that he dated these walls to the Tetrarchic period on the basis of the style of the brickwork.

⁶¹ *Makedonika* i (1940) 464; *AA* 1940, 263. The Serapeum and the finds are now discussed by R.

two of the 'many'⁶² inscriptions said to have been found at the Serapeum have been published to date, but one of them is a letter of Philip V dated 187 B.C., in which he forbade the use of the funds of the Serapeum for purposes other than those connected with the cult and laid down penalties for any contravention of this regulation.⁶³ This has led P. M. Fraser to the conclusion that the cult of Serapis at Thessaloniki was 'well established, with accumulated funds, and no doubt it originated in the third century'.⁶⁴

THE STADIUM AND GYMNASIUM

The existence of a Stadium at Thessaloniki is known from Byzantine literary sources and attempts have been made in the past to show where it stood. The sources are unanimous in placing the stadium in the immediate vicinity of the basilica of St Demetrius and the prevailing opinion is that it stood to the west of the church,⁶⁵ but this cannot be correct. The important point to bear in mind is the length of an ancient stadium: around 600 ft (= 178 m.) for the track, and more for the stands. Due to the lie of the land around St Demetrius, where the ground slopes steeply from north to south, a stadium could only run from east to west and would thus occupy the space of at least four *insulae*, and all traces of the streets dividing these would have disappeared. Since there is a north-south street not twenty-five metres from the western facade of St Demetrius, and the open space further to the west is only two *insulae* wide, the stadium can hardly have been to the west of the basilica as is suggested. Immediately to the south of St Demetrius, however, and to the north of the Roman agora there is a space four *insulae* wide, and since it is the only such space near the basilica, it looks very much as though this was the site of the stadium (FIGS. 3 and 4).

But does the stadium date from Hellenistic times? It is more than likely that it does since Ch. Makaronas has demonstrated that the gymnasium of the Hellenistic city was probably situated near St Demetrius—at least an inscription referring to the administration of the gymnasium in 96–95 B.C. and two inscriptions of Roman date referring to ephebes have been found near the church.⁶⁶ A stadium would not have been out of place in the environs of a gymnasium.⁶⁷

OTHER CIVIC BUILDINGS

The only other indication we have of the civic architecture of Thessaloniki in the Hellenistic period is a slight one. According to Diodorus Siculus, the pseudo-Philip, Andriscus, claimed that there was treasure buried at Thessaloniki 'in the middle of the exedra in the peristyle opposite the palace'.⁶⁸ Andriscus was a liar, but since he had been in Macedonia and presumably knew Thessaloniki, and since he was trying to convince his audience, albeit a Milesian one, of the truth of his claims, the topographical content

Salditt-Trappmann, *Tempel der ägyptischen Götter in Griechenland und an der westküste Kleinasien* (Leiden, 1970) 47–52, pls. 22–4.

⁶² S. Pelekides, 'Από τήν πολιτεία καί κοινωρία τῆς ἀρχαίας Θεσσαλονίκης' in 'Επιστημονική Ἐπετηρίς τῆς Φιλοσοφικῆς Σχολῆς Πανεπιστημίου Θεσσαλονίκης ii (1934) supplement, 4, but they will be included in the forthcoming *IG x 1*.

⁶³ Pelekides, *op. cit.* 5–23; L. Vidman, *Sylloge inscriptionum religionis Isiacae et Sarapiacae* (Berlin, 1969) 48–9; *IG x 1*, No. 3 (forthcoming).

⁶⁴ *Opuscula Atheniensi* iii (1960) 39.

⁶⁵ A. Xyngopoulos, *Συμβολαί εἰς τήν τοπογραφίαν*

τῆς βυζαντινῆς Θεσσαλονίκης (Thessaloniki, 1949) 23–48; G. and M. Soteriou, *op. cit.* 34–7. The Byzantine sources are discussed in: M. Vickers, 'The stadium at Thessaloniki' in *Byzantion* xli (1971) (forthcoming).

⁶⁶ The gymnasium inscription = *IG x 1*, No. 4; all three inscriptions are published by Makaronas, 'Από τὰς ὀργανώσεις τῶν νέων ἀρχαίας Θεσσαλονίκης' in *ΕΕΦΣΠΘ* (see n. 62) vi (1948) 293–308.

⁶⁷ Cf. Wycherley, *op. cit.* 156.

⁶⁸ xxxii 15. 2: κατὰ μέσην τήν ἐξέδραν τήν ἐν τῷ περιστύλῳ κατὰ τήν ἀλήν. I am grateful to Professor Edson for this reference.

of his statement need not be doubted. An exedra in a colonnade is the kind of scenic architectural effect that was fashionable in late Hellenistic times.⁶⁹

For the sake of completeness, mention should be made of the decree of the third century B.C. found at Delos which refers to the decision of the council and people of Delos to erect bronze statues at both Delos and Thessaloniki in honour of a certain Admetus, son of Bocrus, a Macedonian of Thessaloniki and proxenos of the Delians in that city.⁷⁰ This would have been merely one of many such honorific statues set up in Hellenistic Thessaloniki, but it is the only one of which we have direct knowledge.⁷¹

THE HELLENISTIC FORTIFICATIONS

The Hellenistic fortifications of Thessaloniki have not had much attention paid to them over the years (indeed, it is high time that the city walls as a whole received the kind of detailed study that the walls of Constantinople and Nicaea have enjoyed). The fortifications visible today are substantially those which were erected in the mid-fifth century A.D.⁷² When complete, these walls ascended the western slope before turning eastwards along the crests of the hills towards the Acropolis in the north-east corner of the city. From here the east wall originally led straight down to the sea (FIG. 4; the eastward extension of the city which took place in c. A.D. 300 [E on FIG. 1] accounts for the bulge in the southern half of the eastern wall).

Tafrazi describes how in several places in the later schist and brick walls can be seen large blocks of well-worked stone, and this is especially the case in the northern stretches. This leads him to the conclusion that the late Roman wall follows the line of the Hellenistic wall.⁷³ Tafrazi went wrong, however, in calling Hellenistic some re-used marbles which seem to have served as the core of a tower of the Roman eastward extension mentioned above.⁷⁴ This kind of marble core is to be found in a tower still standing on Odos Klaudianou in the western part of the lower city (this street, incidentally, owes its name to the presence of the word Klaudianou on a Roman inscription built into the tower). The presence of re-used blocks here leads one to believe that some at least of the blocks of Hellenistic masonry, which only seem to occur in the upper part of the city, and then mostly as cores for the fifth century towers, are re-used and are no longer *in situ*. Ph.

⁶⁹ T. Fyfe, *Hellenistic Architecture* (London, 1936) 86 ff.

⁷⁰ *IG* xi 665. Discussed by F. Durrbach, 'Décrets du IIIe et du IIe siècles trouvés à Délos' in *BCH* x (1886) 124-133.

⁷¹ Unless the statue described by E. Clarke was Hellenistic: 'Towards the west, opposite to a small monastery of dervishes, is a tower called *Namasia-Koulé*; it has been thus denominated in consequence of the colossal Torso of a female statue, said to be that of the sister of *Alexander the Great*, daughter of *Philip Amyntas*, and wife of *Cassander*, from whom the city received its name. The remarkable tradition certainly entitles this Torso to some consideration. At the feet of the figure is represented the stern of a ship.' (*Travels in various countries of Europe, Asia and Africa*, 4th edition, vii [London, 1818] 448-9). The reference to a representation of a ship reminds us of such Hellenistic naval victory monuments as the Nike of Samothrace (K. Lehmann, *Samothrace, a guide to the excavations and the museum*, 3rd edition

[Locust Valley, 1966] 21, fig. 6) or the Athena Nike set up in the Agora at Cyrene (S. Stucchi, 'Cyrene, 1957-1966' in *Quaderni dell'Istituto Italiano di Cultura di Tripoli* iii [1967] 84-93, figs. 61-71). Cf. M. Jacob-Felsch, *Die Entwicklung griechischer Statuenbasen und die Aufstellung der Statuen* (Waldsassen, 1969) 96-7 and B. S. Ridgway, 'The setting of Greek sculpture' in *Hesperia* xl (1971) 353-4. Alternatively, as Dr Laubscher points out to me, it might have been a statue of the Tyche of Thessaloniki, like those of the city goddesses of the coastal cities of Syria and Palestine; cf. B. Schweitzer, 'Dea Nemesis Regina,' in *Jdl* xlvi (1931) 220 ff.

⁷² For the mid-fifth century date of these walls see my 'The date of the walls of Thessalonica' in *Istanbul Arkeoloji Müzeleri Yıllığı* xv-xvi (1969) 313-318 and my further remarks in the forthcoming *Proceedings of the 8th International Congress of Roman Frontier Studies*.

⁷³ *Op. cit.* 71-2, pls. 6, 1 and 7, 1, but not pl. 6, 2.

⁷⁴ *Op. cit.* pl. 6, 2.

Petsas, however, states emphatically that in the later wall there are stretches of poros blocks belonging to the Hellenistic wall which show no signs of ever having been moved from their original position.⁷⁵ It must be said that this can be paralleled elsewhere in Macedonia: large, well-cut blocks of masonry can now be seen in the recently cleared Hellenistic city wall at Edessa,⁷⁶ and squared blocks of local marble belonging to the Hellenistic walls at Philippi serve as foundations for the Byzantine walls there.⁷⁷ But whether the blocks at Thessaloniki are re-used or not, the strategic realities of the site were the same in Hellenistic as in late Roman times and there is every reason to believe, with Tafrafi, that the walls one sees today follow the lines of the earlier Hellenistic walls.

Within the Acropolis area at Thessaloniki there is a further line of defence beyond the wall which divides it from the city proper, namely, a fort variously known as Yedi-Kule or the Heptapyrgion (FIG. 4).⁷⁸ It was surveyed by a certain Corporal A. Ferran, a member of the Archaeological Service of the Armée française d'Orient during the Great War, and his examination showed the building to be 'Hellenic or Hellenistic in outline, the lower courses being for the most part of squared masonry'.⁷⁹ At Philippi, too, a similar arrangement occurs: there, two walls (built of Hellenistic squared masonry) are interposed between the lower city and the acropolis.⁸⁰ Then in at least one of the Seleucid cities of Syria, at Cyrrhus, a fort is built into the corner of the rectangular acropolis area.⁸¹ The Hellenistic fort at Thessaloniki presumably housed the *acrophylax* (an official recorded elsewhere) who was the commander of the garrison of royal troops regularly placed in Macedonian foundations.⁸²

For the greatest number of parallels for the defensive arrangements of Hellenistic Thessaloniki we must again look to the Macedonian cities of Syria and beyond. Most of them are situated at the foot of a steep hill which served as a citadel, and where necessary, such as in the flat alluvial plains of Mesopotamia, these hills were even man-made, as for example, at Carrhae and Samosata.⁸³ These Hellenistic citadels were never placed in the middle of a city, but rather were incorporated in the city wall. Thus, for example, at Antioch, Seleucia Pieria, Apamea, Laodicea ad Mare, Beroea, Cyrrhus, Arethusa, Chalcis ad Belum and Dura Europos one finds such cities built below impressive citadels which are often some distance from the main part of the city, but which are nevertheless taken into the city's ramparts.⁸⁴ A most striking example has recently been discovered at Ai Khanoum on the Afghanistan-Soviet border. This was a Hellenistic foundation, possibly going back to the time of Alexander himself, where the site of the lower city is dominated by a large triangular acropolis, the Bala Hissar.⁸⁵ The men who built the

⁷⁵ *Makedonika* ix (1969) 154.

⁷⁶ *ADelt* viii (1923) 259-65; xxiii (1968) Chron., 337-8, pl. 283 a-c; *BCH* xcii (1968) 898; *Makedonika* ix (1969) 176, pls 80 a-b, 81 a; Ph. Petsas in 'Αἰγαί-Πέλλα-Θεσσαλονίκη' in *Ancient Macedonia*, 203-19, pls. 41-9.

⁷⁷ P. Collart, *Philippe, ville de Macédoine* (Paris, 1937) 168-72, pls. 24 and 25; *CRAI* 1937, 182: 'Le tracé de la muraille médiévale est presque partout le même que celui du rempart grec.'

⁷⁸ Tafrafi, *op. cit.* 145-6, plan.

⁷⁹ *CRAI* 1918, 16-17; *BSA* xxiii (1918-19) 38. Ferran's report was announced (*BCH* xlviii [1924] 497, n. 3) as forthcoming in *Albania* i (1925), but it does not seem ever to have appeared.

⁸⁰ Heuzey and Daumet, *op. cit.* 50-1.

⁸¹ E. Frézouls, 'Recherches historiques et archéologiques sur la ville de Cyrrhus,' in *Annales archéologiques de Syrie* iv-v (1954-55) 121, pl. 1; plan

reproduced in *EAA* iv s.v. Kyrros, and in Frézouls, 'L'exploration archéologique de Cyrrhus' in *Apamée de Syrie*, 87, fig. 2.

⁸² E. Bikerman, *Institutions des Séleucides* (Paris, 1938) 54.

⁸³ V. Chapot, *La frontière de l'Euphrate* (Paris, 1907) 305 (Carrhae) and 270 (Samosata).

⁸⁴ Antioch: G. Downey, *op. cit.* 71. Seleucia Pieria: *PW* II A, 1, s.v. Seleukia Pieria, 1193-4. Apamea: *Apamée de Syrie*, plan. Laodicea: Sauvaget, *Bulletin d'études orientales* iv (1934) 98, 103, 104, fig. 10, pl. 26 b. Beroea: *id.*, *Alep* 42-5. Arethusa: *ibid.* 43, fig. 14 and 44, n. 95. Cyrrhus: see n. 63. Chalcis: R. Mouterde and A. Poidebard, *Le Limes de Chalcis* (Paris, 1945) 8. Dura: *Excavations at Dura Europos, Ninth Season 1935-6* i, fig. 12.

⁸⁵ *CRAI* 1965, 42 and plan opposite p. 44; *BCH* lxxxix (1965) 593-7.

fortifications of these cities did not in most cases seem to have taken much account of their street plans, but instead to have occupied themselves with purely defensive considerations. The course of the ramparts was governed by the configuration of the terrain and the necessity of securing the heights against enemy attack.

Against this background, the fortifications of Thessaloniki are slightly exceptional in that, in the lower city at any rate, they are more or less parallel with the streets that run from north to south. It would seem that some attempt had been made to harmonise the town plan and the line of the fortifications. It is only in the upper reaches where the ground is irregular that strategic considerations came first.

THE CEMETERIES

Tombs of Hellenistic date have been discovered from time to time in the area to the east of Thessaloniki where there was subsequently a large Roman and early Christian cemetery. No Hellenistic tombs have been found in the area of the Roman cemetery to the west of the city, but two were discovered to the north-west, in the quarter now known as Neapolis.

A chamber tomb of so-called 'Macedonian' type, with a well-preserved Doric façade similar to, but by no means as elaborate as the tomb at Lefkadia,⁸⁶ first came to light during the Great War on Odos Athenon at a point some two kilometres from the eastern wall of the city. It was built of poros blocks which were plastered internally and on the façade. It was 3·25 m. wide and 2·07 m. long. In the chamber was a *kline* on which the body of the deceased had rested. When the tomb was re-examined during the last war, a rectangular area full of ashes surrounded by a brick wall was found on top of the mound which overlay the chamber. The presence of both human and animal bones point to this having been the site of the funeral pyre. Associated pottery and terracottas (unpublished) were said to indicate that the *Verbrennungsplatz* was in constant use around 200 B.C.⁸⁷

In much the same area as this chamber tomb there were found, in May 1944, two stone built cist graves, one containing a late fourth century red-figured pelike, and the other two small pots (unpublished), which are said to be second century B.C. in date. The fourth century tomb had a pedimental roof, but the later one was less carefully constructed.⁸⁸

Closer to the city, but still on the eastern side, another vaulted chamber tomb was found in Plateia Syndrivani in 1957. It was square in plan, measuring internally 3·20 m. × 3·20 m., and it was 3·44 m. high. Again it was built of poros blocks and it contained three stone *klinai* and a small sarcophagus, as well as an important group of third century pottery, including alabastra, skyphoi, cups and an amphora.⁸⁹ Again just outside the eastern city wall, the painted marble grave stele of Histiaeus, the son of Sosicrates, was unearthed in 1954 when the site of the International Exhibition was being prepared. On stylistic grounds, the stele can be dated to the second half of the third century B.C.⁹⁰

⁸⁶ Ph. Petsas, 'Ο τάφος τῶν Λευκαδίων (Athens, 1966); for a brief survey of 'Macedonian' tombs in general, see D. C. Kurtz and J. Boardman, *Greek Burial Customs* (London, 1971) 273 ff.

⁸⁷ *BSA* xxiii (1918-19) 6; *BCH* xlv (1920) 402; *AA* 1942, 160; *BCH* lxiv-lxv (1940-41) 250; *AA* 1943, 321-2; *JHS* lxiv (1944) 92; *Makedonika* ii (1941-52) 599-600.

⁸⁸ *JHS* lxiv (1944) 92; *Makedonika* ii (1941-52) 601, pl. 8 (pelike); figs 5, p. 603, and 6, p. 605 need to be transposed.

⁸⁹ *BCH* lxxxii (1958) 758, figs 6 and 7, 759, fig. 8; *JHS* lxxviii (1958) 13.

⁹⁰ *BCH* lxxix (1955) 272.

The other group of tombs—two in all—were discovered in Neapolis, nearly a kilometre away from the city on the far side of a hill to the northwest. In 1948, a vaulted ‘Macedonian’ chamber tomb was found. It measured 2.50 m. × 3.50 m. internally and had a *kline* partially decorated with painted mouldings. The plastered walls too, were painted with a frieze of vegetal ornaments. Unfortunately, this tomb had already been robbed of its contents when found, with the exception of two stone cushions and a footstool.⁹¹ A cist grave, however, found nearby in 1958, produced some very fine jewellery which included three necklaces, a pair of bracelets adorned with animals’ heads, a pair of earrings in the form of Erotes, and a brooch, all in gold. The presence of dolls amongst the other finds suggest that this was the burial of a young girl.⁹² The richness of the grave goods here is reminiscent of the even more elaborate jewellery that was found at the outbreak of the last war, in a late fourth-century grave at Sedes, only ten kilometres away from Thessaloniki.⁹³

Mention ought, perhaps, to be made here of the votive relief in the Thessaloniki Archaeological Museum, and presumably from the city, which bears a representation of a horseman attacking a leaping bull with a lance. It was set up in honour of a local hero Hippalcmus, by a certain Seleucus, and has been dated to the first quarter of the second century B.C.⁹⁴

THE HARBOUR

Nothing much is known about the Hellenistic harbour at Thessaloniki. Livy mentions that Perseus’ fleet sheltered there during the final Macedonian war,⁹⁵ but that is all. According to Zosimus, writing at the turn of the fifth and sixth centuries there was no harbour as such until Constantine built one in 322.⁹⁶ There is no reason to doubt the fact that Constantine did build a harbour where there was none in the fourth century A.D.; Zosimus was no friend to Constantine and would hardly have given him the credit for something he had not done, though it is difficult to know what relevance, if any, his statement has to the situation in Hellenistic times.

SUMMARY

It would seem that the plan of Thessaloniki (FIG. 4) was laid out at the time of the city’s foundation by Cassander in c. 316 B.C. and that it has close parallels in the plans of other early Hellenistic cities. There was possibly an agora in the upper city from the beginning, but the principal, commercial agora of the Hellenistic city was probably closer to the sea. A large open space to the west was possibly a ‘sacred area’ in Hellenistic times, but the only religious centre whose site is known with any degree of certainty is the Serapeum. A gymnasium is known to have existed to the north of the city from the late Hellenistic period at least, and a nearby stadium probably goes back to Hellenistic times as well.

The Hellenistic fortifications probably followed the lines of those of the mid-fifth century A.D. In common with many other Hellenistic cities there is an acropolis incor-

⁹¹ *BCH* lxxiii (1949) 531; *Makedonika* ii (1941–52) 602.

⁹² *BCH* lxxxiii (1959) 706–7, figs 25–6; *JHS*, *Arch. Reports* 1958, 13 (fig. 15); R. A. Higgins, *Greek and Roman Jewellery* (London, 1961) 166, 172.

⁹³ *AA* 1939, 256; *BCH* lxiii (1939) 314, fig. 27, 315; *AA* 1940, 268.

⁹⁴ U. Hausmann, *Griechische Weihreliefs* (Berlin,

1960) 84, fig. 49; J. and L. Robert, *Bull. ép.*, 1962, 168, No. 180.

⁹⁵ Livy xlv 10. Cf. K. Lehmann Hartleben, ‘Die antiken Hafenanlagen des Mittelmeeres’ in *Klio*, Beih. xiv (1923) 285.

⁹⁶ *καὶ τὸν ἐν ταύτῃ λιμένα, πρότερον οὐκ ὄντα, κατασκευάσας*, *Hist.* ii 22. For the date of Zosimus, see A. Cameron, *Philologus* cxiii (1969) 106–10.

porated in the city wall, but the fortifications of Thessaloniki are slightly anomalous in that the lower stretches of the east and west walls run parallel with some of the streets of the city plan.

Thus, even though the reconstruction of Hellenistic Thessaloniki may be an elusive and often a speculative business, the statement of an anonymous writer to the effect that 'il ne reste à Thessaloniki aucun vestige de la ville hellénistique'⁹⁷ is certainly exaggerated.

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⁹⁷ *Thessaloniki, un petit guide* (Thessaloniki, 1953), cited by Ph. Petsas in *Makedonika* ix (1969) 154.