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Ottoman archaeology in Greece: a new research field

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Some areas of the territory of present-day Greece were under Ottoman rule for more than 500 years. To date, the study of this period has largely been neglected, with academic research generally focused on Prehistoric and ancient Greece. However, over the course of the last 20 years, there have been noteworthy developments in the study of the Ottoman history and archaeology of Greece. This paper has two aims: (1) to summarize research conducted in the fields of Ottoman archaeology and material culture in Greece, focusing on demographics, settlement layouts and ceramics, particularly table wares; and (2) to present recent efforts to record and protect the Ottoman monuments of Greece.

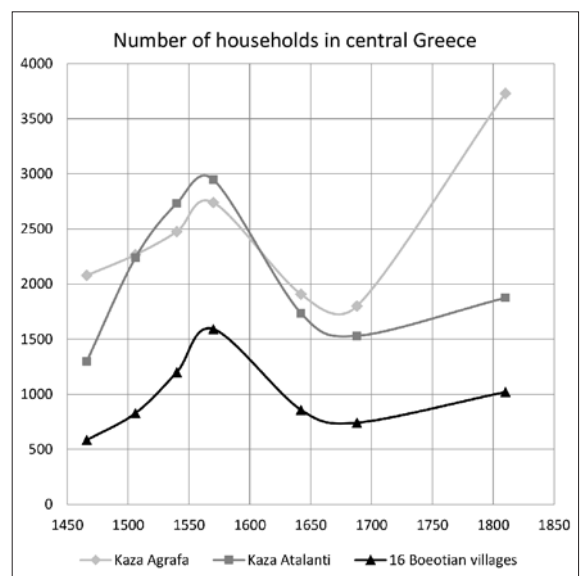
Ottoman archaeology and material culture in Greece (Athanasios Vionis)

A popular view of the Ottoman period in the eastern Mediterranean, after the conquest of Constantinople by the Ottoman Turks in 1453, is of a long era of continuous oppression of the Orthodox Christian populations, characterized by negative effects on local economies, daily life and population densities. However, our understanding is becoming more nuanced following the development of the study of Ottoman archaeology in Greece over the course of the past 20 years, with the initiation of archaeological excavations, conservation projects and surface surveys, and the publication of travellers' accounts and textual data from the Ottoman imperial archives (Balta 1999; Kiel 1999; Sigalos 2004; Zarinebaf *et al.* 2005; Davies and Davis 2007; Brouskari 2008; Laiou 2011; Vionis 2012; 2016; Bintliff 2014; Kolovos 2013; 2015a; 2018; Kotzageorgis 2019).

The development of field archaeology and, in particular, the initiation of intensive surface surveys conducted by foreign schools of archaeology in the 1980s and 1990s essentially gave birth to the archaeological exploration of the Ottoman period in Greece.

The study of settlement patterns and the layouts of both deserted and still-inhabited villages was undertaken with the aim of understanding and interpreting the spatial arrangement of material culture and the nature of lifestyles in rural areas. One such research programme was conducted in the 1980s in central Greece by the *Durham-Cambridge Boeotia Project* (Bintliff 1995; 1997; 1999; Kiel 1992; 1997), and was developed by its successor, the *Ancient Cities of Boeotia Project* (Vionis 2006; 2008; Bintliff 2012). These programmes examined the remaining surface traces of houses, surface ceramics, Ottoman village archival registers and old maps (Bintliff 2014).

It is now understood that the *Pax Ottomanica* period of the second half of the 15th century and most of the 16th century saw a tremendous demographic recovery and significant economic growth (Fig. 156). This is attested by the surviving Ottoman *tahrir defterleri* (tax registers) for central Greece and several Aegean islands of the late 15th and 16th centuries; settlement mushroomed in the countryside and there



156. Graph showing the number of households in central Greece throughout the Ottoman period according to the *tahrir defterleri* for the kaza of Agrafa, the kaza of Atalanti and 16 Boeotian villages. © A.K. Vionis (based on data from Kiel 1997: 349–50; 1999: 203–04, 207).

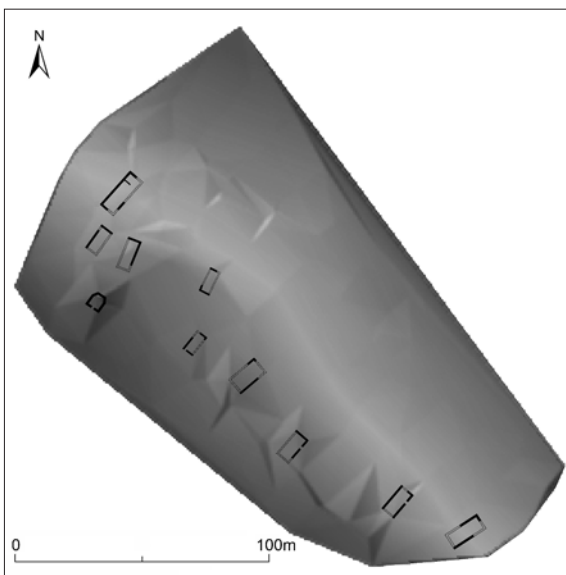
was rapid development of urban centres (Kiel 1997; 1999; 2007; Kolovos 2017). This pattern of recovery and expansion seems to have lasted until the 1580s, when the Ottoman Golden Age came to an end and the empire entered a period of political, military and social crises, leading to high inflation and fiscal exploitation of the peasantry, which, as a result, was gradually weakened (Kiel 1997; Bintliff 2012). Consequently, many of the prosperous villages that had originated in the 15th and 16th centuries contracted in size, while others were broken up into a number of small *çiftliks* (serf estates or commercial farms) with the rise of tax-farming during the 17th century (İnalçık 1972; 1991). The 18th century seems to have been a period of slight economic and demographic recovery, as attested in the tax registers, which record *çiftliks* that had grown to large estates with considerable numbers of inhabitants (Kiel 1997; Laiou 2007).

Towns on the Greek mainland expanded throughout the early period of Ottoman domination. They developed with quarters or neighbourhoods (*mahalle*) populated according to religious or ethnic affiliations that were centred around a mosque, church or synagogue, religious school (*medrese*), bathhouse (*hammam*) and open or covered market (*bedesten*) (Braude 1985; Faroqhi 1997; Bintliff 2014). Towns across much

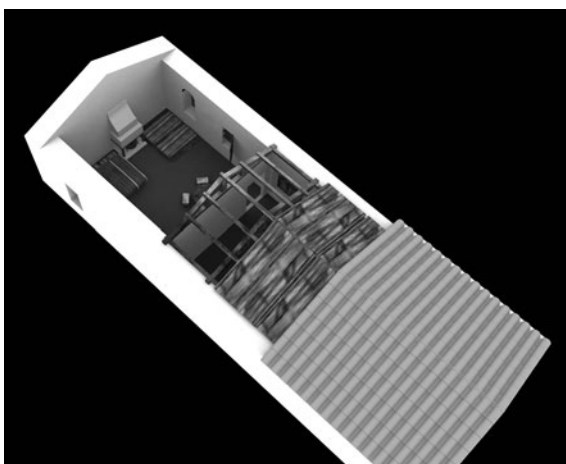
of central and northern Greece gradually invested in the textile industry during the 18th and early 19th centuries. This led to the accumulation of capital in the hands of a rising Greek urban elite, which found the means of expressing its wealth through the construction of churches and elaborate wood-framed two-storey houses (Kiel 1990; Kizis 1994; Sigalos 2004; Kotzageorgis 2019).

Hamlets and *çiftlikler* of the Ottoman period in mainland Greece were each established around a large tower-house (*konak*), the residence of the great landholder/lord (*derebey*). *Çiftlikler* spread throughout central Greece, and developed as a means of investing in agriculture and irrigation works, and controlling grain production for the markets of western Europe. For example, Harmena and Ginossati (two sites in Boeotia that have been explored archaeologically) were *çiftlikler* with a typical Balkan layout. They both preserve the ruins of a *konak* with a number of dispersed, humble, single-storey longhouses stretching below (Fig. 157; Vionis 2016). The tradition of the longhouse in mainland Greece dates back to the Late Middle Ages (14th to 15th century). This is a ‘peasant’ house-type, built of stone or mudbrick, that survived throughout the Ottoman and Early Modern periods; longhouses comprise a single, undivided space for housing humans and stock under the same roof (Fig. 158; Dimitantou-Kremezi 1986; Stedman 1996; Sigalos 2004; Vionis 2016).

Aegean-island communities, on the other hand, maintained to a large degree the established layouts of Medieval (13th to 15th century) town forms. For example, during the Ottoman period, Chora, the main town of the Cycladic island of Naxos, developed immediately beyond its large Late Medieval defended centre (Fig. 159). Chora expanded over time, as newcomers, older inhabitants and various population



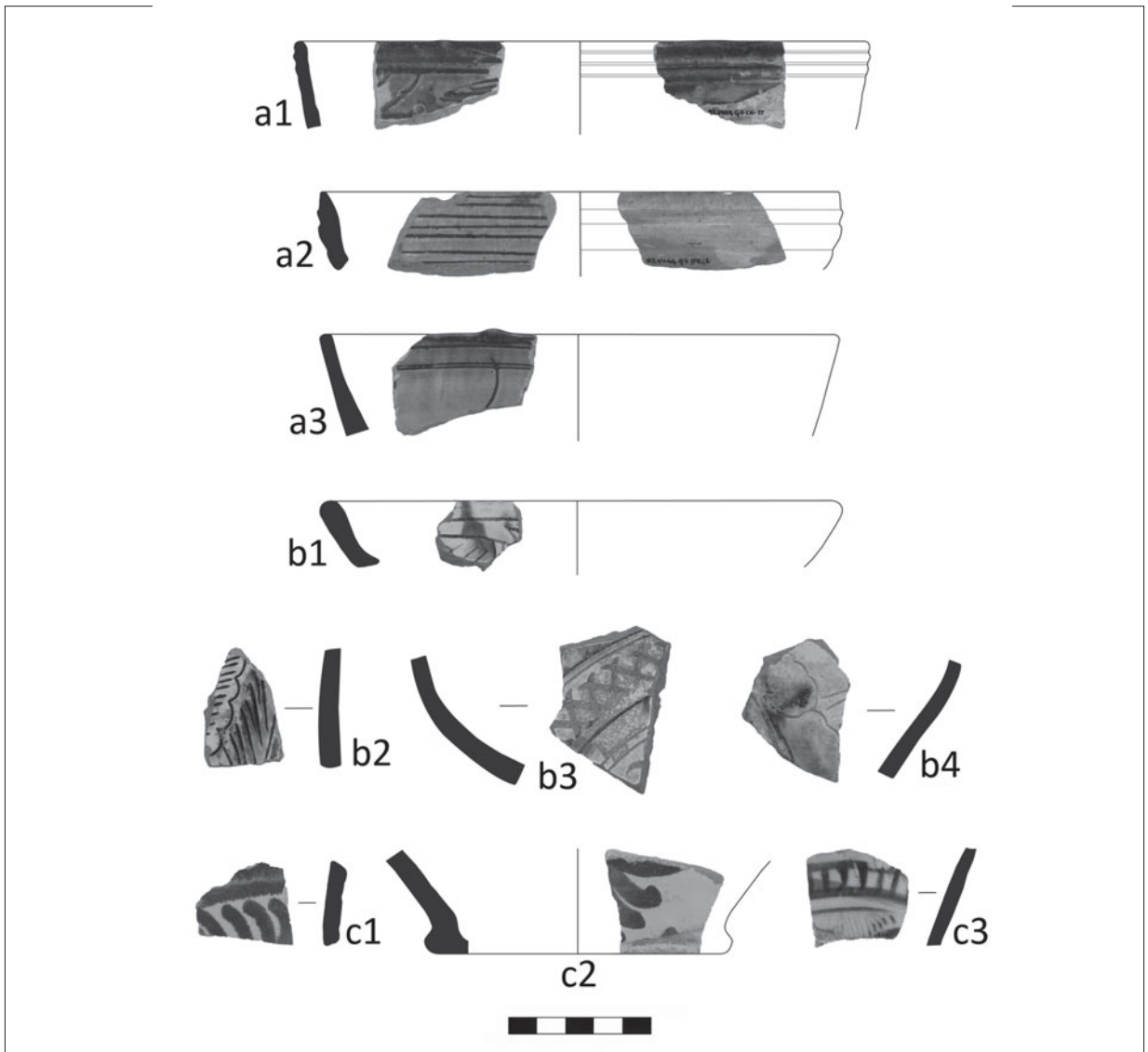
157. Ginossati: plan of the Ottoman çiftlik with the remains of a *konak* and several longhouses. © A.K. Vionis and V. Trigkas.



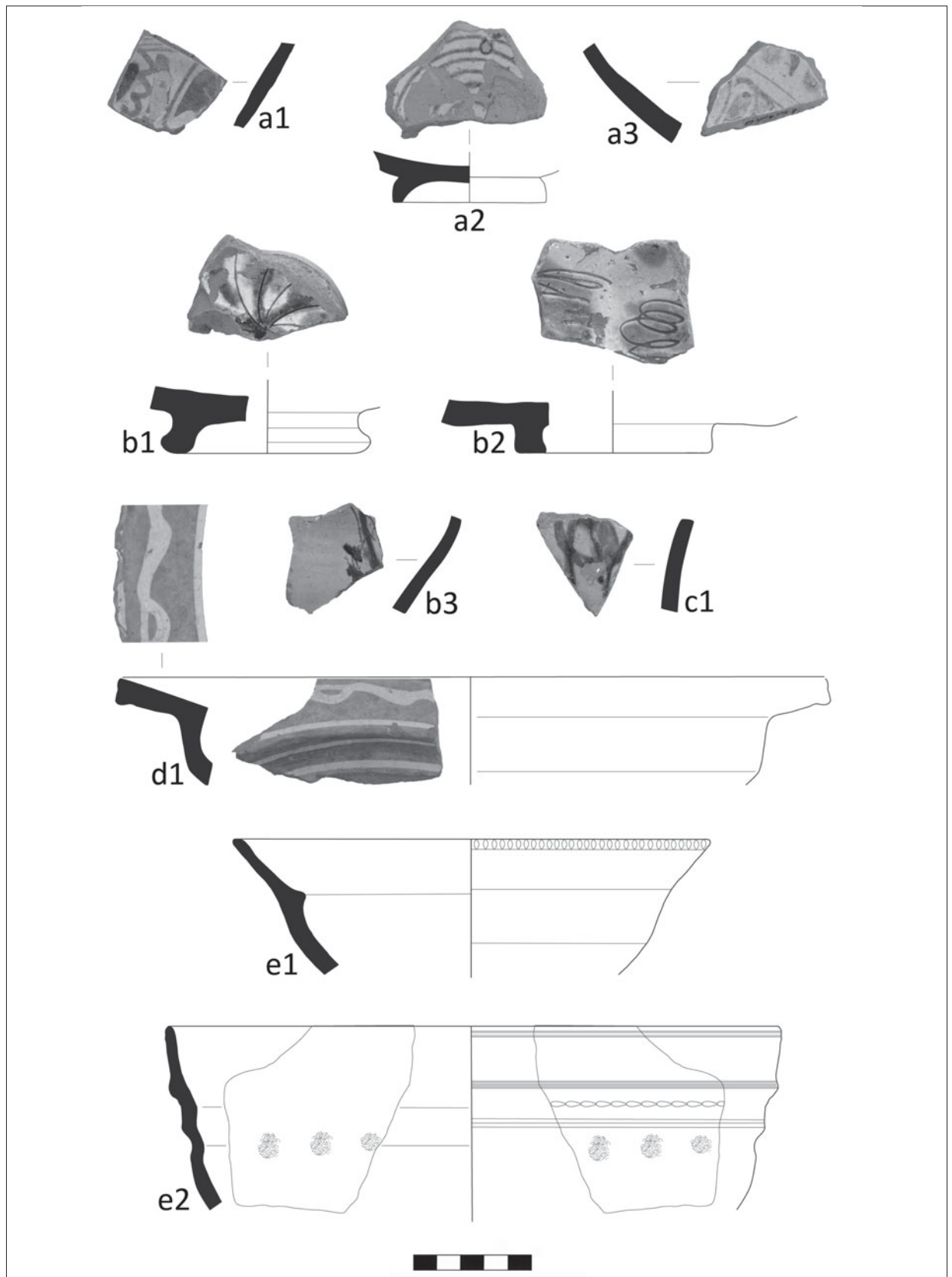
158. Three-dimensional reconstruction of a 19th-century longhouse of central Greece. © Ancient Cities of Boeotia Project (drawn by C. Piccoli).



159. Chora on Naxos: plan indicating the various quarters: A = Kastro (1207), Venetian quarter; B = Bourgo (1344), Greek (and Armenian?) quarter; C = Evriaki (1566), Jewish quarter; D and E = Nio Chorío (1743 and 1877), quarter of migrants from Crete and Asia Minor; F = jetty (1898); G = Phoundana (1922–1931), quarter of migrants from Smyrna. © A.K. Vionis (redrawn by A.K. Vionis after Kouroupaki et al. 1988: fig. 2).



160. Samples of imported Italian pottery found in Boeotia, central Greece: a1–3: Monochrome Sgraffito Ware; b1–4: Polychrome Sgraffito Ware; c1–3: Maiolica Ware. © A.K. Vionis.



161. Samples of regional and local glazed pottery found in Boeotia, central Greece: a1–3: Pseudo-Maiolica Ware; b1–3: Brown and Green Sgraffito Ware; c1: Painted Ware; d1: Late Slip-Painted Ware; e1–2: Monochrome Glazed Ware. © A.K. Vionis.

groups formed a number of quarters (for example, Greeks in the neighbourhood of Bourgo, Jews in Evriaki and migrants from Asia Minor and Crete in Nio Chorio: Kouroupaki *et al.* 1988). In addition to the need to house newcomers and their commercial activities in what was an economically developing city from the 18th century onwards, Chora's layout also reflects the desire of different populations to reside in specific areas according to their religious belief, language and/or ethnic background (Vionis 2003).

The pottery assemblages collected from surveyed and excavated Ottoman-period sites in Greece include a variety of shapes, such as large storage vessels, cooking pots, medium-sized transport/storage jars and small serving jugs (*ibrik* type). Decorated table wares consist mainly of plain glazed jugs and large painted dishes with broad everted rims. Pottery produced locally during the Ottoman period noticeably does not have the refinement of shape and decoration that characterizes ceramics of the Medieval era (13th to 15th century). With the exception of the more sophisticated tin-glazed imported wares from Italy (Maiolica from Faenza, Deruta and Montelupo) and Turkey (İznik Ware) (Fig. 160), or their local imitations (Pseudo-Maiolica Ware from Athens), the great majority of post-Medieval local glazed pottery is rather thick with careless broad *sgraffito* or painted designs (Fig. 161; Frantz 1942; Charitonidou 1982; Aslanapa *et al.* 1989; Hahn 1991; Hayes 1992; Armstrong 1993; Korre-Zographou 1995; Poole 1997; Vroom 2003; Vionis 2012; 2016; MacKay 2015). Most notable, however, is the greater quantity of glazed wares against unglazed/domestic wares found at urban and rural Greek sites of the Ottoman period.

In recent years, there has been a growing interest in the study of table wares, social habits and domestic daily life of the Ottoman provinces, conducted in a bottom-up approach (Faroqhi 1986; Anastasopoulos 2012; Vionis 2012; Sariyannis 2014). Interestingly, one can identify two distinct trends of daily and dining habits in Ottoman Greece through the examination of material culture and textual and visual sources. The first relates to an 'eastern' lifestyle choice made by both the Greek elite and the peasantry; this is the preference to dine at a low table whilst sitting on the floor and to eat from a large communal copper tray, as reported by Edward Clarke (1812/1816) and Edward Dodwell (1819) on the occasions of their visits to Levadeia in Boeotia and Chrisso in Phocis. The second relates to a 'western' trend, which can be identified in those Ottoman-dominated areas with a stronger western presence, such as Crete, the Ionian islands and the Cyclades. The material culture record and pictorial evidence (such as religious icons depicting meals) illustrate individual cutlery and plates, glass wine jugs and drinking glasses, with diners seated on carved stools or even chairs/armchairs around a high table (Fig. 162); this suggests a separation of household activities with a dedicated space for dining (Vionis 2012).



162. 'The Last Supper' (detail): icon, early to middle 18th century, Monastery of Saint Ioannis, Paros. © A.K. Vionis.

Ottoman monuments in Greece (Elias Kolovos)

The fate (and in many cases the destruction) of Ottoman monuments in Greece since 1830 has been studied only recently, for example by the architect Aimilia Stefanidou in her short introduction to a volume containing success stories of protection and restoration (Stefanidou 2009; *cf.* Samara 2016). Almost simultaneously, a selection of similar success stories regarding no fewer than 191 Ottoman monuments in Greece was published by the Directorate of Byzantine and Post-Byzantine Antiquities of the Hellenic Ministry of

Culture, with the collaboration of the staff of the archaeological ephorates that were involved in the protection and restoration of these monuments (Brouskari 2008, including an extensive bibliography on the Ottoman monuments of Greece). Yet, across Greece there are still far too many Ottoman monuments, in many cases in ruins, waiting to be studied, protected and restored (Lowry 2009). Even a cursory following of the Facebook group *Ottoman Monuments in Greece*, where members upload photos and stories of extant or lost Ottoman monuments, reveals such structures spread right across Greece. They remain only partially recorded and catalogued, despite the efforts of the archaeological ephorates: this is a Herculean task!

In 2004, the Institute for Mediterranean Studies, FO.R.T.H., initiated a project to locate and catalogue the Ottoman monuments of the island of Crete; the records have been published and updated online in a preliminary catalogue (Kolovos 2005; <http://digitalcrete.ims.forth.gr/>; see also Kolovos 2008 and 2011 for the Ottoman monuments of Rethymno and Chania respectively; Kolovos 2015b for an overview of the politics of destruction and protection, and a critical approach to the relevant bibliography). Fifteen years later, new discoveries are still being made (such as Ottoman inscriptions), through reports from people across Crete, and the catalogue is, of course, incomplete. In this respect, Ottoman archaeology in Greece is an open-ended field of research.

Nonetheless, some Ottoman monuments in Greece have been studied in more detail in recent years. Machiel Kiel, the pioneer of the study of Ottoman architecture in the Balkans, has produced an authoritative study of the Fethiye Mosque (‘Mosque of the Conquest’) in Athens (Kiel 2002; Kiel’s excellent photographic archive, initiated in 1959, can be found online at <http://www.nit-istanbul.org/kielarchive/index.php>). Kiel has demonstrated that the mosque was not a foundation of Sultan Mehmed the Conqueror, but was actually built and named to commemorate the conquest of Crete by the Ottomans in 1669. The Fethiye Mosque has been recently restored by the Greek Archaeological Service and is open to visitors, with access via the Roman Agora of Athens. A selection of Kiel’s important, short studies on various Greek urban centres and their Ottoman monuments has been translated into Greek and recently published (Markou 2015).

The Greek architect Eleni Kanetaki has studied the Ottoman baths (*hammams*) of Greece, including their typologies and morphologies. Kanetaki’s (2004) book is a meticulous inventory of this type of semi-religious/semi-secular building, examples of which exist across modern Greece, although she does not make extensive use of the Ottoman sources. Kanetaki’s subsequent collaboration with the Ottoman historian Seyyed Mohammad Taghi Shariat-Panahi has resulted in a more comprehensive study of the Ottoman monuments of Corinthia (Kanetaki 2015). Another successful collaboration between an Ottomanist and a Greek architect is that of Kiel with Dimitris Karydis. This produced an exemplary study – based on the amalgamation of Ottoman archival knowledge and an understanding of the history of urban planning and architecture – on the urban development of the island of Lesbos/Mytilene between the 15th and 19th centuries, with particular reference made to the Ottoman monuments of the island (Karydis and Kiel 2000).

Architects, as is to be expected, are especially active in the study of the Ottoman monuments of Greece, and in this review the pioneer papers by the well-respected architect Argyris Petronotis on the Ottoman monuments of Naupaktos (Ottoman İnebahti) and Arcadia cannot be overlooked (Petronotis 1992–1993; 1999, in collaboration with the Ottomanist Dimitris Loupis). Two books designed for a general audience by the Turkish writer Neval Konuk (2008; 2010), on the Ottoman monuments of the Greek islands of the eastern Aegean and those of northern Greece and Thessaly, include useful references to Ottoman documentation. In the same category is a more recent publication by the Egyptian scholar Ahmed Ameen on the Ottoman mosques of Greece; Ameen emphasizes the ‘Islamic’ character of these monuments, rather than their ‘Ottomanness’ (Ameen 2017). This approach should be read in parallel with the very informative research output of the Byzantine archaeologist Georgios Pallis on the topography of Attica under the Ottomans, with a particular focus on the Ottoman monuments (Pallis 2006; 2007; see also his research on the area of Mendenitsa [Ottoman Modoniç] in central Greece: Pallis 2014). Finally, a very recent book by the Greek architect Paschalis Androudīs on the Early Ottoman art and architecture of Greece has yet to be fully absorbed by the academic community (Androudīs 2018).

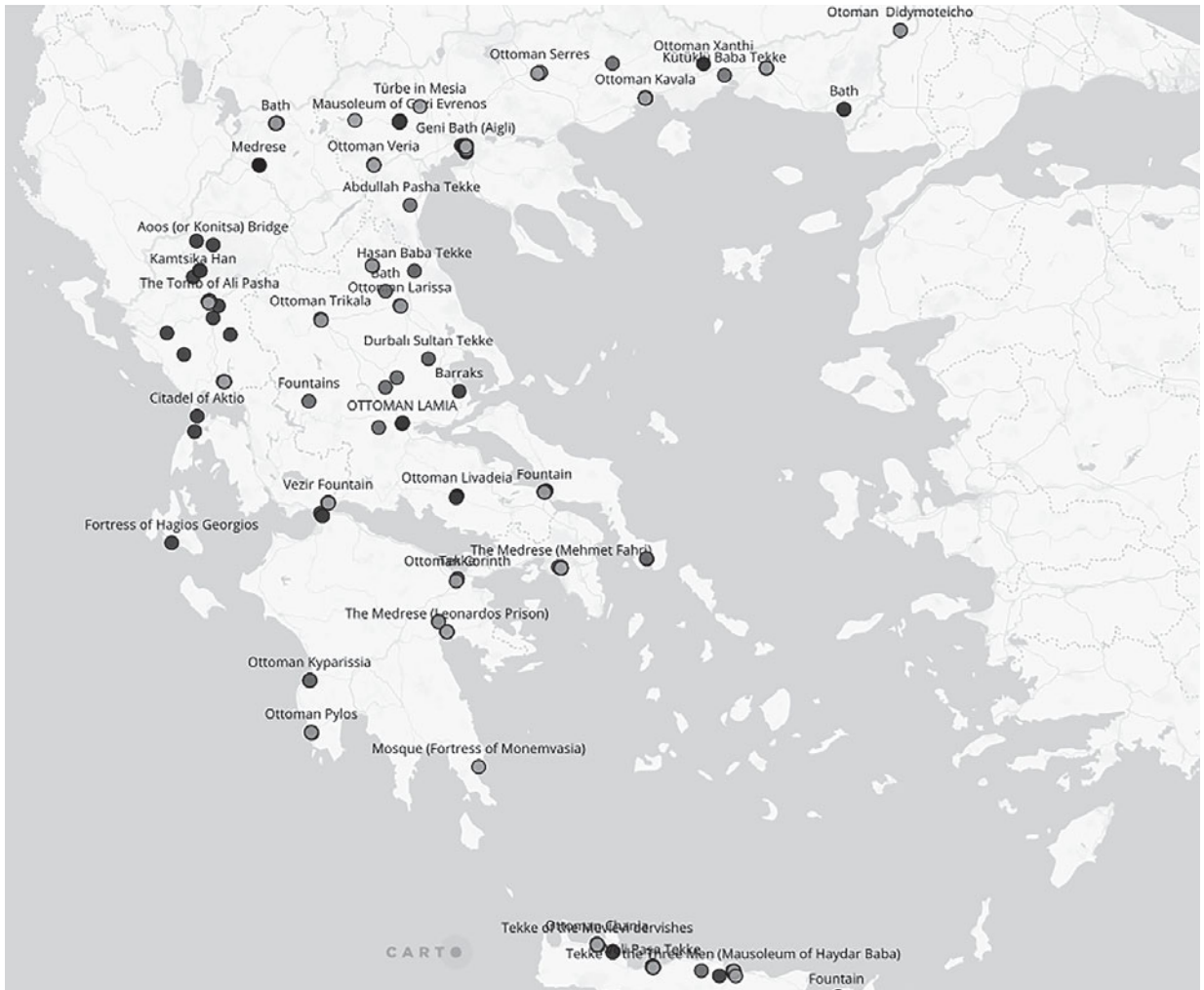
Ottoman inscriptions, produced for monuments and, in particular, gravestones of the Muslim cemeteries of Greece, are found in countless numbers in the depots of the Greek archaeological ephorates. Several specialized Ottomanists and epigraphists have started studying these inscriptions in recent years. Georgios Liakopoulos has published a book on the Ottoman inscriptions from Larissa (Ottoman Yenişehir), including descriptions, transliterations and translations (Liakopoulos and Palioungkas 2013). He has also published three papers presenting in detail 53 Ottoman inscriptions from the town of Chalkis (Ottoman Ağrıboz) (Liakopoulos 2011), a few Ottoman inscriptions from Ypati (Ottoman Bardacık) (Liakopoulos 2012) and a few examples from Messenia (Liakopoulos 2014). Antonis Anastasopoulos has recorded more than 330 Islamic gravestones from Ottoman Rethymno and has compiled an online catalogue, including transliterations and translations of the inscriptions (<http://digitalcrete.ims.forth.gr/>; see also Anastasopoulos 2008; Anastasopoulos *et al.* 2015). Another Greek scholar who has been involved in the publication of the Ottoman inscriptions of Greece is Dimitris Loupis, with a long paper on the Ottoman inscriptions of Almyros (Ottoman Ermiye) (Loupis 2007).

The issue of the impact of the Tanzimat reforms on the various urban centres of northern and mainland Greece, as well as their echoes in the immediate post-Ottoman years, has attracted the attention of urban and architectural historians (Yerolympos 1996). Vassilis Kolonas has offered a systematic study of the urban transformation of Late Ottoman Salonica and its emblematic architectural eclecticism, which is still an integral feature of Salonica's modern cityscape (Kolonas 2005). More recently (2016), Kolonas has also published a beautiful book on the expansion of Salonica beyond its city walls during the Late Ottoman years, based on extensive use of Ottoman archives, illustrations and maps.

These recent scholarly outputs reflect the emergence and gradual establishment of Ottoman studies within Greek academia, a trend that runs parallel with the broader expansion of the fields of Ottoman architecture and archaeology on an international level. The facilitation of archival research and the critical methodologies that this trend has brought to these fields should not overshadow the work of earlier Greek scholars – mainly Byzantinists – who, despite the methodological limitations of their times, recognized the need for scholarly study of the Ottoman monuments of Greece (Xyggopoulos 1929; Travlos 1960; 2005).

Finally, a new research project (*Histories, Spaces and Heritages at the Transition from the Ottoman Empire to the Greek State*), hosted by the Ecole française d'Athènes (EfA), thanks to the open-mindedness of its director, Alexandre Farnoux, aims to explore the historical trajectories of urban space from the time of the Ottoman Empire to that of the modern Greek State (Fig. 163; see <https://otheritages.efa.gr/>). It has already resulted in a paper by Kalliopi Amygdalou and Elias Kolovos on the interesting transformation, during the Greek Revolution, of an Ottoman mosque at Nauplion into the first Greek parliament building (Amygdalou and Kolovos 2017). A novel aspect of this project is that the histories and/or 'stories' of shifting urban spaces are studied in their *intersensorial* dimension. From this point of view, Eleni Kallimopoulou and Panagiotis C. Poulos have explored in a fascinating paper the temporal settlement of Turkish migrants from Anatolia in the mosques of Salonica after the exchange of populations in 1924 (Kallimopoulou and Poulos 2015). Another member of the *Histories, Spaces and Heritages* project, Faidon Moudopoulos-Athanasiou, has recently explored the methodology of research focused on the Ottoman past of Greece (including the case study of Zagori, Epirus), especially when local narratives and local communities are involved in the shaping of research questions (Moudopoulos-Athanasiou 2018). The project organized a conference in June 2019 at the EfA under the title *Ottoman Monuments in Greece: Heritages under Negotiation*, where new research in the field of the Ottoman archaeology of Greece was presented.

Over the course of the past 20 years, Ottoman archaeology in Greece has been developing slowly, but still as a rather marginal field, or as a sideline to the principal archaeological priorities. However, the bulk of the Ottoman material found *in situ* requires a more detailed approach, with regards to both artefacts and monuments. Hopefully, the emergence of Ottomanists in Greece and their fruitful collaborations with the archaeological ephorates and foreign schools will soon produce more studies in this extremely promising research field.



163. Screenshot of map of the Ottoman monuments of Greece (work in progress). © Samia Samara and Otheritages.

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