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EDITORIAL

The sixth issue of PCA presents the material from two conferences held in different European countries last year.

*The volume opens with some of the papers presented at The British School at Rome (April 2014) at a conference on The Recycling and Reuse of Materials during the Early Middle Ages. The meeting – organised by Alessandro Sebastiani (who has collaborated as guest editor for this section), Elena Chirico and Matteo Colombini – dealt mainly with productive structures related to the transformation of glass and metal in Italy (papers by Alessandro Sebastiani, Stefano Bertoldi, François-Dominique Deltenre and Lucia Orlandi). Other international experts have agreed to add their contributions to the subject: Robin Fleming on the reuse of construction material in early medieval graves, Sarah Paynter and Caroline Jackson offering a synthesis on the reuse of glass, and the team of Carmen Fernández-Ochoa in Spain presenting the early medieval productive structures at the villa of Veranes (Gijón). Two papers by Florin Curta and Michele Asolati, dealing with exchange in the Byzantine Mediterranean, have been published in the *Variae* section.*

After the catastrophe of World War II, many international institutions were founded: the United Nations, UNESCO, the European Community. All these organizations are today immersed in a transitional phase in the systemic crisis which affects the entire Western world, a crisis to which the nihilist and relativist positions have contributed and which has (rightly) delegitimated the imperialism on which the West had built its dominant position. In this crisis, the recovery of shared historical memories is increasingly revealed as a central element in the defence of a rational world, which, although it may have abandoned the utopias of the 1900s, at least safeguards the principles of freedom and the pluralism of values. Today, there is wide debate, even among archaeologists, over how to present cultural heritage in a globalized society while nevertheless pre-

...serving its multiple identities and cultures. The discussion of these matters was the purpose of the papers dedicated to the World Heritage List. This collection, guest edited by Margarita Díaz-Andreu, results from a workshop of the EU-project JPI–JHEP Heritage Values Network (H@V) held at the University of Barcelona in February 2015. The main question, summarized in the title of the paper by Díaz-Andreu, is whether the inclusion of social values and local communities in the management of cultural heritage is an impossible dream. Is it a utopian vision, typical of the historical processes which gave birth to the international organizations and their initiatives to hold back the spectre of a World War III? In many of these contributions, the watchwords still conform to this direction: the participation and involvement of stakeholders in the hope that local communities will be led to a positive valuation of assets and their public use.

The different directions of the debate move between the two poles of economic management and cultural enrichment of local communities. Too often, it is difficult to find a balance between touristic exploitation and a useful cultural proposal for local communities, as happened in the telling example of the Daming Palace in China, developed by Qian Gao, winner of the 2016 PCA young researcher award.

Direct involvement is often difficult in a globalized and multicultural society that has lost its historical roots. Most of the contributions consider that a proper balance can be found between global strategies promoted by UNESCO, based on the decalogue of general principles under which to file an application for protected sites, and the feeling and evaluation expressed by the local community (the focus of Torgrim Sneve Guttorsen, Joel Taylor, Grete Swensen on Heritage Routes and Matthias Maluck and Gian Pietro Brogiolo on organizational proposals in the interventions).

Also related to the subject of cultural heritage and the public is the project section of this issue, a homage to the Poggibonsi Archeodromo. A project developed in recent years by the team of Marco Valenti (University of Siena), this is a unique living archaeological park recreated from archaeological evidence, presenting the life of an early medieval village, an initiative that clearly demonstrates the social and economic benefits of good practices in public archaeology in Italy.

Finally, the retrospect section, which addresses the history of early medieval archaeology in different European countries, is this year devoted to the fascinating recent history of early medieval Archaeology in Russia, with an extensive study by Nadezhda Platonova (St Peterburg).

Postcards from Maurilia, or the historiography of the dark-age cities of Byzantium

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The thesis about the fundamental difference between late antique and Byzantine cities, which was put forward in the 1950s by A. Kazhdan has been adopted and tweaked several times in recent years (W. Brandes, J. Haldon, C. Wickham) to fit the general idea of discontinuity between Antiquity and the Middle Ages. However, the false dichotomy between continuity and discontinuity (*polis* and *kastron*) neglects the results of the recent archaeological research on “Dark-Age” cities. Amorion, Naples, Cherson(esus), Tamatarkha, Mesembria, Butrint and Thessaloniki have by now produced sufficient evidence of cities operating as central places in the regional economy, each having preserved the ancient street grid, albeit in a modified form. The proper comparison of the Byzantine, “Dark Age” cities is not with their own, ancient selves, but with contemporary gateway communities (*emporía*) in northwestern Europe. Long before the supposed re-urbanization of the 9th century, central places were in existence that were different from both the ancient and the later cities.

Keywords: historiography, Marxism, cities, trade, seals

La tesi che rimarca una fondamentale differenza tra le città tardoantiche e bizantine, avanzata da A. Kazhdan negli anni '50, è stata adottata e messa a punto parecchie volte in studi recenti (W. Brandes, J. Haldon, C. Wickham) per adattarsi all'ipotesi di una generale discontinuità tra l'antichità e il medioevo. Tuttavia, questa falsa dicotomia tra continuità e discontinuità (polis e kastron) trascura i risultati di indagini archeologiche recenti nelle città nei "secoli bui". Amorion, Napoli, Cherson(eso), Tamatarkha, Mesembria, Butrinto e Tessalonica hanno prodotto evidenze di città operanti come central places nell'economia regionale, preservando inoltre la viabilità urbana, anche se in forma modificata. Un confronto adeguato delle città bizantine dei "secoli bui" si può instaurare non tanto con la loro forma più antica, ma piuttosto con i coevi emporia dell'Europa nord-occidentale. Molto prima della supposta ri-urbanizzazione del IX secolo, i central places erano in una fase differente dalle città antiche e anche da quelle successive.

Parole chiave: storiografia, marxismo, città, commerci, sigilli

When offering one's opinion on urban matters either in the remote past or in the present, it has become fashionable of late to quote from Italo Calvino's *Invisible Cities*. Luca Zavagno (2009) does it in the intro-

duction to his recently published dissertation on Byzantine “cities in transition”. For Zavagno, any one of Marco Polo’s stories of fantastic cities could fit the bewildering variety of Dark-Age cities in transition. Nikos Tsivikis (2012) takes it from a different angle: the name of Italo Calvino is in the first sentence of a paper entitled *Where do cities go when they disappear?*. Whether a symbol for transition or a metaphor for disappearance, Calvino’s invisible, but imaginary cities are apparently a convenient catchall and an excellent conversation starter. I would like to try my hand at it as well.

“In Maurilia — writes Calvino — the traveler is invited to visit the city and, at the same time, to examine some old postcards that show it as it used to be: the same identical square with a hen in the place of the bus station, the bandstand in the place of the overpass, two young ladies with white parasols in the place of the munition factory”. Marco Polo warns Kublai Khan that “sometimes different cities follow one another on the same site and under the same name, born and dying without knowing one another, without communication among themselves”. In this case, “old postcards do not depict Maurilia as it was, but a different city, which, by chance, was called Maurilia, like this one”. Be as it may, the point is that only the new Maurilia allows for a certain remembrance of the old one:

“the magnificence and prosperity of the metropolis Maurilia, when compared to the old, provincial Maurilia, cannot compensate for a certain lost grace which, however, can be appreciated only now in the old post cards, whereas before, when that provincial Maurilia was before one’s eyes, one saw absolutely nothing graceful and would see it even less today, if Maurilia had remained unchanged; and in any case the metropolis has the added attraction that, through what it has become, one can look back with nostalgia at what it was”.

Calvino 1974, pp. 30-31

At a quick glimpse, my use of Calvino seems less adequate than that of both Zavagno and Tsivikis: Dark-Ages cities of Byzantium were, by everybody’s standards, less magnificent and prosperous than their old selves. Both Zavagno and Tsivikis would definitely claim that the cities following one another on the same site did communicate among themselves. There really *is* a connection between the old and the new Maurilia. I would not necessarily dispute that, tired as I am after traveling through the rough country of endless disputes between defenders of continuity and advocates of discontinuity. If I stop in Maurilia for a moment to catch my breath, I do so for a very different reason. Marco Polo’s story is about change, and the fact that one cannot appreciate the old until it is replaced by something new. Nostalgia, however, is use-

less, for the new city has nothing in common with the old one, except the name. It is, after all, a very different city, even though it is located on the same site. Nostalgia is possible only because of that unbridgeable chasm.

That definitely applies to the current state of research on the Dark-Age cities of Byzantium. In 1951, in order to advance in the Italian Communist party, Calvino spent two months in the Soviet Union as correspondent for *L'Unità*. Five years later, disillusioned with the invasion of Hungary by the troops of the Warsaw Pact, Calvino left the Communist Party and even made fun of the intellectuals' political commitments to the Left in his *Baron in the Trees*, published in 1957. Between those two dates, 1951 and 1957, one can also place the beginning of the scholarly career of reputed Soviet Byzantinist, Aleksandr P. Kazhdan, as well as the publication in *Sovetskaia arkheologija* of an article in which he first addressed the question of the Byzantine cities between the 7th and the 11th centuries (Kazhdan 1954). Kazhdan was a teacher in Velikie Luki at that time, desperately trying to gain sufficient reputation in order to return to Moscow. Coming from Ufa in 1942, he had entered the University of Moscow in the middle of the war, into which he was not drafted because of his poor eyesight. In May 1944, at a meeting organized at the Academy of Sciences, the discipline of Byzantine Studies was restored in the USSR, after being condemned for decades for promoting Russian imperialism and being banned for that from Soviet curricula. A direct consequence of the transformation of the Soviet Union into the heir of the Russian Empire, Stalin's decision meant the training of new students, one of whom was Kazhdan (Ivanov 2003, p. 57). His advisor was Evgenii Kosminskii, a specialist in medieval England, who had become the head of the movement for the restoration of Byzantine Studies, and the editor-in-chief of the journal, *Vizantiiskii vremennik*, re-established in 1947. Kosminskii also chaired the Byzantine Studies conference of 1945 dedicated to Fedor Uspenskii. Under Kosminskii, Kazhdan wrote a dissertation about the agrarian relations in Byzantium between the 13th and the 15th centuries, which was published in 1952 (Kazhdan 1952). He taught at Tula between 1949 and 1952, and then at Velikie Luki, before finally returning to the capital in 1956. The article he published in 1954 in *Sovetskaia arkheologija* may have been instrumental for his acceptance, and eventual hiring at the Institute for History of the Soviet Academy of Sciences, where he remained until his next move, first to Western Germany, then to the United States, in 1978. The doyenne of the Byzantine Studies in USSR, Elena E. Lipshic (a former protégé of Nikolai Ia. Marr) had published in 1953 an article in *Vizantiiskii vremennik*, in which she presented the Byzantine cities as continuing from An-

tiquity into the Middle Ages (Lipshic 1953). With his 1954 article, Kazhdan wrote a rebuttal in which he tried to demonstrate that only a small number of ancient cities survived into the 9th century, and that the revival of the urban life took place only later, and only on a new, feudal base (Kazhdan 1954, p. 187). The ancient city, Kazhdan argued, was associated to the slave-owning mode of production, and when that disappeared, the ancient cities disappeared as well. Kazhdan employed archaeological and numismatic evidence, along with written sources to drive his point home. According to him, the small number of 7th- to 8th-century coins in museum collections, and the absence of archaeological evidence dated to that period from most excavated sites clearly indicated a sharp decline in urban structures. His conclusion was that the decline of cities in the early Middle Ages was intimately related to the ruralization of the Empire. Cities re-appeared in the 9th century, but, unlike their antique predecessors, those urban centers had a completely new social, economic, and administrative structure.

In a recent survey of the historiography of the Byzantine cities, Helen Saradi claims that Kazhdan's article did not influence Western scholarship, "for it was written in Russian"¹. Nothing could be farther from truth, actually. While it is true that few in the West could read Russian, the first reaction to Kazhdan's article came from George Ostrogorsky. In a paper presented at the symposium "Byzantium in the seventh century", which took place in May 1957 at Dumbarton Oaks in Washington, D.C., the Russian scholar (at that time director of the newly established Byzantine Institute in Belgrade) argued that the conclusions of Kazhdan's article, "which at first sight appear so convincing, are based upon a serious misunderstanding"². Ostrogorsky focused mainly on Kazhdan's use of the numismatic evidence, and his criticism was further developed by Speros Vryonis (Vryonis 1964). Saradi is right, however, in that the theoretical basis for Kazhdan's arguments went unnoticed, to this day. To say that ancient cities could not have possibly survived until the 9th century is to make cities by-products of the slave-owning mode of production, that is part of the infrastructure. Kazhdan's argument has far-reaching implications: without a true revolution to secure the transition from the slave-owning to the feudal mode of production, cities had to

¹ SARADI 2012, p. 28. To be sure, in the Soviet Union, Kazhdan's orthodox Marxist theory, despite occasional criticism (see the following note) soon turned into official doctrine. To the chief archaeologist in charge with excavations in the city, medieval Cherson was in decline, a city that, like all others in the Empire, was hit hard by the crisis of the slave-owning mode of production (IAKOBSON 1959).

² OSTROGORSKI 1959, p. 50. Ostrogorsky's article appeared in the same year as the first Soviet critique of Kazhdan's theory, which, like Ostrogorsky's, dealt primarily with Kazhdan's use of the numismatic evidence (SOKOLOVA 1959).

wait until the 9th century to re-appear, under a new guise and different social and economic circumstances. A long period of transition was therefore needed for the maturing of the new relations of production — the *sine qua non* of the new type of city. But why wait until the 9th century? Why couldn't the new relations of production come into being in the 10th, or even earlier, in the 8th century? According to Kazhdan, feudal relations began to emerge in the Byzantine village community only in the late 8th century³. Although he apparently rejected Lipshic's idea of urban continuity between Antiquity and Byzantium, Kazhdan endorsed her thesis, according to which feudal relations inside the Byzantine village community developed only after the migration of the Slavs into the Empire, as demonstrated (so Lipshic) by the *Farmer's Law* (at that time dated between the 7th and the 8th century)⁴. Kazhdan cited Marx to argue that if Byzantium was a feudal society, then it must have been rural, not urban⁵. Cities had to disappear in order for the Byzantine society to enter a phase of complete ruralization, in which new relations of production developed inside village communities under Slavic influence. When new cities appeared after the feudal relations of production matured, they had nothing in common with the old ones, for they existed in completely different social and economic circumstances. If Thessaloniki and Constantinople survived, they did so in a much ruralized form: those were definitely not *poleis*, in the ancient meaning of that word⁶. But if cities are by-products of the mode of the production, and if the feudal mode of production was essential rural, how can the survival of Thessaloniki and Constantinople be explained?

Neither Kazhdan, nor any other Soviet historian of Byzantium ever attempted to answer that question, primarily because of the straightjacket of orthodox Marxism requiring a complete disappearance of the urban structure during the transition from the slave-owning to the feudal mode of production. The problem was left to neo-Marxists in the "West" to solve by means of considerable efforts to relax the normativity of Marxist theory. There is therefore no surprise that in the West, Byzantine cities of the Dark Ages (7th to 8th centuries) emerged as a major research di-

³ KAZHDAN 1960, pp. 41-56. For Kazhdan's views on the role of the Slavs in the demise of the slave-owning mode of production, see KAZHDAN 1953.

⁴ LIPSHIC 1945 and 1947. See KAZHDAN, LITAVRIN 1958, pp. 31-49. For the question of the *Farmer's Law* in Soviet Byzantine Studies, see GÓRECKI 2009, pp. 350-363.

⁵ KAZHDAN 1954, p. 187. Kazhdan got the idea of ruralization of the Empire from an examination of the Balkans, a region in which, he claimed, only Thessaloniki showed uninterrupted urban continuity (KAZHDAN 1954, p. 181).

⁶ According to KAZHDAN 1954, p. 178, there were many vineyards inside medieval Thessaloniki, indicating that the city was not what it used to be in Antiquity.

rection only later, long after Kazhdan's emigration to the United States⁷. In his 1984 dissertation in Eastern Berlin, Wolfram Brandes attempted to reconcile orthodox Marxism with Weber's definition of the city as *Idealtyp*. According to him, cities are by-products of the labor division (and not of the mode of production), and the basis for the economic development of the city is trade and industry, despite the occasional presence, more or less important, of the agricultural functions⁸. Cities disappeared in Late Antiquity not because of the demise of the slave-owning mode of production, but because, for various reasons and each at a different time, they lost their social and economic functions, which had distinguished them from both villages and fortresses⁹. Only a few cities in Anatolia maintained their economic significance, all of them because of being on the coast and thus linked to sea-lanes of commerce (Brandes 1989, p. 189). Cherson, although the archaeologically best researched city of the Byzantine Empire, was nonetheless a peripheral city, which existed only under special circumstances, and cannot be regarded as representative for the Byzantine cities in general¹⁰.

John Haldon, at the same time, writing from the point of view of a much more orthodox form of Marxism, was more radical: "The 7th century, and much of the 8th century saw, I believe, an almost total eclipse of urban life" (Haldon 1985, pp. 77-78). But his views evolved, too. In his much-celebrated book on Byzantium in the 7th century, Haldon argued that by that time, cities in the Empire had lost their administrative, financial, and fiscal independence. In the 7th-century Balkans, only Thessaloniki retained any importance as a center for trade, and that only with great difficulty and on a very limited basis¹¹. Similarly, Amorion may have attracted some commercial activity, but it was too small to be called a city. The citadel occupies an area of some 300 by 450 meters, and was successfully defended in 716 by 800 men against an attacking army more than ten times larger (Haldon 1999, p. 15). Exceptions such as Thessaloniki or Amorion had no consequences for the central thesis, according to which "the structural and functional position of the city in

⁷ Alexander Kazhdan returned only tangentially to the theme of his 1954 article in KAZHDAN, CUTLER 1982.

⁸ BRANDES 1989, p. 25: "Die 'Stadt' is also zunächst als 'Fokuspunkt' der einfachen Warenproduktion zu begreifen."

⁹ BRANDES 1989, p. 26. However, ten years later, Wolfram Brandes somewhat modified his position. The conditions of Late Antiquity continued much longer in some peripheral regions such as Sicily or Crimea than in the central areas of the Byzantine Empire (BRANDES 1999, p. 31).

¹⁰ BRANDES 1989, p. 21. ROMANCHUK 2005a, p. 5 still believes Cherson figures prominently in Brandes's book.

¹¹ HALDON 1990, p. 114. Unlike Brandes, Haldon had no mention either of Crimea or of Cherson in his book, and obviously ignored such seminal articles as ROMANCHUK 1981, 1983, and 1985.

the totality of social and economic relations of the late Roman state was changing: the curial order declined both as a group with independent economic resources and as the competent governing element with municipal administrations” (Haldon 1990, pp. 95-96). While Brandes pointed to a loss of economic function, Haldon emphasized that cities survived either because they could fulfill a function in respect to the institutions of Church or state (as an administrative base, for example) or in respect to genuine economic and social patterns of demand (Haldon 1990, p. 121). Twenty-four years after the beginning of excavations and survey in Amorion, even that had to be toned down. It was now clear that besides the relatively small fortress-citadel, large portions of the lower city inside the late Roman walls had been occupied throughout the Dark Ages. At Cherson, despite the general decline in ceramic imports after the mid-7th century, both Constantinopolitan wares and amphorae from the southern Pontic littoral (most likely from Amastris) point to Dark-Age trade controlled by state officials¹². Instead of an exception, Thessaloniki now appears as a “continuous” city, with a “very considerable degree of continuity in infrastructure and use of space” (Brubaker, Haldon 2011, p. 536). Chris Wickham, a non-Byzantinist, knew about Gortyn, where, after an earthquake, “Heraclius reconstructed the entire city, extensively rebuilding churches and a judicial/administrative basilica, and also a nymphaeum”. According to Wickham, interventions of this kind were unparalleled on the mainland, even when emperors had tight control over those regions. However, cities with the most probable continuity in the 8th century, such as Thessaloniki, have had little, if any excavation (Wickham 2005, pp. 626, 628, and 634). The archaeological excavations at Amorion revealed only that some churches survived in the lower city¹³.

In spite of all appearances, the problem with this body of literature is not that it perpetuates the false dichotomy between continuity and discontinuity. Much more serious is its stubborn preoccupation with saving a Marxist model of analysis, even when the evidence, particularly that resulting from recent archaeological excavations points to serious flaws in that model. This explains the relative lack of alternative approaches rooted in archaeological practices, despite the publication, over the last two decades or so, of a great number of books, some written or edited by

¹² BRUBAKER, HALDON 2011, pp. 504-505 and 514. Both ROMANCHUK 1983a and MAKAROVA 1997 are cited in this context.

¹³ WICKHAM 2005, p. 630. In a book published only four years later, Luca Zavagni, Wickham's former student, knows that excavations in Amorion “yielded traces of streets and numerous wells, public buildings (such as the so-called bathhouse complex), artisanal installations (wine-presses), and four churches” (ZAVAGNI 2009, p. 145).

archaeologists¹⁴. The ongoing debate concerning the economic and demographic dynamism of northwestern Europe, best described archaeologically in terms of the rise of new specialized centers (known, since Richard Hodges, as emporia, gateway communities, or ports-of-trade) had so far no echo in studies of the Byzantine cities in the Dark Ages¹⁵. Scholars studying the Byzantine city of the Dark Ages are still stuck in endless and fruitless debates about the proper name for such urban centers—*polis* or *kastron*. Despite the recent flurry of good quality results from a few archaeological sites (Naples, Butrint, Gortyn, Amorion), there is still a tendency to regard ancient cities still in existence during the Dark Ages as “exceptions” or “anomalies”. Industrial activity is documented in the 7th and 8th centuries in the so-called Byzantine quarter at Gortyn, while the Church of St. Tito underwent a large restoration just before AD 700. There were also kilns for roof-tiles and pottery, which produced the local Painted Ware dated to the second half of the 7th century. The Roman street grid around the *praetorium* was kept intact, although paved with rubble and somewhat narrowed by the encroachment of stalls and workshops. Finally, seven 8th- to 9th-century seals are known from Gortyn, all of them of *archontes*¹⁶. The late antique street grid has also been kept intact in Amorion, where the Lower City basilica, built around 500, remained in use “for over 300 years through the Dark Ages”, with substantial restoration work done at some point in the late 7th century. The bath complex located nearby was also in use throughout the 7th and the first three quarters of the 8th century. Fragments of glass cullet found in the environs strongly suggest the existence of a glassmaking workshop, the remains of which have not yet been found (Iverson 2007, pp. 41, 44-45, and 48).

Scholars writing on Naples during the early Middle Ages have equally emphasized the “exceptional” nature of the city, which, unlike Amorion was not a thematic capital, yet it displays a number of similar features. Naples has perhaps the best-preserved ancient street grid in the whole of Italy, with 3 main roads and 22 lesser, perpendicular roads. As in Amorion, the medieval (and modern) roads are narrower than their an-

¹⁴ E.g., RICH 1992; BROGILO, GELICHI 1998; BROGILO, GAUTIER, CHRISTIE 2000; LIEBESCHUETZ 2001; KRAUSE, WITSCHEL 2006; SARADI 2006; BROGILO 2011; DEY 2015.

¹⁵ With one notable exception: TROMBLEY 1993, p. 432 and 440 first characterized Byzantine cities of the Dark Ages (6th to 9th centuries) as equivalent to Richard Hodges’s type-B emporia. But he too called the Dark-age city a *kastron*. For emporia/gateway communities/ports-of-trade, see HODGES 1982; MORELAND 2010, p. 208-216. For a good summary of the debate, see HODGES 2007. There is no mention of any of the Dark-Age Byzantine cities in GELICHI, HODGES 2012.

¹⁶ ZAVAGNO 2009, pp. 64, 70, 82, and 90. As TROMBLEY 1993, pp. 432 and 442 with note 20 mentions, the *praetorium* in Gortyn is also mentioned in an 8th-century inscription.

cient predecessors, because of the encroachment of properties, stalls, and shops onto what was until quite late, public land. Excavations in different parts of the city strongly suggest that the narrowing of the old Roman streets in Naples did not begin before ca. 800, which indicates the presence through the early Middle Ages of a central authority capable of preventing further encroachment onto the main thoroughfares and of regulating traffic (Arthur 2002, pp. 38 and 40). In 680, a new basilical church and diaconia was built at San Gennaro, within the Roman walls, at the same time as the translation of the remains of the St. Ianuarius from the exposed suburban site at Campodimonte (Arthur 2002, p. 66). Although no evidence of industrial activity has so far been found in Naples, amphorae were clearly produced in the region of the Bay of Naples during the 8th and 9th centuries, as indicated by wasters found at the kiln sites at Misenum and on the island of Ischia. Such amphorae were found not only in Naples, but also at Crypta Balbi in Rome, and one is reminded of the negotiations between Theodore, the duke of Naples and Pope Gregory II (715-731) for the 29-year lease of the island of Capri, during which the duke promised to pay 100 amphorae of wine per year¹⁷. In the late 8th century, Naples was known for its purple-dyed cloth, clearly an elite production, which used dye imported from the East (Arthur 2002, p. 115). A permanent mint opened in Naples in 663, which struck half-folles with the mint mark NE. The mint was located at San Marcellino, near the palace of the duke, which is most likely beneath the present-day building of the university, overlooking the sea (Arthur 2002, pp. 42 and 135). The only 8th-century house found in Naples is that discovered at the site of Carminiello di Mannesi, which was built over an in-filled road, between two Roman *insulae* (Arthur 2002, p. 49). Elsewhere in the city (e.g., at Via San Paolo, on the site of the former *odeion*), abandoned Roman buildings were razed and covered with agricultural soil brought from the countryside, no doubt in order to enable cultivation within the city walls (Arthur 2002, p. 54).

To be sure, after the fall of Ravenna in 751, Naples seems to have broken away from the Empire, as suggested by the replacement of the emperor's portrait on local coins with that of St. Ianuarius, the city's patron, and the inscription +/NEAPOL/IC on the reverse. A similarly ambiguous position had Tamatarkha (later known as Tmutarakan), on the eastern side of the Kerch Strait between the Black Sea and the Sea of Azov. Tamatarkha was clearly within the territory controlled by the Khaz-

¹⁷ ARTHUR 2002, p. 112. Duke Theodore (719-729) is mentioned on a Greek epitaph, one of the only two inscriptions known from 8th-century Naples.

ars, but the excavations carried on the site since the 1950s have revealed a settlement which looks strikingly similar to others within the Empire. Much like in Naples, the street grid of ancient Hermonassa was kept intact in Tamatarkha. The regular street grid has been demonstrated by the discovery in 1955 of a group of houses on the eastern side of a street running north-south in the eastern part of the settlement. Over 50 percent of the associated ceramic assemblage was made up of amphorae dated to the late 7th and early 8th century, but there were also fragments of fine, gray pottery with burnished ornament (most typical for Khazaria), as well as lots of animal bones, especially horse¹⁸. Another house was found in 1985 in the northern part of the settlement, right on the shore of the Taman Bay. This was a square building with a floor area of over 30 square meters and walls built in the herring-bone (*opus spicatum*) technique, which is most typical for 8th- to 9th-century buildings in Crimea. Inside the house, on the floor, there was a pot thrown on a tournette with combed ornament. Five pits cut through the floor were filled with fragments of handmade pottery with finger impressions on the lip, a piece of an ancient marble tombstone, fragments of amphorae, a bone needle, and animal bones (including fish) — all dated to the 7th and 8th centuries. Particularly interesting is the find of a clay lamp and a bone buckle, the latter confirming the date assigned to those assemblages (Chkhaidze 2008, pp. 87-89, 91-92, 94; p. 90 fig. 5; p. 187 fig. 101; p. 223 fig. 126; p. 226 fig. 127).

Unlike Naples and Tamatarkha, Cherson, on the southwestern coast of Crimea, never left the Empire. In the 7th and 8th centuries, this was the place of exile of Pope Martin I (649-655) and the dethroned emperor Justinian II (685-695). Two letters written by Pope Martin from Cherson and dated to 655 mention the salt pans, but also ships coming into the harbor with grain, a clear indication that the city relied on exports, and not on its hinterland for agricultural supplies (Borodin 1991; Sorochan 2013, vol. 3, pp. 70-83). Although Pope Martin's letters do not mention the origin of the grain shipments, the presence on the southern coast of Crimea of amphorae and later lead seals from Paphlagonia, particularly from Amastris, suggests a trade network across the Black Sea (Romanchuk 2000-2001, p. 138; Brubaker, Haldon 2011, pp. 514, 519, and 520-521). The ships that carried the grain to Cherson most likely returned with cargoes of salt. It has been estimated that Cherson may have produced about 20 kg of salted fish per month and inhabitant. However, the number must have been higher, since within just

¹⁸ CHKHAIDZE 2008, pp. 71-73-75; p. 72 fig. 34. Only two 8th-century coins are known from Tamatarkha, both solidi struck for Constantine V between 751 and 775 (CHKHAIDZE 2008, p. 234).

a third of the territory of the ancient city that has so far been explored archaeologically, there are some 1,000 salt tanks, of which 30 may be dated between the 6th and the 9th centuries¹⁹. Moreover, the local production of pottery, particularly amphorae, is documented archaeologically by two kilns dated to the 8th and early 9th century, one found on the western side of the Karantynna Bay, at a short distance from the south-eastern corner of the city walls, the other outside the western walls on the eastern shore of the Pishchana Bay (Zolotarev 1982). Like Naples and Tamatarkha, Dark-Age Cherson maintained the old street grid, but little is known archaeologically about life inside the city. The city walls were renewed between the 7th and the 9th century, as indicated by excavations of the western walls and towers (Antonova 1971, p. 106; Romanchuk 2005a, pp. 80-81). A substantial layer of 7th- to 8th-century material has been found underneath area 4 in section III, next to the Uvarov Basilica, on top of which a bath was built in the 9th century (Romanchuk 2005b, p. 161). A building of public nature found in the 1930s on the southern side of the harbor zone and initially dated to the 9th century seems now to be much earlier, at least judging from the large quantity of amphorae dated to the 8th and to some extent to the early 9th century²⁰. Despite the rather slim archaeological evidence of a Dark-Age occupation, several seals are known from Cherson, primarily from stray finds. Prominent among them are seals of high-ranking imperial officials, such as the count of Opsikion, an 8th-century Grand Logothete, or the *gennikon kommerkiarios* of the *apotheke* of Constantinople between 688 and 689 (Sokolova 1991, pp. 206 and 210; Alekseenko 1999). Much more important is the presence, as in Gortyn, of seals of *archontes*, all with such lofty titles as *hypatos*, imperial *spatharios* or spatharocandidate (Alekseenko 1996, pp. 157 and 159: four seals dated to the 8th - 9th century). Two 8th- or 9th-century seals from the same *boulloterion* belong to one Leo, *hypatos* and lord (*kyrios*) of Cherson. What exactly a "lord" of Cherson was is not clear (at least to me), but seals of the same date are also known that belong to bishops of the city and of Gothia²¹. No mint was found in Cherson, but coins of Constans II are known to have been struck in the city (Guruleva 1996). A number of small coins

¹⁹ ROMANCHUK 2005a, p. 77. The one in area 9, section VIII is dated to the late 7th or early 8th century, while that in section 1 of the harbor region is dated to the late 8th and early 9th century (SOROCHAN 2013, p. 394).

²⁰ ROMANCHUK 2005b, pp. 206 and 209. Alla Romanchuk is wrong in assuming that such amphorae appear only in Crimea.

²¹ ALEKSEENKO 1996, p. 161; SOKOLOVA 1991, p. 210. Alekseenko wants to make Leo one of the "fathers of the city" with some function in the city administration, but the title suggests a position not unlike that of *archon*.

with the letter A, T, and N, as well as with the monogram DNTH have been attributed to the emperors that ruled immediately after 700—Tiberius III, Philippikos Bardanes, Anastasius II, and Theodosius III²².

Very little is known about the preservation of the ancient city grid in Mesembria, now Nesebăr, on the western coast of the Black Sea. The Old Metropolitan church in the city was rebuilt in the early 620s, as attested by two graffiti on the eastern wall of the sanctuary, and on the western face of the southeastern pillar, respectively. Both were scratched by masons working on rebuilding the superstructure. One of them contains the date of June 10, 618 (Stanev, Zhdrakov 2009). As in Amorium, the local bath was still in operation in the late 7th century, as indicated by the events of 680, when Emperor Constantine IV abandoned the campaign against the Bulgars to go to Mesembria for treating his gout in the *thermae* of the city (Chimbuleva 1988; Iordanov 2014, p. 60). Like Cherson, Mesembria was the place of exile for the future Emperor Leo III and his parents during the reign of Justinian II (Curta 2005, p. 121). Coins of Constantine IV, Justinian II and Leontius have been found in various parts of the modern city of Nesebăr, and two hoards are known, one of gold (the latest coin struck between 681 and 685), the other of bronze coins (with the latest coin struck between 685 and 695) (Iordanov 2014, p. 60; Iurukova 1980; Penchev 1991). The new excavations have brought to light the city's 7th-century cemetery, while finds of Glazed White Ware, the staple import from Constantinople, are known from various parts of the city. No less than 37 seals are known from Nesebăr, 6 of them of *archontes*, in addition to several seals of general *kommerkiarioi* of the *apotheke* of Mesembria, as well as anonymous seals of imperial *kommerkia*, which appear without interruption between the early 8th century and the joint reign of Constantine V and Leo IV (751-775) (Iordanov 2014, pp. 191-193; Curta 2005, p. 120). Archaeological excavations in Sozopol, 27 km across the Bay of Burgas from Nesebăr, have revealed around the Church of St. George a large dome-in-cross church, probably built in the late 7th or early 8th century, with a rich marble ornamentation and frescoes (Drazheva 2005, p. 236). Late 8th and early 9th-century seals have also been found in Develt, farther to the south on the western coast of the Black Sea, in addition to Byzantine glazed pottery from that same time, and a hoard of gold coins (Iordanov 2014, p. 98).

The Church of Hagia Sophia in Thessaloniki was destroyed, possibly by an earthquake in the 620s, but then rebuilt on the same spot. Its im-

²² CHOREF 2010. For a follis of Tiberius III, see GOLENKO 1972, pp. 212 and 214. For a bronze imitation of an 8th-century coin, see GURULEVA 2009, p. 74.

pressive dome belongs to a second building phase of that second church, as indicated by the accompanying inscription dated to 690/1. Another inscription in the mosaic of the apse implores the Savior on behalf of Emperor Constantine VI (780-797) and his mother Irene, and of the archbishop of Thessaloniki, Theophilus (Malamut 2005, p. 167; Bouras 2006, p. 62; Robertson Brown 2010, p. 231). This was definitely the city cathedral, in which Theodore Studite prayed during his exile in 797. For, like Cherson and Mesembria, Thessaloniki was also a preferred place of exile. In a letter to his uncle, Plato, Theodore Studite mentions that when coming to Thessaloniki on March 27, 797, he was taken from the eastern gate across the agora to the *archon* (Malamut 2005, p. 171). Knowing that Theodore entered the city from the east, along the old Via Egnatia (Leophoros), the agora in question must have been that of the ancient city, next to the palace of the *archon* and the Church of St. Demetrius. Like all other cities considered in this paper, the street grid of ancient Thessalonica was preserved intact in early medieval Thessaloniki, but this is the only example I know of the survival of the agora. This is also the only case of a survival of the late antique urban institutions. Much like in contemporary Naples, there were many open spaces inside the city that were reserved for vegetable gardens, as indicated by Book II of the *Miracles of St. Demetrius* (II 4.252; Bakirtzis 2007, p. 92). The *archon* to whom Theodore Studite was presented in 797 was most likely the city eparch, whose existence at the time is otherwise documented by no less than seven 8th-century seals, five of which have names as well — Andronikos, Eustathios, Leo, Niketas, and Staurakios — all men sporting such lofty titles as *hypatos* and imperial *spatharios* (Curta 2004, pp. 171, 184, and 186-189).

Much like in Cherson, in the 7th century, grain supplies were brought to Thessaloniki from the outside. Food was stored in considerable quantity in both private houses and in public granaries. A large amount of grain was sold in 676 from the public granaries to private merchants at a price of 1/7 *nomisma per modius* (12.8 kg), a transaction that brought the city a hefty profit of over 7,800 gold coins, the equivalent of over 700 tons of sold grain (Bakirtzis 2007, p. 97). Thessaloniki is similar to Cherson in another respect as well. In September 689, Justinian II granted all profits from the city's salt-pans to the Church of St. Demetrius in order to help with its running costs (Bakirtzis 2007, p. 98). Thessaloniki was also a trade center, as indicated by numerous seals of *kommerkiaroi* and *abydikoi*. Three different *kommerkiaroi* are known for the early 8th century, followed by no less than ten anonymous seals of the imperial *kommerkia* of Thessaloniki (Curta 2004, pp. 181-813). In at least two cases, one and the same individual was both *kommerkiarios*

and *abydikos* of Thessaloniki²³. The latter was in charge with shipments by sea, which points to the importance of the trade relations between Thessaloniki and Constantinople. In the early 10th century, John Kaminiates mentions silk as being highly prized in Thessaloniki, and a great number of merchants in the agora, both foreign and local, who used contracts (*synallagmata*) (John Kaminiates, *On the Capture of Thessaloniki* 9; Malamut 2005, p. 180). Unfortunately, next to nothing is known about the archaeology of Dark-Age trade in Thessaloniki, or of the city, in general, during the 7th and 8th centuries.

Equally modest is the contribution of archaeology to the understanding of the Dark-Age history of cities on the Adriatic coast, particularly Zadar and Trogir. However, it is quite clear that in both cases the ancient street grid was preserved intact. In the 10th century, Zadar was the largest town in Dalmatia, but with a structure entirely inherited from Antiquity. Even the cathedral may have been kept intact from Late Antiquity, as suggested by Constantine Porphyrogenitus' description of that church as with "green and white columns, and all decorated with encaustic pictures in the antique style; its floor is of wonderful mosaic" (Constantine Porphyrogenitus, *On the Administration of the Empire* 29; Jović Gazić 2011, p. 185). One is reminded at this point of the late antique, Lower City Church in Amorion. Constantine Porphyrogenitus also mentioned a domed church, which is most likely the rotunda of St. Donatus. There has been much discussion about the date of its construction, primarily because of the extensive use of *spolia* from neighboring Roman buildings around the preserved forum, and because of the numerous sculptural elements with good analogies in Italy, where they are commonly dated to the late 8th or early 9th century (for the dating of the rotunda, see now Obelić, Sliepčević 1999-2000). A similar date has been advanced for the presbyterium in the cathedral, mainly on the basis of sculptural elements found during excavations inside the church (Vežić 1990, pp. 55 and 59). While the Roman forum was taken over by the episcopal complex, of which the rotunda was a part, much like in Naples, the civic center shifted to a different location, away from the episcopal see, in the region of present-day Narodni trg, where the Church of St. Peter the New (now destroyed and known only from archival sources) served for a while as the seat of the town council (Jović Gazić 2011, pp. 187 and 191). Very little is known about early medieval Trogir. Excavations carried out in the late 1980s in the area of the Benedictine church of St. Nicholas revealed a church squeezed between the late an-

²³ CURTA 2004, pp. 163 and 166. In one case, a *kommerkiarios* was also *dioiketes*, or tax collector (CURTA 2004, p. 187).

tique wall of the city, to the north, and the early medieval wall, to the south. This strongly suggests that instead of shrinking, the area of early medieval Trogir actually expanded during the Dark Ages (Jović Gazić 2011, p. 176).

One of the most interesting, albeit unusual situations is that of Butrint, in southern Albania. The western defenses of the late antique city, built in the late 5th century with spolia from earlier Roman buildings were still in use by the late 8th century. That much results from the recent excavation of two towers, both of which functioned as dwellings (Kamani 2011, pp. 116 and 121; Kamani 2013). Some 100 glass vessels, in addition to window glass, and waste glass (63 wine goblets among the remains), all dated between the 5th and the 8th century have been found in one of the towers. This glass appears to have been intended for resale and recycling (Jennings 2010). Moreover, there were about 24 ceramic vessels, especially globular amphorae, fragments of Glazed White Ware from Constantinople, two chafing dishes, and pottery thrown on a tournette, with combed decoration. Some of the amphorae had painted ornament very similar to those from the kiln at Mitello in Otranto, but also to amphorae found in Cherson, on Crete, at Comacchio and in Venice (Vroom 2012, p. 294). The excavation of the second tower produced also an unglazed chafing dish of local production, a red-painted jug, and a few curious vessels with three handles and spouts, all dated to the 8th and early 9th century (Kamani 2011, pp. 125-126; Vroom 2012, p. 291). No other consistent traces of Dark-Age occupation have so far been found inside the city, and the presence of those ceramic and glass assemblages in the two towers raises the question of the nature of the Dark-Age settlement in Butrint. Was this a simple garrison guarding a largely abandoned city? How then to explain the presence of imports, as well as of broken glass meant to be resold for recycling? With whom did merchants trade for the sale of this relatively large quantity of raw glass? And for whom were amphorae and Glazed White Ware brought to Butrint from Constantinople and elsewhere in the Empire? Such questions have no answers yet, but the intriguing situation in southern Albania begs the question of what, after all, was a city in the Dark Ages.

There are many similarities between the sites mentioned in the previous survey, and I have already pointed out some of them. They are all central places with dependent territories and nodes in economic networks, with more or less autonomous administration responsible for the erection of such public works as the Church of Hagia Sophia in Thessaloniki, the rotunda of St. Donatus in Zadar, or the church in the St.

George area of the old town of Sozopol. The economic base of each one of those sites appears to have been sufficiently diversified to create a surplus that could stimulate manufacturing activities and secure the participation of the site in interregional exchange systems. One only needs to think of the saltpans in Cherson and Thessaloniki, and the salted fish tanks in Cherson. Finally, all sites appear to have possessed concentrations of population, as well as social hierarchies. Perhaps the most surprising of all common traits, however, is the preservation of the ancient street grid, albeit with narrower streets and thoroughfares. The list of sites that exhibit this particular feature is too long for any of them to be regarded either as an accident or as an exception: Naples, Zadar, Trogir, Thessaloniki, Cherson, Tamatarkha, in addition to Gortyn and Amorion. The appropriate question concerning the Dark-Age history of all those sites is not “*how* was it possible for the ancient street grid to be kept intact?” but “*why* was it kept intact?” Writing about Naples, Paul Arthur directly linked the preservation of the street grid to the presence of the central authority capable of preventing encroachment into the main roads and of regulating traffic (Arthur 2002, p. 40). Chavdar Kirilov went even farther: cities, according to him, survived where the state continued to be present or where it had control over the neighboring areas, as on the Black Sea coasts (Kirilov 2006, p. 98).

The proper comparison in that respect is not with the cities of (Late) Antiquity, but with contemporary gateway communities (or emporia) in northwestern Europe, several of which were planned by an authority. One is reminded here of Dorestad, a large site of some 30 ha, excavated between 1967 and 1977 near the confluence of the Lower Rhine and the Lek river, in Netherlands. The site shows a systematic layout, with the 20 m-wide parcels in the harbor extending back into the trading and rural settlements (Es 1990). The same is true for another emporium, Haithabu (Hedeby), in northern Germany, where excavations have brought to light evidence of a geometric, checkerboard plan (Jankuhn 1986). At Ribe, in western Denmark, a series of parallel ditches divided the settlement into equal plots, an indication of planning that, again, suggests that a centralized authority was implicated in the development of the site (Bencard, Jørgensen 1990; Fevile, Jensen 2000). Within the enclosure at Hamwic, a street grid was laid out consisting of three north-south main roads and at least six secondary streets running from the east to the west. The planned layout of the site has been attributed to the intervention of Ine, King of Wessex (688-726) (Brisbane 1988; Stoodley 2002). The 7th- to 8th-century Byzantine cities have also other things in common with the emporia in northwestern Europe. Like them,

they were typically located on the coast, an indication that they were “dendritic” central places functioning as gateway communities for the nearby regions, and controlling exchange, including of prestige goods. However, those were not only trade centers, but also sites of industrial activity. The salt coming out of the pans of Thessaloniki and Cherson and the purple-dyed cloth produced in Naples bespeak the production of a limited number of commodities, no doubt for external distribution. Ceramic production is well documented at Cherson, where two kilns have been found just outside the early medieval walls of the city, as well in the region of the Bay of Naples. Amphorae were produced in Cherson and Naples for the transportation of commodities from the hinterland of those cities, most likely wine. Much like Carolingian denars and sceattas were minted in Dorestad and Hamwic, respectively, so were Byzantine coins struck in the 8th century in Naples and Cherson.

But there are also differences between emporia and the “Dark-Age” cities of Byzantium. With few exceptions (Haithabu), emporia in north-western Europe were not fortified. All known Byzantine cities of the 7th and 8th centuries had walls, but it would be a mistake to see them as examples of the supposedly new medieval city, the *kastron*²⁴. If Butrint was a *kastron*, then it is very curious that the only remains of an early medieval occupation of the city come from the western defenses, and not from the acropolis. The acropolis of Thessaloniki, on the other hand, is not mentioned in the sources before 900 (Odorico 2005). Its appearance must post-date the first mention of the *strategos* of Thessaloniki and the appearance of the theme, a situation perfectly mirroring that of Cherson²⁵. If not *kastra*, what then were those sites? To call them cities would have violated the widely accepted notion that cities disappeared when the ancient world (or the slave-owning mode of production) went out. The difficulty of finding an appropriate term for something that is not supposed to exist is highly relevant for the current historiographic cul-de-sac. According to Alla Romanchuk, Cherson is neither a *polis*, nor a *kastron*, and must be called a “city of the transitional type.” To Leslie Brubaker and John Haldon, sites such as Cherson were “continuous cities” with a very considerable degree of continuity in infrastructure and use of space. To Albena Milanova, the network of Roman cities proved to be remarkably resilient and provided the basis of the medieval urban-

²⁴ SARADI 2006, pp. 471 and 464-470. All examples of “new medieval cities” that Saradi offers (Nicomopolis ad Istrum/Nikiup, Markovi kuli near Skopje, and Caričin Grad) did not in fact survive until the beginning of the Middle Ages (i.e., cannot be dated after ca. 620).

²⁵ MALAMUT 2005, p. 172. For the *praetorium* of Cherson, in fact the residence of the *strategos*, see KHRAPUNOV 2002 and SOROCHAN 2008.

ization after the 10th century²⁶. In all three cases, the Dark-Age city is understood in essentially residual terms, emphasizing what it was not (the ancient city) or what the ultimate target of urban evolution was expected to be (the medieval city). To study the Dark-Age cities of Byzantium means, more often than not, to compare them with those of Antiquity (Treadgold 1990). In a twisted, bizarre way, most Byzantinists cannot understand Maurilia without being nostalgic about the old one. They cannot contain their regrets at the changes that have taken place in the Dark Ages, as the prosperous, magnificent cities of Antiquity were gone, never to reappear. What was left behind were postcards from old Maurilia, which one could use as a substitute until the medieval city would emerge in the 9th century. But a snapshot of the archaeological evidence from the Dark-Age cities shows that it is pointless to ask whether the medieval Maurilia was a sequel to the old one, since those were two very different cities, although they happened to be called by the same name. That 7th- to 8th-century Byzantine cities escape definition has a lot to do with how reluctant historians and archaeologists alike have been to acknowledge that long before the supposed re-urbanization of the Empire in the 9th century, central places were in existence that were different from both the ancient and the later cities. When the supposed re-urbanization happened in the 9th century, those cities neither disappeared nor turned into something else. In that respect, praising the postcard city and favoring it over the one of the Dark Ages is not going to help. To paraphrase one of Mark Knopfler's songs, there are "so many reasons why I won't be sending postcards" from Maurilia.

²⁶ ROMANCHUK 2000-2001, 146 (in reference to Cherson); BRUBAKER, HALDON 2011, p. 536; MILANOVA 2004, p. 190.

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