



WHITE TOWER

THESSALONIKI

Built at the point where the coastal and the eastern land walls intersected, the White Tower, in its present-day form, is a 15th century edifice that replaced an earlier Byzantine structure. It is circular in plan (height: 33.90 m., diameter: 21.70 m.) and consists of the ground floor and six storeys. It was originally enclosed by a low octagonal chemise wall, whose ground plan is still in evidence in the area that surrounds the monument, enhanced by three octagonal turrets on three corners. The exemplary restoration of the monument, implemented in 1985 by the then responsible Ephorate of Antiquities, was awarded with the Europa Nostra Prize in 1988.

It has had various names at times, such as "Lion Tower", in the 16th century and "Fortress of Kalamaria" in the 18th century. Its current designation "White" was given in 1883 when, by order of Sultan Abdul Hamid II, the tower was whitewashed because its former name "Blood Tower" as a prison and a place where executions were carried out, in the 19th century, was inconsistent with the fresh reformist spirit of the time. It has become the symbol of Thessaloniki, the emblem of the city and a favourite meeting place.

From 2008 (5/9) onwards it houses a permanent exhibition dedicated to the history of Thessaloniki, from its foundation, in 316/5 BC, through to modern days, by presenting various aspects of the city's culture. The need to exhibit a large amount of information within the relatively limited space of the monument's storeys resulted in the use of multimedia in conjunction with printed graphics, whereas the display of archaeological material was kept to a minimum. The aim of the exhibition is to introduce visitors to Thessaloniki through the ages and to encourage them continue their exploration of the city's specialist museums, its monuments and archaeological sites. The exhibition is thematically arranged on each floor with a brief presentation of the subject in the central space followed by a more detailed narrative articulated in the surrounding rooms.

Ground floor:
"Thessaloniki. Space and Time"

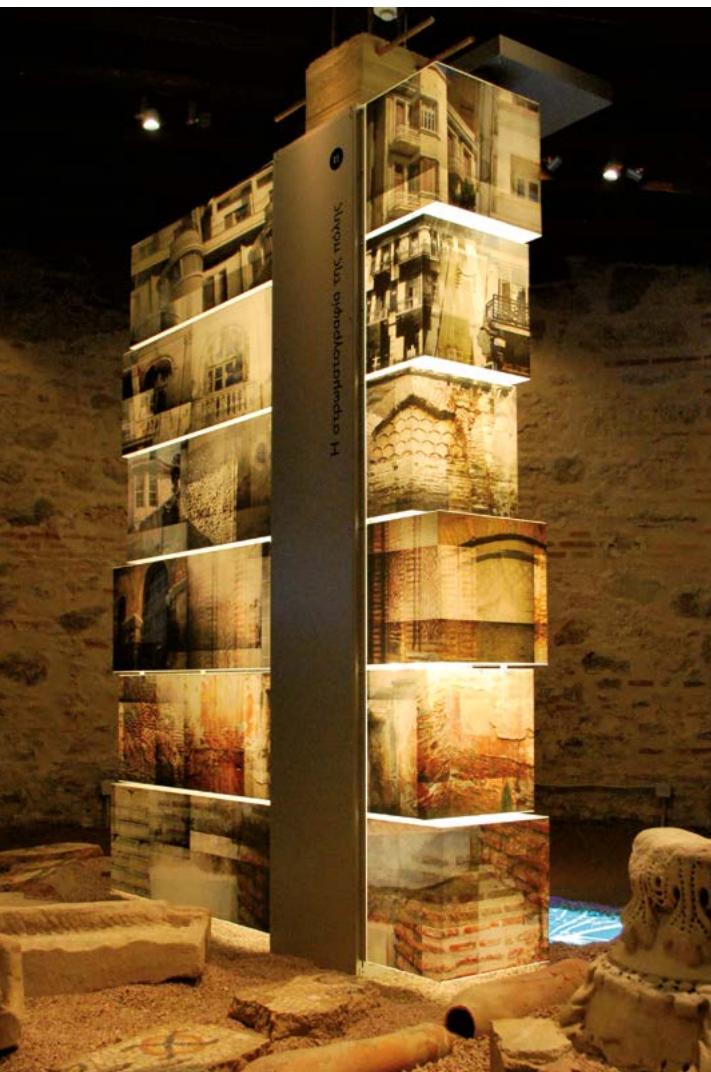
Through projections and interactive touch screens, themes such as the foundation of the city, time, space, the environment and its history are brought into focus. Here, information points that feature a virtual tour of the exhibition are made available to visitors with mobility impairment.



1st floor:

"Thessaloniki. Transformations"

Graphical and artistic configurations, screens and light boxes depict the urban history and the architectural character of the city with its critical infrastructures, its fortification, its water-supply system and its harbour, focusing particularly on the momentous change that took place at the end of the 19th and the beginning of the 20th century, the demolition of the walls and the Great Fire that led to the urban regeneration of the city by the French architect and urban planner Ernest Hébrard.



2nd floor:

"Thessaloniki. Monuments and History"

The history of the city is represented with the aid of seven screens that display an equal number of its most significant monuments: the Golden Gate, the ancient Agora, the palace complex of Galerius, the Heptapyrgion and the churches of Hagios Demetrios, the Acheiropoietos and the Holy Apostles. In the rooms that cluster around the central space light boxes draw attention to decisive moments in the history of the city, such as the massacre of Thessaloniki (AD 390), the rise of the Zealots (1342-1349), the Macedonian Struggle (1904-1908) etc.



3rd floor:

"Thessaloniki. A homeland of people"

Graphical illustrations and projections are employed to present the inhabitants of the city, the natives as well as the refugees. The exhibition is supplemented with population demographics, excerpts from documentary sources written by scholars and travelers and a film screening in which people recount their memories or emotions of the city and their new homeland respectively. In the adjoining rooms light boxes inform about the life of Thessalonians and the population groups over the centuries culminating with the repatriates in the 1990s'.



4th floor:

"Thessaloniki. On the routes of commerce"

On the floor's landing, a wooden structure with an opening that imitates a porthole shows a view of the city from the sea. The theme of the exhibition is commerce and the city's economy, the people, the places, the merchandise and the activities. In the scenery dominating the central space, which alludes to the cardinal points, the archaeological exhibits are combined with graphics. Four screens display the trade routes. In the surrounding rooms light boxes, projections and authentic exhibits portray the progress towards modernization and industrialization, the emergence of the working class and the social changes that the new era brought forth.





5th floor:
"Thessaloniki. Leisure and culture"

The spiritual and artistic life of the city in the 19th and 20th century is put on view. In the small amphitheatre that dominates the central space a film is screened that presents, by means of archival and contemporary material, facets of the artistic and sports life. In the adjacent rooms light boxes, sound applications and projections provide information on aspects of the city's cultural life such as the mass media, the University, literature, theatre, cinema and music.



6th floor:
"Flavours"

In a space that, in effect, resembles a dining room, with four tables, visitors can visually taste and obtain information about the city's culinary delights as these were created from the convergence and integration of different cultures. The Archaeological Receipts Fund shop also operates here. From the floor's platform visitors take pleasure in the view and are advised of the city's sites and monuments with the aid of informational material.



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Co-financed by the European Union (3rd Community Support Framework, Sectoral Operational Programme "Culture", 2000-2006).

Free audio guide equipment is available in four languages (English, German, Russian and Turkish).

Maximum visitor capacity: 70 persons

*For the comfort and convenience of groups, schools etc.
please contact for early booking.*

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ΕΛΛΗΝΙΚΗ ΔΗΜΟΚΡΑΤΙΑ
Υπουργείο Πολιτισμού και Αθλητισμού



ΟΡΓΑΝΙΣΜΟΣ ΔΙΑΧΕΙΡΙΣΗΣ ΚΑΙ ΑΝΑΠΤΥΞΗΣ
ΠΟΛΙΤΙΣΤΙΚΩΝ ΠΟΡΩΝ



ΜΝΗΜΕΙΑ ΚΑΙ ΜΟΥΣΕΙΑ ΤΗΣ ΕΛΛΑΔΑΣ
MONUMENTS AND MUSEUMS OF GREECE

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