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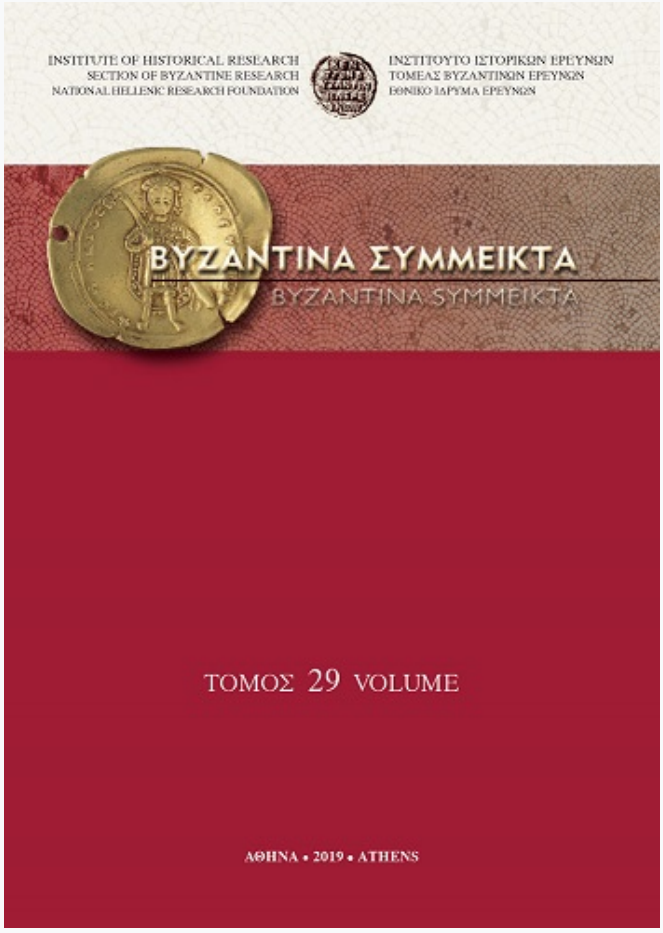

Influences and interpretations of Byzantine history and culture in the literary work of the Modern Greek writer Nikos Gabriel Pentzikis

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ΤΟΜΕΑΣ ΒΥΖΑΝΤΙΝΩΝ ΕΡΕΥΝΩΝ
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Introduction

Thessaloniki is an historical palimpsest, containing layer upon layer of history: at the lowest level lie the ancient Greek monuments, a little higher up, the Roman monuments appear. Above them are the Byzantine monuments which bear witness to the profound importance of Thessaloniki as a Byzantine city. Finally, at the top, we see the modern monuments. The city has: a) a particular topography (the sea – the Thermaikos Gulf, the hill – the upper town); b) a characteristic geometric shape of land (semicircle – sea, butterfly-shaped city); c) a historical center with perimeter walls; d) many monuments that function as landmarks[1]. Thessaloniki's historical profile, an uninterrupted course from the Hellenistic era to this day bears more than anything the marks of its Byzantine period. The walled city with its monuments can reasonably be described as an open Byzantine museum.

Although time changes everything, the traces of the illustrious past are not easily erased. Some modern Thessalonian writers chose the role of the *Φύλακας Ερειπίων* (Guardian of the Ruins), believing that many of the "ruins", for example the monuments and the history of Thessaloniki, are valuable and make this role enviable[2]. According to Pericles Sphyridis, these writers developed the narrative techniques of associating ideas and

1. N. Tsinikas, Προς μια βιώσιμη πόλη, in: *Πρακτικά Επιστημονικού Συμποσίου 'Ποια Ελλάδα;'*, ed. M. Vlachou, Aristotle University of Thessaloniki 2014, 312-316; 312.

2. G. B. Ritzoulis, *Λογοτεχνία και αλήθεια. Πώς ήταν η πραγματική Θεσσαλονίκη;*, *Ένεκεν* 17 (2010, July-August-September). https://nigromont.wordpress.com. Accessed 24 November 2018.

the stream of consciousness, "combining the modernist and introverted European style of the interwar period with the Byzantine mystical tradition of the city", thus creating a unique style[3].

Nikos Gabriel (Gavriil) Pentzikis (1908–1993) is one of these "Guardians of the Ruins". His work stands between concrete reality and a mythical or metaphysical imaginary world. He writes: *Τὰ κατακείμενα μάρμαρα τῶν ἐρειπίων, δὲν τὰ ζωντανεύει ὁ ἐπιστήμων ἐρευνητής, ἀλλ' ὁ ταπεινὸς ἀρχαιοφύλαξ, ποὺ ἀπὸ τοὺς ἄλλους ἔμαθε νὰ τ' ἀγαπᾶ καὶ μάλιστα ἐπὶ πολλῶν ὅσων θεμάτων, τυφλά*[4]. And elsewhere *Ὁ ἑλληνικὸς λόγος καὶ ἡ διάρκειά του δὲν μπορεῖ νὰ μὴν ἅπτεται ἐρειπίων. Στὶς ἐπιστρωματώσεις τῶν ἐρειπίων ὑπάρχουν ὅλες οἱ κινήσεις τῶν ἀνθρωπίνων χεριῶν. Ὁλόκληρη ἡ δουλειά σου δὲν εἶναι παρὰ ἡ προσπάθεια νὰ ἔχεις κάποια αἴσθηση τῆς αἰωνιότητας μέσα στὸ φθαρτὸ καὶ ἐφήμερο...*[5]. Pentzikis' sense of loss finds its cure in the "ruins"; the narrator eventually resolves to examine human weakness more objectively and find some solution to his problem within the wider spectrum of his city, the traditions of his land and religion. The tension that results from these two opposing views of the world, the objective and the mythical, and the need to harmonize them occupied Pentzikis's intellect all his life[6]. Ancient Thessaloniki emerges through the mythological traditions that Pentzikis uses selectively, while the significance of the city during the byzantine era is extolled in most of his works[7]. The author's work, distinguished by a rare openness to

3. P. Sphyridis, Η λογοτεχνική ζωή της Θεσσαλονίκης, *Διαβάζω* 356 (1995, October), 48-52; 48. Idem, 'Εσωτερικός μονόλογος' και 'νέο-ρεαλιστική πρόζα', *Οδός Πανός. Η λογοτεχνία της Θεσσαλονίκης* 133 (2006, July-September), 34-37; 37. K. Zacharopoulou, *Μακεδονικές Ημέρες (1932-1939, 1952-1953): η διαμόρφωση του νεωτερικού λόγου στην πρωτεύουσα του βορρά και οι μεσοπολεμικές πνευματικές αναζητήσεις*, Master Thesis, University of Patras 2011, 13, 33, 57 [=https://nemertes.lis.upatras.gr/jspui/bitstream/10889/4644/1]

4. N. G. Pentzikis, *Σημειώσεις ἑκατὸ ἡμερῶν*, Athens 1973, 134 [hereafter: Pentzikis, *Σημειώσεις*].

5. Pentzikis, *Σημειώσεις*, 71.

6. G. Thaniel, *Homage to Byzantium. The Life and Work of Nikos Gabriel Pentzikis,* Toronto 1983, 17-19, 22.

7. T. H. Kotopoulos – A. Karakitsios, Thessaloniki: Landscapes and Memory – the City's Poetic in Prose, in: *Identités culturelles en Méditerranée,* ed. A. Dagkas, Thessalonique 2013, 143-167; 154.

diverse ideologies and traditions, is also a sample of the Greek modernist enterprise[8].

Pentzikis stands out among the important prose writers of the 30's. His work reflects James Joyce's experiments, in that he is one of the main exponents of the "interior monologue", while also endeavoring to bring together Eastern and Western legacies through the blending of the ancient Greek and the Orthodox Christian Byzantine worlds with contemporary European thought[9]. Pentzikis' mysticism and religiosity follow in the footsteps of the Great Fathers of Orthodoxy, the ancient Greek Mystery religions, Neoplatonic theosophy, and the works of Byzantine scholars. Thus, he tries to find ways and means to survive the dissolution of the 'daily contradictions' of life. On the one hand, Pentzikis believes in the plain and unalloyed faith of the simple man, the faith which he sees as the main thrust behind the Christian monuments and traditions of his land. On the other hand, he has sensed that the primary function of the artist today is to dig deep into the areas of the human soul which lie beneath ordinary consciousness and to discover or rediscover some unifying myth. Pentzikis rediscovered and reembraced Greek Orthodoxy, the myth that nourished both his youth and, for many centuries, his entire nation[10].

Pentzikis was influenced above all by Orthodoxy and he gradually accepted the Greek Orthodox Church as the spiritual treasure without which he could not live. His relation with Orthodoxy has a special and complex character: on the one hand, he finds there a refuge from the dissolution of

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8. Sphyridis, *Η λογοτεχνική ζωή*, 48. Idem, *Εσωτερικός μονόλογος*, 37. Zacharopoulou, *Μακεδονικές Ημέρες*, 54-55.

9. P. Moullas, Ὁ παλίμψηστος κώδικας τοῦ Ν. Γ. Πεντζίκη, *Ἐντευκτήριο*, nr. 5, Dec. 1988, 24-35 [= Idem, *Παλίμψηστα καὶ μή. Κριτικὰ δοκίμια*, Athens 1992, 165–199]. E. Voyiatzaki, *The Body in the Text: James Joyce's Ulysses and the Modern Greek Novel*, Lanham- Boulder-New York-Oxford, 101. Eadem, *Νίκος Γαβριήλ Πεντζίκης, Ο άνθρωπος και τα σύμβολα*, Athens 2004, 25-28.

10. N. G. Pentzikis, Ὁ κόσμος τῶν Βυζαντινῶν, in: *Λογοτεχνικό ταξίδι στο Βυζάντιο*, ed. S. Paschalis, Athens 2003, 249. Thaniel, *Homage*, 94. T. Kazantzis, *Η πεζογραφία της Θεσσαλονίκης (1912-1991)*, Thessaloniki 1991, 75. N. Karatzas, *Η Θεσσαλονίκη των συγγραφέων*, Thessaloniki 1996, 9. P. Sphyridis, *Παραφυάδες ΙΙ. Κείμενα λογοτεχνίας και βιβλιοκρισίες 1999-2008*, ed. S. Stavrakopoulou, Athens 2008, 147. A. D. Vakaloudi, *Η βυζαντινή Θεσσαλονίκη μέσα από το έργο των σύγχρονων Θεσσαλονικέων λογοτεχνών*, Thessaloniki 2018, 30.

the modern world, and, on the other hand, he shapes a system of ideas that links ancient Greek civilization to Byzantium, and the modern tradition of scholarship to popular tradition[11]. Pentzikis believes that Christianity is not a restricted revelation received through a single channel, but a movement which has united and enlarged during its own existence other channels of inspiration previously present in the ancient world[12]. He justifies his theory with the following arguments: a) *Ὑπὸ τὸν χορὸ τῶν ἀνθρωπόμορφων θεῶν, ποὺ μελετήθηκε ἡ προέλευση καὶ ἡ ἐξέλιξή τους, ὁ χορὸς τῶν πόλεων ποὺ γίνονται ἀγάλματα, στὰ μέτρα τῆς μορφῆς τοῦ ἀνθρώπου, εἶναι ἕνας χαρακτήρας ποὺ θὰ παραμείνει βασικὸς στὴ διαμόρφωση τῆς ἑλληνικῆς σκέψης*[13]. b) *Στὴν ἐποχή μας ὅμως ἐξερευνᾶται καὶ ἀναγνωρίζεται ἡ πρωταρχικῆς σημασίας συμβολὴ τῆς ἀρχαίας θρησκείας, ὅσον ἀφορᾶ τὴν ἀνάπτυξη καὶ διαμόρφωση τοῦ Χριστιανισμοῦ ὑπὸ τῆς Ἐκκλησίας. Ὁμολογεῖται δὲ εὐρύτερα ἡ βαθυτέρα σχέση, μεταξὺ ἀρχαίων ἑλληνικῶν μύθων καὶ χριστιανικῶν μυστηρίων, ἰδιαζόντως μάλιστα τῶν τοιούτων τῆς Ὀρθοδοξίας*[14]. c) *Οἱ παρομοιασθέντες μὲ Κόρη καὶ Κοῦρο νέοι. 'Μὲ λένε Ἀπόλλωνα' ἀκούστηκε νὰ λέει τὸ παλληκάρι. 'Η σύντροφός μου ὀνομάζεται Ἀπολλιναρία, πως καὶ οἱ δυό μας ὁμολογοῦμε, τὴν πίστη μας στὸ Χριστό, παρὰ τὰ εἰδωλολατρικά μας ὀνόματα ... Ὅταν ὁ Παρθενὼν γίνεται ἐκκλησία τῆς Παναγίας τότε εἶναι θαυμάσιος. Στὸ φῶς τοῦ προσώπου τοῦ Χριστοῦ καὶ ἐν τῷ γλυκασμῷ τῆς ὡραιότητός του τὸ Βυζάντιο παραμένει ἀθάνατο'*[15]. The attenuation of the plot and the abstract presentation of thoughts characterize the above passages. The author ignores the linear narration and verisimilitude. Instead, he focuses on his argumentation that copying, imitating a tradition, and responding with trust to forms handed down through generations do not negate the true nature of humanity but instead uphold it. Pentzikis retains his high regard

11. N. G. Pentzikis, *Ὑδάτων ὑπερεκχείλιση. Ἀνάλεκτα,* Thessaloniki 1990, 340-341 [hereafter Pentzikis, *Ὑδάτων ὑπερεκχείλιση*].

12. S. J. Case, Christianity and the Mystery Religions, *The Biblical World* 43 (1) (1914), 3-16; 4. https://www.journals.uchicago.edu/doi/pdfplus/10.1086/474965. Accessed 6 December 2018.

13. N. G. Pentzikis, *Μητέρα Θεσσαλονίκη,* Athens 1970, 63 [hereafter: Pentzikis, *Μητέρα Θεσσαλονίκη*].

14. Pentzikis, *Σημειώσεις*, 31.

15. Pentzikis, *Ὑδάτων Ὑπερεκχείλιση,* 102, 159, 200.

for the ancient Greek religion in that he is convinced that since the ancient Greeks had been enlightened by the Logos, later encapsulated perfectly in the person of Christ, they themselves were in some ways predecessors of Christianity. He believes that items appropriated from other religions had been rescued from a false setting and restored to their divinely intended position in the new faith[16].

According to Pentzikis, man is obliged to reconcile his personal and national past through his contemporary reflections to understand the cyclical movement of time and, at the same time, liberated from his ego, to harmonize himself mystically with the universe as a divine creation. In the same vein, elsewhere the author writes: *Τὸ ἴδιο ἱστορικὸ αἴσθημα συναντᾶμε στοὺς χρονογράφους τοῦ Βυζαντίου, σὰν κοινὴ ἀντίληψη τῆς Ὀρθόδοξης Χριστιανοσύνης, τὸν καιρὸ ποὺ ἀποτελοῦσε πανίσχυρη καὶ ἐκτεταμένη αὐτοκρατορία. Σήμερα ἐν ὀνόματι τῆς ἀτομιστικῆς ἀντίληψης τῆς ἱστορίας, ἀπὸ τὰ στερνὰ κατάλοιπα τοῦ οὐμανισμοῦ, ποὺ ἔχει ἐντελῶς πιὰ ξεφλουδίσει, ἐν ὀνόματι μιᾶς πολὺ περιορισμένης σ' ἔκταση λογικῆς, μάθαμε ν' ἀποκαλοῦμε τερατολόγους καὶ παραμυθάδες αὐτοὺς ποὺ στέκουν σάμπως θεμελιωτές τοῦ Γένους*[17]. All these wanderings unfold as regressive journeys to past memories, personal and collective, stimulated by the random impingement of a detailed solid world which imparts to Pentzikis' work the trivia of mundanity[18].

The Byzantine Thessaloniki through the literary work of Nikos Gabriel Pentzikis

During the Byzantine era, many scholars who were either born in Thessaloniki or lived in it, wrote an encomium for the city[19]. Ioannes

16. Thaniel, *Homage*, 22. Nt. Christianopoulos, *Η λογοτεχνία στη Θεσσαλονίκη (1850-1950),* Thessaloniki 1999, 22. N. Philippaios, *Σύγκριση των δύο εκδόσεων του πεζογραφήματος "Πραγματογνωσία" του Νίκου Γαβριήλ Πεντζίκη,* Volos 2014, 2-3. https://www.academia.edu. Accessed 25 November 2018. Cf. Case, *Christianity*, 4.

17. Pentzikis, *Σημειώσεις*, 190-191.

18. E. Voyiatzaki, Greek Modernism and Inner-Oriented Art, in: *Modernism,* ed. A. Eysteinsson – V. Liska, Amsterdam/Philadephia 2007, 991-1007; 1003.

19. See H. Hunger, Laudes Thessalonicenses, in: *Εταιρεία Μακεδονικών Σπουδών. Εορταστικός τόμος, 50 χρόνια, 1939-1989*, Thessaloniki 1992, 99-113. F. Tinnefeld, Intellectuals in Late Byzantine Thessalonike, *DOP* 57 (2003), 153-172; 154.

Caminiates, in the chronicle *Εἰς τὴν ἅλωσιν τῆς Θεσσαλονίκης*, which refers to the city's siege and sacking by the Saracen pirates led by Leo of Tripoli in the 10th century (904), describes a great city, well-fortified, with a safe harbor, which, due to a long-standing peace, flourished. According to Caminiates, education and arts also flourished in Thessaloniki[20]. Eustathius, archbishop of Thessaloniki during the city's siege by the Normans (1185), describes the city as a paradise which no visitor could forget (*Οὐ γὰρ πόλις ἦν ἡ ἁπλῶς, ἀλλὰ μακάρων γῆ, ὁποίαν ὁ μαθὼν οὐκ ἂν ἔχοι λαθέσθαι αὐτῆς*)[21]. Demetrios Kydonis, in the 14th century, in his work *Μονῳδία ἐπὶ τοῖς ἐν Θεσσαλονίκῃ πεσοῦσι* includes an encomium to Thessaloniki[22], which begins with the praise of the position and the climate of the city. He also refers to the multitude of the city's churches and its famous market, which attracts many traders and visitors from all over the world. Kydonis also mentions the city's harbor, which he describes as an embrace for the city[23]. Kydonis actually attributes

20. Ioannis Caminiatae, De expugnatione Thessalonicae *(Ἰωάννου κληρικοῦ καὶ κουβουκλεισίου τοῦ Καμινιάτου εἰς τὴν ἅλωσιν τῆς Θεσσαλονίκης)* [hereafter Caminiata], ed. G. Böhlig [CFHB 4], Berlin 1973, 4.1-12.6 [pp. 4-12]. Cf. *Ιωάννης Καμινιάτης, Ευστάθιος Θεσσαλονίκης, Ιωάννης Αναγνώστης. Χρονικά Αλώσεων της Θεσσαλονίκης*, ed. Ch. Messis – P. Odorico, Athens 2005, 3-12 (pp. 71-87) [hereafter Messis – Odorico]. G. Michael, *Πηγές των τριών Αλώσεων της Θεσσαλονίκης. Συγκριτική Μελέτη,* Master Thesis, Aristotle University of Thessaloniki 2014, 57-58 [=https://ikee.lib.auth.gr/record/270181/files/GRI-2015-14837.pdf]. On the doubting of the authenticity of the whole text or a part of it, see A. P. Kazhdan, Some Questions Addressed to the Scholars Who Believe in the Authenticity of Kaminiates' Capture of Thessalonica, *BZ* 71 (1978), 303-314. A. Konstantakopoulou, *Βυζαντινή Θεσσαλονίκη. Χώρος και Ιδεολογία*, Ioannina 1996, 83-85. A. Karpozelos, *Βυζαντινοὶ Ἱστορικοὶ καὶ Χρονογράφοι*, v. 2, (8th–10th c.), Athens 2002, 253-280. P. Odorico, in Messis – Odorico, 20-24, 25 ff. accepts the authenticity of the text.

21. Εὐσταθίου Θεσσαλονίκης *Συγγραφὴ ἁλώσεως* [hereafter Eustathios], ed. St. Kyriakidis, *Eustazio di Tessalonica. La espugnazione di Tessalonica* [Istituto Siciliano di Studi Bizantini e Neoellenici, Testi 5], Palermo 1961, 146, 6-7. Messis – Odorico, 298.19-22. Michael, *Πηγές*, 59.

22. Δημητρίου Κυδώνη, *Μονῳδία ἐπὶ τοῖς ἐν Θεσσαλονίκῃ πεσοῦσι* [hereafter Kydonis], *PG* 109, 639-652.

23. Kydonis 641B3-5; B5-8; B9-12; B12-C5; C5-8; 641-644. E. Kaltsogianni – S. Kotzabasi – I. Paraskevopoulou, *Η Θεσσαλονίκη στη βυζαντινή λογοτεχνία. Ρητορικά και αγιολογικά κείμενα,* Thessaloniki 2002, 54-55. E. Marki, Το Κωνσταντίνειο λιμάνι και άλλα βυζαντινά λιμάνια της Θεσσαλονίκης, in: *Proceedings of the International Symposium*

to the landscape of Thessaloniki qualities that are beneficial for the residents of Thessaloniki and its visitors[24]. Nicephorus Choumnos has also written a paean for his city Thessaloniki, which is included in his treatise *Θεσσαλονικεῦσι συμβουλευτικός. Περὶ δικαιοσύνης*. He begins by addressing the Thessalonicians who live in this "great and marvelous city" and then continues by praising the city. According to Choumnos, the landscape around the city is breathtaking and the city's economy is flourishing[25]. Choumnos thereafter marvels at the size and magnificence of the city, the spacious acropolis, the public buildings, the large and luxurious temples and the lofty houses[26]. Choumnos makes special mention of the Patron Saint of Thessaloniki, Saint Demetrios, who always supports, protects and defends Thessaloniki and its inhabitants[27].

As a fervent Orthodox Christian, born in Thessaloniki, Pentzikis believes that his city is the arc of Orthodoxy and the most beautiful city in the world. In his works, the history of the city is selectively regenerated and its legend welded through the glorifying mythological and ancient traditions in which both the Christian and the Byzantine character of the city are harmoniously interwoven. Pentzikis seeks, besides introducing the city as a woman and a mother, to bind it irrevocably to the divine essence at a transcendental level beyond its human figure[28]. In *Σύννεφα*

'*Medieval Ports in North Aegean and the Black Sea. Links to the Maritime Routes of the East*', ed. F. Karagianni, Thessaloniki 2013, 174-180; 175.

24. Kydonis, 641C 5-8. Kaltsogianni, et al., *Η Θεσσαλονίκη*, 55.

25. Νικηφόρου Χούμνου, *Θεσσαλονικεῦσι συμβουλευτικός* [hereafter Choumnos], ed. J. Fr. Boissonade, *Anecdota Graeca e codicibus regiis*, v. 2, Paris 1830, 137-187; 140. Cf. A. Laiou, Η Θεσσαλονίκη, η ενδοχώρα της και ο οικονομικός της χώρος στην εποχή των Παλαιολόγων, in: *Πρακτικά Διεθνούς Συμποσίου 'Βυζαντινή Μακεδονία, 324-1430 μ.Χ.* [Μακεδονική Βιβλιοθήκη 82], Thessaloniki 1995, 183-194; 183.

26. Choumnos, 141-143. Cf. Kaltsogianni et al. *Η Θεσσαλονίκη*, 36-47. Laiou, *Η Θεσσαλονίκη*, 183.

27. Choumnos, 148-151. Kaltsogianni et al., *Η Θεσσαλονίκη*, 45. A. D. Katsochis, *Ιστορία και Θεολογία στη Θεσσαλονίκη του 14ου αι. Πρόσωπα και τάσεις*, Master Thesis, Aristotle University of Thessaloniki 2009, 84 [https://ikee.lib.auth.gr/record/115937/files/GRI-2010-4788.pdf].

28. S. Stavrakopoulou, Η Θεσσαλονίκη στο πεζογραφικό έργο των Ν. Γ. Πεντζίκη, Γ. Ιωάννου και Αλ. Ναρ, in: *Πρακτικά 4ου Συνεδρίου Ευρωπαϊκής Εταιρείας Νεοελληνικών Σπουδών 'Ταυτότητες στον ελληνικό κόσμο (από το 1204 έως σήμερα)'*, v. 1, ed. K. Demadis,

καὶ ἀναπολήσεις he calls Thessaloniki the *Μητέρα Πόλη*[29], *τοῦ ἐνδόξου μας Βυζαντινισμοῦ*[30], *Μητέρα Νύμφη μὲ τὸν Θερμαϊκὸ κόλπο*[31]. Pentzikis' comment about Thessaloniki as a woman and the title of his more well-known book *Μητέρα Θεσσαλονίκη*, seem to be imbued by Byzantine notions. They bring to mind a comment of his 15th-century fellow-Thessalonian Andronikos Kallistos (c. 1400-1476), who described Constantinople as *κοινὴν πατρίδα τε καὶ τροφόν* (a common homeland and a nurse)[32]. Pentzikis, like Kavafy, had a thorough knowledge of Byzantine culture. He feels proud of his native city and, following the Byzantine literary tradition, he writes a warm tribute for Thessaloniki describing the city as heaven on earth[33]. Elsewhere the author repeats a passage from the aforementioned work of the Byzantine scholar Demetrios Kydonis[34]. There, Kydonis considers Thessaloniki as a new Helicon and compares it with Athens of the classical period; he praises the spiritual development of the city during the 14th century, and he assures his readers of the continuity of the city's spiritual tradition (*Ἀλλὰ τὸν ἅπαντα δὴ χρόνον Ἑλικὼν ἦν ἡ πόλις, καὶ νενίκηκεν ἐνταῦθα τὰ τῶν μουσῶν δι' αἰῶνος ἀκμάζειν, ὥσπερ φασὶ τὴν Ἥβην οἱ ποιηταί. Οὕτως Ἀθήνησιν ἄν τις εἴποι μετὰ Δημοσθένους καὶ Πλάτωνος διατρίβειν αὐτόθι γενόμενος*)[35]. Likewise, Pentzikis combines Christianity with the city's ancient Greek heritage when he mentions that:

Athens 2011, 87-103; 99 [=Eadem, *Ἐπ' ἀφορμῇ. Μελετήματα για τη λογοτεχνία της Θεσσαλονίκης*, Athens 2011, 120-135]. Kotopoulos – Karakitsios, Thessaloniki, 156-157.

29. N. G. Pentzikis, *Πραγματογνωσία καὶ ἄλλα ἑπτὰ κείμενα μυθοπλασίας γεωγραφικῆς,* Thessaloniki 1977, 128 [hereafter Pentzikis, *Πραγματογνωσία*].

30. Pentzikis,*Πραγματογνωσία*, 110. Idem, *Μητέρα Θεσσαλονίκη*, 76. The influence of K. P. Kavafis's poem, Στὴν Ἐκκλησία (*ὁ νοῦς μου πηαίνει σὲ τιμὲς μεγάλες τῆς φυλῆς μας, / στὸν ἔνδοξό μας Βυζαντινισμό*) [in: K. P. Kavafy, *Ποιήματα Α΄ (1896-1918)*, ed. G. P. Savvidis, Athens, 1980 (13th ed.), 48], is evident.

31. Pentzikis, *Σημειώσεις*, 129.

32. Andronikos Kallistos, Μονῳδία κῦρ Ἀνδρονίκου τοῦ Καλλίστου ἐπὶ τῇ δυστυχεῖ Κωνσταντινουπόλει, in: *Μονῳδίαι καὶ θρῆνοι ἐπὶ τῇ ἁλώσει τῆς Κωνσταντινουπόλεως*, ed. S. Lampros, *NE* 5 (1908), 109-269; 217. Cf. E. Russell, *Literature and Culture in Late Byzantine Thessalonica*, London-New York 2013, 6.

33. N. G. Pentzikis, *Ὁ πεθαμένος καὶ ἡ Ἀνάσταση* (1st edition Athens 1944), 2nd edition Thessaloniki 1970, 152 [hereafter Pentzikis, *Ὁ πεθαμένος*].

34. Pentzikis, *Σημειώσεις*, 131.

35. Kydonis, 644B9-13.

Ὁ Ὅσιος Δαβίδ .... σὰν πτηνὸ ... μετήλλαξε τὴ θλίψη σὲ χαρὰ γιὰ τοὺς ἀνθρώπους τῶν προαστείων τῆς Θεσσαλονίκης, Νέου Ἑλικῶνος ὡς ἐχαρακτηρίσθη κατὰ τὴν Βυζαντινὴν Περίοδον[36].

P. A. Agapitos comments that τhe work of some of the Greek authors who were inspired by Byzantine history is characterized by a purely Helladic and nationalist perspective. Byzantium appears as a mixture of radiant greatness and mournful decline, in many cases serving as a background for depicting the birth of modern Hellenism[37]. Pentzikis belongs to an intellectual and cultural movement (Neo-Orthodox) which has attempted to promote Neo-Byzantinism, to formulate an Orthodox identity for contemporary Greece in the face of the social chaos that has left the Orthodox rootless in a post-Cold War era. In particular, the retrieval of Orthodox ascetic theology combined with a particular understanding of Greek identity, the *Ρωμιοσύνη*, has provided the theological basis for the Neo-Orthodox political ideology. However, as D. P. Payne and E. Voyiatzaki stress, we are not dealing with the outcome of a chauvinistic 'Hellenocentric' project, a matter of ethnonationalism or even ethno-religious nationalism, but instead a religious culture that transcends nationalist categories. This religious culture is found in all Orthodox countries in the form of a culture of Hesychasm, rooted in Orthodox monasticism[38]. Indeed Pentzikis' aesthetic project is a constant attempt at bridging the gap between Western and Eastern civilization, by associating Christianity, Byzantine Orthodox tradition and ancient myth with the modernist European sensibility[39]. Pentzikis embraces the ideology of the continuity of the Greek nation. Therefore, he does not mention that Thessaloniki was under the Turkish occupation for 482 years. Moreover, according to Pentzikis, if the monuments of Athens refer to the ancient past of the nation, which will fade during the Roman occupation, the nation will

36. Pentzikis, *Σημειώσεις*, 131.

37. P. A. Agapitos, 'Metamorphoseon permulti libri': Byzantine literature translated into modern Greek, in: *Byzantium and the Modern Greek Identity*, ed. D. Ricks – P. Magdalino, Aldershot, UK 1998, 63-74; 65.

38. D. P. Payne, *The Revival of Political Hesychasm in Greek Orthodox Thought: A Study of the Hesychast Basis of the Thought of John S. Romanides and Christos Yannaras*, PhD diss., J. M. Dawson Institute of Church-State Studies, Baylor University 2006, 6. Voyiatzaki [as in n. 18], 992.

39. Voyiatzaki [as in n. 18], 1001.

continue its life through Orthodoxy and Byzantium, and it will be 'resurrected' by the city of Thessaloniki into the new Greek state. Pentzikis states clearly in *Θεσσαλονίκη καὶ Ζωή: Τὸ δράμα τοῦ θανάτου καὶ τῆς ἀνάστασης τοῦ Ἑλληνισμοῦ ὁλόκληρο περιλαμβάνεται μέσα στὴν ἐκκλησία μας. Ὅταν σκεφτοῦμε ἔτσι, βλέπουμε ποιά μπορεῖ νὰ 'ναι ἡ αἰσθητικὴ πειθαρχία ποὺ χρειάζονται τὰ μάτια μας γιὰ νὰ δοῦνε. Νὰ δοῦμε τὴν πόλη τῶν πολλῶν καὶ ὡραίων ναῶν, ὅπως συνήθως χαρακτηρίζεται, τὴν πόλη τοῦ Ἁγίου Δημητρίου, ὅπως ἐπίσης ἡ Θεσσαλονίκη ὀνομάζεται*[40]. According to G. Thaniel[41], «Pentzikis stresses, above all, the rhythm that pervades and guides Byzantine art and architecture, but also religious rituals – a rhythm and a symmetry which spring from a mistrust of complete symmetry in the classical sense".

Several Byzantine scholars of Thessaloniki wrote encomiums for its Patron Saint Demetrios[42]. At the beginning of the 10th century, the archbishop of the city Plotinus states that the "glorious city" Thessaloniki owes its fame and glory rather to the martyrdom of its Patron Saint than to its founders[43]. The aforementioned Ioannes Caminiates (10th c.) considers Saint Demetrios second only to the Apostle Paul and attests that the Saint saved Thessaloniki many times from its enemies and assured it victory[44]. Characteristic is also the way that famous scholars of the 14th and 15th centuries, Thessalonian or no, express their adoration to Saint Demetrios. Demetrios Kydonis

40. Pentzikis, *Μητέρα Θεσσαλονίκη*, 64.

41. Thaniel, *Homage*, 42.

42. Kaltsogianni et al., *Η Θεσσαλονίκη*, 87-212. Σ. Πασχαλιδης, *Ἡ Γραμματεία τῶν Δημητρίων Β΄: Μαρτύρια, Συλλογὲς Θαυμάτων καὶ Ἐγκώμια στὸν Ἅγιο Δημήτριο. Πρωτοβυζαντινὴ – Μεσοβυζαντινὴ Περίοδος* [Κέντρον Ἁγιολογικῶν Μελετῶν 5], Thessaloniki 2005. Tinnefeld, Intellectuals, 154.

43. Πλωτίνου Θεσσαλονίκης, Ἐγκώμιον εἰς τὸν πανένδοξον τοῦ Χριστοῦ μάρτυρα Ἅγιον Δημήτριον, ed. Th. Ioannou, *Μνημεῖα ἁγιολογικὰ νῦν πρῶτον ἐκδιδόμενα*, Venice 1884 (repr. Leipzig 1973), 41.26-42.2. A. Stavridou-Zafraka, Πολιτικές και πνευματικές σχέσεις της Θεσσαλονίκης με την Κωνσταντινούπολη στα χρόνια του Λέοντα Στ΄, *Βυζαντιακά* 30 (2012-2013), 133-147; 134. G. Tsiaples, *Πολιορκίες και αλώσεις πόλεων στα βυζαντινά ρητορικά και αγιολογικά κείμενα*, PhD diss., Aristotle University of Thessaloniki 2014, 146 [=http://hdl.handle.net/10442/hedi/35295].

44. Caminiata, 3.65-67 [p. 5]; 8.52-54 [p. 10]. Messis – Odorico, 3 [p. 72.7-15]; 8 [p. 81.10-20].

(14th c.)[45], Symeon, archbishop of Thessaloniki (1416/17-1429)[46], Gregory Palamas, archbishop of Thessaloniki[47], Nicephorus Gregoras[48], Nicephorus Choumnos, Constantine Armenopoulos[49], all declare that Saint Demetrios is the city's savior and benefactor and it is because of him Thessaloniki has become a heaven on earth[50]. Pentzikis, following in the footsteps of Byzantine scholars, writes his own paean for Saint Demetrios: *Ὁ Ἅγιος μεγαλομάρτυς Δημήτριος ὁ Μυροβλύτης μαζὶ μὲ τὴν πυκνὴ φάλαγγα τῶν ἄλλων ἁγίων, ποὺ διήνυσαν ἐδῶ στὴ Θεσσαλονίκη τὸν βίο τους, μαζὶ δὲ μὲ τὴ Θεοτόκο Μητέρα-Κόρη, μεσολαβώντας βοηθοῦσαν στὴν ἀναγωγὴ τῶν ἀμέσων, προβάλλοντας τὸ παθητικὸ σχῆμα τους γι' ἀχνάρι, ὅπου ὁ καθένας μὲ τὰ ἰδιαίτερα δικά του φτάνοντας, ἐννοοῦσε τὴ λαμπρότερη τῆς πόλεως ἄποψη*[51], because *Τῆς πόλης τὸ πρόσωπο ... σκεπάζουν ... σύννεφα γεμάτα ὄνειρα, ποὺ μπορεῖς νὰ ταξιδέψεις πρὸς ὅλες τὶς διαστάσεις σὲ κάθε ἀπόσταση*[52]; also *Στοὺς κόλπους τῆς Θεοτόκου Μητέρας βρίσκεται ἡ πραγματικότητα τῆς Θεσσαλονίκης ὁλόκληρη*[53]; and elsewhere *Στὴν ἄκρη τῆς θάλασσας καρδιά, κοιτίδα τοῦ ἔνδοξου Μυροβλύτη Μεγαλομάρτυρα*

45. Kydonis, 644A4-15. Kaltsogianni et al., *Η Θεσσαλονίκη*, 56.

46. Συμεών, Λόγος ἱστορικός, in D. Balfour (ed.), *Politico-Historical Works of Symeon Archbishop of Thessalonica (1416/17 to 1429). Critical Greek Text with Introduction and Commentary* [*WBS* 13], Wien 1979, 19-21. *Ἁγίου Συμεὼν Ἀρχιεπισκόπου Θεσσαλονίκης Ἔργα Θεολογικά*, ed. D. Balfour [Ἀνάλεκτα Βλατάδων 34], Thessaloniki 1981 [hereafter *Συμεὼν Ἔργα Θεολογικά*], 61, 30-32; 106. Κανὼν προεόρτιος εἰς τὸν αὐτὸν [Δημήτριον], Ὠδὴ θ΄, ed. I. Fountoulis, *Συμεὼν Ἀρχιεπισκόπου Θεσσαλονίκης τὰ λειτουργικὰ συγγράμματα I, Εὐχαὶ καὶ ὕμνοι*, Thessaloniki 1968, 203, footnote 33. G. A. Poulis, *Οι απόψεις του Αγίου Συμεών, Μητροπολίτη Θεσσαλονίκης, για τα εκκλησιαστικά αδικήματα,* Ph.D. diss., Aristotle University of Thessaloniki 1998, 154-155, 157. G. Tsiaples, *Πολιορκίες*, 188-193.

47. Γρηγορίου Παλαμά, Homilia XLIII. *Εἰς τὸν ἐν ἁγίοις μεγαλομάρτυρα καὶ θαυματουργὸν καὶ μυροβλύτην Δημήτριον*, *PG* 151, Paris 1865, 536B-548D; 548A-B. B. Laourdas, Ἐγκώμια εἰς τὸν Ἅγιον Δημήτριον κατὰ τὸν δέκατον τέταρτον αἰώνα, *ΕΕΒΣ* 24 (1954), 275-290; 283-285. Katsochis, *Ιστορία*, 111-112.

48. B. Laourdas, Βυζαντινὰ καὶ μεταβυζαντινὰ ἐγκώμια εἰς τὸν Ἅγιον Δημήτριον, *Μακεδονικά* 4 (1) (1960), 47-162; 134-145. Katsochis, *Ιστορία*, 100-101.

49. Kaltsogianni et al., *Η Θεσσαλονίκη*, 171-173. Katsochis, *Ιστορία*, 134-135.

50. Vakaloudi, *Η βυζαντινή Θεσσαλονίκη*, 38-40.

51. Pentzikis, *Μητέρα Θεσσαλονίκη*, 59.

52. Pentzikis, *Ὁ πεθαμένος*, 152.

53. Pentzikis, *Μητέρα Θεσσαλονίκη*, 140.

Ἁγίου Δημητρίου, ἡ Θεσσαλονίκη[54]. The narrative unfolds through dreams, phantasmagoric metamorphoses and hallucinations. In one of his dreams, the narrator conflates the ancient myth of Demeter-Persephone (Mother-Daughter) with the Virgin Mary. The act of salvation and life is related to the polymorphous and multidimensional employment of myth. Pentzikis, influenced by Freudian ideas, uses dream as an essential device to uphold the development of the narrative[55].

Pentzikis believes in miracles, the miracle of Thessaloniki[56]. Through this miracle, the Byzantine city of Thessaloniki is resurrected, allowing people's actions and historical events to unfold before our eyes in the most eloquent of terms[57]. Pentzikis writes: *Ἡ πολυάνθρωπη Θεσσαλονίκη, ὄχι σὰν ἀδελφή τοῦ Μέγ' Ἀλέξανδρου, παρὰ σὰν ὀρφανὸ τῆς εὐγενικιᾶς Νικασίπολης ποὺ πέθανε πάνω στὴ γέννα, κάθεται κάτω ἀπ' τὸν Οὐρανό, στὴν ἄκρη τοῦ γιαλοῦ ζητώντας παρηγοριά. Εὐθὺς προστρέχει στὴν προσευχὴ της τὸ τέκνο της, τῶν Οὐρανῶν πολίτης ὁ Ἅγιος Δημήτριος, ποὺ γιὰ χάρη τῆς μάννας του ἐγκαταλείπει τὰ επουράνια, γιὰ νὰ κατοικήσει μέσα της, φέρνοντας τὴ δικαιοσύνη. 'Ἀγαλλιάσθω', λοιπόν 'γῆ πᾶσα Θεσσαλονίκη', μὲ τὸ παιδί σου ποὺ κι' ἂν τὸ σκεπάζουν τὰ χώματα, ἀπὸ τὴν εὐωδιά του γεμίζει ὁ κόσμος*[58].

The above passage is reminiscent of a passage from a Speech of Constantine Armenopoulos, which he gave on the eve of Saint Demetrios' Day, that is October 25, in the Church of Acheiropoietos, in Thessaloniki. In his speech, Armenopoulos describes in detail an image which was in the Church of Acheiropoietos. On that image, Saint Demetrios was depicted as an armed official with Holy Mary standing next to him depicted in prayer. He concludes his description by saying that everyone who praises Saint Demetrios and Holy Mary and asks for their mercy will be rewarded[59].

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54. N. G. Pentzikis, *Συνοδεία*, 23. *Πεζογραφήματα 1936-1968*, Thessaloniki 1970, 23 [hereafter Pentzikis, *Συνοδεία*].

55. Voyiatzaki, *The Body*, 19.

56. N. G. Pentzikis, *Ποιήματα (Παλαιοντολογικά),* Thessaloniki 1988, 36. Idem, *Ὑδάτων Ὑπερεκχείλιση,* 329 ff.

57. Vakaloudi, *Η βυζαντινή Θεσσαλονίκη*, 282.

58. Pentzikis, *Πραγματογνωσία,* 59.

59. O. Tafrali, *Thessalonique, des origines au XIVe siècle,* Paris 1919, 143, footnote 1. A. Xyngopoulos, *Συμβολαὶ εἰς τὴν τοπογραφίαν τῆς βυζαντινῆς Θεσσαλονίκης,* Thessaloniki 1949, 19 and footnote 1.

In Pentzikis' text, Holy Mary appears to identify with Thessaloniki, who is in prayer and Saint Demetrios is rushing to protect her from any danger. The ancient past of the city converges with its Christian existence. The supremacy of Saint Demetrios and the transcendental essence of the city under his protection bestow a metaphysical status on Thessaloniki; thus, the miracle that Pentzikis mentions occurs. Just as in Byzantine texts, the miraculous powers of Saint Demetrios prevail in Pentzikis, being totally interwoven with Thessaloniki. *Μεγαλύνει τὴν πόλη καὶ τὴν σώζει ἀπὸ τὶς προσβολὲς τῶν ἐναντίων, στρατηλάτης ἐνάντια στὰ στίφη τῶν ἐχθρῶν, ζωντανὸ ταμεῖο ἀπ' ὅπου ἀναβλύζουν ἰάσεις γιὰ ὅλα τὰ πάθη*[60] and *Ἀγαλλιάσθω γῆ πᾶσα Θεσσαλονίκη ... ὑπαινισσόμενος (τὴν) ἐκ τῶν Μύρων τοῦ Δημητρίου εὐωδιά ποὺ κατακλύζει τὴν οἰκουμένη*[61]. In his work, Pentzikis highlights the timeless grandeur of Christian Byzantine Thessaloniki by personification as an essential component in mythologization and thereby 'constructing' the mythical character of the city, imbuing it at the same time with metaphysical qualities. Thus, his native city is introduced as having a human figure[62].

As in Byzantine texts[63], the Patron Saint of Thessaloniki is present in Pentzikis at every difficult moment of his city; he is the one *ποὺ ἔσωσε τοὺς κατοίκους (της) ἀπὸ λιμὸ καὶ λοιμό, ὁδηγώντας χειμῶνα καιρό, μὲ χιόνι καὶ κακοκαιρία, καράβια φορτωμένα στάρι στὸ λιμάνι της*[64]. Regarding his hometown, Pentzikis writes: *Μητέρα πόλη εὐλαβεστάτη, μὴν ἀθυμεῖς στὴ δυστυχία, ἔχοντας τὴν πίστη τριαντάφυλλα, νὰ προσφέρεις ὁλοκαύτωμα, ὄργια τῆς ἄνοιξης, τοὺς τάφους. Μύρα ὁ Πολιοῦχος σου ἀπ' τὸ μνῆμα του ἀνάβρυζε. Ἂν τὰ στέρεψε ἡ σκλαβιὰ καὶ τὸ χῶμα εἶναι ἴαμα θαυμάσιο καὶ μέγα τοῦ τάφου ... Γιὰ τὴ Θεσσαλονίκη ἀρμενίζοντας, στὸ μητρικὸ μέσα κόλπο, νὰ πιστεύετε στὴν Ἀνάσταση*[65]. Here we trace an exceptional resemblance to Joyce's work. As in Joyce's heroes in *Ulysses*, Pentzikis arrives at the seashore preoccupied with his fantasies and the

60. Pentzikis, *Μητέρα Θεσσαλονίκη*, 113.

61. Pentzikis, *Πραγματογνωσία*, 127.

62. Kotopoulos – Karakitsios, Thessaloniki, 156.

63. Tsiaples, *Πολιορκίες*, 146 ff., 189 ff.

64. N. G. Pentzikis, *Ὁμιλήματα. Πλησίασμα πέντε πεζῶν κειμένων παρεμφερῶν*, Athens 1972, 57 [hereafter Pentzikis, *Ὁμιλήματα*].

65. Pentzikis, *Μητέρα Θεσσαλονίκη*, 116.

frustration of his life. He constructs in *Μητέρα Θεσσαλονίκη* his aesthetics around the concept of epiphany, as Joyce does in *Stephen Hero*. The mythical archetypes which swarm around the central concepts of reincarnation and transubstantiation are superimposed on a kind of vitalism reflected in the liquid element of the narrative, mostly pertaining to the birth-death-rebirth motif close to Jung's archetypes. Jung, in his study of religion, has showed that rebirth into a new way of life has been recognized and organized by religions throughout history. Pentzikis (like Joyce) associates the archetype of the regenerative sea with the biological concept of evolution as an unconscious desire to return to earlier stages, preceding the ego, relating to the mother. It is this retracing backwards of the ego, in critical moments of friction with the outer world that generates a yearning for the maternal, for a preconscious biological symbiosis in the womb. J. Piaget calls this state "protoplasmic consciousness"[66]. Besides its spiritual form, Thessaloniki is also the paragon of sensuality and sexuality, the fleshy earth mother who gives life, like the ancient goddesses Demeter and Persephone who helped the believers to return, metaphorically, to the womb of Mother-Earth, experience the "ecstasy" (the spiritual uplift), and finally rise to the domain of heroes and become *ἀγαθοὶ δαίμονες* who accompanied gods. Likewise, in Plato's *Phaedrus*, the initiatives, pure, and not imprisoned in the body (that living tomb), like an oyster in his shell (*ὀστρέου τρόπον δεδεσμευμένοι*), they are able to see apparitions innocent and simple and calm and happy, and finally, the beauty shining in brightness (*κάλλος δὲ τότ᾽ ἦν ἰδεῖν λαμπρὸν*)[67]. Accordingly, for Pentzikis, Mother-Earth, the eternal woman, is the flesh which becomes the Logos. By identifying the Virgin Mary with Mother-Earth, Pentzikis reveals his secular idea about the corporeal role of the Virgin Mary. Here we trace another influence from Joyce, the theme of Mariolatry, the overt allusions to the Virgin Mary and the Church. The suggestion is also that the writer's identity is formed in a process of becoming through his art-making, which occurs in terms of the death-rebirth motif entangled with the questing voyager archetype[68]. In another text, Pentzikis compares the frescoes of Saint Catherine's Church

66. Voyiatzaki, *The Body*, 54, 69, 71, 75-76, 154.

67. Plato, *Phaedrus* 250 BC.

68. Voyiatzaki, *The Body*, 121, 128.

with those of the Church of Panagia Chalkeon and detects many interesting similarities: *Τὰ ἐντελῶς παρομοιάζοντα πρὸς τὴν Βαυβὼ πιθάρια, τῆς τοιχογραφίας τοῦ γάμου ἐν Κανᾷ στὸν ἱερὸ ναὸ τῆς Ἁγίας Αἰκατερίνης ἐν Θεσσαλονίκη ἔχουν τὸ αὐτὸ σχῆμα μὲ τὶς οὐράνιες δυνάμεις (μόνο κεφάλι, πόδια, φτερά) σιμὰ στὸ θρόνο τοῦ Κριτοῦ στὴν ἀπεικόνιση τῆς Δευτέρας Παρουσίας στὴν Παναγία Χαλκέων*[69] and *Ταυτόχρονα ... οἱ πήλινες στάμνες ... μοιάζουν μὲ φτερὰ τῶν ἀσωμάτων μορφῶν, ποὺ ἐν Οὐρανοῖς ὑπηρετοῦν τὸν Κύριο. Κοιτώντας τὰ πιθάρια μιὰ μέρα στὴν Ἁγία Αἰκατερίνη, θυμήθηκα τὰ ἑξαπτέρυγα ... κατὰ τὴ Δευτέρα Παρουσία, στὴν τοιχογραφία τοῦ Νάρθηκα τῆς Παναγίας τῶν Χαλκέων, τῆς Μητέρας Πόλεως Θεσσαλονίκης*[70]. In the Church of Panagia Halkeon, in the arch of the narthex, to the southern portico of its eastern side, and to the north portico of the west wall, various scenes of the great synthesis of the Second Coming are depicted. These frescoes are found on the older layer and belong to the original decoration of the 11th century[71].

"Τὰ παρομοιάζοντα πρὸς τὴν Βαυβώ πιθάρια", and "οἱ στάμνες μὲ τὸ σχῆμα μήτρας ποὺ ὑπογραμμίζουν τὴν ἔννοια τῆς γονιμότητος ποὺ ὑπάρχει στὸ γάμο καὶ μοιάζουν μὲ φτερὰ τῶν ἀσωμάτων μορφῶν"[72], mentioned by Pentzikis, remind us of the myths and ceremonies of ancient Mystery religions. In addition, in *Μητέρα Θεσσαλονίκη II* Pentzikis writes: *Γιὰ τὴ Θεσσαλονίκη ἀρμενίζοντας, στὸ μητρικὸ μέσα κόλπο, νὰ πιστεύετε στὴν Ἀνάσταση*[73]. The word *Βαυβὼ* is found in the work of Empedocles[74], who lived during the 5th century B.C.E. and managed to justify in writing why some people had supernatural powers and had the ability to perform

69. N. G. Pentzikis, *Πρὸς Ἐκκλησιασμό* [1st edition Thessaloniki 1970], Athens 2007, 188 [hereafter Pentzikis, *Πρὸς Ἐκκλησιασμό*].

70 . Pentzikis, *Σημειώσεις*, 200.

71. A. Xyngopoulos, Αἱ ἀπωλεσθεῖσαι τοιχογραφίαι τῆς Παναγίας τῶν Χαλκέων Θεσσαλονίκης, *Μακεδονικά* 4 (1960) 1-19; 1-2. E. N. Tsigaridas, *Οι τοιχογραφίες της μονής Λατόμου Θεσσαλονίκης και η βυζαντινή ζωγραφική του 12ου αι.,* Thessaloniki 1986, 152. Vakaloudi, *Η βυζαντινή Θεσσαλονίκη*, 141.

72. Pentzikis, *Σημειώσεις*, 200. Idem, *Πρὸς Ἐκκλησιασμό,* 98.

73. See n. 65.

74. Empédocle, *Les Origines, Commentaire 2* [hereafter Empédocle], ed. J. Bollack, vol. III, Paris 1969, 150 [153].

miracles[75]. *Βαυβὼ* is a difficult word to fully understand, being either the goddess Demeter's nurse, or meaning the "abdomen", as Empedocles uses it. Empedocles, probably a follower of the Eleusinian mysteries, posits that a sacred object was used in the cult of Demeter that symbolized the female abdomen. At the same time, this object represented Demeter's nurse, who sang and cradled her to sleep. For Empedocles, Βαυβὼ probably represents the cavity of the earth, where the four eternal and unchanging elements of nature, fire, air, water, and earth, struggle to form the material world and the Cosmic Man[76]. In this case Pentzikis creates a link between the Christian religion and art and the ancient Mystery religions because he believes that they have a common purpose. Pentzikis is eager and zealous in his search for religious experience. Like the initiations into the Eleusinian mysteries who had shared Demeter's grief for the loss of her daughter and welcomed the return of Persephone with all the joy that the returning life of vegetation might kindle, Pentzikis finds the moment of supreme joy in death and the resurrection of Christ. Therefore, he believes that Eleusinianism was not blotted out by Christianity. On the contrary many of its forms and some of its old content has been perpetuated in Christianity[77].

Following the example of the Byzantine scholars, Pentzikis refers to the famous city's feast of Saint Demetrios in his works: *Μόνη της στὴν ἐκκλησία παρακολούθησε τὴ σύγκληση γιὰ τὴν παγκόσμια σημερινὴ πανήγυρη τοῦ Ἀθλοφόρου Ἁγίου...*[78]; and *Σ' ὅλο τὸ μάκρος τῶν ὁδῶν ποὺ ἀκολουθοῦσαν ἄλλοτε οἱ περίλαμπρες Λιτανεῖες, τὴν παραμονὴ τῆς Μνήμης τοῦ Πολιούχου, πεποικιλμένες μὲ χρυσοκέντητα ἄμφια ἱερέων καὶ ἱεραρχῶν...*[79]. Pentzikis also reminds us of the "Demetria", the large

75. A. D. Vakaloudi, *Η γένεση του θεϊκού ανθρώπου στις αρχαίες θρησκείες,* Athens 2002, 100.

76. Empédocle, 480 [B 153], 401-402. Clément d'Alexandrie, *Le Protreptique*, ed. C. Mondésert [SChr. 2] (1949, 2nd ed.), 20. Vakaloudi, *Η γένεση*, 58, 60, 135-136. Eadem, *Η βυζαντινή Θεσσαλονίκη,* 142-143.

77. Cf. M. L. King, Jr., The Influence of the Mystery Religions on Christianity, in: *The Papers of Martin Luther King, Jr.,* I: *Called to Serve,* ed. C. Carson – R. Luker – P. A. Russell (January 1929-June 1951). https://kinginstitute.stanford.edu/king-papers/documents/influence-mystery-religions-christianity. Accessed 5 December 2018.

78. Pentzikis, *Σημειώσεις*, 47.

79. Pentzikis, *Μητέρα Θεσσαλονίκη,* 76.

inter-regional and international fair which took place during the feast and is described in the 12th century's anonymous text *Τιμαρίων*[80].

Pentzikis is a deeply religious man; thus, he sees Thessaloniki as the continuation of the Orthodox tradition and he wants to communicate this belief through his work: *Νιώθω ἀφάνταστα νέος καὶ καινούριος, σὰ νὰ ζῶ πρώτη φορά, τοῦτο εἶναι τὸ νόημα τῆς ἄφιξής μου στὴν πόλη. Ἂν δὲν εἴχαμε πλοηγὸ τὴν Ὀρθόδοξή μας κληρονομημένη πίστη, δὲν ξέρω ἂν στὸ τέλος θὰ παρακάμπταμε τὸν σκόπελο ... Ἀλλὰ τὸ γεγονὸς ὅτι βρίσκομαι σήμερα στὴν πόλη μας, ... εἶναι ἕνα προσκύνημα*[81]. The secret wish of Pentzikis is to win the obliteration of his tormented self by escaping from the earthly humanity governed by the world senses, and reach, beyond the senses, the world of objective reality[82]. Arrival at his city will help him to fulfill his wish.

Symeon, the archbishop of Thessaloniki during the last sack of the city by the Turks (1430), writes about the Thessaloniki – Constantinople relationship, stressing Thessaloniki's inclusion in God's plan for the *Βασιλεύουσα* ("Queen of Cities"): *Ἡ πόλις αὕτη κεφάλαιον τῆς εὐσεβείας ἀπ' ἀρχῆς ἐστι μετὰ τὴν πρώτην καὶ βασιλίδα ... βοηθεῖ καὶ τῇ βασιλίδι τῶν πόλεων καὶ τῆς ὀρθοδοξίας χείρ ἐστι καὶ ἀγαθὴ καὶ συνεργός...*[83]. *(God) οὐ παρεῖδε (Thessaloniki, but) μεσιτείαις τοῦ Δημητρίου, οὐδ' ἀφῆκεν εἰς χεῖρας πολεμίων ἐλθεῖν, οὐδὲ καταδουλωθῆναι τοῖς ἀσεβέσι· ἢ γὰρ τῶν Θεσσαλονικέων ὡς ἀκρόπολίς τις καὶ φρουρὸς τῶν περὶ ταύτην ἐστὶ καὶ τῆς βασιλίδος αὐτῆς πόλεως ἔρεισμά τε καὶ συνεργὸς ... δι' ἣν οἶμαι αἰτίαν μὴ ἐγκαταλειφθῆναι ταύτην ἔτι ὑπὸ Θεοῦ καὶ τοῦ ἐν αὐτῇ πολιούχου*[84].

Accordingly, for Pentzikis, after the fall of Constantinople, Thessaloniki with its Roman and Byzantine past as well as its Byzantine churches wears the crown of Orthodoxy[85]. Pentzikis frequently refers to the Arch of Galerius

80. *Pseudo-Luciano Timarione*, ed. R. Romano [*Byzantina et Neo-Hellenica Neapolitana* 2], Napoli 1999, 49-92; 53, 114 ff. [=R. Romano, *La satira bizantina dei secoli XI-XV* (Classici Graeci) Torino 1999, 99-175]. Kaltsogianni et al., *Θεσσαλονίκη*, 19-22.

81. Pentzikis, *Μητέρα Θεσσαλονίκη*, 124, 126.

82. Thaniel, *Homage*, 33.

83. *Συμεών*, *Ἔργα θεολογικά*, 89, 32-90, 1.

84. *Συμεών*, *Ἔργα θεολογικά*, 63, 22-34.

85. Pentzikis, *Πρὸς Ἐκκλησιασμό*, 144. Idem, *Μητέρα Θεσσαλονίκη*, 68-69, 138. Stavrakopoulou, *Η Θεσσαλονίκη*, 90.

as one of the most notable monuments of Thessaloniki and one of the most characteristic of late antiquity[86]. The walls of Thessaloniki are also one of the most important landmarks of the city[87]. Thus, they play an important role in Pentzikis' work. The author writes: *Προσέξτε ἰδίως πόση χάρη προσδίδουν στὸ κάστρο, οἱ διαγραφόμενοι μέσα στὰ κενά, ἀνάμεσα στὰ ἐπάλληλα τόξα τῶν πλίνθων μεγάλοι Σταυροί ... Σ' ἕνα μέρος ὅπου τὸ τεῖχος γκρέμισε, φαίνονται λευκὰ μάρμαρα τῶν ρωμαϊκῶν χρόνων καὶ ἡ ἐπιγραφή: 'ΚΛΑΥΔΙΑΝΟΣ ΤΟΙΣ ΓΟΝΕΥΣΙΝ'. Τοῦτο φανερώνει ὅτι τὸ Βυζαντινὸ κάστρο, ἀγκάλιασε καὶ περιτύλιξε παλαιότερο ὀχυρωματικὸ κτίσμα, τῶν πρώτων αἰώνων τῆς ἀκμῆς τῆς Θεσσαλονίκης*[88]. The city's walls and "leaden" cloud cover remind him of Domenicos Theotokopoulos' painting *Το Τολέδο με καταιγίδα*[89]. Elsewhere, he mentions: *Οἱ περισσότεροι ζωγράφοι μας προτιμοῦν νὰ εἰκονίζουν τὴν ἀνατολικὴ πλευρὰ τοῦ περιτειχίσματος, μὲ τὴν τάπια, ἀπ' ὅπου ρίχνει τὸ κανόνι κατὰ τὶς ἐπίσημες ἑορτές, παρ' ὅλο ὅτι ἡ Ἱστορία μ�ς πληροφορεῖ ὅτι αὐτὴ ἦταν ἡ μᾶλλον εὐάλωτη πλευρὰ καὶ ὅτι ἀπ' αὐτοῦ πατήθηκε ἀπὸ τοὺς Τούρκους στὰ 1430 ἡ Θεσσαλονίκη*[90]. The timelessness of the White Tower (probably on the site of the "*eastern tower by the sea*" mentioned by Byzantine authors) as one of the symbols of Thessaloniki's history is highlighted in Pentzikis' work. The author links the monument with other Byzantine landmarks such as the "Golden Gate" and the walls: *Ἀπὸ τὴν τάπια ἀπ' ὅπου σήμερα ρίχνονται πανηγυρικοὶ καὶ χαιρετιστήριοι κανονιοβολισμοί, τὸ κάστρο δίχως διακοπὴ κατέβαινε σὲ εὐθεία γραμμὴ μέχρι τὸ Λευκὸ Πύργο, καθορίζοντας πρὸς τὰ Ἀνατολικὰ τὸ σχῆμα τῆς*

86. Ch. Mauropoulou-Tsioumi, *Βυζαντινή Θεσσαλονίκη,* Thessaloniki 1992, 31-32. A. Papagiannopoulos, *Ιστορία της Θεσσαλονίκης,* Thessaloniki 1995, 50-51. A. Stavridou-Zafraka, Η βυζαντινή Θεσσαλονίκη: Πολιτική, κοινωνική και οικονομική εξέλιξη, in: *Θεσσαλονίκη τοῖς ἀγαθοῖς βασιλεύουσα. Ιστορία και Πολιτισμός,* ed. I. K. Chasiotis, v. 1,Thessaloniki 1997, 114-135; 115.

87. G. I. Theocharidis, *Ιστορία της Μακεδονίας κατά τους μέσους χρόνους (285-1354)* [Μακεδονική Βιβλιοθήκη 55], Thessaloniki 1980, 84. N. K. Moutsopoulos, Οι εβραϊκές συνοικίες των Βρόχθων, Rogos και Ομφαλού, *Μακεδονικά* 30 (1996), 1-41; 14-15. Marki, *Τὸ Κωνσταντίνειο λιμάνι*, 174-175.

88. Pentzikis, *Μητέρα Θεσσαλονίκη,* 78-80, 122.

89. Pentzikis, *Μητέρα Θεσσαλονίκη,* 55-56, 75, 122.

90. Pentzikis, *Μητέρα Θεσσαλονίκη,* 41-43.

πόλης[91], and *Μοῦ δῶκαν τὴ δυνατότητα νὰ ἐπεξεργαστῶ ὑλικώτερα, τὸν πέριξ τῆς κυρίαρχης μορφῆς Λευκὸ Πύργο τῆς συμπρωτεύουσας Θεσσαλονίκης, τὸν ἐπὶ Τουρκοκρατίας λεγόμενο Μπέας Κουλέ ἢ Κανλή Κουλέ, ποὺ θὰ πεῖ Πύργος Αἵματος*[92]. The "Golden Gate", where Dimokratias Square (Vardaris district) now lies, is often mentioned in Pentzikis' work[93]. All the aforementioned monuments constitute an 'other' world for Pentzikis, away from the external world of decay, because they are preserved in their position for thousands of years, as a reminder of the greatness of the city and its uninterrupted existence from antiquity to the contemporary era. Pentzikis goes beyond the material world and its imperfections by spiritualizing them[94]. The nostalgia of infinite distances, of eternity, overwhelms him. In this metaphysical world everything is intense, it makes no difference if you are dead or alive, if you forget or remember, because everything is as simple as a thought, as a walk in a primordial paradise, the Promised Land, where every wish is immediately fulfilled. The author tries to analyze the most 'mystical' essences of the human soul with 'earthly instruments'[95]. Pentzikis comments extensively and with admiration on the Byzantine churches of his city, referring warmly and at length to them. For him nothing in the decoration of its Byzantine churches is irrelevant. Every small brush stroke, every shape, the placement of every fresco or mosaic in the temple serve a deeper purpose: to send a message of 'salvation' to the faithful[96].

Στὴ Θεσσαλονίκη ἰδιαίτερα τότε (14ος αἰ.) κτίζονται πολλὲς ἐκκλησίες[97]. While wandering in the Church of the Holy Apostles, Pentzikis

91. Pentzikis, *Μητέρα Θεσσαλονίκη,* 84.

92. Pentzikis, *Ὑδάτων Ὑπερεκχείλιση,* 132.

93. Pentzikis, *Μητέρα Θεσσαλονίκη,* 65, 84.

94. K. Malatos, Νίκος Γαβριήλ Πεντζίκης: Περιδιάβαση στις εκκλησίες της Θεσσαλονίκης, in: *Greek Research in Australia: Proceedings of the [3rd] Annual Conference of Flinders University Department of Languages – Modern Greek,* ed. E. Close – M. Tsianikas – G. Frazis, Adelaide 2001, 354-372; 365, 368.

95. Malatos, Νίκος Γαβριήλ Πεντζίκης, 371.

96. M. Tsianikas, Éloge des larmes: Με λογισμό και δάκρυα, in: *Greek Research in Australia: Proceedings of the Sixth Biennial International Conference of Greek Studies, Flinders University 2005,* ed. E. Close – M. Tsianikas – G. Couvalis, Adelaide 2007, 527-542; 537, 538.

97. Pentzikis, *Πρὸς Ἐκκλησιασμό,* 94.

writes: *Βγαίνοντας ἕνα ἀπόγευμα ἀπὸ τοὺς Δώδεκα Ἀποστόλους, ὅπου θαυμάζοντας τὰ περισωθέντα ἀπὸ τὸ μνημεῖο πίστης (ποὺ ἀνήγειρε ὁ Πατριάρχης καὶ κτήτωρ Νήφων ἀπὸ τὴ Βέροια καὶ συμπλήρωσε ὁ μαθητής του Παῦλος, ποὺ φαίνεται σὲ μιὰ ζωγραφιά, στὰ πόδια τῆς ἔνθρονης Βρεφοκρατούσης Θεοτόκου πάνω ἀπὸ τὴν εἴσοδο τοῦ κυρίως Ναοῦ) προσπαθοῦσα νὰ φανταστῶ πῶς θὰ ἦταν τὸ σύνολο τῆς Ἐκκλησίας, ποὺ ὁ Καβάφης μᾶς ἐξομολογεῖται ὅτι ἀγάπησε τὸ τελετουργικὸ καὶ τὸν διάκοσμο, σκέφτηκα ὅτι καθὼς θὰ ἐξέρχονταν ἀπὸ τὴν ἐκκλησία οἱ Βυζαντινοὶ θὰ εἶχαν ἀλλοιωμένο τὸ νοῦ. Τί ἐννοῶ λέγοντας ἀλλοιωμένο νοῦ; Τὴν παραδοχὴ μιᾶς καταστάσεως μετὰ τὴ δραματικὴ θέση τοῦ ἐρωτήματος 'εἰ τὸ ζῆν ἐστι κατθανεῖν τὸ δὲ κατθανεῖν ζῆν'. Ποιός μπορεῖ νὰ γνωρίζει ἂν τὸ νὰ ζεῖ κάποιος σημαίνει πὼς ἀκόμα εἶναι νεκρός, ἐνῶ θὰ μπεῖ πιὰ στὴ ζωή, ὅταν θὰ 'χει ἤδη πεθάνει;*[98] *... ποὺ διατύπωσε ὁ Εὐριπίδης καὶ τὸ δανείστηκε γιὰ μότο στὸ βιβλίο "Οἱ ἀποκαλύψεις τοῦ θανάτου" ὁ Σεστώφ. Ἡ παραδοχὴ τῆς μοίρας του, ὡς αὐτεξούσιου πλάσματος, παρομοιάζει τότε τὸν ἄνθρωπο μὲ τὰ πετεινὰ τοῦ οὐρανοῦ καὶ τὰ κρίνα τοῦ ἀγροῦ. Μιὰ τέτοια ἀντίληψη εἶναι μυθική. Κάτι δηλαδὴ ποὺ τὸ ἄτομο τολμᾶ νὰ φανταστεῖ στὰ ὄνειρά του, ὅτι δηλαδὴ εἶναι πουλὶ ἢ λουλούδι, καὶ διαρκῶς, ξυπνώντας, τὸ βλέπει ἀπραγματοποίητο, στὴν περίπτωση τοῦ μύθου καθίσταται γεγονός ἀπείρως πιὸ στέρεο ἀπὸ τὴν ἀντικειμενικὴ ἀλήθεια*[99]. The way that Pentzikis interprets Euripides' verses *εἰ τὸ ζῆν ἐστι κατθανεῖν τὸ δὲ κατθανεῖν ζῆν* ("Who knows whether life is death, and death life"), according to his own beliefs, is encapsulated in the following passage: '*Ἡ ζωὴ εἶναι ἕνα φαινομενικὸ ἀνάπτυγμα, διαδοχικῶν ρυθμικῶν φάσεων, τοῦ χώρου τῆς ἀναπνοῆς τῶν νεκρῶν' στοχάζεται ὁ ἀσκητὴς μόνος του. Εἶδε τὸν μεταστάντα γέροντα...πηγαίνοντάς τον στὸ μνῆμα... νιώθοντας σάμπως ἀκόμα νὰ ἀνάπνεε. Ζοῦσε λοιπὸν ὁ νεκρός;... Εἶναι δυνατὸ νὰ εἶναι νεκρὸς καὶ νὰ ζεῖ;... Ἡ ἀναπνοὴ τῶν νεκρῶν πηγὴ ζωτική, δεκτική, τῆς ψυχῆς ... Ἔκλαιγε θέλοντας νὰ ναρκωθοῦν οἱ αἰσθήσεις του γιὰ ν' ἀντιλαμβάνεται λιγότερο ... τοποθετοῦσε τὸ ἐγώ του σὰν ἕνα*

98. Plato, Gorgias, 492e.

99. Pentzikis, *Ὁ κόσμος τῶν Βυζαντινῶν*, 249-250. E. Kyriakoudis, Ύστερη Βυζαντινή Περίοδος. Αρχιτεκτονική, Ζωγραφική, Εικόνες, Γλυπτική, Μικροτεχνία, in: "*Μακεδονία*". *Αρχαιολογία – Πολιτισμός*, Athens 1993, 98-155 [= http://anemourion.blogspot.gr/2015/12/1204-1453-2.html. Accessed 25 November 2018].

αὐγὸ μέσα στὴν κάμαρη. Πηγαίνοντας στὴ Θεσσαλονίκη καταλαβαίνει ὅτι μπορεῖ νὰ ἀξιωθεῖ νὰ δεῖ 'ἐπὶ πτερύγων ἀνέμων ὀχούμενον καὶ περιπατοῦντα τὸν Κύριο'[100]. Elsewhere Pentzikis wonders: *Τὸ Αὐγό... Ἡ λατρεία του πρὸς τὸν ἥλιο μπορεῖ τάχα νὰ θεωρηθεῖ ὡς μιὰ πρώτη ὀρθὴ ἀντίληψη τοῦ κόσμου τοῦ φωτός;*[101]. In the above passages Pentzikis' self-analysis cuts very deep and is often excruciating. He plays various roles or imagines himself playing roles that run back and forth through time without any geographical restrictions. Both the first and the third persons are employed in the narration[102]. Finally, Pentzikis comes to the following conclusion: *Ἡ ὑπαγωγὴ τῆς ἀρχαιότητος στὸν Χριστιανισμό, δύναται νὰ ἐννοηθεῖ καὶ ἐν ὀνόματι τῶν μυστικῶν μυήσεων, στὴν Ελευσίνα, τὴ Σαμοθράκη ἢ τὴν Ἡφαιστεία τῆς Λήμνου, ὅπου ὁ ἄνθρωπος καθίσταται ἱκανός, διὰ μιᾶς ἐξόδου ἀπὸ τὰ κατ' ἑαυτόν, νὰ στέκει ἀντιμέτωπος τοῦ Θανάτου, ἐλπίζοντας στὴν διὰ τοῦ Θανάτου κατανίκηση τοῦ Θανάτου, ὅπως μοναδικὰ ἀπὸ τὸν Θεάνθρωπο ἱστορικὰ ὁλοκληρώθη, διὰ τοῦ μαρτυρίου του, θανάτου ταφῆς καὶ ἀναστάσεως*[103]. *Τί ἄλλο τάχα στὸ βάθος μπορεῖ νάναι ὁ Παράδεισος ἀπόναν ζωντανὸ θάνατο; Νὰ πάψεις νὰ ἀνησυχεῖς, νὰ πάψεις νὰ σκέφτεσαι, δίχως νὰ πάψεις νὰ αἰσθάνεσαι τὸν κόσμο*[104]. *Ἀλλὰ ποιό εἶναι τὸ φῶς τοῦ Χριστοῦ; Τίνι τρόπῳ ἐν τῷ θανάτῳ γίνεται ἀθανασίας πρόξενος; Διὰ τῆς ἐνδελεχοῦς παρακολουθήσεως καὶ συμμετοχῆς εἰς τὸ τελούμενον ἐν τῇ ἐκκλησίᾳ μυστήριον τῆς θείας μυσταγωγίας, ἀπαντᾶ μία τῶν σημαντικοτέρων μορφῶν τοῦ ιδ΄ αἰώνα, ὁ εὐλαβὴς Νικόλαος Καβάσιλας*[105]. We detect, in the above-mentioned passages, especially the one about "the Egg and its worship of the sun", Pentzikis' conviction that the Christian religion was related to the "mystical initiations" of ancient Mystery religions. One of the most basic texts of Orphism, *The Derveni Papyrus*, a cosmo-theogonic poem that is repeatedly attributed to Orpheus and can be dated with certainty to the mid-4th century B.C.E. with influences from a common Eastern cosmogenic mythology,

100. Pentzikis, *Πραγματογνωσία*, 133, 135, 136, 137.

101. Pentzikis, *Σημειώσεις*, 9.

102. Thaniel, *Homage*, 22-24.

103. Thaniel, *Homage*, 31-32.

104. N. G. Pentzikis, *Τὸ μυθιστόρημα τῆς κυρίας Ἔρσης*, Pyrgos 1966, 83 [hereafter Pentzikis, *Τὸ μυθιστόρημα*].

105. Pentzikis, *Ὑδάτων Ὑπερεκχείλιση*, 103.

refers to the cult of the Eternal Sun and mentions that Chronos created an egg, the perfect form of life, from which a perfect creature of exceptional qualities derived, the Protogonos. Protogonos exists before the creation of the world. He is the god creator, from whom everything originates[106]. Mystery religions were a type of faith which emphasized the hope of future blessedness to be obtained by worshiping a deity, or deities, who themselves had triumphed over death and thus were able to give their votaries a similar victory[107]. Pentzikis claims that both ancient Mysteries and Christianity act as avenues of traffic between the present and the past, between life and what is wrongly thought to be dead and gone. The mystical essence of a personal encounter with God and the revelations that this encounter trigger can also be attributed to the religious experience related to the Eleusinian mysteries, the Dionysian Mysteries, and Orphism. The beauty and the glory of these sacred acts touched great Greek poets such as Aeschylus and Pindar, from the middle of the 7th century. The Homeric Hymn *εἰς τὴν Δήμητραν*, which states that the initiates will enjoy a better life after death: *ὄλβιος ὃς τάδ' ὄπωπεν ἐπιχθονίων ἀνθρώπων᾽ / ὃς δ' ἀτελὴς ἱερῶν, ὃς τ' ἄμμορος, οὐ ποθ' ὁμοίων, / αἶσαν ἔχει φθίμενός περ ὑπὸ ζόφῳ εὐρώεντι* (verses 480-482) reveals the 'revelation' which was provoked by the mystical initiation to the Eleusinian mysteries[108]. The common links between Eleusinian and Orphic mysteries are obvious. The center of both mysteries is purification, fertility, rebirth; both mysteries, though with significant differences, are struggling for a bright 'other world'[109]. Pentzikis finds mystical bonds between the ancient Mysteries and Christian religion because he thinks that they point in the same direction; the resurrection / rebirth through death. It is almost as if he believes that Jesus himself should be taken for

106. Vakaloudi, *Η γένεση*, 54, 56, 121-122, 125-126.

107. Case, *Christianity*, 8.

108. N. J. Richardson, *The Homeric Hymn to Demeter*, Oxford – New York 1974, 134.

109. W. Burkert, *Griechische Religion der archaischen und klassischen Epoche* (*Αρχαία ελληνική θρησκεία. Αρχαϊκή και κλασική εποχή*, trans. N. Bezantakos – A. Avagianou), Athens 1993, 565. R. Parker, Early Orphism, in: *The Greek World,* ed. A. Powell, London 1995, 483-510; 485-486, 503-504. L. Bruit-Zaidman – P. Schmitt-Pantel, *Religion in the Ancient Greek City* (*Η θρησκεία στις ελληνικές πόλεις της κλασικής εποχής*, trans. K. Bouras), Athens 2005, 136-137. W. Wili, *Τα ορφικά μυστήρια και το ελληνικό πνεύμα,* Athens n.d., 51-52. http://en.calameo.com/read/001733404df00b9abc9cb. Accessed 1 December 2018.

the divine Lord of the cult through whose death and resurrection salvation was to be found. Pentzikis endorses the theory that the Mystery religions prepared people mentally and emotionally to understand the type of religion which Christianity represented. They encouraged the movement away from state religions and philosophical systems and toward the desire for personal salvation and the promise of immortality. Christianity was truly indebted to the Mystery religions for this contribution, for they had done this part of the groundwork and thus opened the way for Christian missionary work[110].

Pentzikis is also influenced by the related theories of the Neoplatonic philosophers (3rd-6th c. A. D.) – especially the theurgists (for instance, Plotinus and Iamblichus)[111].

Regarding Pentzikis' reference to the cult of Sun, the author also embraces Hesychastic theory; Hesychastic thought frequently draws a distinction between God's essence and energy (light) by using the example of the sun whose rays are really distinct from its globe, though there is only one sun. Pentzikis concedes that he endorses the introspective theology of mysticism and Hesychastic practices because it was reputed that the Hesychasts had visions of the *ἄκτιστον φῶς* (uncreated light). Pentzikis adopts the theory and practice of the Byzantine Hesychasts as an excellent way to reach the ultimate goal which is union with God. Thus, he prays constantly, isolating himself from every external stimulus and seeking to experience religious ecstasy. He writes: *Ἐλευθερία θὰ πεῖ ἐσωτερικὴ ὑποταγὴ καὶ δούλωση... (σ)τὸν ἐν ἀρχῇ, Λόγο καὶ Θεό ... Αὐτὴ ἡ λευτεριὰ ἀποκτιέται μὲ τὴν ἀτροφία μιᾶς ἢ περισσοτέρων αἰσθήσεων ἢ καὶ ἀκόμα μὲ τὴν ἀπώλεια καὶ τοῦ συνόλου αὐτῶν*[112]. Thessaloniki, the cradle of Hesychasm, will support him in this undertaking. According to Pentzikis, Gregory Palamas's theory of the *ἄκτιστον φῶς* is connected with the *Ἡσυχία ποὺ εἶναι τόσο κοντὰ μὲ τὸν θάνατο*[113]. In his writings, Pentzikis describes Gregory Palamas as the man

110. Cf. King, Jr., *The Influence*.

111. Pentzikis, *Το μυθιστόρημα*, 21. Idem, *Συνοδεία*, 127. Idem, *Σημειώσεις*, 108. Idem, *Ὑδάτων Ὑπερεκχείλιση*, 268 ff.

112. Pentzikis, *Ὑδάτων Ὑπερεκχείλιση*, 236.

113. Pentzikis, *Ὁ πεθαμένος*, 34-35. Idem, *Πρὸς Ἐκκλησιασμό*, 90-91, 93. Cf. Theocharidis, *Ιστορία*, 391. A. Karathanasis, *Ιστορία της Θεσσαλονίκης, 323 π.Χ. – 2012*, Thessaloniki 2012, 63.

of love, whose teaching about the "uncreated light" was powerfully linked to the social and political events of the late Byzantine period. According to the author, Palamas *εἶχε τὸ ἐξαιρετικὸ χάρισμα, ὁ ὑπέρμαχος τῆς θερμῆς ἀπὸ πίστη καὶ ἀγάπη καρδιᾶς, ἐνάντια στὰ ποικίλα γνωστικὰ καὶ λογικά, ψυχρὰ ἀντικειμενικὰ δόγματα τῶν σοφῶν*[114]. For Pentzikis, Palamas holds the position of the *ἐπαναστάτης τῆς ἀγάπης* ("rebel of love") because *ἡ ἡσυχία ποὺ εἶναι τόσο κοντὰ μὲ τὸν θάνατο, κατανοεῖται ἀπὸ αὐτὸν ὡς ἡ μόνη ἠθικὴ στάση τοῦ ἀτόμου 'ποὺ σκέπτεται μέσα σ' ἕνα σύνολο λαοῦ ποὺ οἱ ἄρχοντές του ἀποξενώνονται'*[115]. The movement of Hesychasm "may be viewed from a political and social point of view as an ideology that trusts in God and is skeptical about humankind's capacity to regulate affairs by reason alone"[116]. Pentzikis is trying to re-establish the Hellenic-Orthodox identity of his fellow countrymen, rooted in Hesychast spirituality based on the teachings of Gregory Palamas[117]. Hesychasm had been fiercely criticized by the Western Church. Thus, in the course of discussion on serious theological and political affair of the Union of Churches, Pentzikis excoriates the Palaiologoi because they took part in the Councils for the Union[118].

In conclusion, Pentzikis continues to encounter myth in ancient Mysterious religions and in Christianity, especially in the Neoplatonists and Hesychasm, as a consolation for the chaotic fragmentation of everyday life, a support for the strengthening of the individual before a mundane and trivial life and death. In his work, myth is infused by religious feelings. Moreover, his myth is a religious mélange of different textual patterns, entwined and enmeshed with each other[119]. "Myth", as a modernist characteristic, is used as a basic component of an external world the presentation of which depends upon the character's own perception. It is multidimensional and allows the reader to create the complete image of contemporary life by putting together the bits and pieces of external observation and inner meditation based on

114. Pentzikis, *Τὸ μυθιστόρημα*, 108.

115. Pentzikis, *Ὁ πεθαμένος,* 34-35. Cf. Ch. A. Stamoulis, Το κίνημα των Ζηλωτών και ο Γρηγόριος Παλαμάς στον Νίκο Γαβριήλ Πεντζίκη, *andidosis* (2014, March) https://antidosis.wordpress.com/2014/03/16/. Accessed 5 December 2018.

116. Thaniel, *Homage*, 23.

117. Payne, *The Revival*, 2.

118. Pentzikis, *Πρὸς Ἐκκλησιασμό*, 48-49.

119. Voyiatzaki, *The Body*, 116.

a familiar universal shape. An exceptional example of this technique is James Joyce's *Ulysses*[120]. Pentzikis' aesthetic project clearly bore the impact of Eliot's ideas about the role of tradition in modernity. His invocation of Hellenism ties in with modernism's reviving of folk traditions by laying bare those authentic, primitive and mythical elements of a nation's soul which could be rendered as universal and archetypal patterns of thought. Pentzikis' employment of elements extracted from the national culture and his use of ancient Greek myth is part of his modernist project[121].

Pentzikis often conflates the art of painting with literature. Indeed, his paintings are equally as important as his writings. As a painter he stands out for his distinct and highly personal style which has enriched modern Greek art with utterly new characteristics previously unseen. Having a deep knowledge of Byzantine arts and letters, as well as being familiar from an early age with all the movements and trends in European modernism and the avant-garde, Pentzikis combined elements of post-Impressionism in his work and formed a uniquely personal expression. Pentzikis' work is related directly to his intellectual world, his particular perception, and his modernist and audacious writings. As he had so often said, the core and the spark of his artistic work were his Orthodox beliefs and the writings of the Church Fathers[122]. Thus Pentzikis, as an artist and an expert on Byzantine arts, describes extensively in his writings the external decoration of Thessaloniki's Byzantine Churches as well as their magnificent internal decoration with their frescoes and mosaics. He mentions that in the 13th century and in the first half of the 14th century famous artists travelled from Thessaloniki throughout Macedonia, Serbia and Greece proper and we see a great influence of artists and styles which emanate from Thessaloniki and spread into all these territories. All attest to the excellence of the artists of Thessaloniki[123]. Here, Pentzikis reaffirms very strongly the validity of both

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120. A. Natsina – A. Kastrinaki – I. Dimitrakakis – E. Daskala, *Η πεζογραφία στη μακρά δεκαετία του 1960*, Athens 2015, 146-147.

121. Voyiatzaki [as in n. 18], 993.

122. E. Sofras, *Nikos Gabriel Pentzikis*. http://www.kalfayangalleries. Com/view-biography. php?EXHIB_ID=150. Accessed 2 April 2019.

123. Pentzikis, *Μητέρα Θεσσαλονίκη*, 61-62, 121. Idem, *Συνοδεία*, 126. Idem, *Σημειώσεις*, 107-108. Cf. P. A. Vokotopoulos, Οι μεσαιωνικοί ναοί της Θεσσαλονίκης και η θέση τους στα πλαίσια της βυζαντινής ναοδομίας, in: *Πρακτικά Συμποσίου*

the Byzantine painting tradition and the faith that underlies it. He stresses that the Byzantine art is the concrete image of the metaphysical world. Even the smallest details in Byzantine painting and the architecture of a Byzantine church treasure their own symbolisms[124] and convert the city into an unreal place with metaphysical dimensions. Then the narrative drifts from dream to reality and Pentzikis wanders in the narrow streets of the modern upper city, tracing the remains of the city's great Byzantine heritage. He mentions that the *σαχνισιά* (sachnisia / terraces) which decorate the houses are the *ἡλιακά / ἡλιακοί* (heliakā / heliakoi) of the Byzantine houses *τῆς χαμένης κληρονομίας τῆς ἐνδόξου Βυζαντινῆς ἐποχῆς*, a characteristic element of the popular Macedonian architecture[125], Pentzikis consistently points out in his writings that the 14th century –particularly the first half of the century– was a period of great prosperity and a social, political and spiritual apogee for Thessaloniki. This milieu was due not just to its glorious past, but also to the vital role that the city played (during the Byzantine era) and to its active presence in political and ecclesiastical developments[126]. Generally, the city played a major political role in the Balkan affairs in the 14th century due to the new political situation that was developed with the spread of

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Τεσσαρακονταετηρίδος της Εταιρείας Μακεδονικών Σπουδών 'Η Θεσσαλονίκη μεταξύ Ανατολής και Δύσεως' [Μακεδονική Βιβλιοθήκη 59], Thessaloniki 1980, 97-110; 98-100. N. Nikonanos, Τοπογραφία και τέχνη στην παλαιοχριστιανική και βυζαντινή Θεσσαλονίκη, in: *Θεσσαλονίκη τοῖς ἀγαθοῖς βασιλεύουσα* [as in n. 86], v. 2, 32-59. N. Nikonanos, – N. Papachatzis, *Μνημεία της Θεσσαλονίκης,* Thessaloniki 1997, 94-96.

124. Thaniel, *Homage*, 41. A. E. Laiou, Thessaloniki and Macedonia in the Byzantine period, in: *Byzantine Macedonia: Identity, Image and History,* ed. J. Burke – A. Scott, Melbourne 2000, 1-11; 10.

125. Pentzikis, *Μητέρα Θεσσαλονίκη,* 137. I. Dujčev (ed.), La chronique byzantine de l'an 811, *TM* 1 (1965), 205-254 [= I. Dujčev, *Medioevo Bizantino-Slavo*, [v. 2], *Saggi di Storia Letteraria* [Storia e letteratura. Raccolta di Studi i Testi 113] (Roma 1968) 425-489], 230-231. N. K. Moutsopoulos, *Μακεδονικὴ Ἀρχιτεκτονική: Συμβολὴ εἰς τὴν Μελέτην τῆς ἑλληνικῆς Οἰκίας,* Thessaloniki 1971, 223 ff. Idem, *Η αρχιτεκτονική προεξοχή 'το σαχνισί'. Συμβολή στην μελέτη της ελληνικής κατοικίας,* Thessaloniki 1988, 35, 43 ff., 319 ff., 374 ff. K. Parthenopoulos et al., *Παραδοσιακός οικισμός Άνω πόλης Θεσσαλονίκης. Προτάσεις αναβάθμισης,* Thessaloniki 2010, 11-12, 49-50. Accessed 2 December 2018. http://portal.tee.gr/portal/page/portal/teetkm/DRASTHRIOTHTES/OMADESERGASIAS/oe_paradosiakos_oikismos_anw_poli.pdf.

126. Katsochis, *Ιστορία*, 93-94.

the Turks in Asia Minor and the strengthening of the Serbian state in the Balkans[127].

Pentzikis comments on numerous occasions that the important role of Thessaloniki during the Byzantine era was due to the close ties the Byzantine emperors had with the city[128]. In particular he refers to the close relationship of the imperial Palaiologan family with Thessaloniki. He goes on to observe that, if we study the city's characteristics during the 14th century, we will discover many of the elements of our contemporary life[129]. It would seem however that Thessaloniki was the residence of many learned people long before the members of the imperial family settled there. During the 13th century a number of scholars who seem to have studied in Constantinople after 1261, were occupying high offices in the metropolis of Thessaloniki. All these scholars acted under the protection of the metropolitans of the city. Thessaloniki, as a growing cultural center, indubitably attracted scholars, most of whom had received their education in Constantinople or had kept in close contact with scholars in the capital. Moreover, in the city there were libraries and scriptoria for copying, illuminating, and illustrating manuscripts or secular works. This atmosphere of intellectual ferment in the late 13th and early 14th centuries was to lead to the expansion of learning in the 14th century[130]. Referring to the Byzantine emperors Pentzikis notes: *Οἱ Βασιλεῖς, μετὰ τὴν ἀναστήλωση τῶν εἰκόνων, ἔχουν ἀπόλυτα συνειδητοποιήσει ὅτι δὲν πρόκειται μὲ τὶς πράξεις τους, ἔστω καὶ τὶς πιὸ ἐνάρετες, νὰ καταξιωθεῖ τὸ Χριστιανικὸ Κράτος. Ὁ σεβασμὸς τῶν τύπων παίρνει γι' αὐτοὺς τεράστια σημασία. Ὑπ' αὐτὸ τὸ πνεῦμα ὁ Κωνσταντῖνος ὁ Πορφυρογέννητος ἔκατσε κι' ἔγραψε ὄντας Αὐτοκράτωρ τὸ 'Περὶ βασιλείου τάξεως'. Ἡ σημασία τοῦ Κράτους ἔγκειται στὸν ὑψηλό του συμβολισμό*[131]. Elsewhere writes *Πρέπει νὰ αναφέρω γιὰ τοὺς Βασιλεῖς ποὺ βιογραφήθηκαν ἀπὸ τοὺς χρονογράφους, ποὺ ὁλονῶν τὸ ἔργο συνεχίζει τὴν ἀποδεικτικὴ τῆς Θεότητας βιβλικὴ παράδοση, πάνω στὸ*

127. Stavridou-Zafraka, Η βυζαντινή Θεσσαλονίκη, 95. Laiou, Thessaloniki, 8-9.

128. Pentzikis, *Πραγματογνωσία*, 110. Idem, *Μητέρα Θεσσαλονίκη*, 76. Cf. C. N. Constantinides, Οι απαρχές της ακμής των γραμμάτων στην Θεσσαλονίκη κατά τον 14ο αιώνα, *Δωδώνη* 21 (1992) 133-150; 135.

129. Pentzikis, *Πρὸς Ἐκκλησιασμό*, 45.

130. Constantinides, Οι απαρχές, 136-137, 147, 150.

131. Pentzikis, *Ὁ κόσμος τῶν Βυζαντινῶν*, 252. Cf. Idem, *Μητέρα Θεσσαλονίκη*, 125.

ἐπίπεδο τῆς Καινῆς Διαθήκης καὶ τῆς ἔλευσης σὲ δεύτερη παρουσία τοῦ Κυρίου ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ[132] and *Ἡ Θεσσαλονίκη ... πλειστάκις κατὰ τὴν ἐποχὴ 'τοῦ ἐνδόξου μας Βυζαντινισμοῦ' συνέβη νὰ τύχει ἐπισκέψεων τῶν Ἁγίων βασιλέων, ποὺ μὲ τὴν παρουσία τους συνέδεαν τὰ ἐν Οὐρανοῖς πρὸς τὰ ἐπίγεια*[133]. In the above passages Pentzikis' dreamy phantasmagoria is conflated with the imperial ideology of the Byzantines; the emperor of the Byzantine Empire was *divus*, *sacer*, ruler by Divine Right, representative of God on earth until the Second Coming of Christ, according to the Christian-eschatological interpretation[134]. The strict hierarchy in the government, the *ἐπαινετὴ τάξις*, reflected the order of the universe and heaven and it was regulated according to the emperor's will. The scholar emperor Constantine VII Porphyrogenitus (10th century) –whom Pentzikis mentions– regarded the administrative hierarchy and order as essential for the consolidation of imperial power. The excellent structure of governance as well as personnel and staffing policy in the capital and in the provinces secured the good work of the administrative services and therefore imperial power. Thus, the subjects of the empire and in particular the officials valued their position in society according to the established hierarchy, and the emperor's officials were responsible for bolstering by all means the imperial political ideology in the Byzantine Empire[135].

The 14th century is characterized as the 'golden age' of Thessaloniki's intellectual life. The Byzantine scholars of this era call the city *πολυάνθρωπος, πολυανδροῦσα, μεγαλόπολις, μήτηρ ῥητόρων καὶ Ἑλικὼν τῶν μουσῶν.* At this time in Thessaloniki there lived a considerable number of philologists, historians, philosophers, theologians, jurists. There were the brothers Demetrios and Prochoros Kydonis, distinguished theologians and writers, the *νομοφύλακες* Constantine Armenopoulos and Matthew Blastares (monk and priest of the Kyr Isaak monastery), who wrote legal

132. Pentzikis, *Ὁ κόσμος τῶν Βυζαντινῶν*, 251.

133. Pentzikis, *Πραγματογνωσία*, 110. Idem, *Μητέρα Θεσσαλονίκη*, 76.

134. I. E. Karagiannopoulos, *Η πολιτική θεωρία των Βυζαντινών,* Thessaloniki 1989, 19. H.-G. Beck, *Das Byzantinische Jahrtausend* (*Η βυζαντινή χιλιετία*, trans. D. Kourtovik), Athens 1990, 105-107.

135. Tz. Albani (ed.), *Ώρες Βυζαντίου, Έργα και Ημέρες στο Βυζάντιο, Κατάλογος Έκθεσης,* Athens 2001, 44-45. A. D. Vakaloudi, Βυζάντιο: Το νέο Imperium Romanum, *Φιλόλογος* 160 (2015), 174-195; 187.

texts to be later translated into Slavonic languages, Nichephorus Choumnos, who urged his contemporary writers to imitate the ancient teachers. Indeed, his opinion on the value of ancient learning corresponded closely enough to that of Saint Basil. There were also the brothers Theodore and Nicephorus Kallistos Xanthopoulos (the eminent writer of *Ecclesiastic History*), Thomas Magistros (monk Theodoulos), an enlightened scholar, who wrote speeches and letters where he pointed out the supreme value of the traditional Byzantine liberal education and the duty of the emperor to encourage the education of every man in every city and not simply the rich and leisured. Thomas used the ideas of Plato, Aristotle and Plutarch in order to educate the Byzantines and especially the Thessalonians. Demetrios Triklinios wrote *scholia* on ancient Greek texts like Thomas Magistros, Nikolaos Kabasilas was a 'humanist theologian' whose work displays a profound understanding of the sacramental and liturgical life of the Eastern Orthodox Church. Other important persons included the archbishops of Thessaloniki, Gregory Palamas (the leader of the Hesychasts), Neilos Kabasilas, and Isidoros Boucheras and Philotheos Kokkinos, later archbishops of Constantinople; in the 15th century, the archbishop Symeon, the last archbishop (1416 – September 17, 1429) before the city's siege by the Ottoman Turks (March 29, 1430), and Theodore Gazes who fled from Thessaloniki – after the city's siege – to Italy where he taught the Greek literature. All these men were great scholars who nurtured students of equal worth with their teaching[136]. Pentzikis refers to all these important men of letters and arts who either were born in Byzantine Thessaloniki or visited the city and praised it. All these people were connected in some way with events that marked the history of

136. D. M. Nicol, The Byzantine Church and the Hellenic Learning in the Fourteenth Century, in: *Studies in Church History*, ed. G. J. Cuming, [v. 5], Leiden 1969, 23-57; 37. D. J. Geanacoplos, *Constantinople and the West,* Madison, Wisconsin 1989, 68 ff. Nikonanos, *Τοπογραφία*, 250-251. Constantinides, Οι απαρχές, 136. E. Fryde, *The Early Palaeologan Renaissance (1261 – c. 1360)*, Leiden 2000, 300. Tinnefeld, Intellectuals, 155 ff. Y. P. Avvacumov, Sacramental Ritual in Middle and Later Byzantine Theology: Ninth-Fifteenth Centuries, in: *The Oxford Handbook of Sacramental Theology*, ed. H. Boersma – M. Levering, Oxford 2015. On line Publication, 2016. Doi: 10.1093/oxfordhb/9780199659067.013.20. Accessed 12 April 2019. http://www.oxfordhandbooks.com/view/10.1093/oxfordhb/9780199659067.001.0001/oxfordhb-9780199659067-e-20. Vakaloudi, *Η βυζαντινή Θεσσαλονίκη,* 15, 240 ff. Kyriakoudis, [as in n. 99].

the city and the empire during the Byzantine period. Pentzikis praises those intellectuals who had a very strong faith in Christianity[137].

In both cases (imperial ideology and Orthodox Byzantine scholars) Pentzikis applies the artistic technique that is based on associating ideas as a means of expressing his spiritual priorities such as the 'transcendent' Orthodox ontology and the associated 'empirical – mystical' communication with the world[138]. Although Pentzikis' attitude strikes us as anachronistic while being a youth in the thirties, when we consider the great influence of the socialist and atheist ideologies of that era, his above references are characteristics of his orientation toward a metaphysical rather than political, sociological, or aesthetic apprehension of life. His ideal state is Byzantium, but it is a mythical rather than a historical Byzantium. It is a religious but not theocratic state, in the sense of a strong and dogmatic church that regulates or strongly influences the governance of the community. When it comes to contemporary politics, Pentzikis does not take sides and has never declared absolute faith in one or other of the Greek governments which he has seen in his time, nor has he viewed the kings of the Hellenes in the same light in which he views those of his mythical Byzantium[139].

Pentzikis recites in many of his works the capture and sack of Thessaloniki by the Arabs (904) in a time when Thessaloniki seems to have profited greatly from its great role in trade. He uses the testimonies of Ioannes Caminiates who wrote the monody *Εἰς τὴν ἅλωσιν τῆς Θεσσαλονίκης*[140]. In this 10th century Byzantine source Ioannes Caminiates speaks repeatedly of Thessaloniki's intense maritime and mainland commercial activity, of the presence of many merchants, both native and foreign – an indignation of an inter-regional role. He reports great wealth in gold, silver, precious stones, silk, cloth, metal and glass objects[141]. Pentzikis also narrates the

137. Pentzikis, *Ὁμιλήματα*, 145.

138. Zacharopoulou, *Μακεδονικές Ἡμέρες*, 57.

139. Thaniel, *Homage*, 35.

140. Pentzikis, *Ὁμιλήματα*, 122. Idem, *Σημειώσεις*, 63. Idem, *Μητέρα* Θεσσαλονίκη, 119, 5. Cf. Mauropoulou-Tsioumi, *Βυζαντινή Θεσσαλονίκη*, 102. Laiou, Thessaloniki, 7. An additional proof of the economic importance of Thessaloniki was the fact that the city had the right to issue currency; Michael, *Πηγές*, 27.

141. Caminiata, 10 [pp. 82-83]. Pentzikis, *Ὁμιλήματα,* 57. Idem, *Σημειώσεις*, 63. Idem, *Μητέρα* Θεσσαλονίκη, 5, 119. Cf. Mauropoulou-Tsioumi, *Βυζαντινή Θεσσαλονίκη* 102. Laiou, Thessaloniki, 7.

second terrible sack of the city by the Normans (1185)[142], a tragic event that marked the history of the city as the events of the sack of the 10th century was repeated, based on the testimony of the archbishop of Thessaloniki Eustathius. According to Niketas Choniates, the tragic situation in which the city found itself is similar to the fall of Troy (*ἄλλη τίς ἐστι κακῶν Ἰλιάς*)[143].

In his work *Ἐλπιδοφόρα Μηνύματα* Pentzikis writes: *Ὁ ιδ΄ αἰώνας στὸ Βυζάντιο μοιάζει μὲ μακρὺ ψυχορράγημα. Ὁριστικὴ ἀπώλεια τῆς Ἕω, τῆς μιᾶς κεφαλῆς τοῦ Δικέφαλου, τῆς Ἀνατολῆς ... Ὁ συμβασιλεὺς τοῦ θρόνου τῆς Κωνσταντινουπόλεως καὶ ἐπίσημος ἑκάστοτε διάδοχος διοικεῖ σχεδὸν αὐτονόμως τὴ Θεσσαλονίκη, δευτέρα πόλη της ἐπικράτειας, ποὺ πρὶν βγεῖ ὁ αἰών, γιὰ ἕνα μικρὸ διάστημα, καταλαμβάνεται ὑπὸ τῶν Ασιατῶν. Μεσοῦντος τοῦ ιδ΄ ὁ βασιλιὰς τῶν Σέρβων (ποὺ οἱ λόγιοι Βυζαντινοὶ τοὺς ἀποκαλοῦν, μὲ ἀρχαῖο ὄνομα, Τριβαλούς), αὐτοτιτλοφορούμενος βασιλεὺς Ρωμαίων καὶ Σέρβων, φτάνει μέχρι τὰ πρόθυρα τῆς Θεσσαλονίκης. Συνθηκολογεῖ στὸ Γυναικόκαστρο, ποὺ κεῖται ἐρειπωμένο σήμερα. Μένει τελείως ἀνασφάλιστη ἡ ὕπαιθρος, καταρδευόμενη ἀπὸ ποταμοὺς αἵματος*[144]. Many historical events are included in the above passage. Unfortunately, in this period Thessaloniki could no longer control even its own hinterland[145].

142. Pentzikis, *Ὁ πεθαμένος,* 120.

143. Nicetae Choniatae *Historia*, ed. I. A. van Dieten [CFHB. 11, 1-2; 2 = indices], Berlin-New York 1975, 299.1-2. Theocharidis, *Ιστορία*, 289-297. G. Ostrogorsky, *Geschichte des Byzantinischen Staates* (*Ιστορία του βυζαντινού κράτους*, trans. J. Panagopoulos), v. III, Athens 1981, 69-70. V. Rotolo, Οι Σικελοί στη Θεσσαλονίκη το 1185, in: *Πρακτικά Συμποσίου Τεσσαρακονταετηρίδος της Εταιρείας Μακεδονικών Σπουδών* (as in n. 23), 9-20; 15-19. Papagiannopoulos, *Ιστορία*, 84 ff. A. E. Vakalopoulos (ed.), *Ιστορία της Μακεδονίας από τα προϊστορικά χρόνια ώς το 1912* [Μακεδονική Βιβλιοθήκη 63], Thessaloniki 2007 (2nd ed.), 110-112. B. M. Kartsiakli, *Η αρχιτεκτονική στη Θεσσαλονίκη από τον 7ο ως τον 12ο αιώνα με βάση κείμενα της περιόδου*, Master Thesis, Aristotle University of Thessaloniki 2010, 23-24. Karathanasis, *Ιστορία*, 56-57. Michael, *Πηγές*, 59-61.

144. Pentzikis, *Πρὸς Ἐκκλησιασμό*, 89.

145. Ἰωάννου Αναγνώστου, *Διήγησις περὶ τῆς τελευταίας ἁλώσεως τῆς Θεσσαλονίκης. Μονῳδία ἐπὶ τῇ ἁλώσει τῆς Θεσσαλονίκης*, ed. G. Tsaras [Βιβλιοθήκη της Βυζαντινής Θεσσαλονίκης 1], Thessaloniki 1958, 70, 9-14. Laiou, Η Θεσσαλονίκη, 184, 186, 189, 194. Stavridou-Zafraka, Η βυζαντινή Θεσσαλονίκη, 95. E. Chrysos, Σχόλια για το κίνημα των Ζηλωτών στη Θεσσαλονίκη, *ZRVI* 50 (2013), 705-712; 706. Katsochis, *Ιστορία*, 164-166.

The 14th century of Byzantium looks in retrospect, as Pentzikis remarks, like a long-drawn out death rattle, with the weakened borders of the state being overrun steadily by the Turks and the internal political insecurity. Pentzikis compares people and events in Byzantine history, a time dominated by personal aspirations and resulting in devastating civil wars, especially during the Palaiologan era, with similar phenomena of his own time, where he traces the same corruption, the greed and the pursuit for personal gain[146]. Modern social unrest and family problems as well as the feeling of personal contradictions may have led Pentzikis to the conviction that a human being is an essentially weak creature with delusions of grandeur, who can find solace and sustenance only in forces outside its own unreliable and shifting self. Also, through observing himself and others, Pentzikis knew that man was a weak and volatile creature, often unable to reason out his deeper problems. This is perhaps why gradually Pentzikis' affection for and reliance on church tradition grew stronger. His deeper motivation may have had to do with his perception of how far political credos can be compromised in practice. Humility generated by that knowledge found expression in his faith[147].

Pentzikis narrates the events that led to the 14th century dynastic conflict which divided the state between the regency in Constantinople (the emperor John V Palaiologos) and the powerful aristocrat John Kantakouzenos[148]. The author also discusses the social-revolutionary stance of the Thessaloniki Zealots which was connected with the dynastic controversy of John V Palaiologos and John Kantakouzenos[149]. He criticizes severely the social-revolutionary stance of the Zealots as he does not agree ideologically with it. His works *Ἄλλοτε καὶ νῦν* and *Πρὸς*

146. N. G. Pentzikis, *Ἀρχιτεκτονικὴ τῆς σκόρπιας ζωῆς,* Athens 1963, 154-155 [hereafter: Pentzikis, *Ἀρχιτεκτονική*].

147. Thaniel, *Homage*, 19, 24.

148. Pentzikis, *Ἀρχιτεκτονική*, 154. Idem, *Ὑδάτων Ὑπερεκχείλιση*, 226-227. Idem, *Μητέρα Θεσσαλονίκη*, 77-78. Laiou, *Thessaloniki*, 9.

149. Ἰωάννου Καντακουζηνοῦ, *Ἱστοριῶν βιβλία Δ΄*, v. I-III: v. 3, ed. B. G. Niebuhr – L. Schopen [CSHB], Bonn 1832, 104-105, 108-111, 117-118. Pentzikis, *Πρὸς Ἐκκλησιασμό*, 92. Ch. Malatras, Ο μύθος των Ζηλωτών της Θεσσαλονίκης, *Βυζαντιακά* 30 (2012-2013), 229-242; 236-237. Chrysos, *Σχόλια*, 708. T. E. Gregory, *A History of Byzantium*, Chichester, UK 2005, 2010, 358.

Ἐκκλησιασμὸ refer to the negative consequences of this revolt which he describes as *Ἀκόμη καὶ ἐξέγερση τῶν μαζῶν κάπως ἀνάλογη πρὸς τὴν κομμουνιστικήν*[150]. The social position of Pentzikis is the rejection of the notion that man can succeed on his own, that is, without God[151]. Pentzikis, while narrating the events concerning the Zealots, also mentions the famous scholars of Thessaloniki who at this time pointed out the acute social problems and tried to propose solutions[152]; *... Μέσα σ' αὐτὸν τὸν σάλο, ἐνῶ ὁ Κυδώνης περιορίζεται σὲ θρήνους τῶν σκοτωμένων, ὁ ἐμβριθὴς Θεσσαλονικεὺς νομοφύλαξ Κωνσταντῖνος Ἀρμενόπουλος, ἀποβλέπων στὴ διαφύλαξη τῶν θείων καὶ ἱερῶν κανόνων, συντάσσει τὴν Ἑξάβιβλο ποὺ θὰ σταθεῖ βάση τῆς νομοθεσίας τοῦ ἀναγεννώμενου κατὰ τὸ '21 Ἔθνους. Ἐκ παραλλήλου ο Χοῦμνος παρέχει πολυτίμους συμβουλάς. Ὁ Θωμᾶς Μάγιστρος ὁμιλεῖ ὑπὲρ ὁμονοίας. Ο Νικόλαος Καβάσιλας, πλησιάζοντας τὴν πιθανὴ ἀφορμὴ τοῦ κακοῦ, ἐκφράζεται κατὰ τῶν τοκιζόντων*[153]; *...τὸ ἐπίσημο ὄργανο τῶν νομομαθῶν τῆς Θεσσαλονίκης φέρει τὸ ὄνομα τοῦ μεγάλου Κωνσταντίνου Ἀρμενόπουλου, νομομαθοῦς τοῦ 14ου αἰ., στὴ Θεσσαλονίκη. Η* 'Πεντάτευχός' *του ἀποτελεῖ θεμέλιο τῆς νεώτερης ἑλληνικῆς νομικῆς επιστήμης*[154]. Pentzikis does not fail to mention the last siege of Thessaloniki, by the Turks, in 1430[155] and its horrifying and disastrous aftermath. He concludes by referring to the last archbishop of the city Symeon; *Ὁ Συμεὼν Θεσσαλονίκης ἔγραψε ποίημα, ὅπου ὁ Πολιοῦχος λέγει στὴ Μητέρα του Πόλη, ὅτι δὲν πρέπει νὰ στενοχωρεῖται, γιατί ἔχει αὐτὸν Προστάτη. Πολλοὶ συνέγραψαν τότε ἐξιστορήσεις τοῦ βίου καὶ τῶν θαυμάτων ἁγίων τῆς Θεσσαλονίκης"*[156].

150. Pentzikis, *Πρὸς Ἐκκλησιασμό*, 45.

151. Thaniel, *Homage*, 135.

152. N. G. Pentzikis, *Ἀνδρέας Δημακούδης καὶ ἄλλες μαρτυρίες χαμοῦ καὶ δεύτερης πανοπλίας*, Thessaloniki 1988, 195 [hereafter Pentzikis, *Ἀνδρέας Δημακούδης*]. Idem, *Πρὸς Ἐκκλησιασμό*, 92. Papagiannopoulos, *Ιστορία*, 102. V. Katsaros, Γράμματα και πνευματική ζωή στη βυζαντινή Θεσσαλονίκη, in: *Θεσσαλονίκη τοῖς ἀγαθοῖς βασιλεύουσα* [as in n.123], v. 2, 178-213; 199. Tinnefeld, Intellectuals, 165 ff. Vakalopoulos, *Ιστορία*, 136. Katsochis, *Ιστορία*, 93-94. Karathanasis, *Ιστορία*, 62. Michael, *Πηγές*, 16-17. Laiou, Thessaloniki, 9.

153. Pentzikis, *Πρὸς Ἐκκλησιασμό*, 92.

154. Pentzikis, *Ἀνδρέας Δημακούδης*, 195.

155. Pentzikis, *Μητέρα Θεσσαλονίκη*, 41-43.

156. Pentzikis, *Πρὸς Ἐκκλησιασμό*, 92.

We observe that whereas Pentzikis includes descriptions of war and other acts of violence in his works, he makes no appeal for human or political rights. We understand this better if we recall that Pentzikis denies that the individual man can stand alone without sustenance from some external cause, which for him is God. Such experiences as acts of violence, wars, slavery, only make Pentzikis suspicious of man's pride in the authority of his mind. Thus, Pentzikis becomes a neo-Christian (like Eliot, but from a different starting point) and returns to Christianity through mysticism and the purgatorial paths of modern life[157].

Epilogue

In the above paper we have shown how the "remarkable past" of the ancient, Roman and Byzantine Thessaloniki has influenced the modern Thessalonian writer N. G. Pentzikis. Pentzikis was a restless spirit, a centripetal as well as centrifugal human being[158]. Existential anxieties and mundane concerns often give a dramatic character to the narrative of his works. As a "Guardian of Ruins", believing that many of the "ruins" keep alive the memory of the ancient and Byzantine history and culture, Pentzikis reproduces a vivid image of Thessaloniki's glorious past connecting the city with the serious theological and political affairs that took place there. According to Pentzikis, Thessaloniki represents the most successful combination of the ancient Hellenic past with Orthodoxy and Byzantium. He acknowledges the mythic foundation of Orthodox religion and does not reject its pagan origins. On the contrary, he endorses it as a way out of the individual's predicament. This is the reason why elements of the ancient Mysteries abound and fuse with his faith. The religious and the secular, the pagan and the Christian, have a symbiotic existence which permits a shifting from one symbol to another, from one thematic structure to another[159]. Emulating Joyce's synthetic ability, Pentzikis claims in his works that memory helps man integrate his fragmentary experiences into a meaningful whole and recapture a lost Eden, because it connects the past

157. Thaniel, *Homage*, 136-137.
158. Thaniel, *Homage*, 54.
159. Voyiatzaki, *The Body*, 145.

with the future. The road of memory may lead to the light, but it has first to cross darkness, where all sorts of dangers lurk. In this way, someone sinks into Lethe, the oblivion of all that annoys, divides, and fragments man's life and his vision of God[160].

160. Thaniel, *Homage*, 90, 91.

Επιρροες και Ερμηνειες της Βυζαντινης Ιστοριας και του Βυζαντινου Πολιτισμου στο Εργο του Συγχρονου Ελληνα Λογοτεχνη Νικου Γαβριηλ Πεντζικη

Ο Νίκος Γαβριήλ Πεντζίκης γεννήθηκε στη Θεσσαλονίκη και ανήκει στη λεγόμενη «σχολή της Θεσσαλονίκης» και στη γενιά της δεκαετίας του 1930. Ο Πεντζίκης, στο έργο του, επιθυμεί να αναδείξει το διαχρονικό μεγαλείο της χριστιανικής – βυζαντινής Θεσσαλονίκης, επιλέγοντας την προσωποποίηση της πόλης ως βασικό στοιχείο μυθοποίησης, προκειμένου να δημιουργήσει τον μυθικό χαρακτήρα της πόλης και ταυτόχρονα να της αποδώσει μεταφυσικές ιδιότητες. Γι' αυτό, ο συγγραφέας προσδίδει ανθρώπινη μορφή στη γενέθλια πόλη του. Ακόμη, συνδυάζει τον Ελληνισμό με τις λαϊκές παραδόσεις, τον μοντερνισμό και τα αυθεντικά, πρωταρχικά και μυθικά στοιχεία της ψυχής του έθνους, που θα μπορούσαν να καταστούν καθολικά πρότυπα και αρχέτυπα της σκέψης. Ο Πεντζίκης συνδυάζει τα στοιχεία του Ορθόδοξου βυζαντινού πολιτισμού και των αρχαίων ελληνικών μύθων με τις επιρροές που έχει δεχθεί από τον μοντερνισμό για να συνενώσει την ανατολική με τη δυτική πνευματική κουλτούρα και τη σύγχρονη ευρωπαϊκή διανόηση.