



105<sup>th</sup> Primary School of Thessaloniki

I was born 3.000 years ago, in central Macedonia in Northern Greece, nearly at the top of a small hill facing south to the sea, a great archipelago called Aegean! A path was going through that hill come from the east and turned to the south a few kilometres away, heading to a big mountain nearby where (as it was said) gods used to live, to Mt Olympus.

I am an olive tree and nobody knows how I was planted there, maybe some passer by dropped olives, or the wind brought the seeds...

No humans lived around the hill for a long time, they just passing by across the pathway either alone either in small group. They all headed to the south and rarely someone came back. Some of them during summers used to stand in my shadow to rest or to enjoy the great view. I heard a lot of stories about cities, far to the south, Athens, Sparta, Thebes, Mycenae, Olympia and many more!

Five centuries after I was born, people started to inhabit the area creating small settlements across the gulf and beyond, next to some thermal springs to the east.

Soon after, huge crowds of people crossed the path heading to the south to concur Greece. Over a million warriors from Persia passed in front of me with thousands of ships crossing the Aegean Sea down to the horizon. As I heard a year after, they defeated by the Greeks.....in Thermopiles, in Marathon, in Salamis, in Platees.....

Thirty years passed, and people were gathering around that beautiful place. A great kingdom established fifty km to the west that one of Macedonia with King Philip II and his son Alexander. Alexander united all Greeks prepare an army and all passed in front of me heading to the east that time, to Asia minor, Babylon, Egypt, Persia and far too far away, to India. Alexander established a great empire and later he was called Alexander the Great,

One of his successors, Cassander king of Macedonia, at around 700 years since I was born, united all small settlements and founded the city of Thessaloniki (his wife's name and daughter of King Philip II)

Time and people kept passing for almost two hundred years in a same pattern.

Then, some people came from west and concurred all area, the Romans, who made Thessaloniki capital of the province of Macedonia and built a lot of monuments, palaces, big roads, water facilities..... One of these roads "Via Egnatia" as they used to say, passed just down the hill I was. It connected two big cities, Roma and Constantinople! It's still there a little bit different though.

After that too many people crossed my area, all kind of nations at all time. Fortunately they used the main road, only few were using the old path.

Two hundred years passed again.....

One morning I saw a human lying in my shadow, he spent his night here. As I heard later, his name was Paul and he preached the words of Jesus Christ the son of the one and only God! I remembered the 12 gods of Mt Olympus across me!!

His preaching had had an enormous impact because in the years that comes Christians become more and more and they built a lot of temples and churches in Thessaloniki and some year Agios Dimitrios was testified as the patron saint....

The Romans used a new calendar and started to count the years by different way. Suddenly we were at year 300 A.D.

After the Romans it was the Byzantines that took over Thessaloniki. From then on, Thessaloniki became a big city with walls around to protect her from enemies.

But a lot of people were coming, too many wars.....

First the Venetians, then the Crusaders, after them the Slavs and finally the Turks.....

Too many years have passed, even me I can't count them.....

The city below me grown up with people from all over east!

At the beginning of last century the city was liberated from the Turks and reunited with the Greek state after many many years. A few years later, a large fire destroyed the city center. Soon after people started to reconstruct the city, you can see, even today, the new buildings stood there.

The city became bigger and bigger and except a short period of time (called Second World War) that passed in pain and hunger, would flourish to today's big Metropolis.

The path in front of me does not exist any more; I even got burned once, in 1997 from a large fire that destroyed a beautiful forest nearby.

It is 2016 now, as I heard some children playing around to say, buildings almost reached my hill, too much noise, too many people.....

The view is still breathtaking, unchanged! The Aegean Sea and Mt Olympus across it greet me every day long, lately I cannot hear them well. I am too old, some scientist came and count my age. More than 3000 years they told. They even put a sign in front of me telling my age!!!

This is my story. I hope I 'll be around for a little more.....to tell all that I heard to the children!

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