

The Historical Review/La Revue Historique

Vol 4 (2007)

Vol 4, No (2007)



The Topography of the Athenian Plain under Ottoman Rule (1456-1821)

Georgios Pallis

doi: [10.12681/hr.208](https://doi.org/10.12681/hr.208)

To cite this article:

Pallis, G. (2008). The Topography of the Athenian Plain under Ottoman Rule (1456-1821). *The Historical Review/La Revue Historique*, 4, 33-55. <https://doi.org/10.12681/hr.208>

THE TOPOGRAPHY OF THE ATHENIAN PLAIN UNDER
OTTOMAN RULE (1456-1821)

Georgios Pallis

ABSTRACT: The settlements that developed in the Athenian plain under Ottoman rule are the subject of the following paper. According to the written sources and the surviving monuments, 25 villages and 14 monasteries were spread throughout the area. After a remarkable period of prosperity in the sixteenth century, most of them fell into a continuous state of decline, until the end of the Ottoman era. The history and the organisation of these settlements, the road network that connected them and domestic and church architecture are put under investigation, in order to reconstruct as much as possible the map and the picture of the area during this long period.

The medieval topography of the plain that surrounds Athens has attracted little scientific attention until today, despite its vital significance for the city. A few studies deal with the habitations of Attica during the Byzantine era¹ and the period of Frankish occupation,² while there is less interest in the years under Ottoman rule (1456-1821).³ The state of the Athenian plain during this late

¹ R. Janin, *Les églises et les monastères des grands centres byzantins (Bithynie, Hellespont, Latros, Galèsios, Trébizonde, Athènes, Thessalonique)*, Paris 1975, pp. 298-340; E. Granstrem, I. Medvedev and D. Papachryssanthou, "Fragment d'un Praktikon de la région d'Athènes", *Revue des Études Byzantines* 34 (1976), pp. 5-44; J. Koder and Fr. Hild, *Hellas und Thessalia. Tabula Imperii Byzantini*, Vol. I, Vienna 1976, *passim*; J. Koder, "Der Schutzbrief des Papstes Innozenz III. für die Kirche Athens", *Jahrbuch des Österreichischen Byzantinistik* 26 (1977), pp. 129-141; E. Gini-Tsofopoulou, "Μεσοβυζαντινή περίοδος (9ος-12ος αι.)" [The middle Byzantine period (9th-12th centuries)], in *Μεσογαία. Ιστορία και πολιτισμός των Μεσογαίων Αττικής* [Mesogaia: history and civilisation of Mesogaia of Attica], Athens 2001, pp. 166-181.

² M. K. Langdon, "The Mortared Towers of Central Greece: An Attic Supplement", *The Annual of the British School at Athens* 90 (1995), pp. 475-503, pl. 50-57; E. Gini-Tsofopoulou, "Υστεροβυζαντινή περίοδος (13ος-15ος αι.)" [The late Byzantine period (13th-15th centuries)], in *Μεσογαία*, pp. 182-197.

³ M. Kiel, "Population Growth and Food Production in 16th Century Athens and Attica According to the Ottoman Tahrir Defters", *Varia Turcica* IV (1985), pp. 115-133; E. Gini-Tsofopoulou, "Μεταβυζαντινοί χρόνοι - περίοδος Τουρκοκρατίας (1456-1821)" [The post-Byzantine era – the period of Turkish occupation (1456-1821)], in *Μεσογαία*, pp. 198-221.

period was the subject of the author's dissertation⁴ and its basic points are condensed in this article. The main object was to identify the settlements that existed here, which have now disappeared as a result of the expansion of modern Athens. The road network that connected the sites and the topographic attribution of the numerous extant post-Byzantine churches and chapels to villages' territories were also studied. The search was based on the written sources of this period, primarily notarial acts and travellers' texts, and on field work, which centred on the investigation of sites and monuments.

The Athenian plain is bordered by Mounts Aigaleo, Poikilon, Parnes, Pentelikon and Hymettus and the coastline of the Saronic Gulf (fig. 1). Dense forests covered some of these mountains in the Ottoman era. The northern part of the coastline includes natural harbours, Piraeus being the largest and the safest among them. The River Cephissus [Kifissos], which runs through the plain, rises from the slopes of Parnes and Pentelikon and collects the water of numerous streams and rivulets. During this period the river never reached the sea, because it was exhausted in the irrigation of the great Athenian olive grove.

After the taking of Athens by the Ottoman Turks in 1456, the city became the seat of a *kazas* (province) that included the greater part of Attica and belonged to the *sanjak* (prefecture) of Evripos (modern Chalkis).⁵ The *kazas* of Athens was divided in four districts, and the Athenian plain was found in the boundaries of two of them, that of the city and the so-called *Katadema*, to the north.⁶ The Athenians were granted privileges, the most important among which was the right to elect their elders, who conducted the affairs of the Christian community.⁷ The surrounding villages took part in the election, but they also had their own heads, called *protogeroi* or *gerontes*.

⁴ The dissertation was approved in 2007 by the Department of Archaeology of the School of Philosophy of Athens University. For their constant support and help, I wish to express my warm thanks to my supervisors, Professor M. Constantoudaki-Kitromilides and Assistant Professor E. Deligianni-Dori of the Department of Archaeology of Athens University, and Professor D. Karydis of the National Technical University, Department of Urban Planning. I also thank Vassilis Zoumbos, civil engineer and my colleague at the 24th Ephorate of Byzantine Antiquities, for his comments on the English translation of the present text. (Unless otherwise stated, photographs in this article are the author's own).

⁵ I. G. Giannopoulos, *Η διοικητική οργάνωσις της Στερεάς Ελλάδος κατά την Τουρκοκρατίαν (1393-1821)* [The administrative organisation of Sterea Hellas during the Turkish occupation (1393-1821)], Athens 1971, p. 116.

⁶ P. F. Christopoulos, "Δέμα και Κατάδεμα" [Dema and Katadema], *Πρακτικά Β' Συμποσίου ιστορίας λαογραφίας Βόρειας-Δυτικής Αττικής* [Proceedings of the 2nd symposium of history and folklore of north and west Attica], Aspropyrgos 1992, pp. 465-477.

⁷ Th. N. Philadelphus, *Ιστορία των Αθηνών επί Τουρκοκρατίας. Από του 1400 μέχρι του 1800* [History of Athens during the Turkish occupation: from 1400 to 1800], Vol. I, Athens 1902, pp. 241-252.



Fig. 1. The Athenian plain with villages and sites marked on it, by William Leake.
 W. M. Leake, *The Topography of Athens and the Demi*, London 1841.

The majority of the inhabitants of the plain were Christians of Albanian origin, who settled in the area after successive colonisations, from the end of the 14th century until 1778.⁸ The peasants were bilingual, speaking an Albanian idiom and Greek, given that the Greek language was spoken in trade, by the local government, the church and the native Greeks. The economy⁹ was rural, and olive oil was the main product of the region. The land was divided into small holdings of the peasantry and big holdings under the ownership of a few Turks and Greeks and the clergy. Considerable parts of the rural population were villeins living and working in the estates of these landowners. Cattle-raising was another productive activity, as was bee-keeping, which was under the control of the big monasteries.

Ottoman tax registers¹⁰ prove that the Athenian plain and the whole of Attica experienced a period of prosperity during the sixteenth century, when the number of inhabitants and the local economy reached their peak. However, as a consequence of the land's incapability to satisfy the needs of the increasing population, as well as the changes in administration and the general deterioration of living conditions, a large portion of the rural population lost their property and moved to neighbouring provinces.¹¹ By the mid-seventeenth century many settlements had lost more than half of their inhabitants – some of them were almost deserted – and they never managed to recover.¹² The conditions became worse during the tyranny of Hadji Ali Chasekis (1774-1795),¹³ under whom the peasantry and the Athenians suffered days of tough depression and some of them fled from Attica. The Ottoman rule of the region

⁸ K. H. Biris, *Αρβανίτες, οι Δωριείς του νεωτέρου ελληνισμού. Ιστορία των Ελλήνων Αρβανιτών* [Arvanites, the Dorians of modern Hellenism: history of the Greek Arvanites], Athens 1960, pp. 90, 219-240.

⁹ The economic and social history of Athens and its countryside under the Ottomans is critically described in detail in the unpublished dissertation of D. Karydis, *Πολοδομικά των Αθηνών της Τουρκοκρατίας* [Urban planning of Athens during the Turkish occupation], Athens 1980, pp. 107-200.

¹⁰ Kiel, "Population Growth", pp. 115-133.

¹¹ Kiel, "Population Growth", pp. 120-122; Karydis, *Πολοδομικά των Αθηνών*, pp. 129-132.

¹² See the settlements catalogue of 1676, after Spon and Wheler (*Voyage d'Italie, de Dalmatie, de Grèce et du Levant, fait aux années 1675 et 1676 par Jacob Spon docteur medecin aggregé à Lyon, & George Wheler gentilhomme anglois*, Vol. II, Lyon 1678, pp. 248-250).

¹³ Philadelphus, *Ιστορία των Αθηνών*, Vol. II, pp. 124-176; D. Gr. Kambouroglou, *Αι Αθήναι κατά τα έτη 1775-1795* [Athens during the years 1775-1795], Athens 1931.



Fig. 2. Panaghia Kouloudrou, one of the surviving monuments in the territory of the settlement of Levi, and a placename itself.

ended with the outbreak of the Greek Revolution in April of 1821, when the villagers invaded Athens.

According to research, 25 settlements and 14 monasteries¹⁴ were dispersed in the Athenian plain during this period. In this paper they are examined per routes corresponding to central roads of that time or geographic unities, considering Athens as the starting point, in order to give a clear picture of the topography of the area. The bibliography on the post-Byzantine monuments which is given in this text includes the basic titles.

The first route runs north, following the road to Chassia, and in the beginning includes the area between this road and the Cephissus. Sepolia, the first village after Athens, was full of gardens and it probably existed before the Ottoman conquest.¹⁵ Next, between Sepolia and Kamatero, there were four settlements that belonged to private estates and bear the names of their ancient

¹⁴ Each monastery is estimated as a small settlement of monks and peasants who work and live in the monastic property.

¹⁵ According to a reference in the so-called *Θρήνος των Αθηνών* [The lament of Athens], a poem concerning a seize of Athens dated to 1396 (Philadelphus, *Ιστορία των Αθηνών*, Vol. I, p. 136) or to the Ottoman conquest of the city (Sp. P. Lambros, *Μεικταί σελίδες* [Mixed pages], Athens 1905, pp. 525-530).

landowners: Levi,¹⁶ at the site of modern Treis Gefyres (fig. 2); Dervischagou,¹⁷ on the left shore of the river, modern day Anakassa; Dragoumano,¹⁸ the later Pyrgos Vasilissis; and Tourali,¹⁹ further upstream on the Cephissus. All of them were rural settlements thanks to the adjacent river, which watered the land and moved mills. On the way back to Chassia, the village of Kamatero stood before the entrance to the north-west part of the plain; its foundation is attributed to the first colonisation of Albanian Christians, at the end of the fourteenth century.²⁰ From this point the road continues to the settlement of Liosia, which was founded in the same colonisation,²¹ and reaches Haghios Ioannis Theologos, a small monastery that prospered in the first decades of the nineteenth century.²² Chassia,²³ the largest village in Ottoman Attica according to Leake,²⁴ was located in the first heights of Mount Parnes, on the pass to Thebes and northern Greece – a road of great significance in the Middle Ages.

¹⁶ F. C. H. L. Pouqueville, *Voyage de la Grèce. Avec cartes, vues et figures. Deuxième édition, revue, corrigée et augmentée*, Vol. V, Paris 1827, p. 104; W. Gell, *The Itinerary of Greece Containing One Hundred Routes in Attica, Boetia, Phocis, Locris and Thessaly*, new edition, London 1827, p. 49; D. Sourmelis, *Ἀττικά, ἤτοι περὶ δήμων Ἀττικῆς καὶ περὶ τῶν Ἀθῆνῃσι ἀρχαίων δικαστηρίων καὶ τινῶν ἀρχαίων καταστημάτων* [Attica, that is about the demes of Attica and the ancient lawcourts of Athens and some ancient public institutions], Athens 1862, p. 106.

¹⁷ W. M. Leake, *Travels in Northern Greece*, Vol. II, repr. Amsterdam 1967, p. 417; Gell, *Itinerary of Greece*, p. 105.

¹⁸ Sourmelis, *Ἀττικά*, pp. 105-106; Gell, *Itinerary of Greece*, p. 49.

¹⁹ Leake, *Travels in Northern Greece*, p. 417; Gell, *Itinerary of Greece*, p. 105.

²⁰ Biris, *Αρβανίτες*, p. 90.

²¹ Sp. P. Lambros, “Ἡ ὀνοματολογία τῆς Ἀττικῆς καὶ ἡ εἰς τὴν χώραν ἐποικίησις τῶν Ἀλβανῶν” [The onomatology of Attica and the colonisation of the country by the Albanians], *Φιλολογικὸς Σύλλογος Παρνασσός, Ἐπετηρίς* 1 (1896), p. 184; I. Sarris, “Τοπωνύμια τῆς Ἀττικῆς” [Placenames of Attica], *Ἀθηνά* 40 (1928), p. 155; Biris, *Αρβανίτες*, p. 90; *id.*, *Αἱ τοπωνυμῖαι τῆς πόλεως καὶ τῶν περιχώρων τῶν Ἀθηνῶν* [The placenames of the city and the surroundings of Athens], Athens 1971, p. 62.

²² D. Gr. Kambouroglou, *Ἱστορία τῶν Ἀθηναίων. Τουρκοκρατία, περίοδος πρώτη, 1458-1687* [History of the Athenians: the Turkish occupation, first period, 1458-1687], Vol. II, Athens 1890, p. 260; A. K. Orlandos, *Μεσαιωνικά μνημεῖα τῆς πεδιάδος τῶν Ἀθηνῶν καὶ τῶν κλιτύων Ὑμηττοῦ-Πεντελικοῦ-Πάρνηθος καὶ Αἰγάλεω* [Medieval monuments of the plain of Athens and the slopes of Hymettus-Pentelikon-Parnes and Aigaleon], Vol. III of *Εὐρετήριον τῶν Μεσαιωνικῶν Μνημείων τῆς Ἑλλάδος* [Catalogue of the medieval monuments of Greece], Athens 1933, p. 213; D. G. Giotas, *Παλιὰ μοναστήρια τῆς Πάρνηθος* [Old monasteries of Parnes], Phylli 2004, pp. 129-164.

²³ Koder and Hild, *Hellas und Thessalia*, p. 139.

²⁴ W. M. Leake, *The Topography of Athens and the Demi*, London 2nd 1841, p. 124.



Fig. 3. The church of the Dormition in the village of Chassia, a remarkable post-Byzantine three-aisled basilica, in its present state.

It seems that very soon the village acquired the status of *derveni*²⁵ (i.e. guard of the pass), and the privileges connected with this status enabled it to flourish, which is obvious in the numerous extant post-Byzantine churches (fig. 3) at this old mountain settlement.²⁶ Further out on the pass of Chassia can be found the monastery of Kleiston,²⁷ naturally protected in a ravine. It is possibly a post-Byzantine building, but there are also some indications of an earlier date.

²⁵ K. H. Biris, *Τα Αττικά του Εβλιά Τσελεμπή. Αι Αθήναι και τα περίχωρά των κατά τον 17ον αι.* [The Attica of Evliya Tselembi: Athens and its surroundings during the 17th century], Athens 1959, p. 70; *id.*, *Αρβανίτες*, pp. 215-216. The text of the last firman reassuring the privileges in 1817 has been published recently (D. Kallieris, *Στο δρόμο προς την εθνεγερσία. Τα προνόμια του δερβενίου της Χασιάς, ο αγώνας της ανεξαρτησίας και η συμμετοχή των Χασιωτών* [On the way to the national revolt: the privileges of the *derveni* of Chassia, the struggle for independence and the participation of Chassioties], Aspropyrgos 2006, pp. 18-20).

²⁶ Orlandos, *Μεσαιωνικά μνημεία*, pp. 211-213, fig. 283-284; T. Tanoulas, “Οι Άγιοι Ανάργυροι Κολοκύνθη στην Αθήνα” [Haghioi Anargyroi Kolokynti in Athens], *Εκκλησίες στην Ελλάδα μετά την Άλωση 2* (1982), pp. 186, 188, fig. 8-9 and 12.

²⁷ Kambouroglou, *Ίστορία τῶν Ἀθηναίων*, Vol. II, pp. 238-239; *id.*, *Ο Αναδρομάρης της Αττικής* [The Anadromaris of Attica], Athens 1920, pp. 82-83; Orlandos, *Μεσαιωνικά μνημεία*, pp. 210-211, fig. 280-282; Koder and Hild, *Hellas und Thessalia*, pp. 140-141; Giotas, *Παλιά μοναστήρια*, pp. 67-106.



Fig. 4. The monastery of Haghia Triada on the slopes of Mount Parnes, in a photograph taken shortly before 1908. D. Aiginitis, *Το κλίμα της Ελλάδος, Μέρος Β'. Το κλίμα της Αττικής*, Athens 1908, pp. 154-155. Only the katholikon of the monastery exists today.

The group of settlements which was located at the foot of Mount Parnes forms a geographic unity around the village of Menidi. Hobhouse estimated Menidi as the largest country town in Attica;²⁸ in any case, it was an old settlement²⁹ which flourished during this period, partially thanks to the exploitation of Mount Parnes' forests. On the slopes and at the foot of the mountain, going from west to east, were found the monastery of Haghia Triada³⁰ (fig. 4), with a late-Byzantine katholikon, the settlement of Varibobi,³¹ under the big rock of the same name, with a tower,³² Tatoi, in the grounds of the later royal estate, and to the east of this, Liopesi and Bafi. These small semi-mountainous villages were private estates.

²⁸ J. C. Hobhouse, *A Journey through Albania and Other Provinces of Turkey in Europe and Asia, to Constantinople, during the years 1809 and 1810*, Vol. I, London 1833, p. 440.

²⁹ Koder and Hild, *Hellas und Thessalia*, p. 218.

³⁰ Kambouroglou, *Ἱστορία τῶν Ἀθηνάϊων*, Vol. I, Athens 1889, p. 392, Vol. II, pp. 236-238; *id.*, *Μνημεῖα τῆς Ἱστορίας*, Vol. I, Athens 1891, pp. 355-360, Vol. III, Athens 1892, pp. 149-150; *id.*, *Αναδρομὰς της Αττικής*, p. 80; Giotas, *Παλιὰ μοναστήρια*, pp. 19-55.

³¹ A. Kordellas, *Αἱ Ἀθήναι ἐξεταζόμεναι ὑπὸ ὑδραυλικὴν ἔποψιν* [Athens examined under hydraulic view], Athens 1879, p. 127.

³² Langdon, "Mortared Towers", p. 482, note 15.

Three villages on the way from Athens to Koukouvaounes are included in the third route. Patissia, the first of them, with many gardens and the dependency of Haghia Filothei monastery,³³ was distinguished from afar by high cypresses.³⁴ The village of Koukouvaounes (today Metamorphosis), to the north, was located in one of the Cephissus' streams, in which many watermills could be found.³⁵ Arakli was a small settlement to the east of Koukouvaounes, existing today as Herakleion.³⁶

The road to Cephissia [Kifissia] forms the fourth route, beginning from the Mesogeitiki Porta (gate) of the walls of Athens. Not far from the city was found the Petraki monastery.³⁷ Formerly a dependency of the convent of Careas, in 1673 it became the seat of the fathers and soon acquired a huge land property and a considerable influence in the life of Athens. Four significant villages follow to the north/north-east, inhabited by free peasants and – most of them – older

³³ A. K. Orlandos, “Δύο ανέκδοτοι ναοί των Αθηναίων Μπενιζέλων” [Two unpublished churches of the Athenian Benizeloi], *Επετηρίς της Εταιρείας Βυζαντινών Σπουδών* 8 (1931), pp. 318-323, fig. 1-3; *id.*, *Μεσαιωνικά μνημεία*, p. 133, fig. 170; *id.*, “Εργασίαι αναστηλώσεως Βυζαντινών μνημείων” [Restoration works on Byzantine monuments], *Αρχαίον των Βυζαντινών Μνημείων της Ελλάδος* 3 (1937), pp. 199-204, fig. 7-10; K. D. Mertzios, “Η οσία Φιλοθέη. Ανέκδοτα έγγραφα” [Hosia Filothei: unpublished texts], *Ελληνικά* 13 (1954), pp. 122, 125-126; St. A. Kalantzopoulou, *Μεσαιωνικοί ναοί της Αθήνας από σωζόμενα σχέδια και σημειώσεις του Paul Durand. Διδακτορική Διατριβή* [Medieval churches of Athens according to surviving sketches and notes of Paul Durand: dissertation], Athens 2000, pp. 110-112, pl. 9a.

³⁴ J. Stuart and N. Revett, *The Antiquities of Athens*, Vol. III, London 1794, p. 5.

³⁵ K. Diamantis (ed.), *Αθηναϊκόν αρχαίον* [Athenian archive], Athens 1971, p. 187, note 174, p. 234, note 176.

³⁶ E. Dodwell, *A Classical and Topographical Tour through Greece, during the Years 1801, 1805 and 1806*, Vol. I, London 1819, pp. 522-523.

³⁷ Kambouroglou, *Ίστορία τῶν Ἀθηναίων*, Vol. I, pp. 390-394, Vol. II, pp. 270-272; *id.*, *Μνημεία τῆς Ίστορίας*, Vol. I, pp. 355-384, 399-430, Vol. III, pp. 149-160, 164-224; Orlandos, *Μεσαιωνικά μνημεία*, pp. 125-128, fig. 157-160; M. G. Sotiriou, “Το καθολικόν της μονῆς Πετράκη Αθηνῶν” [The katholikon of the Petraki monastery, Athens], *Δελτίον της Χριστιανικῆς Αρχαιολογικῆς Εταιρείας* ser. 4, 2 (1960-1961), pp. 101-129, pl. 47-50; T. A. Gritsopoulos, “Πετράκη, Μονή” [The monastery of Petraki], *Θρησκευτικὴ καὶ ἠθικὴ εγκυκλοπαίδεια* [Encyclopaedia of religion and ethics], Vol. X, Athens 1967, col. 332-344; P. Lazaridis, *Αρχαιολογικόν Δελτίον* 20 (1965), Β' 1, pp. 132-133, pl. 112α-β-116α-β; M. G. Biris, “Μεταγενέστερες προσθήκες στο καθολικό της Μονῆς Πετράκη στην Αθήνα” [Later additions to the katholikon of the Petraki monastery in Athens], *Εκκλησίες στην Ελλάδα μετά την Ἀλωση* 2 (1982), pp. 191-202; I. Stoufi-Poulimenou, *Ιερά Μονή Πετράκη. Ίστορία-αρχιτεκτονική-γλυπτὸς διάκοσμος-ζωγραφικὴ* [The holy monastery of Petraki: history-architecture-sculptural decoration-painting], place and date not cited.

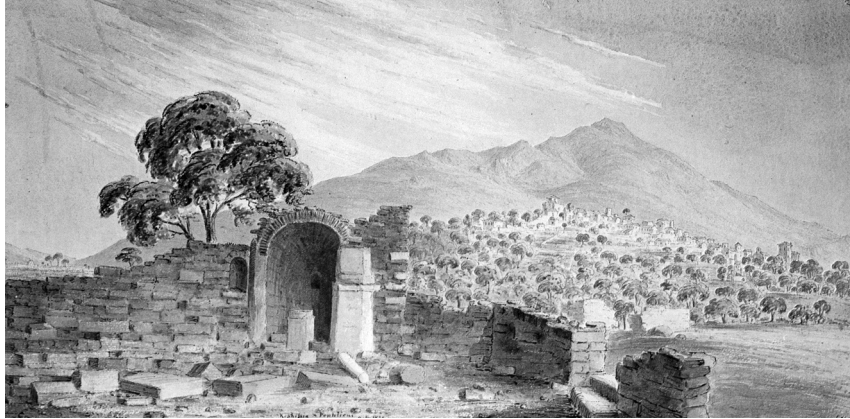


Fig. 5. A view of the village of Cephissia, a few years after Greek Independence, by James Skene of Rubislaw. J. Skene, *Μνημεία και τοπία της Ελλάδος, 1838-1845*, Athens 1985, no. 23. The ruins in the foreground belong to an unidentified church.

than the Ottoman occupation: Ambelokipoi, the summer resort of Greek Athenians, with small towers, gardens and an olive grove,³⁸ Chalandri, first mentioned only in 1667,³⁹ Maroussi, with an old forest of olives,⁴⁰ and Cephissia (fig. 5), the headquarters of the *Katadema* provincial administrative subdivision and favourite summer country retreat of the Ottomans, because of the rich gardens and the abundance of water.⁴¹ The only mosque in the countryside of Attica, apart from those in Athens, had been built there.⁴² A road from Chalandri leads directly to the monastery of Penteli⁴³ (fig. 6), the greatest

³⁸ R. Chandler, *Travels in Greece or an Account of a Tour Made at the Expense of the Society of Dilettanti*, Oxford 1776, p. 171.

³⁹ Biris, *Τσελεμπή*, pp. 9, 60, note 98.

⁴⁰ Hobhouse, *Journey through Albania*, Vol. I, p. 437.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, p. 436.

⁴² G. Pallis, “Τα οθωμανικά μνημεία της Κηφισιάς” [The Ottoman monuments of Kifissia], *Αρχαιολογικά Ανάλεκτα εἰς Ἀθηνῶν* 39 (2006), pp. 229-240.

⁴³ Kambouroglou, *Ἱστορία τῶν Ἀθηναίων*, Vol. II, pp. 217-228; *id.*, *Μνημεία τῆς Ἱστορίας*, Vol. I, pp. 314-318, 384-398; D. S. Alvanakis, *Ἱστορία των Ἱερῶν Μονῶν του Κράτους. Α΄. Μοναί Μητροπόλεως Ἀθηνῶν, I: Ἱερά Μονή Πεντέλης* [History of the holy monasteries of the State, I. Monasteries of the metropolis of Athens, Vol. I: The holy monastery of Penteli], Athens 1905; Sp. Lambros, “Τρία πατριαρχικά σιγίλλια μονῶν της Ἀττικής” [Three patriarchal sigilia of monasteries of Attica], *Νέος Ἑλληνομνήμων* 4 (1907), pp. 83-87, 94-97; Kambouroglou, *Αναδρομὰς της Ἀττικής*, pp. 59-66; Orlandos, *Μεσαιωνικά μνημεία*, pp. 188-192, fig. 252-256; G. Prokopis, “Πεντέλης, Μονή” [Penteli monastery], *Θρησκευτική και Ἠθική Ἐγκυκλοπαιδεία*, Vol. X, Athens 1967, col. 278-284;



Fig. 6. A view of the katholikon and the north wing of the monastery of Penteli, by Skene, *op. cit.*, no. 61. Today these buildings have suffered extended alterations.

and wealthiest monastery of Attica, established in 1578 and granted special privileges by the sultans. This monastery was the biggest landowner and honey producer in the region and it had numerous monks who lived in the monastic complex on the mountain and its dependencies. On the road that connected Cephissia and Menidi could be found the small monastery of Panaghia Chelidonou,⁴⁴ probably dating to the sixteenth century, and the settlement of the estate of Monomati, with a tower.⁴⁵

A. Nikas and G. Xanthakou-Nika, *Μονή Πεντέλης* [The monastery of Penteli], The Holy Monastery of Penteli 1973; I. H. Volanakis, *Οδηγός του Μουσείου της Ιεράς Μονής Κοιμήσεως Θεοτόκου Πεντέλης* [A guide to the museum of the holy monastery of Penteli], The Holy Monastery of Penteli 21974.

⁴⁴ Orlandos, *Μεσαιωνικά μνημεία*, p. 205; St. A. Mouzakis, *Το άγνωστο μικρομονάστηρο της Παναγίας Χελιδονούς στις Αχαρνές Αττικής (16ος αι.). Ιστορική-λαογραφική-τυπολογική μελέτη. Αποκατάσταση της μορφής* [The unknown little monastery of Panaghia Chelidonou in Acharnes of Attica (16th c.): historical-folkloric-typological study: restoration of the form], Acharnes 1988.

⁴⁵ Langdon, "Mortared Towers", p. 483, note 21.



Fig. 7. A view of the katholikon of Asteriou monastery, with the characteristic so-called “Athenian type” dome, which imitates a Byzantine local architectural form.

The monasteries of central and north Hymettus form the fifth unity. The monastery of Kaisariani,⁴⁶ to the east of Athens, is the most famous among them. It was founded circa 1100, but thanks to the considerable production of honey and the scholars who served as abbots, it flourished again in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. However, by the end of the eighteenth century Kaisariani had fallen into decline. A little to the north is located the monastery

⁴⁶ For the history of Kaisariani in the Ottoman era see Spon and Wheeler, *Voyage*, Vol. II, pp. 225-226; Kambouroglou, *Μνημεῖα τῆς Ἱστορίας*, Vol. I, pp. 134-137, Vol. II, Athens 1890, pp. 41-43, Vol. III, pp. 119-124; *id.*, *Ἱστορία τῶν Ἀθηναίων*, Vol. II, pp. 119-120, 191-202; Philadelphus, *Ἱστορία τῶν Ἀθηναίων*, Vol. II, pp. 160-162; Orlandos, *Μεσαιωνικά μνημεῖα*, pp. 161-164, fig. 213, 216, 218; T. A. Gritsopoulos, “Καισαριανῆς, Μονή” [Kaisariani monastery], *Θρησκευτική και Ἠθική Εγκυκλοπαιδεία*, Vol. VII, Athens 1965, col. 187-192. For the building activity and the artistic production in the same period see A. Xyngopoulos (ed.), *Τοιχογραφία ἐκκλησιῶν Ὑμηττοῦ. Μοναὶ Θεολόγου καὶ Καισαριανῆς* [Mural paintings of the churches of Hymettus: monasteries of Theologos and Kaisariani], Athens 1933, pp. 13-18, 33-41, pl. III-IV, fig. 28-100; Emm. Chatzidakis, “Σκαφικαὶ ἐρευναι ἐν τῇ μονῇ Καισαριανῆς” [Excavation researches in Kaisariani monastery], *Πρακτικά τῆς ἐν Ἀθῆναις Ἀρχαιολογικῆς Εἰταιρείας* 1949, pp. 48-50, fig. 6-10; *id.*, “Νεώτεροι σκαφικαὶ ἐρευναι ἐν τῇ μονῇ Καισαριανῆς” [Recent excavation researches in Kaisariani monastery], *Πρακτικά τῆς ἐν Ἀθῆναις Ἀρχαιολογικῆς Εἰταιρείας* 1950, pp. 139-144, fig. 6-8; A. Xyngopoulos, *Σχεδιάσμα ἱστορίας τῆς θρησκευτικῆς ζωγραφικῆς μετὰ τὴν Ἀλωσιν*

of Asteriou⁴⁷ (fig. 7); despite the shortage of written sources about the date and the conditions of its foundation, archaeological evidence ascribes it to the sixteenth century. Like Kaisariani, Asteriou was in a permanent state of decline after the seventeenth century. The katholikon of this monastery shares the same architectural type and common characteristics with that of Haghios Ioannis Theologos,⁴⁸ another monastery on Hymmetus, in the modern-day suburb of Papagou. Theologos was founded in the sixteenth century too and it soon fell into decline, to become a dependency of Petraki monastery from 1721 onwards. The middle Byzantine monastery of Haghios Ioannis Kynigos (fig. 8), on the northern

[A sketch of the history of religious painting after the capture of Constantinople], Athens 1957, pp. 198-199, pl. 50.2; A. K. Orlandos, *Μοναστηριακή αρχιτεκτονική* [Monastic architecture], Athens 1958, pp. 32, 36, 48, 50, 51, 123, fig. 63, 62; P. Lazaridis, *Αρχαιολογικόν Δελτίον* 20 (1965), B' 1, 133, pl. 116γ, 117α-β, 118α-β; N. Chatzidaki, *Το Μοναστήρι της Καισαριανής* [The monastery of Kaisariani], Athens 1977, pp. 15-22, 24-25; *id.*, "Ψηφιδωτά και τοιχογραφίες στις βυζαντινές και μεταβυζαντινές εκκλησίες της Αθήνας" [Mosaics and wall paintings in the Byzantine and post-Byzantine churches of Athens], in *Αθήναι. Από την Κλασική εποχή έως σήμερα (5ος αι. π.Χ. - 2000 μ.Χ.)* [Athens: from the Classic era until today (5th c. BC - 2000 AD)], Athens 2000, pp. 274-277, fig. 37-42; M. Garidis, *Μεταβυζαντινή ζωγραφική (1450-1600). Η εντοίχια ζωγραφική μετά την πτώση του Βυζαντίου στον ορθόδοξο κόσμο και στις χώρες υπό ξένη κυριαρχία* [Post-Byzantine painting (1450-1600): mural painting after the fall of Byzantium in the Orthodox world and the countries under foreign dominion], Athens 2007, pp. 339-341.

⁴⁷ D. Sourmelis, *Κατάστασις συνοπτική τῆς Πόλεως Ἀθηνῶν ἀπὸ τῆς πτώσεως αὐτῆς ὑπὸ τῶν Ρωμαίων μέχρι τέλους τῆς Τουρκοκρατίας* [Synoptic situation of the city of Athens from its fall to the Romans until the end of the Turkish occupation], Athens 1842, p. 48; Kambouroglou, *Ἱστορία των Αθηναίων*, Vol. II, pp. 202-203; G. Lambakis, "Μουσεῖον Χριστιανικῆς Ἀρχαιολογίας καὶ Τέχνης. Μελέται, ἐργασίαι καὶ περιηγήσεις 1893" [Museum of Christian Archaeology and Art: studies, works and travels 1893], *Δελτίον τῆς Χριστιανικῆς Ἀρχαιολογικῆς Ἑταιρείας*, ser. 1, Vol. II (1892-1894), pp. 34-35; Orlandos, *Μεσαιωνικά μνημεία*, pp. 165-167, fig. 221-225; *id.*, *Μοναστηριακή αρχιτεκτονική*, pp. 49, 121, 122, 123, fig. 139; Koder and Hild, *Hellas und Thessalia*, p. 268; Ch. Bouras, *Βυζαντινή και Μεταβυζαντινή αρχιτεκτονική στην Ελλάδα* [Byzantine and post-Byzantine architecture in Greece], Athens 2001, p. 254; Garidis, *Μεταβυζαντινή ζωγραφική*, p. 341.

⁴⁸ Kambouroglou, *Ἱστορία των Αθηναίων*, Vol. II, pp. 203-204; *id.*, *Αναδρομὴ τῆς Ἀττικῆς*, pp. 45-46; Orlandos, *Μεσαιωνικά μνημεία*, pp. 168-169, fig. 226-229; Xyngopoulos (ed.), *Τοιχογραφία ἐκκλησιῶν Ὑμηττοῦ*, pp. 7-11, 21-31, pl. I-II, fig. 1-27; Orlandos, *Μοναστηριακή αρχιτεκτονική*, pp. 48, 49, 50, 60, 62, 134, fig. 61; P. Lazaridis, *Αρχαιολογικόν Δελτίον* 19 (1964), B' 1, p. 98, pl. 95α-100β; *id.*, *Αρχαιολογικόν Δελτίον* 20 (1965), B' 1, p. 132, pl. 109β-111α-β; Koder and Hild, *Hellas und Thessalia*, p. 176; Langdon, "Mortared Towers", p. 493, note 52; Bouras, *Βυζαντινή και Μεταβυζαντινή αρχιτεκτονική*, p. 254; Garidis, *Μεταβυζαντινή ζωγραφική*, pp. 341-342.



Fig. 8. A view of Haghios Ioannis Kynigos, the northern of the Hymettian monasteries, in a photograph of the 1930s to early 1950s. Mount Penteli can be seen in the background, with a part of the plain, today densely built.

M. Chatzidakis, *Βυζαντινή Αθήνα*, Athens 1958, fig. 122.

eminence of Hymettus, had a remarkable revival during the sixteenth century,⁴⁹ but it soon followed the same course of decline, until it was totally deserted.

The sixth route runs through the south-west slopes of Mount Hymettus, along the road to Cape Sounion, and includes several settlements and monasteries. The first site from the north is the small monastery of Haghios Georgios Koutalas,⁵⁰ to the south of Kaisariani, which was established in the sixteenth or seventeenth century, but then fell into oblivion. The monastery of

⁴⁹ For the post-Byzantine phase of Kynigos see Philadelphus, *Ιστορία των Αθηνών*, Vol. I, p. 285; Kambouroglou, *Αναδρομάρης της Αττικής*, p. 48; Orlandos, *Μεσαιωνικά μνημεία*, p. 174, fig. 230-231.

⁵⁰ Kambouroglou, *Ιστορία των Αθηνών*, Vol. II, 191; *id.*, *Αναδρομάρης της Αττικής*, p. 33; Orlandos, *Μεσαιωνικά μνημεία*, p. 158, fig. 210-211; G. G. Ladas, *Η παρά τους πρόποδας του Ύμηττου εκκλησία του Αγίου Γεωργίου επονομαζομένου Κουταλά* [The church of Haghios Georgios the so-called Koutalas at the foot of Hymettus], Athens 1974; K. N. Xenogiannis, *Το Μοναστήρι του Αγ. Γεωργίου Κουταλά εις τον Ύμηττό* [The monastery of Haghios Georgios Koutalas on Hymettus], Athens 1983; Garidis, *Μεταβυζαντινή ζωγραφική*, p. 339.



Fig. 9. The church of the Dormition at the site of Trachones, one of the villeins' settlements of Hymmetus, as it exists today in the former Geroulanos estate.

Careas,⁵¹ to the south-east of Koutalas, was founded or revived in the sixteenth century, but it was gradually deserted after the removal of the monks to the dependency of Petraki. Four settlements were located at the south part of the route: Karas,⁵² on the grounds of modern Helioupolis, Brahami,⁵³ today Hagios Demetrios, Trachones⁵⁴ (fig. 9), today Alimos, and Chasani,⁵⁵ where

⁵¹ Kambouroglou, *Μνημεία τῆς Ἱστορίας*, Vol. I, p. 356; *id.*, *Ἱστορία τῶν Ἀθηναίων*, Vol. II, pp. 189-191; *id.*, *Αναδρομῆς τῆς Ἀττικῆς*, pp. 30-33; Orlandos, *Μεσαιωνικά μνημεία*, pp. 157-158, fig. 208-209; P. Lazaridis, *Αρχαιολογικόν Δελτίον* 19 (1964), B' 1, pp. 97-98, pl. 94α-ε; *id.*, *Αρχαιολογικόν Δελτίον* 24 (1969), B' 1, p. 96, pl. 72β-γ; *id.*, *Αρχαιολογικόν Δελτίον* 25 (1970), B' 1, pp. 143-144, pl. 111γ; K. Tsouris, "Ἡ Μονή του Ἀγίου Ἰωάννου του Προδρόμου Καρέα" [The monastery of Haghios Ioannis Prodromos Kareas], *Κληρονομία* 30 (1998), pp. 261-309; Koder and Hild, *Hellas und Thessalia*, p. 175; Garidis, *Μεταβυζαντινὴ ζωγραφικὴ*, p. 341.

⁵² Stuart and Revett, *Antiquities of Athens*, Vol. III, p. xiii.

⁵³ Dodwell, *Classical and Topographical Tour*, Vol. I, p. 483.

⁵⁴ Stuart and Revett, *Antiquities of Athens*, Vol. III, p. x; Hobhouse, *Journey through Albania*, Vol. I, pp. 367-368; Kambouroglou, *Μνημεία τῆς Ἱστορίας*, Vol. II, p. 116; Th. Drikos, *Οἱ πωλήσεις των οθωμανικῶν ιδιοκτησιῶν τῆς Ἀττικῆς, 1830-1831* [The sale of the Ottoman properties of Attica, 1830-1831], Athens 1994.

⁵⁵ Leake, *The Topography of Athens and the Demi*, p. 48.

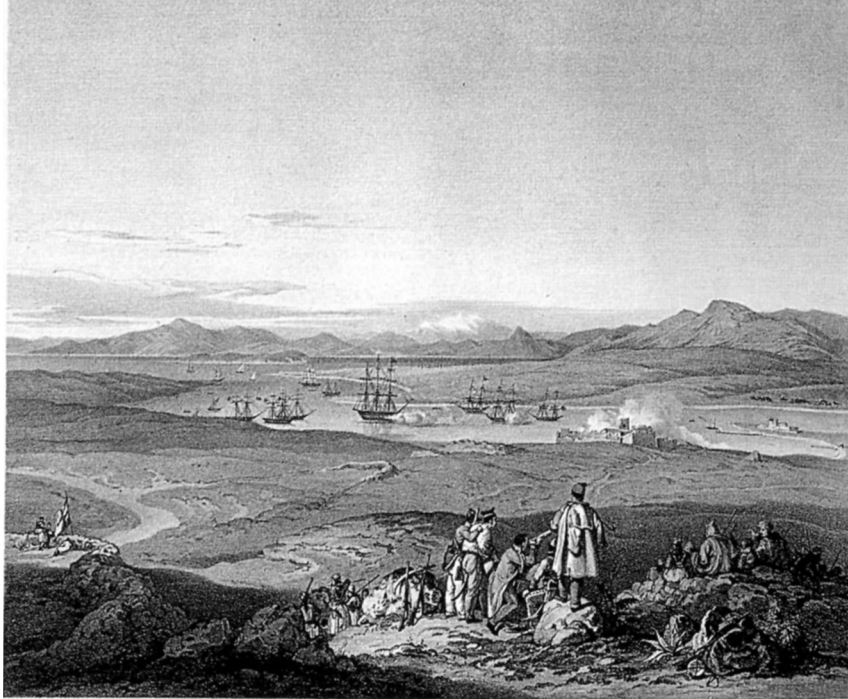


Fig. 10. Porto Draco, the port of Piraeus, depicted by Karl Krazeisen during the battle of Athens, in 1827. The fleet hits the only big building of the deserted harbour, the monastery of Haghios Spyridon. M. Z. Kasimati, *Karl Krazeisen. Οι αυθεντικές μορφές των ηρώων του '21. Σχέδια, υδατογραφίες, λιθογραφίες 1826-1831*, Athens: National Gallery, 2005, p. 41.

the old Athens airport stood. All of them were small villages belonging to private Ottoman estates. The families of the Albanian villeins lived in obscure houses built around the tower of the landlord.

The seventh route consists of the coastline. This part of the Athenian plain remained deserted during the Ottoman period, as a result of continuous pirate raids. The only inhabited place was Porto Draco or Porto Leone, the port of Piraeus, where there stood a few buildings for the service of the import and export trade of Athens. The small monastery of Haghios Spyridon, which was erected at the port probably in the beginning of the eighteenth century,⁵⁶ was destroyed during the Greek War of Independence (fig. 10).

⁵⁶ Kambouroglou, *Μνημεία τῆς Ἱστορίας*, Vol. II, p. 256; *id.*, *Ἱστορία τῶν Ἀθηναίων*, Vol. II, pp. 266-267; Philadelphus, *Ἱστορία τῶν Ἀθηναίων*, Vol. I, pp. 169-170, 315-316, Vol. II, pp. 377-378; Orlandos, *Μεσαιωνικά μνημεία*, p. 152; A. Papanikolaou-Christensen, *Ἀθήνα 1818-1853. Ἔργα Δανῶν καλλιτεχνῶν* [Athens 1818-1853: works of Danish architects], Athens 1985, p. 66, fig. 55.



Fig. 11. Hagios Savvas on Iera Odos (the ancient Sacred Way), one of the most famous chapels of the great Athenian olive grove, in its present state.

The last route covers the heart of the plain, the great olive grove or Elaionas,⁵⁷ and, more specifically, its uninhabited part, from the Academy to Tavros and Moschato. Thirty-four post-Byzantine churches and chapels (fig. 11) are spread in the area of the olive grove, and they were used for private, family worship.⁵⁸ This route ends at the famous Byzantine monastery of Daphni, which experienced a recovery in the middle of the sixteenth century,⁵⁹ when a new fraternity carried out extended works at the katholikon and the monastic complex.⁶⁰ However, the repeated incursions of pirates and Turkish

⁵⁷ Kambouroglou, *Αναδρομάρης της Αττικής*, pp. 113-132; Z. E. Ropaitou-Tsapareli, *Ο Ελαιώνας της Αθήνας. Ο χώρος και οι άνθρωποι στο πέρασμα του χρόνου* [The olive grove of Athens: the place and the people through the passing of time], Athens 2006, pp. 49-73.

⁵⁸ Orlandos, *Μεσαιωνικά μνημεία*, pp. 142-148, fig. 187-196; G. A. Sotiriou, “Ο Ελαιών των Αθηνών” [The olive grove of Athens], *Ημερολόγιον του Οδοιπορικού Συνδέσμου* 2 (1926), pp. 168-179; Ropaitou-Tsapareli, *Ελαιώνας*, pp. 83-104.

⁵⁹ Sp. Lambros, “Κερκυραϊκά έγγραφα ανέκδοτα” [Unpublished texts from Corfu], *Νέος Ελληνομνήμων* 7 (1910), pp. 464-465; G. H. Pentogalos, “Πληροφορίες για τη μονή του Δαφνίου από ανέκδοτο Κεφαλονίτικο έγγραφο του ΙΣΤ΄ αι.” [Evidence on the monastery of Daphni from an unpublished text from Kephallonia dated to the 16th c.], *Παρθενώνας* 18 (1976), pp. 69-73.

⁶⁰ A. K. Orlandos, “Νεώτερα ευρήματα εις την μονήν Δαφνίου” [Recent finds in the

troops soon brought about the decline of the monastery, which became almost deserted in the beginning of the nineteenth century.

The settlements of the Athenian plain can be divided into two basic categories, those of free peasants and those which belonged to private estates and were inhabited by villeins. The first ones are usually villages older than the Ottoman conquest, located on sites which provided arable land and water supplies. On the contrary, the settlements in estates were created after the conquest, on the properties of Ottoman landowners, and they were of a limited size. In both cases, the shape of the settlements is generally loose, with an irregular, sparse plan, and cultivated land among the buildings. In the villeins' settlements, the tower of the landowner was the centre around which small houses were built.

In general, the road network that connects the settlements remains the same as it was formed in Antiquity, without breaks in its use.⁶¹ The different names of road types found in the texts – *στράτα*, *μονοπάτι*, *σοκάκι*, *ρούγα* – seem to be relative to their size and significance.

Houses were of course predominant in the built environment of the villages. Unfortunately, very little is known about domestic architecture, given that almost no example has survived. On the basis of information from written sources and parallels from the neighbouring area of Mesogeia,⁶² it appears that two types of houses were the most common in the Athenian plain's settlements, the simple single-room house and the two-storey house. The first was the most widespread and knew many variations (fig. 12). The second type, the two-storey house known as *πύργος* or *πυργάκι*, was the more distinguished one.⁶³ Possessing a courtyard with various subsidiary structures around it, many

monastery of Daphni], *Αρχαίον των Βυζαντινών Μνημείων της Ελλάδος* 8 (1955-1956), pp. 69, 88-95, 98-99, fig. 20-25; E. G. Stikas, "Στερέωσις και αποκατάστασις του εξωνάρθηκος του καθολικού της μονής Δαφνίου" [Consolidation and restoration of the outer narthex of the katholikon of Daphni monastery], *Δελτίον της Χριστιανικής Αρχαιολογικής Εταιρείας* s. 4, Vol. III (1962-1963), pp. 4-10, fig. 2-5, pl. 2.2, 3.1, 4.1, 5.3.

⁶¹ I. Travlos, *Πολεοδομική εξέλιξις των Αθηνών* [The evolution of the urban planning of Athens], Athens 1960, pp. 17-18.

⁶² For the domestic architecture of Mesogeia, with comments for the whole of Attica, see Ai. Dimitsandou-Kremezi, *Το καμαρόσπιτο της Αττικής. Προέλευση και αντιστοιχίες μιας βασικής αρχιτεκτονικής ιδιοτυπίας* [The "kamarospito" of Attica: origin and correspondences of a basic architectural peculiarity], Athens 1986; and *id.*, "Αττική" [Attica], *Ελληνική παραδοσιακή αρχιτεκτονική* [Greek traditional architecture], Vol. V, Athens 1987, pp. 205-238.

⁶³ Dodwell, *Classical and Topographical Tour*, Vol. I, p. 412.



Fig. 12. Partial view of the village of Menidi shortly before 1908. The small long single-storey houses in the foreground preserve features of post-Byzantine domestic architecture. Aiginitis, *op. cit.*, pp. 402-403.

houses took the form of small complexes. The extremely poor evidence about industrial buildings (oil-presses or watermills) prevents any comments on this kind of architecture.

Church and monastic architecture is the only issue that can be satisfactorily studied. Two hundred and forty-two churches are found in the area under discussion, including a few older ones which are still surviving. The most significant monuments are dated to the sixteenth century. Among the sophisticated architectural types in use, the cross-in-square (fig. 13) was almost exclusively applied in monastery churches dated to the sixteenth century, the cross-vaulted was not very popular, while there are quite a few examples of the three-aisled basilica. The single-nave domed church (fig. 14) forms a local peculiarity, attributed to influence from Islamic architecture,⁶⁴ like the use of squinches to carry domes and semi-domes.⁶⁵ The most widespread type was the single-aisled church, with variations from the simplest to more complicated solutions, like churches with blind arches along the side walls (fig. 15) and

⁶⁴ Orlandos, *Μεσαιωνικά μνημεία*, p. 124.

⁶⁵ Tanoulas, “Άγιοι Ανάργυροι Κολοκύνθη”, pp. 187-188.

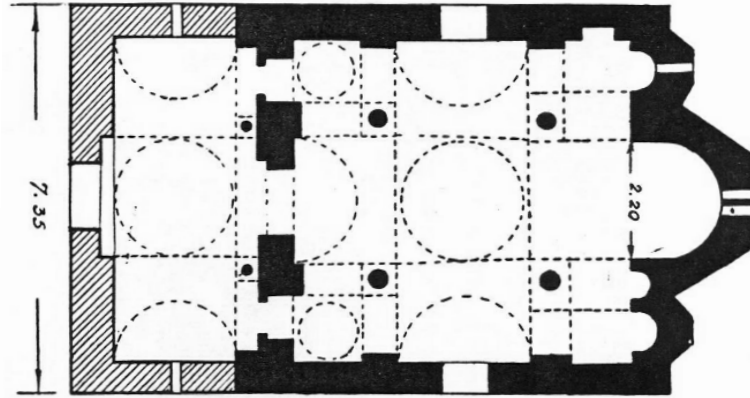


Fig. 13. The katholikon of Haghios Ioannis Theologos monastery on Mount Hymmetus is an example of a post-Byzantine cross-in-square church that imitates earlier, Byzantine monuments of Athens.
Orlandos, *Μεσαιωνικά μνημεία*, fig. 227.

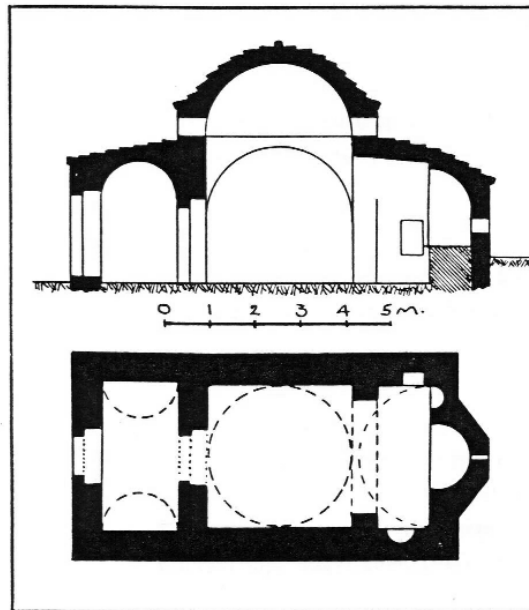


Fig. 14. Haghios Nikolaos in modern Aimonos Street, formerly in the olive grove, a typical example of the single-nave domed church. Orlandos, *Μεσαιωνικά μνημεία*, fig. 182.

arches reinforcing the barrel vaults.⁶⁶ The numerous churches were the only field for the cultivation of monumental art – i.e. mural painting – in the region

⁶⁶ A. K. Orlandos, “Αι καμαροσκέπαστοι βασιλικαί των Αθηνών” [The vaulted basilicas of Athens], *Επετηρίς της Εταιρείας Βυζαντινών Σπουδών* 2 (1925), pp. 288-305.

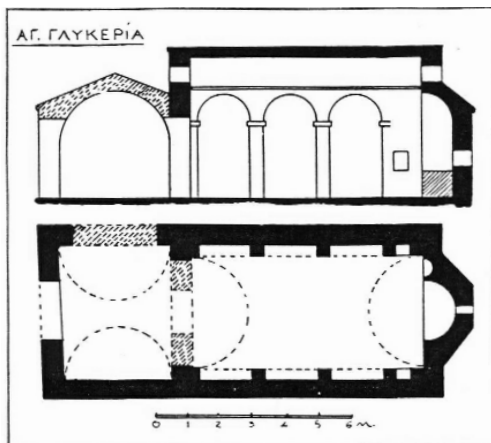


Fig. 15. Haghia Glykeria at Galatsi (after Patissia), now demolished, was an example of a single-aisled church with blind arches along the side walls and a narthex to the west. Orlandos, *Μεσαιωνικά μνημεία*, fig. 171.

under the rule of the Ottomans. Ninety-one painted churches are recorded in the present research (fig. 16), 37.6% of the whole, but the original proportion must have been much greater. According to the few studies concerning this subject, even with the great artistic production from the sixteenth century onwards, no local tradition of religious painting was established;⁶⁷ the personal,



Fig. 16. St Demetrius, from the wall paintings of the Haghios Ioannis Pelikas chapel in Maroussi, the decoration of which represents the provincial art of the region and is probably dated to the 18th century.

⁶⁷ Garidis, *Μεταβυζαντινή ζωγραφική*, p. 342; M. Chatzidakis, “Πνευματικός βίος και πολιτισμός, 1669-1821. Η τέχνη” [Cultural life and civilisation, 1669-1821: the art], *Ιστορία του Ελληνικού Έθνους* [History of the Greek nation], Vol. XI, Athens 1975, p. 256.

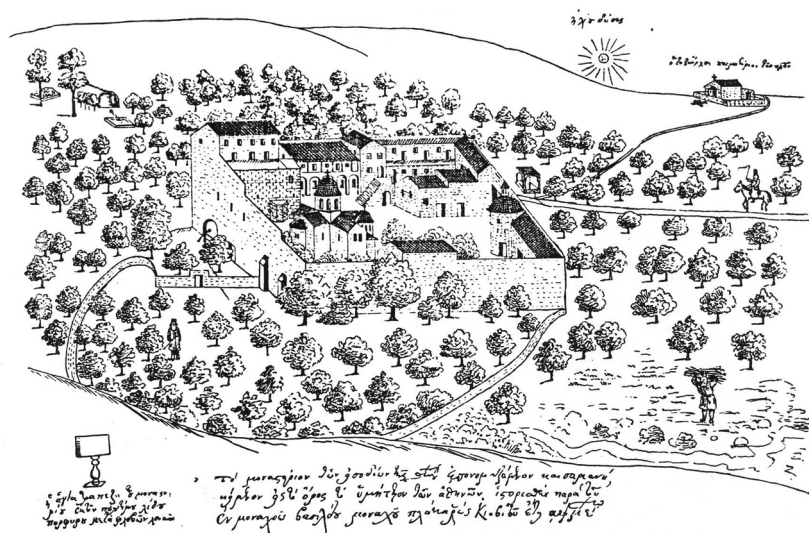


Fig. 17. The monastic complex of Kaisariani, after a sketch by the Russian pilgrim Basil Barsky dated to 1745. Orlandos, *Μεσαιωνικά μνημεία*, fig. 213.

academic style of Georgios Markou⁶⁸ and his students in the first half of the eighteenth century cannot be perceived as a local school.

Monastic architecture involves enclosure walls, gates, towers, refectories, fireplaces, wings of cells, storerooms, fountains and other buildings. The usually small dimensions of the monastic complexes and the restricted resources of the era and the region prevented the construction of large-scale and complicated buildings. In almost all the examples in this category only simple and functional forms can be observed (fig. 17).

The investigation of the settlements and their monuments attests primarily the significant flourishing of the Athenian plain in the sixteenth century, in contrast with the conventional historiographical view on this period. The demographic and economic expansion of the villages reached its climax, and monasticism was thriving. This phenomenon was the result of many factors, among which the most significant were the political stability, the privileges of Athens and the limited presence of Turks in the area. In spite of the remarkable prosperity, the architecture and the arts never exceeded their provincial standard. What characterises the church architecture of the region in the time

⁶⁸ M. Chatzidakis and E. Drakopoulou, *Έλληνες ζωγράφοι μετά την Άλωση (1450-1830)* [Greek painters after the capture of Constantinople], Vol. II, Athens 1997, pp. 173-174.

of its flourishing are the imitation of well-known Byzantine patterns in the most sophisticated buildings and the hesitant adoption of a few features of Ottoman architecture. This conservatism is obvious in mural painting too, where the influences from the contemporary great schools of post-Byzantine fresco painting never managed to form a local artistic idiom in Attica. In the following years of decline, the map of the Athenian plain did not change, but the population dwindled and the economy suffered a permanent downfall. Building activity was never interrupted, but it became more and more simplified in form and building techniques and was limited in scale.

*Greek Ministry of Culture
24th Ephorate of Byzantine Antiquities, Lamia.*





τη λεζάντα