The Zealots then started negotiating the surrender of the city to the Serbians but Metochites called Kantakouzenos for aid. The entry of Kantakouzenos next year in the city was peaceful; he imprisoned the rest of the Zealots with out any reaction.

Similar efforts trying to link them with the religious controversies of the time (e.g. opposition to the Hesychasts) or with heretic circles have proved fruitless. The Zealots were nothing more than a fraction of the aristocracy that tried to appropriate power and use the force of the people for their cause. Moreover, the city remained attached to the central government and does not represent an effort for self-government. Yet, it can be treated as one more incident in the growing centrifugal tendencies of the late Byzantine centuries, caused by a weakening state machine.
The Thessalonian discourse (c.1380-1430): 
a synecdoche for developments in Late Byzantine society*

Angelike Konstantakopoulou’s 1996 monograph on Thessalonike examines the Macedonian city in terms of its representation and conceptualisation as a spatial entity and as an ideological construct in Byzantine literature. Focussing primarily on the middle and late Byzantine period, she analyses the wording employed in texts to portray the city as congruent with specific developments in the political sphere; she further suggests that the texts are imbued with cultural, philosophical and theological nuances. One of the principal ideological commonplace in late Byzantine sources was that of the city as fatherland.

Since the publication of Konstantakopoulou’s study, further works have used different angles and methodological approaches to explore the broader issue of ideology in the late Byzantine period. They all appear to converge to the same idea: the territorial fragmentation of the empire after 1204 and the subsequent rapid changes in the political environment due to the impact of the Turkish threat on contemporary rhetoric. This instigated a modification of the traditional Byzantine worldview and, by extension, the collective and political identity of the Byzantines. Thus a distinct and growing feeling of localism found recourse to novel or reintroduced forms of self and group designation.

The city of Thessalonike with an intricate history in the later years, is no exception to this rule. This paper will concisely examine the linguistic devices employed mainly, but not solely, in discourses addressed to the Thessalonians.

*This paper is a part of my unpublished doctoral thesis: Socio-economic Conditions in 14th and 15th Century Thessalonike: A New Approach, University of Birmingham 2011.

1. Αγγελική Κωνσταντακοπούλου, Βυζαντινή Θεσσαλονίκη, Χώρος και ιδεολογία, Γιάννενα 1996.
between 1380 and 1430, by representatives of the political and ecclesiastical authority of the city. These point to the articulation of a collective identity centred around the notion of the city in order to rally the population against the external enemy. On a secondary level, I aim to add another dimension to this discussion: I will seek to demonstrate that, despite its consistency with the general pattern outlined above, this rhetoric of ‘localism’ could also be fraught with discrepancies and mixed messages. It could, indeed, stand in sharp contrast to the internal political developments of the city, resulting in a possible uneasiness for the audience.

In the critical years between 1382 and 1430, Thessalonian society was subject to the turmoil of war activities and constant changes in the city’s authority and leaders until its final subjection to the Ottomans. The protagonists in the political scene of Thessalonike were Manuel II Palaeologus, who assumed power of the city as an independent ruler in 1382, and the archbishops Isidoros Glabas (1380-1396), Gabriel (1397-1416/7) and Symeon (1416/7-1430). The archbishops each had a distinct personality; they held diverse attitudes towards the political developments of their time. Isidoros personally co-operated with the defensive struggle of Manuel II Palaeologus against the Ottomans (1383-1387); however this did not mean that the relationship of the two men always ran smoothly. Both Isidoros and his successor, Gabriel, experienced the first Ottoman occupation of Thessalonike (1387-1402), during which they acted as mediators between the Thessalonians and the Turkish authorities. Gabriel was particularly renowned for his mild character, which seems to have helped considerably in the amelioration of the conditions in the city. Lastly, Symeon, was a central figure in the political life of the city. He was a man of firm anti-Turkish and, to a lesser extent, anti-Latin sentiments. His opposition to Italy was partly prompted by Venetian rule of the city (1423-
1430), provoking in many cases the discontent of both the political authorities and the people⁶.

These individuals attempted to propagate certain ideas at a broader social level through formal public addresses. The bulk of these addresses are orations delivered to the people of Thessalonike by the archbishops on various occasions. A considerable number of them are in the form of encomia to the patron of the city, Saint Demetrios. Two limitations of this type of source must be taken into account. Firstly, their theological and moralistic nature makes their message seem quite abstract, sometimes with no specific target. Secondly, even if they do make allusions to more specific circumstances, such as malpractices of the political authorities, the fact that many of them are not dated renders the extrapolation of safe conclusions as to whom they exactly refer (the Byzantines or the Ottomans) fairly difficult. However, these texts do comment on important political and social issues that preoccupied the society of Thessalonike. They can reveal the kind of means employed to direct and shape public opinion by their authors, especially at moments of fluid or precarious political conditions. The change of the style of the encomia over the course of the period indicates a growing concern of the ecclesiastics about social and political issues, which started in the writing of Isidoros Glabas. After his enthronement in 1380, the encomia cease to be merely praises of the virtues and miraculous intervention of the patron saint. Instead, their theme is broadened by the inclusion of admonitions and rebukes.

The only text of a political speech that has survived is the advisory discourse that Manuel II Palaeologos delivered to the people of Thessalonike in 1383. Between 19 September and 26 October of that year, the Ottomans sent an ultimatum to the inhabitants: they must either pay tribute, or face attack⁷. Manuel opposed any form of unconditional surrender and summoned an assembly with the aim of securing the support of the inhabitants for his policy of resistance⁸. For this reason, he delivered an advisory speech, which is a

---


8. Β. Λαούρδας, Ο συμβολισμός πρώτος των Θεσσαλονικέων του Βυζαντινών Παλαιολόγου,
fine example of patriotic fervour and in which he outlines his firm belief that the Ottomans’ proposal should be rejected. Furthermore, he encourages the Thessalonians to resist mightily, employing every possible means, whether military or diplomatic, in order to retain their freedom. This article will focus on the specific ideas projected in these texts, commenting occasionally on the way that the same concepts were treated by other individuals with historical links to the city. The following organizing themes will be addressed: i) the relationship between fatherland and city; ii) collective identity; iii) the relationship between the political and ecclesiastical authorities.

i) The relationship between fatherland and city

The notion of homeland (πατρίς) and its connotations is far from uniform in the late Byzantine period: its use depends on personal preferences, perceptions, or political intentions. One thing is for certain, that particularly in the fifteenth century the long-standing concept of imperial ecumenism could no longer substantiate a political ideology that was not in accord with the political reality.

In the early Palaeologan period, the emperor’s world domination (οἰκουμένη) had already ceased to be embodied in his person but Constantinople, the New Rome, and fatherland came to be associated with his native city. The idea of homeland broadens after the thirteenth century, addressing issues of continuity with the past and expressing the emotionally charged atmosphere of the time, in addition to denoting place of birth. As Kioussopoulou has suggested, political actors and authors of the late Palaeologan period, would recreate, consciously or not, political entities based on an ideology that promoted the common cultural traits of the Byzantines, such as those of language and religion combined with the territorial definition of areas. In her analysis of the case of Constantinople, she considers

Mακεδονικά 3 (1953-55) 290-307. – G. Dennis, The Reign of Manuel (see n. 7) 78-85. The editor of the speech supported that it was delivered in front of the senate of the city, but Dennis and Maksimović have suggested that it was addressed to all the citizens, making it, thus, even more pertinent to our discussion, namely the interaction between the political actors and their audience. See respectively G. Dennis, The Reign, 80 and L. Maksimović, The Byzantine Provincial Administration under the Palaiologi, Amsterdam 1988, p. 255, note 22.

9. D. Angelov, Imperial Ideology (see n. 2) 102-103.

10. Τόνια Κιουσοπούλου, Η έννοια της πατρίδας κατά τον 15ο αιώνα, in 1453. Η άλωση της Κωνσταντινούπολης από τους μεσαιωνικούς στους νεωτερικούς χρόνους, Ηράκλειο 2005, p. 147-160, 155-156. We should not downplay, however, the value attached by Late Byzantine and other Balkan rulers in Serbia, Thessaly and Epiros to a version of political ecumenism in the later 14th and 15th centuries, and their attempts to appropriate this concept. Characteristic is the case of the
the capital of the empire to be politically transformed in the later Byzantine period, having acquired the character of a city-state. This political function of the term was bound to reinforce a collective identity, or in Kioussopoulou’s words *nationalization* (εθνικοποίηση), which would potentially create a united front against an external threat.

In the Thessalonian discourse, the concept of *fatherland* was frequently employed in various ways in the publicly-delivered texts dating from the period of the immediate Ottoman threat against the city of Thessalonike. The prominent aspects to the enunciation of *fatherland* are: i) the cultural, including history and religion with the various kinds of symbolism these entailed; ii) the geopolitical.

The cultural aspect of *fatherland* is evident from the opening sentences of Manuel II Palaeologos’ speech in which he invokes both the historical and religious symbols of King Philip of Macedonia and Saint Demetrios, the patron of the city, respectively. In the very first sentence, he addresses the Thessalonians as dwelling in *the land of Philip*12, while a few lines later he refers to Saint Demetrios as defender of the city during its past and future13. Thus, the first layer in the meaning of fatherland, as it is manifested in Manuel’s wording, has to do with the glorious historical past of Thessalonike. The historical significance of the city is a common trait in all of these texts, irrespective of lay or ecclesiastic background. In this period, the names of *Alexander* and *Philip* were frequently drawn from history, both in public discourses and in more private discussions14. The recollection of these two personalities in the text has a very particular aim: to bolster the morale of the people and prompt them to struggle against the external threat. The Thessalonians share a fatherland with these two men who defeated powerful nations; in comparison, the Turks can be viewed as outcasts15. References to the ancient past and historical examples seem to have been a favourite rhetorical device of Manuel and are also evident in his funerary oration for his brother, Theodoros, the

---

11. T. Κιουσοπούλου, Βασίλευς ή οικονόμος (see n. 2) particularly 201-234.
12. Μανουηλ, Ο συμβουλευτικός (see n. 8) 295, l. 1.
13. Μανουηλ, Ο συμβουλευτικός 295, l. 9-11.
15. Μανουηλ, Ο συμβουλευτικός 297, l. 21-34.
Despot of the Morea. This general trend of recalling the past through prominent historical figures, as well as articulation in a discourse of antiquity and reminiscence, has been seen as the beginning of the development of historical memory, with the city and collective memory acquiring respectively historical and political content.

The cultural significance of Thessalonike as fatherland is further reinforced in these discourses through the employment of symbols that do not represent the Hellenic past. The next target was the Christian faith of the audience. For this reason, one of the commonest features in all the examined speeches is the regular mention of the patron saint of the city, Saint Demetrios, as its defender. Such references, particularly in the ecclesiastical writings, are so frequent that recording every one would require the time and resources of a separate academic project. Suffice it to say that this figure, along with other saints linked to Thessalonike, constitutes one of the most easily available symbols through which the long Christian history of the city could be accessed, reinforcing the impression of a growing feeling of localism, or civic loyalty, in the Palaeologan era. In addition, there was a conscious effort by contemporaries to link the patron saint with their present situation, stressing his recent miracles. The most characteristic case is that of Symeon, who composed a discourse wherein historical events were linked with the miraculous intervention of Saint Demetrios.

A new element, which is consonant with the emphasis laid upon the Christian past of the city, seems to recur increasingly in our texts. The references to Saint Paul within encomia of Saint Demetrios become more frequent.

17. Αγγ. Κωνσταντακοπόλου, Βυζαντινή Θεσσαλονίκη (see n. 1) 164-173.
19. The editor of the text has counted twenty-five such cases, including two miracles attributed to Theotokos. D. Balfour, Politico-historical Works of Symeon Archbishop of Thessalonica (1416/17 to 1429), Critical Greek Text with Introduction and Commentary, Vienna 1979, p. 104.
20. D. Balfour, Λόγους Σώμων Αρχιεπισκόπων Θεσσαλονίκης (1416/7-1429) έργα θεολογικά, Θεσσαλονίκη 1981, p. 190, l. 138-139. Some years earlier, a suggestion of Nikolaos Kavaselas in an encomium of his that Saint Demetrios was superior to John the Baptist had provoked the indignation of the Thessalonian intellectuals. See Β. Λαούρδας, Εγκώμια εἰς τὸν Άγιον Δημήτριον κατὰ τὸν δέκατον τέταρτον αἰῶνα, ΕΕΒΣ 24 (1954) 275-290, p. 280.
in the Late Byzantine period as a sign of a retreat to the Christian tradition triggered by the precarious conditions that the Byzantine lands confronted\textsuperscript{21}. Therefore, one often finds references to Saint Paul by Manuel, who evokes him in two separate points of his speech, relating him to certain ideas that he wished to project. The first one follows his exhortation to fight, defying death. After presenting death for freedom as preferable to slavery, he maintains that liberty itself is better than losing one’s life. So, he urges the Thessalonians to undertake any activities needed: according to Paul, man possesses the ability to will and action\textsuperscript{22}. This emphasises his reliance on personal determination and mobilization of local power. In the second case, while the purpose of recalling Paul’s words remains the encouragement of the inhabitants, the path he follows is quite different: he employs the moralistic device of presenting difficulties as a retribution from God to whom, according to Paul, man owed his creation and life, cultivating thus an underlying sense of guilt. Only the restoration of this relationship would bring this unpleasant situation to an end\textsuperscript{23}. Through both allusions to Saint Paul, Manuel draws on piety to strengthen his arguments. In general, the fatherland-city was associated with Christian figures, either explicitly or implicitly, to make it sacred. This is embodied in the words of the Thessalonian intellectual and friend of Manuel, Demetrios Kydones, whose views in matters of policy are consonant with Manuel’s. In the discourse he composed for the defence of Kallipolis, aiming to persuade the citizens to accept western aid\textsuperscript{24}, he advises them to hold their city and consider it more valuable than anything they own\textsuperscript{25}: I consider fatherland to be the most valuable and holiest of everything else, at any rate after God\textsuperscript{26}. Here, fatherland should be conceived in a wider sense.

By referring to the Thessalonians as dwellers of Phillip’s land, Manuel invokes the city’s past. Additionally, he associates fatherland with place of birth, therefore siting it in a social and geopolitical context. This nuance is also projected in the anonymous encomium for archbishop Gabriel, which states that his fatherland was that of Phillip\textsuperscript{27}. It is common to meet characterizations

\begin{itemize}
  \item \textsuperscript{21} \textit{Αγγ. Κωνσταντακοπούλου, Βυζαντινή Θεσσαλονίκη} (see n. 1) 155-161.
  \item \textsuperscript{22} \textit{Μανουήλ, Ο συμβουλευτικός} (see n. 8) 300, l. 3-4
  \item \textsuperscript{23} \textsuperscript{24} \textsuperscript{25} \textsuperscript{26} \textsuperscript{27} \textit{Ν. Νεκιπόγλου, Ottoman and Latin} (see n. 3) 124-125.
  \item \textsuperscript{24} \textit{N. Necipoglu, Ottoman and Latin} (see n. 3) 124-125.
  \item \textsuperscript{25} \textit{Demetrii Cydonii Oratio de non reddenda Callipoli potente Amurate}, ed. J.-P. Migne, PG 156 (1866), col. 1012B.
  \item \textsuperscript{26} \textit{Demetrios Kydones, Apologia della propria fede: I. Ai Graeci Ortodossi, in Notizie di Procoro e Demetrio Cidone, Manuele Calace e Teodoro Meliteniota ed altri appunti per la storia della teologia e della letteratura bizantione del secolo XIV}, ed. G. Mercati, [Studi e Testi 56] Vatican 1931, p. 400, l. 1-2.
  \item \textsuperscript{27} \textit{Λουίζα Συνδίκα-Λαούρδα, Εγκώμιο εἰς τὸν ἀρχιεπίσκοπον Θεσσαλονίκης Γαβριηλ, Μακεδονικά 4} (1955-1960) 352-370, p. 354, l. 52.
\end{itemize}
of the city, such as that of common mother and nourishing land of Demetrios, wherever a writer sought to underline his strong bond with the city. The connotation of birthplace is often stressed in the letters exchanged between Manuel and Kydones, particularly when the former criticizes his friend for having abandoned his fatherland in that critical period and for residing in the comfort of Constantinople. On the other hand, there is a conscious effort to link the city of Thessalonike with the area of Macedonia and to stress the important role that the periphery played in the Late Byzantine period. Kydones refers to his friend as governor of the Macedonians. While this could be indicative primarily of the particular literary style that prevailed in the Late Byzantine period, it is also evident that the fragmentation of the empire had an impact on contemporary perception of space. This is also depicted in the vocabulary of the archbishops who define fatherland as the land of Thessaly, or stress the salient position of Thessalonike as the one presiding over the Thessalians.

At the same time, though, both Manuel and Kydones use alternative meanings in numerous other cases. For instance, Manuel comments on the fact that Kydones has preferred a foreign land to his own, referring to his trip to Venice from Constantinople, implying apparently the whole empire. Moreover, in his funeral oration for Theodore, he once again associates fatherland with a city; however in this case, he refers to Constantinople, which was Theodore’s place of origin. Yet in the same text he also refers to his brother’s defence of the fatherland, linking it this time not with a particular city but with the broader area of the Peloponnese. Kydones uses the strict sense of

31. The Late Byzantine texts are characterized by an elitist quality that is particularly evident in the adopted language and stylistic forms, which in the main are obsolete, reproducing ancient concepts and literary devices. See H. Hunger, Klassizistische Tendenzen in der byzantinischen Literatur des 14. Jh., in Actes du XIVe Congrès international des études byzantines, Bucarest 1971, Bucarest 1974, v. I, p. 146-151, and for the same issue in the personal correspondence, see I. Ševčenko, Nicolas Cabasilas’ Correspondence and the Treatment of Late Byzantine Literary Texts, BZ 47 (1954) 49-59 (= Society and Intellectual Life in Late Byzantium, London 1981, no. X).
32. Ισίδωρος, Ὀμιλίαι εἰς τὰς ἑορτὰς (see n. 28) 19, l. 14.
33. Συμεών, Έργα θεολογικά (see n. 20) 189, l. 88.
34. Manuel, Letters of Manuel (see n. 29) letter 62, l. 17-19.
35. Manuel, Funeral Oration (see n. 16) 80-83.
36. Manuel, Funeral Oration (see n. 16) 113-115. See also T. Κιοκασπούλου, Η ἐννοια τῆς πατρίδας (see n. 5) 150-151.
πατρίς (as the native city) interchangeably with the wider one of the empire. He normally refers to Thessalonike as his fatherland, when commenting in his letters on its political conditions37, but in other cases he associates the term with the empire and its deplorable situation38. It seems therefore that these two individuals adapt the notion of fatherland according to the particular circumstances they wish to discuss. In the period when Manuel was emperor and his area of authority broadened, it is understandable that his typical usage of the term would reflect this reality. On the other hand, during the period of his governorship in Thessalonike, the employment of πατρίς was inevitably restricted to this city. This is also true for most use of the word by archbishops. However Symeon, who also uses it to refer to his own place of birth, Constantinople, is an exception to this rule39.

In the public discourses of the period, the fatherland-city frequently also acquires the property of bulwark of liberty and culture. The geopolitical role of cities, and therefore of Thessalonike, as a stronghold securing the inhabitants from external threat is emphasized from the very beginning of Manuel’s speech, wherein he likens cities to an admirable trench and an impregnable wall40. In the same vein, Kydones ascribes a significant role to the way that the city of Kallipolis could function as a defending post for its surrounding area and the imperial city itself. Kydones suggests that one should not underestimate the city as a small provincial centre. He points out that it is foolish to judge things according to their magnitude, underlining the strategic point of Kallipolis as a stronghold for the other cities of Thrace, as well as a harbour which facilitated the provision of grain41. By implication, it was of vital importance for the sustenance of the broader area and of the capital. His arguments reveal the importance that he places on the periphery as a guardian of the life of the empire as a whole. This highlights the way that Manuel’s attitude diverges on

37. R.-J. Loenertz, Cydonés correspondance (see n. 30), letters 94, 168, 285 = Fr. Tinnefeld, Kydones Briefe (see n. 30), letters 61, 146, 267.
38. R.-J. Loenertz, Cydonés correspondance, letter 184 = Fr. Tinnefeld, Kydones Briefe (see n. 30), letter 148, and commentary p. 28.
39. Symeon, Politico-historical Works (see n. 19) 72, l. 26-28. Symeon was the only one of the three clergymen not to originate from the Macedonian city. However, apart from the passages clarifying this he generally complies with the practice to designate Thessalonike as fatherland.
40. Μανουήλ, Ο συμβουλητικός (see n. 8) 295, l. 11-13. – In his lamentation for the fall of Thessalonike, Markos Eugenikos considers the fortification of a city along with faith the most vital element for the aversion of danger. Αγίου Μάρκου τοῦ Εὐγενικοῦ, μητροπολίτου Εφέσου, Εάλω Θεσσαλονίκη. Θρῆνος γιὰ τὴν ἀλωση τοῦ 1430, ed. Μ. Πιλαβάκης, trans. Δ. Βαμβακάκας, Αθήνα 1997, p. 58 l. 409-415. – For the topographical and symbolic significance of the walls in literature, see Άγγ. Κωνσταντακοπούλου, Βυζαντινή Θεσσαλονίκη (see n. 1), 16-18.
41. Kydones, De non reddenda (see n. 25) col. 1024C, 1028A-1029B.
this issue in 1383. At the time, having assumed power of Thessalonike without approval of his father, John V Palaeologos, Manuel could not share Kydones’ broader view of policy. This caused a breach in the relationship between the capital and the provincial city. Characteristically, he does not explicitly refer to the imperial centre in connection with his battle for freedom at all during this discourse. Besides, he was not totally opposed to negotiations with the Turks and the ensuing political result that would not endanger his own political position. The remark made retrospectively by the metropolitan of Ephesos, Markos Eugenikos, on the detrimental effect that the separation of Thessalonike from Constantinople had for the fate of the city, is also distinctive. It represents a detachment, which is corroborated by other sources and seems to have been on-going over several decades.

The archbishops’ references to the city tend to be formulaic manner, principally representing it as a longstanding centre of the orthodox faith. However, they also recognise the city’s geopolitical standing. For Isidóros, Thessalonike is the hearth (ἑστία) of the cities of the west, as Constantinople was for the east. Symeon also addresses its importance for other areas of the empire and, most crucially, for the imperial centre. He specifically sees Thessalonike as protector of the area’s Christians, as well as those of the West and of the islands. Furthermore, he portrays it as an aid to the imperial city, as well as to Orthodoxy. His own firm views on the value of Byzantine tradition are embodied in the very role he attributes to this city: The city has from the beginning been a capital of Orthodoxy, second only to the first, the imperial city. It protects the Christians of this area; it protects those in the West, for it is because of this that they enjoy some measure of ease; it protects those on the islands; it helps the imperial city, and is a hand of Orthodoxy and a useful helpmate.

---

43. Μάνουήλ, Ο συμβουλευτικός (see n. 8) 300, l. 36-37, 301 l. 1.  
44. Μάρκος Ευγενίκος, Εάλω Θεσσαλονίκη (see n. 40) 56, l. 366-368.  
45. In one of his letters, Kydones presented the people of Thessalonike as indifferent to the liberation of John V Palaeologos and his two sons, Manuel and Theodore, who had been imprisoned by his other son, Andronikos, demanding an apology. R.-J. Loenertz, *Cydonès correspondance* (see n. 30), letter 206 = Fr. Tinnefeld, *Kydones Briefe* (see n. 30), letter 197 (1379/80). – P. Charanis, The Strife among the Palaeologi and the Ottoman Turks, 1370-1402, *Byzantion* 16 (1942-43) 286-314, particularly p. 296-299, for the events of this period.  
46. Ισίδωρος, Ὁμιλίαι εἰς τὰς ἑορτὰς (see n. 28) 43-44.  
47. Symeon, *Politico-historical Works* (see n. 19) 89, l. 32-35; 90, l. 1.  
ii) Collective identity

Robert Browning touches on the issue of space as a defining criterion for self-appellation and cultural consciousness; he examines it diachronically, providing a general outline of the epithets employed during Antiquity and the Byzantine era. He argues that, in terms of self-designation, people tend to identify with their community in addition from differentiating themselves from the ‘others’. To put it differently, the sense of belonging to or alienation from a city, a particular region or a broader political entity has an impact on the way a person perceives and names themselves. For the late Byzantine period, Anthony Bryer discerns three major foci as embodying the collective perceptions and identities in this period: family, culture and, lastly, the most salient of all, place. Manuel’s references to the identity of the Thessalonians are consonant with these utterances. In his discourse, he juxtaposes the Roman nationality of the subjects with the location of Macedonia, which was well established over the centuries. You have to remember, he says, that we are Romans, that the fatherland of Philip and Alexander belongs to you. He thus evokes two cultural traditions, Christian-Roman and Hellenic, while demarcating the geographical area that had to be defended.

As we have seen, the reference to specific historical figures seems to be essentially a rhetorical device, which aims to set a historical precedent for the fight against the eastern adversaries. It seems quite unlikely that it was used with the intention to shape any sort of ethnic identity in the modern sense of the word, at least not consciously. Indeed, Manuel’s only distinguishing name for the Thessalonians is the epithet Roman; Hellene is not met in this text at all. The Byzantine state was still in existence, even as a shadow of its older self and could not at this stage be disowned as a political institution, even by a person who promoted his political independence. It is characteristic that a discernible and crystallized ethnic identity does not exist in this period for the rest of the Balkan states; the frictions that occurred among them


51. Μανουήλ, Ο συμβουλευτικός (see n. 8) 297, l. 7 and 21, 299 l. 32.

52. Apparently, the term *Hellene* was very scarcely used in his funeral oration and only with reference to ancient past and not as a qualifier of ethnicity. G. Page, *Being Byzantine* (see n. 2) 255.
should be mainly seen within their political context, detached from issues of national consciousness\textsuperscript{53}. It has also been noted that the separatist tendencies that prevailed in the Late Byzantine period did not automatically or necessarily entail a break of the bond with the centre. Oikonomides has discerned a \textit{substrat idéologique} that attached the periphery to the centre, mainly due to the religious affiliation and amplified role of the Church in the period. Although the Church was frequently divided by opportunistic attitudes in matters of policy, it was spiritually and dogmatically united\textsuperscript{54}. Therefore, if the notion of \textit{Hellenism} occurs in fourteenth century texts, rather than in its differentiated and broader use in the fifteenth century\textsuperscript{55}, it functions as a historical paradigm and seems to be a cultural trait rather than a concrete concept of identity \textit{per se}. For the purposes of his oration, Manuel adheres to the usage of the term \textit{Roman} and assigns to it a distinct political. His predilection for this epithet is still noticeable, though restricted to few occurrences, in his fifteenth century oration for Theodore, which might indicate a shift in the collective perception of Roman as a subject of the empire\textsuperscript{56}. It is worthy of note, however, that, on one occasion, he associates it with the notion of \textit{race (γένος)}\textsuperscript{57} and ascribes the quality of ethnicity to it, which exemplifies the diverse criteria that existed for the adoption of a certain term in a text. Eventually, in the later period, this impacted on the redefinition of Byzantine political vocabulary.

To return to the Thessalonian paradigm, the linguistic choices regarding self-designation made by the clergymen befit their role as guardians of the Christian faith and their intellectual conservatism. Not surprisingly, \textit{Christian} is the appellation \textit{par excellence} that surfaces in their texts. The epithet \textit{Roman}
is used by Symeon in connection with *race* (*φῦλον*) and not *nation* (*ἔθνος*); *nation* usually signifies non-Christians in his writings and is used side-by-side with the terms *unbeliever* (*ἀθέος*) and *ungodly* (*ἀσεβής*)⁵⁸. That is not to suggest, however, *nation* had always a negative connotation. When properly qualified, it could acquire a positive meaning. For example, when writing to the Christians of Caesarea and Ankara, Symeon praises them as a *holy nation living in the midst of the most ungodly nations*⁵⁹. Once again, the term should be interpreted in a religious rather than political context. The term *ethnarch* (*ἐθνάρχης*), which is met twice in Symeon’s texts, is also of interest. The first occurrence pertains to the leader of the Timurids, Timur; the second to the ruler of Wallachia, Mircea⁶⁰. Irrespective of their different faiths they were both leaders of nations. This term could not be applied to the Roman emperor because, until the fall of the empire, he was consistently addressed as *βασιλεύς*. Similarly, Isidoros uses *ethnos* and its derivatives to refer to the non-Christian world, whereas his very sparse references to Hellenism are made in the conventional sense of pre-Christian paganism⁶¹.

Overall, the archbishops of Thessalonike were quite frugal in the usage of self-designating terms or cultural attributes other than those denoting their faith. Common descent appears sometimes in the form of *ὁμοφυλέτης* or *ὁμόφυλος* (of the same race)⁶², but is nowhere combined with the ancient past. Yet, the distinguished prelates of the thirteenth century, Demetrios Chomatianos of Achrída and Ioannes Apokaukos of Naupaktos, spoke on the association between language and identity, classifying a person whose first language was Greek with terms such as *Graeci*, while identifying him as a Roman citizen. Apokaukos went even further to overtly equate Roman with *Hellene*⁶³. Georgios Scholarios’ terminological diversity has been seen as a sign

---

⁵⁸. Symeon, *Politico-historical Works* (see n. 19) 47, l. 25, 74, l. 32, 84, l. 30.
⁵⁹. Συμεών, *Εργα θεολογικά* (see n. 20) 111, l. 15-16.
⁶⁰. Symeon, *Politico-historical Works* 44, l. 21, 48, l. 25. Symeon refers to these two individuals within the context of his historical evaluation of the events during the years from 1387 up to 1427, referring herein to the period 1402-1411 and the Turkish internal political affairs which directly affected the Thessalonike, particularly in 1411 when Musa, one of the pretenders of the Ottoman throne, laid siege to the city. For a detailed analysis of the events, see D. J. Kastritis, *The Sons of Bayezid. Empire Building and Representation in the Ottoman Civil War of 1402-1413*, Leiden-Boston 2007.
⁶². Symeon, *Politico-historical Works* 47, l. 36, 84, l. 34.
of the redefinition of Orthodox identity during the fifteenth century; the usage of *Hellene* as an attribute of the members of the Palaeologan dynasty in his works should be seen within this context. On the contrary, in Thessalonike during the late fourteenth and early fifteenth centuries, the representatives of the Church did not extend the discussion of identity beyond the boundaries of religion, either out of pure traditionalism or due to the fluid political conditions. For them, faith constituted a more stable point of reference and potentially a more effective device in their rhetoric. It was actually more imperative for them to differentiate themselves from those people who, in reality, presented a threat to their spiritual and physical territory, than to rely on fabricated and baffling terms of identity.

Another element in our discourses and a constant feature in the Byzantine texts is a pejorative attitude towards the ‘others’, which is reflected in the adoption of a highly derogatory vocabulary. Byzantines would intensify the antithesis between the Byzantine self-image and any foreign element with terms of a derogatory nature. This applies particularly to those who were perceived, justifiably or not, to constitute a political and spiritual threat. One of the commonest designations encountered is that of the *barbarian* (*βάρβαρος*), to which three features were commonly ascribed: a) heathenism; b) not belonging to the Roman Empire; c) ignorance of Hellenic language and culture. References to the Turks in this period frequently took this archaic form of designation, which had a very specific purpose. In the second half of the fourteenth century in particular, imperial dialectic espoused the notion of the *impius barbarian*. This served the purpose of justifying warlike activities while simultaneously looking towards a political affiliation with western powers against the enemy from the East. In both Manuel’s and Kydones’ speeches, *barbarian* is the only term employed to refer to the attackers of Thessalonike and Kallipolis respectively, whilst there are no other utterances denoting their ethnicity.

1995, Παιδαγωγική Σχολή Φλώρινας ΑΠΘ, Φλώρινα 1997, p. 31-43, esp. 38 ff., with a critical view on Demou’s article.


66. S. Kyriakides, Warfare in Late Byzantium, 1204-1453, Leiden-Boston 2011, p. 36-44.
Yet, while the archbishops used the same description occasionally, surely with no political aspiration to western aid, they seem to have been particularly keen on appellations of a different type. In the majority of cases, they refer to the Ottomans with religious phraseology and almost never with ethnic terms. The tendency to confuse the religious and ethnic quality, even by the intellectuals, was quite widespread in late Byzantine texts. As a result, the labelling of the Turks would end up being quite artificial. There is nothing to suggest that the archbishops were unaware of the ethnic origins of the enemy, but their typical preference for linguistic forms originating in theological concepts led to the adoption of a wide array of adjectives connoting the impious character of the enemy, such as impious (ἀσεβεῖς), godless (ἀθεοί), faithless (ἀπιστοί), god-hating (θεομισεῖς) antichrist (ἀντίχριστοι), and profane (μιαροί).

On occasion, unfavourable comments about the infidels took the form of a straightforward religious polemic. Symeon, who was well known for his uncompromising political stance and his harsh language, would turn against the Islamic faith with expressions such as the profane and totally deceptive religion, or the adjutants of mischievous Mohamed. The only positive remark he made about the Turks was within the bounds of reprimand to his flock, noting that, though the Turks were deceived and working lawless deeds, they were at least devout.

The hostile view of the Turks had an impact on the way that their inner qualities and political behaviour were depicted elsewhere in these discourses. Two characteristics, untrustworthiness and avarice, are most frequently projected about the Ottomans’ political integrity in public addresses. In order to emphasize the deceitful and cunning character of the Ottomans and their proposals, Manuel compares them to fishermen who, by using a small bait, can catch a large prey. While for Manuel this functions as a warning about the real intentions of the enemy towards the population, it would be presented by Symeon as a certainty and a grim reality. Let us see, he says to his

67. Only twice have I met the designation Turks in the archbishops’ writings. The first time as part of the title of the sermon delivered by Gabriel after the defeat of the Ottomans by the Mongols who are referred to as Scythians, Γαβριήλ Θεσσαλονίκης ὁμιλίαι, ed. Β. Λαούρδας, Ἀθηνᾶ 57 (1953) 141-178, p. 164. The other reference is found in one of Isidoros’ letters where he speaks of the Turks’ greediness. Ἰσιδώρου ἀρχιεπισκόπου ἀστευτοῖς ὀκτῶ ἀνέκδοτοι ἐπιστολαί, ed. Β. Λαούρδας, Νέος Ελληνομνήμων (1912) 343-414, 395 l. 23.
68. S. Vryonis, Byzantine Attitudes toward Islam during the Late Middle Ages, Greek, Roman and Byzantine Studies 12 (1971) 281-285.
69. Symeon, Politico-historical Works (see n. 19) 48, l. 29-30 50, l. 38.
70. Συμεών, Ἐργα θεολογικά (see n. 20) 96, l. 403-407.
71. Μανουήλ, Ο συμβουλευτικός (see n. 8) 301 l. 1-3.
Thessalonian flock, all the cities of the east, which have been destroyed and most of them uninhabited by the Christians; and wherever there are a few Christians, they are being ridiculed, despised each day and becoming fewer. And we also see the cities of the west being destroyed in a short period of time. For, there is persecution, and this impious nation is really the forerunner of the Antichrist and it resembles that snake which deluded Adam. Symeon portrays the treatment of the population by the Turks as one of total oppression. Isidoros also emphasises the destructive character of their advance. In 1383, he comments on the way that the fields, houses, horses, children and women of the Thessalonians were ravished by the enemy. However, in this period, the siege was actually taking place and military activities could be viewed in no other way.

Gregory Palamas, the known Hesychast and archbishop of Thessalonike, presents a different impression in his account of the period in 1354 during which he spent some time in comfortable captivity in Asia Minor, where the settlement of the Turks had taken place long before. He witnessed there the peaceful coexistence of Christians and Muslims and a lack of restrictions regarding the practice of the Christian faith. He describes this situation in two of his letters to his church along with an argument on theological issues in which he had participated. Essentially, his attitude towards Turkish conquest was much more realistic than the inflexible standpoint of Symeon, who also had close ties with the Hesychastic movement. The main issue for Palamas was the preservation of the Christian faith of the occupied population. Therefore, he was not opposed to contacts with the opposite side, a position apparently adopted by many other Hesychasts and the lower classes in the fourteenth century. This conciliatory attitude can also be detected in Isidoros’ writings. In one of his surviving letters from the period of the first occupation of Thessalonike, most probably written in 1387, there is a passage wherein he counsels the inhabitants to abide by the new rulers’ wishes, saying the following: The submission to our own masters, of whom we are now subjects, and all that power to do service to them in this life has been conferred by commands; this has been long since declared by the blessed men [...]. Isidoros made this recommendation in a period when he had fled the city and resided in the capital; the bitterness of his fellow citizens about this absence suggests that it would not be received

72. Symeon, Politico-historical Works (see n. 19) 89 l. 24-29.
74. G. G. Arnakis, Gregory Palamas Among the Turks and Documents of his Captivity as Historical Sources Speculum 26 (1951) 104-118. – Anna Philippidis-Braat, La captivité de Palamas chez les Turcs: Dossier et commentaire, TM 7 (1979) 109-122.
76. Ισίδωρος, Οκτώ ανέκδοτοι (see n. 67) 389 l. 20-23.
positively\textsuperscript{77}. However, the fact remains that the growing involvement of the church’s representatives in the political affairs of the areas under their jurisdiction, particularly in the periods after the conquest had already taken place, meant that their views concerning the ‘others’ had to be appropriately modified. Paradoxically, the modest and almost submissive attitude that Isidore in this instance demonstrated towards the Ottoman authorities does not typify his views and reactions in the years of Manuel’s reign. As we shall see, he overtly disagreed with him in matters of economic policy, without hesitating to spell out his own positions and to oppose him publicly.

\textit{iii) The relationship between the political and ecclesiastical authorities}

This brings us to the decisive question of whether the messages that were communicated to the people of Thessalonike in this period contained any inherent ambiguities or inconsistencies. The sometimes subtle political nuances that the lay and church representatives adopted and articulated within the rhetorical conventions may have passed unnoticed by a large part of the population. Yet, the ongoing problems between the secular and the ecclesiastical authorities are striking. Their conflicting interests and antagonism are, at times, reflected in their personal writings; furthermore the issue of conflict can be also detected in their discourses, and would cultivate the audience’s insecurity about their living conditions and mistrust towards their leaders.

Yet before commenting on this issue as depicted in the texts, it is instructive to briefly sketch the background of this controversy. In the Palaeologan period, four major disputes took place: the Arsenite schism; the conflict between the reformist Patriarch Athanasios and emperor Andronikos II; the Hesychast controversy; the debate on the issue of the Union with the Roman Church\textsuperscript{78}. The Arsenite schism constitutes the departure point for modifications in the conception of the relationship between the emperor and the patriarch. The early Palaeologan period saw the elaboration of a theocratic theory developed by the Patriarchs Arsenios and Athanasios. Both men came from monastic backgrounds. By contesting the primacy of the emperor in the pyramid of power, they steadfastly challenged his authority by developing and promoting a novel scheme of political theory which attributed a superior role

\textsuperscript{77} We glean this information from two letters (numbered 7 and 8) that he sent to his city, where he apologises and explains the reasons that kept him away. Ισίδωρος, ὁκτώ ἀνέκδοτοι (see n. 66) 382-391.

\textsuperscript{78} M. D. Nicol, \textit{Church and Society in the Last Centuries of Byzantium}, Cambridge 1979.
to the spiritual authority. Their polemics gave way to an intense antagonism between these two poles of power that would be transplanted and maintained in the later years of the Palaeologan state in various forms.

The crisis of the relationship between the state and the Church had its roots in the contrasting dimensions of their authority, featured mainly in the course of the fourteenth century. The territorial shrinkage of the empire entailed the enfeeblement of the state machinery, while, on the other hand, the Church started to enjoy a privileged position by assuming a more active role in the administration. The most striking example of the increasing administrative role of the Church is the decree of 1312 issued by Andronikos II, according to which Mount Athos was passed to the jurisdiction of the patriarchate. The involvement of the Church as a regulator of monastic affairs at a local level had further implications, especially in the case of Macedonia and the city of Thessalonike. The fact that churchmen exercised judicial duties and settled civic matters considerably bolstered their status. Progressively, in the subjects’ eyes, the Church would develop into an institution with a sounder and a more credible structure on which to rely. In addition, it represented not only the inhabitants of the Byzantine Empire, but also the entire world of Orthodox faith.

Key element in the development of Church was the emergence Hesychasm during the troubled period of the mid-fourteenth-century second civil war. It was essentially an Athonite monastic movement, which advocated the primacy of spirituality within religious practices and very soon spread all over the Orthodox world, mainly in the Balkans, reinstating its inner bonds. Moreover, it found its way into the circles of the Patriarchate: after 1347, the office of the Patriarch was held by former hesychast monks. Hesychasm had a profound effect on the political life of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries for three reasons: firstly, on a theoretical level, its theological discourse was a continuation of the tendency cultivated in the previous period that suggested the submission of the imperial authority to the ecclesiastical one. By extend-

79. D. Angelov, *Imperial Ideology* (see n. 2) 351 ff. discusses the process of this ideological change in detail.


82. J. Meyendorff, Society and Culture (see n. 80) 61-62. – D. Nicol, *Church and Society* (see n. 77) 40, 88.

83. J. Meyendorff, Society and Culture 51.
ing this kind of argument, it cemented the conditions for the reshuffle of late Byzantine ideology around a strictly religious core. More specifically, it offered a way to adapt one of the fundamentals of the political belief system, that of order (taxis). The term represented the traditional Byzantine view of the world, which was believed to be constructed upon a vertical hierarchy of power, at the top of which was the institution of the emperor. As a result of the radicalization of ecclesiastical ideas, the patriarchs were gradually presented to be protectors of order. Secondly, in the field of politics, the movement of Hesychasm offered an ideological pretext for the confrontation between secular and ecclesiastical authorities by playing a vital role in the division of opinion regarding the Union of the Churches. Even though there was no actual disagreement on the idea of reconciliation, the main concern was the manner in which this could be achieved without betraying traditional theological principles. Thirdly, on the issue of collective identity, the rigid stance of Hesychastic thought widened the gap between its representatives and the secular authority, leading to an even greater polarization of views between the two existing political factions: the unionists and the anti-unionists. In this dispute, one can discern the emergence of two separate ‘Byzantine nationalisms’ that were particularly manifest in the capital. This represents arguably the only clear distinction that can be made in terms of self-definition during the fifteenth century, when the looseness of structures and opportunist attitudes that were instigated by the insecurity of the times rendered any other specification fairly difficult.

This poses the question of how these developments are reflected in the sources. In their discourses, neither Kydones nor Manuel refer to the church as an institution or a component of the political life of the city. The decision of whether to surrender rested with the inhabitants as a whole and the initiative for their assembly had been taken by the lay authority. It was self-evident to these authors that the role of the church in political matters could be only marginal. Nonetheless, Manuel himself enjoyed some support from Isidoros in his struggle against the Turks. In a sermon from the first year of the siege

85. D. Nicol, Church and Society (see n. 78) 28.
86. J. Meyendorff, Society and Culture 59.
88. Τ. Κιουσοπόουλος, Βασιλείας ή οικονόμας (see n. 2) 14-15, 65. The lack of a uniform policy is also attested within the circles of the Patriarchate. See also Π. Γουναρίδης, Πολιτικές διαστάσεις της συνόδου Φερράρας-Φλωρεντίας, Θησαυρίσματα 31 (2001) 107-129.
(26 October 1383), Isidoros attempts to bolster up Manuel’s defensive policy, painting his image in the most fervent manner: he was the king (βασιλεύς) sent by God to help the city in those critical moments, possessing the four cardinal virtues of the ideal ruler: purpose (φρόνησις); prudence (σωφροσύνη); fortitude (ἀνδρεία); justice (δικαιοσύνη). Isidoros suggests that Manuel is not responsible for the current situation facing the city; instead, he points to the turbulent conditions of the time. Isidoros also likens him to the golden head of a body whose members were in poor health; he therefore urges the people to let him navigate the ship in those times of trouble 89.

Isidoros’ support for Manuel did not, however, extend to his financial policies. The ruler of Thessalonike had sequestered ecclesiastical property twice for the purposes of defence. The first time was during the years 1369-1373, when Manuel acted as a Despot; the second was during his independent rule. This movement caused the resentment of Isidoros, who, as we have already seen, expressed his disapproval of this policy before his congregations. In the autumn of 1383, he delivered two sermons where he tenaciously criticized the confiscation of ecclesiastical revenues. In the first one, at which Manuel must have been present, Isidoros severely criticises his fellow-citizens for their ethical decadence, presenting the depredations made by the infidels as a result of their own thefts of property. Despite the severity of the current situation, Isidoros presents piety as a deterrent to such actions. He suggests that private effects are not equal to the sacred ones 90. In his next sermon, he stands by these views, but does not turn directly against Manuel, presenting him as a victim of his own officials: I am compelled to say these things for those who urge this most righteous king to remove the sacred objects 91.

Nevertheless, this may not fully indicate the complexity of the problems between church and state. Around the same period (1380-82), John V and patriarch Neilos concluded on a series of rights that were ceded to the emperor and allowed him to interfere in church matters. The motive behind this agreement is thought to be Neilos’ intention to demonstrate, in a rather paradoxical fashion, that the power of the emperor emanated from the patriarch himself 92. Isidoros, who himself originated in Hesychastic circles, informs us, in his texts, of his perception of the relationship between the two spheres of authority. In one of his homilies, he voices a poignant criticism of the phenomenon of the growing interference of monks in secular issues and likewise of the

89. Ισίδωρος, Ομιλίαι εἰς τὰς ἑορτὰς (see n. 28) 31-32.
90. Ισίδωρος, Ομιλίες (see n. 73) 49, l. 459-460.
91. Ισίδωρος, Ομιλίες 83. Parts of this sermon were published in Ισίδωρος, Ὅκτω ἄνεκδοτοι (see n. 66) 349-351. It is also discussed and partly translated by G. Dennis, The Reign of Manuel (see n. 7) 89-90.
secular representatives in monastic life. The text reinforces the necessity for distinct duties for the seculars and ecclesiastics, but also points to Isidoros' view that the spiritual life has a precedence that contributes to a synergy between them: 

\textit{Man, it has been legislated that the secular ruler is made sacred and assisted by you, in order that he achieves power by using you as mediator to God and king and renders you the befitting respect of piety, for you pray for his sake\textsuperscript{95}}. Isidoros afterwards rues the way that this very common Christian order (τάξις) had been altered; he accuses clergymen of expecting to receive holy offerings from laymen, instead of \textit{vice versa}, noting that this eventually led to submission to the infidels\textsuperscript{94}.

There is nothing to suggest that these statements represent Isidoros contesting or rejecting the secular authority. Rather, it seems that he wished to establish a border between the actions of the secular and ecclesiastical authorities. Isidoros' description of the feast of Saint Demetrios and the order that was followed by the participants in order to pay respect to him underlines this. The lay representative would come first, followed by his dignitaries, then the prelate, the monks and, finally, the rest of the congregation.\textsuperscript{95} Moreover, despite various differences at certain times with the political authorities of the city, he did not attempt to supersede them and he frequently made recommendations to both his flock and the officials on how to overcome their differences; occasionally, he went even further to parallel the obedience to the ruler to obedience to God\textsuperscript{96}.

The case of Symeon is especially illuminating for the issue of the growing influence of the church in Late Byzantine society and its direct involvement in the political affairs. Late Byzantine churchmen had often to undertake multiple tasks in the life of their diocese, ranging from diplomatic contacts with the Turks to the direction of the defence against them\textsuperscript{97}. Symeon was a controversial figure and so was his relationship with the political power. The main contradiction that emerges in his addresses to the Thessalonians relates to his political ideas, which are a curious amalgam of traditionalism and radicalism.

Outwardly, Symeon’s position towards the members of the imperial family was very favourable\textsuperscript{98}. He extolled Manuel II for his trip to the West.
(1399-1402) and his efforts to seek help for the Romans, stressing his piety and characterising him as the *apex of the best*\(^99\). He spoke similarly of John VII, Manuel’s nephew, who was left in charge in the capital\(^100\). A subtle change of accent occurs when he refers to Manuel’s son, Andronikos, Despot of the city from 1408 to 1423. He is quite critical of his financial policies, which led the city to impoverishment: *To tell the truth, he himself was to some extent the cause of this penury: he had allowed himself to be over-influenced by feelings of generosity and several times, during outbreaks of pestilence, he had exhausted public stocks beyond what was proper*\(^101\). This attitude can be easily explained with reference to Symeon’s disapproval of the straitened conditions of the time that led to the city’s handover to the Venetians.

Besides, the competition between the two poles of authority was founded on the ideological shift that had taken place in the Late Byzantine era. Symeon represented a part of the clergy that professed that the emperor served the church rather than *vice versa*. In Symeon’s lifetime, the relationship between the two sides had become quite strained, a situation triggered by the fact that emperor Manuel II had, in 1416, confirmed his privileges over ecclesiastical matters\(^102\). As a reaction, Symeon composed a work on ordination, where he outlined his thoughts about the status of the political authority towards the ecclesiastical. He unequivocally stated that the emperor was in the service of the synod and that he should honour the Church and not control it\(^103\). In the Thessalonian discourse, this conviction would be translated into an overemphasized view of his own role and those of other ecclesiastical representatives in the political affairs of their dioceses. More specifically, he replied to those who suggested that the absence of a high priest would bring peace for the population during the Venetian occupation of the city when he was virtually a detainee because of his opposition to the regime and the Thessalonians that supported it. This is characteristic of the significance he ascribed to this institution. He considered that people should be under the guidance of their shepherd and follow the rules of piety, otherwise it would be better for him to die\(^104\). A letter he addressed to the other dioceses of the Theme of Thessalonike

by God. – See *Ioannes Anagnostes De extremo Thessalonicensi excidio narratio*, ed. I. Bekker, Bonn 1838, p. 497.

101. Symeon, *Politico-historical Works* (see n. 19) 56, l. 31-33 (translation by D. Balfour).
104. Symeon, *Politico-historical Works* (see n. 19) 8.
corroborates this standpoint. It is a lengthy exhortation to the people to obey the church’s representatives: The archbishop is then the foundation and the source of Christianity. *For this reason the faithful ought to render him such an honour like the one [they attribute] to the Saviour himself, and be subjugated to him and the rest of the priests along with him in everything, even if it seems that any of the defects exists in any of them*.\(^{105}\) In a more aphoristic manner, he will even state that *Obedience is the accomplishment of God’s will*.\(^{106}\)

Nevertheless, in the circumstances of the later period, it was difficult to convince people to obey demands for compliance to the authorities, whether political or ecclesiastical. The abundance of examples in the texts discussed in this article, as well as other contemporary sources, corroborate the social tensions and discontent that prevailed in Thessalonike during this period. These problems were provoked by external factors: Ottoman pressure and the ensuing economic hardships. One can assume that internal conflicts were also instigated, at least in part, by the underlying competition between political and church powers. Moreover, the conscious effort in contemporary rhetoric to project an elevated image of the city and to adopt concepts and wording that would construct a local identity may have cultivated a feeling of introversion, negatively affecting the morale of the Thessalonian citizens and intensifying their insecurity in the face of the rapidly changing environment of the 14\(^{th}\) and 15\(^{th}\) centuries.

\(^{105}\) Συμεών, Ἑργα θεολογικα (see n. 20) 164, l. 173-177.

\(^{106}\) Συμεών, Ἑργα θεολογικα 163, l. 117-118.