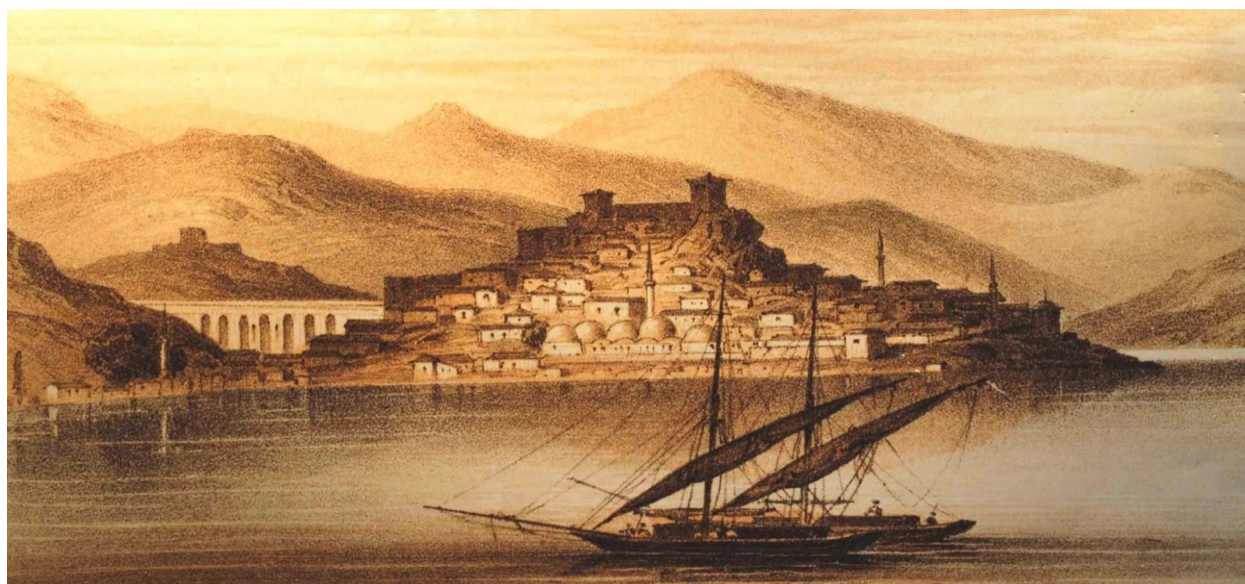


Cultural Sustainable Tourism (CST) - 5th Edition
Online International Conference, 21/23 June 2023

A historical, cultural and religious experience of the city of Kavala

Stratos Karakitsos, PhD Candidate, School of Theology, Aristotle university, Thessaloniki

Brief Presentation



Αριστοτέλειο Πανεπιστήμιο
Θεσσαλονίκης



This research has been co-financed by the European Regional Development Fund of the European Union and Greek national funds through the Operational Program Competitiveness, Entrepreneurship, and Innovation, under the call RESEARCH CREATE—INNOVATE (project code: T2ΕΔΚ-02564).

Intro

The history of the city of and the region around Kavala is long, with the first traces of human presence in the area being dated back to prehistoric times. The city was initially called Neapolis and later on Christoupolis. At the end of the fourteenth century, the settlement was conquered by the Ottomans and, in the late 16th century, was named Kavala. The city's development started at the beginning of the 16th century, with large infrastructure projects being implemented and organized population settlements taking place. The city expanded beyond the Panagia peninsula and the walls in the early years of the 16th century. The monuments we are interested in were constructed between the early 16th and the late 19th century, when it stops due to the 1923 Treaty of Lausanne, which was followed by population exchanges that led to the disappearance of the Muslim presence and influence from the city and the broader region. Among the historic Muslim monuments we recorded – all belonging to the Ottoman period – approximately twenty-five are found in the city of Kavala and fifty in the prefecture.

ICE Project research

The project's recorded surviving Ottoman-Muslim monuments of the city, which exist either after restoration or in non-preserved form, are the following: Muhammad Ali kulliye or Imaret; Muhammad Ali house; Ibrahim Pasha mosque and hammam; Hadji Ali Pasha medrese; Halil Bey mosque and medrese; Kadi Ahmet Efendi mosque; İç Kale mescit; Hadji Ahmet Bey medrese; Ibrahim Pasha hammam, the hammam in the Kadi Ahmet Efendi district. The non-existing anymore monuments of the city are the following: Hussein Bey Mosque and medrese; Ali bin Ağus mosque; Ishak Bey mosque or Hamidiye mosque; Küçük Mahala mosque; Selimiye or Depo mosque; Tosun Bey or Yeni Mahala mosque; Kadi Ahmed Efendi mescit; Zeyneb Hâtun turbe; Ibrahim Ağa turbe; tekke-mosque at the port; tekke in Halil Bey district; tekke in the Kadi Ahmet Efendi district; and all the remaining parts of the Ibrahim Pasha kulliye, such as medrese, mekteb. The non-existing anymore monuments in the prefecture of Kavala comprise: twenty-one mosques; five tekke; four medrese and four mescit; three hammams; two turbe; one mekteb; one zaviye; and many cemeteries.

In this brief presentation we will not analyse all of the monuments. We will just mention the restored monuments and then the surviving monuments that are suitable for restoration and cultural heritage enrichment.

RESTORED MONUMENTS

Imaret



The main Ottoman, Muslim monument that has been fully restored, with a series of works approved by the KAS of the Ministry of Culture, is Muhammad Ali's kulliye, known as Imaret, which has an area of about 4,200 sq.m. and is strategically located on the Panagia peninsula just above the harbor. Its entrance is at Theodorou Poulidou Street, 6. The restoration of the complex started in early 2000, lasted four years and since then Imaret has been operating as a boutique hotel. The kulliye was founded by Muhammad Ali Pasha and its construction period lasted from 1808-1810 to 1821. It provided accommodation and food for students and gave meals to travelers, residents and the needy, regardless of their origin. It included two medrese, one of which was to be a school of engineering (mühendishâne), two mekteb, a mescit-dershane, a kitchen, dormitories for the students and rooms for the teachers, a hammam, fountains for washing, etc. It functioned as an institution of elementary and higher education, religious and secular. It ceased to function at the beginning of the 20th century. There were plans for restoration throughout the previous century but they did not come to fruition. In 1954 it was listed as protected building. From the Treaty of Lausanne until the 1960s it housed refugees and until its restoration the premises were used for multiple uses by private individuals. During the restoration attention and effort was dedicated to revive the spirit and atmosphere of the institution. Reconstructions were avoided and importance was given to preserving the original form and layout of the complex. As for its services, apart from the high level of services provided to the hotel's residents, guests can attend a guided tour, thanks to which they can walk around the premises of the monument-hotel and learn about its history.

Muhammad Ali House



The second restored monument is Mohammad Ali's House. The restoration of the house was carried out according to the same philosophy as the kulliye, by the IMARET company at the same time as the Imaret. The house is a mansion of the second half of the 18th century. It is located on the north side of the homonymous square, near the edge of the peninsula of the Panagia district. It is two-storey, built with stone and sil beams between the layers and surrounded on three sides by a lush garden. The ground floor was a hayat, i.e. the family's daily work place and stable, and the second floor consisted of rooms for the women's quarters (harem) and the men's quarters (selamlık). There is also a small, private hammam. The house accomodates the offices (headquarters) of the MOHA Research Centre and supports education and research; it hosts exhibitions, holds cultural activities and organizes educational programs. It functions as a museum and a book and souvenir shop operates on the premises. Finally, in the gardens of the House we find the ornate, marble cenotaph of Muhammad Ali's mother, Zeyneb Hâtun, while across the street from the House, in the center of Mehmed Ali square, designed by the architect of the court of King Fuat, Ernesto Verucci Bey, stands the bronze statue of the equestrian Mohamed Ali, created by the sculptor Konstantinos Dimitriadis and funded by the Greek community of Cairo. The statue was unveiled in 1949.

Halil Bey Mosque and Medrese



The third monument, which completes the triad of restored and accessible monuments in the Panagia district, is the Halil Bey kulliye, which is located on the plateau between Mehmet Ali and Anthemiou streets. It is essentially the mosque and the medrese of Halil Bey. In its present form, the mosque was built around 1900 on top of the previous mescitmosque, which we assume was built in the early 16th century and for which we have no description. In its courtyard, the building of the medrese is preserved, which was probably built on the same site as the primary one, which was already functioning in the middle of the 17th. Next to the mosque still stands the base of the minaret. The modern name of the mosque as the Mosque of Music comes from the 1930s-1940s, when the Municipality's Philharmonic Orchestra was housed there. In 2002, it was declared a historical monument and restoration began. The mosque has been transformed into a multi-activity area and is open to visitors. The cultural association of the district of Panagia 'The Castle' is based in the building of the medrese.

NON-RESTORED

İç Kale mescit



İç Kale mescit i.e. the mosque of the Acropolis, is recorded in the description of the city of Kavala by the traveler Evliya Çelebi in 1667 AD. It is built of stone and is located in the inner enclosure of the most fortified position of the fortress. Its function was probably related to the needs of the Muslim administration. We do not know when it was built, but if we assume that the needs of the officers were served by the first mescit-mosque built on the peninsula just below the Acropolis, that of Halil Bey, then we can assume that it must not have been constructed before about the first half of the 16th century. Also, it cannot have been built in the second half of the 17th century, since there is the testimony of Evliya Çelebi. Therefore, its foundation may be between the mid-16th and mid-17th century. The Acropolis is open to visitors and most parts of the fortress have been restored, but its premises are used for multiple cultural uses.

Hamмам of the district of Kadi Ahmed Efendi



We do not know when the hammam of the district of Kadi Ahmed Efendi was built. Judging by its location, we assume that it belonged to the kulliye of the same name. If this is the case, it may have been founded before 1704 together with the Kadi mosque. It is possible that it was built later. It is located on the peninsula of Panagia, at Anthemiou Street, 12 today. It is seen in a private garden, surrounded by houses and is located between the Halil Bey complex and the mosque of Kadi Ahmed Efendi. As oral accounts attest, there was a medrese or mekteb in close proximity to it. We do not know whether it was a public bath or was intended for use only by students. The building is very small and half-ruined. On one side of the rectangular roof we can see a small brick dome, which has in fact been patched with tiles and cement. The remaining, restored and visited baths in the same district are those of Mohammed Ali's House and Imaret. We know of the existence of two more baths in the district of Panagia: the first was located at the junction of Gravias and Th. Poulidou streets, was Ottoman and was probably replaced at the beginning of the last century by apartment buildings and shops; the second one was located in Messologiu Street, was built in the early 1930s and operated until the 1960s.

To conclude:

The existing cultural and religious tour of the city therefore includes the Imaret, Mohammed Ali's House and the so-called Mosque of Music with the medrese. The latter, through its successive uses, as well as its latest use as a cultural venue and museum, gives life to the monument and makes it worth a visit. Mohammed Ali's House, with its surrounding historical landmarks, its own gardens, the cenotaph of his mother, Zeyneb Hâtun, his bronze statue, where he returns home on horseback in peace, putting his sword in its scabbard, and the square itself, bear witness to rich aspects of the city's history. In addition, the fact that House is open to visitors as a museum and is also the seat of an institution with a scientific interest that promotes research in multiple fields, testify to an organised effort to highlight the monument, which offers multiple benefits in the field of culture. Finally, thanks to its preservation and aesthetic restoration, Imaret is a living cell of the history of the place, linking the 'before' and the apparently 'other' with the 'now' and the 'us'. Its cultural value goes beyond the narrow context of the city and even of the country itself, since its history and that of its founder have influenced and marked an entire era and a region defined by Greece, Egypt and Turkey, the core of the Eastern Mediterranean. Adding the two non-restored monuments that we mentioned before in our list, the İç Kale mescit and the hammam of the district of Kadi Ahmed Efendi obviously will enrich the cultural and religious tour of the city. Also, Kavala misses a restored hammam since the old hammams do not exist anymore, apart from the private one in Imaret hotel and the other one in Muhammad Ali Museum which is part of the museum- and giving life to the mescit which is located inside the Acropolis of the city will be a wonderful experience for the visitors. We know that the restoration issue is mainly political so we cannot “push” for it but least we can do is mentioning it. Finally, even without restoration, these two monuments have to be added in the tours since they will add a layer of education to the visitor regarding the awareness of the multicultural and rich history of the city.

Thank you everyone!



