

Inheritance of Forefathers

Mosques and Lands of Wakfs* in Greece



ABTTF

Federation of Western Thrace Turks in Europe

NGO in Special Consultative Status with the Economic and Social Council of the United Nations
Member of the Federal Union of European Nationalities (FUEN)

...homeland of the Turkish Minority in Greece



Western Thrace is the name of the "yellow" region at the map. In Western Thrace, 150 000 Turks live today, who have settled in the region from the beginning of the Ottoman times.

In 1923, with the **Peace Treaty of Lausanne**, the minority rights of these 150 000 Turks have been guaranteed and **Western Thrace** has been left to Greece.



Wakf

A wakf (*also waqf*) is an inalienable religious endowment in Islam, typically devoting a building or plot of land for Muslim religious or charitable purposes as to support a mosque or caravansary, or to benefit the poor, etc. It is conceptually similar to the common law trust.



For centuries, cultures have been influenced by religion, be it Islam, Christianity, Judaism, or any other religion people believe in. Regarding history, folks without strong culture got forgotten and did not manage to survive – as soon as they began to lose their culture and traditions, they also began to lose themselves. As a contrast to these, countries offering cultural variety are at the same time the ones most respected in today's world.

In order to protect and conserve its historical and cultural heritage, our country Greece signed like many other countries international agreements. The minimal compliance with these agreements in reality shall be presented by this piece of work. The mosques and wakfs owned by the Muslim Turkish minority in Xanthi and Komotini in Western Thrace will be particularly focused on.

Primarily, the city plan created in 1933 will present you the systematic extermination of our culture by attacking nearby every Muslim Turkish historical and cultural heritage. The realization of this plan would mean demolition of some properties as a whole, and for some in a way that they would almost lose all of their significance. Historical properties and symbols proving the presence of the Turkish minority of Western Thrace are about to get ruined and demolished in *different ways*.

Most of the mosques were named after the name of the street they are located on, and these street names are today still used by the Muslim Turkish minority although they are not official anymore.

Even though the obstacles with regard to the obtaining of licenses for restoration have decreased after the accession of our country Greece to the European Union (EU) in 1981, the Turkish minority still faces bureaucratic and financial challenges on national and local levels. While on the one hand, the properties of the Muslim Turkish minority are being expropriated by the realization of the city plan of 1933 more and more, on the other hand, the number of parks available for Christian temples is continuously increasing.

In modern times, we are supposed to learn from the past, and to appreciate the significance of cultural variety.



THE GENERAL CONFERENCE of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) meeting in Paris from 17 October to 21 November 1972, at its seventeenth session,...

CONVENTION CONCERNING
THE PROTECTION OF THE WORLD
CULTURAL AND NATURAL HERITAGE

protect & conserve



UNITED NATIONS EDUCATIONAL, SCIENTIFIC
AND CULTURAL ORGANISATION

Article 5

To ensure that effective and active measures are taken for the protection, conservation and presentation of the cultural and natural heritage situated on its territory, each State Party to this Convention shall endeavor, in so far as possible, and as appropriate for each country:

1. to adopt a general policy which aims to give the cultural and natural heritage a function in the life of the community and to integrate the protection of that heritage into comprehensive planning programmes;
2. to set up within its territories, where such services do not exist, one or more services for the protection, conservation and presentation of the cultural and natural heritage with an appropriate staff and possessing the means to discharge their functions;
3. to develop scientific and technical studies and research and to work out such operating methods as will make the State capable of counteracting the dangers that threaten its cultural or natural heritage;
4. to take the appropriate legal, scientific, technical, administrative and financial measures necessary for the identification, protection, conservation, presentation and rehabilitation of this heritage; and
5. to foster the establishment or development of national or regional centres for training in the protection, conservation and presentation of the cultural and natural heritage and to encourage scientific research in this field.

<http://whc.unesco.org/en/conventiontext>

Historical places and objects of cultural and religious value are important for the preservation of cultural identity and continuity. Therefore promotion of awareness of conservation of historical and culturally significant buildings is adopted as one of the goals of all countries.

*...it is the land and
history of our children...*



However, the traditional Turkish cultural heritage remaining in Greece has been deliberately destroyed over time. Also, despite the unique workmanship, some of these monumental examples of Turkish architecture are in deplorable situation. The properties of the religious foundations or wakfs are systematically plundered and confiscated through administrative processes and falsification of official records and documents. The ones which survive are refused permission for repairs and restoration. Some are even totally torn down by the authorities for being "in a dangerous state" for public.

For many years, the Greek authorities have refused the Turkish community permission to repair their mosques or to build new ones. Moreover, they have not exempted the real estate of the wakfs from the general confiscation of Turkish land in Thrace. This has affected the financial basis of community life considerably and has caused serious problems for mosque personnel and for teachers in the minority schools, since the employees often receive part of their salary from revenues of these pious institutions.

*...some examples
of some cases...*



THE ASAGI MAHALLE MOSQUE IN XANTHI

The "Lower District" Mosque

1775

It is the oldest mosque after that the Xanthi Clock Tower Mosque demonstrated during the Bulgarian invasion in 1941. The other name is the Çinar Mosque. It takes its name from the çinar tree located at the intersection point of the aforementioned streets below. The mosque was built by Çıplak (Naked) Hüseyin Ağa in 1775.



The mosque is located at the Stenimachou Avenue (Οδος Στενημάχου) at the east and, Miaouli Avenue (Οδος Μιαούλη) at the west and at the intersection of the Hr. Kopsida (Χρ. Κοψίδα) Avenue which is settled straight to these two avenues.

The Areas Expropriated:

App. 190 m² (see dark yellow hachured parts) at the direction of Miaouli Ave. Is left to the aforementioned street.

App. 110 m² at the direction of Stenimachou Ave. Is left to the aforementioned street.

The rest of the entire property is transferred to the **Public Space**.

See. Pafta No. KA 10.66/1/19.01:
«Κοινόχρηστος Χώρος -Κ.Χ.-»



Çinar Camii



“ Land area : app. 2000 m²
Expropriated area : app.300 m²
Remaining area : 1700 m²
+ Entire public space ”

THE AHREN MAHALLESİ MOSQUE IN XANTHI

in the "palio polis" of Xanthi

This mosque is located at the old town of the city of Xanthi. (Old Town | Παλαιά Πόλη).

The mosque is located at the Argyrokastrou (Αργυρόκαστρου) Street at the west, and it is located at the intersection point of Androu (Ανδρού) Street at the east-west direction in the north and the street settled straight to the Hydragogeiou (Υδραγωγείου) Street in the south-east.



The Area of Property : app. 400 m²

The Building Base Space:

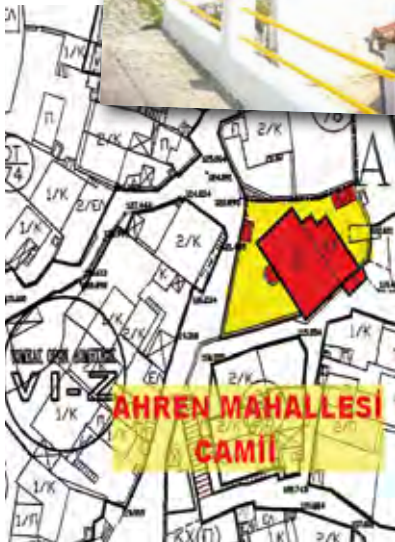
The total space is 175 m² with 60 m² mosque main building and app. 5 ve 10 m² two single floor service buildings.

The Areas Expropriated:

It is not expropriated as open space, but the mosque main building is designated as the **building space border** in the map.

Accordingly, nothing is allowed to build in the mosque courtyard except the border of the mosque main building.

See. Pafta No. Π-1.6.3. –yellow hachured part



THE MUHACIR MAHALLESİ MOSQUE IN XANTHI

The "Emigrant District" Mosque



It is located at the Dayranis Avenue (Οδός Δα'ί'ράνης) in the west.

The Area of Property: app.1000 m²

The Building Base Space: 115 m² mosque main body + 80 m² ve 90 m² ve 100 m² first-floor buildings: 385 m² in total.

The Areas Expropriated:

The map shows that a 120 m² area including the minaret of the mosque is expropriated for the Dayranis Ave. (ΔΑ'Ι'ΡΑΝΗΣ).

See. Pafta No. KA 10.66 1/19.00- the dark yellow hachured part



Land area : app.1000 m²
Expropriated area : 120 m²
Remaining area : 880 m²

İskeçe

This mosque which was built by the Governor Hüseyin Bey; is located at the point of intersection of the IX. Merarhias Street (Οδός ΙΧ. Μερραρχίας) at the north east and Skiathou Pedestrian Lane (Πεζόδρομος Σκιάθου)' at the south east.



The Area of Property : app. 585 m²

The Building Base Space: The total space is 275 m² with 225 m² Mosque main body and 50 m² mosque front entrance.

The Areas Expropriated:

The entire mosque courtyard and the front entrance is designated as **Preservable Open Area** (Διατηρητέος Ακάλυπτος Χώρος).

Accordingly, this is not expropriated but the property is not allowed to build in any circumstances. .

See. Pafta No. Π-1.6.10.



THE OLD MOSQUE IN KOMOTINI

The Central Mosque

1608

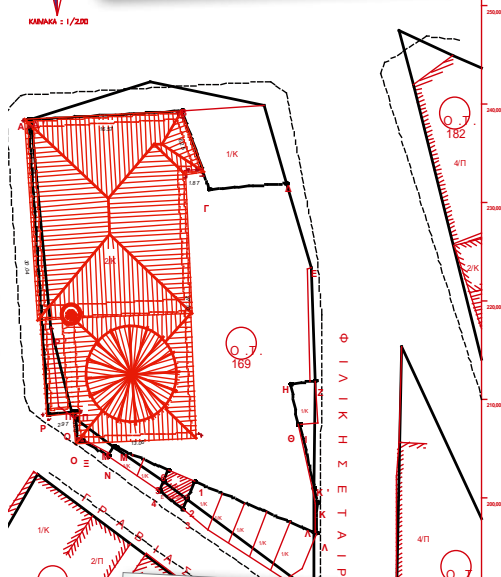
The Old Mosque in Komotini, which is located directly in the city center, was constructed in **1608** according to the first architectural style of the Ottoman Empire and renovated in **1854**. It has a tomb covered with red tiles, and a minaret with two balconies. The indoor decorations, which were destroyed during the Balkan War in **1912**, were re-constructed in **2002** with ceramic from Kutahya, Turkey.



Although the rest of the historical public fountain on the right side of the mosque is still existent, instead of preserving it in its original state by restoring, a complete new one was constructed. Today, the front side stands completely hidden behind the new public fountain.



KARNAKA : 1/200



Merkez
Camii

Land area : 954,16 m²
Expropriated area : 38,31 m²
Remaining area : 915,85 m²



THE TABAKHANE MOSQUE IN KOMOTINI

1530

Put up in 1530, the Tabakhane mosque is today a department of worship for many Muslims in Komotini.

The presence of a night club just 5 meters afar represents for local Muslims a religious oppression, just as the fact that 25,79m² of an overall land area of 715,02m² is expropriated.



Gümülcine



16th Century

Being inhabited by Turkish people for centuries, the urban area of Tabakhane presented a noble territory during this time period. As a result of World War II, increasing emigrations and the new infrastructural plans after the flood in the 1960's, the amount of local Turks decreased to a minimal number.

Κομοτηνή



Land area : 126,00 m²
Expropriated area : 75,60 m²
Remaining area : 51,24 m²

THE KIRMAHALLE MOSQUE IN KOMOTINI

& *Primary School next to it*



Representing the early presence of Turkish people in the West Thracian area, a gravestone from 1185 can still be found inside the mosque of Komotini Kirmahalle. (also Kara Mehmet Mosque)

Land area : 1572,72 m²
Expropriated area : 746,38 m²
Remaining area : 826,34 m²



1185

Kara Mehmet Camii
1406



▲ The main entrance of the mosque
and the school ▶



Owning a land area of 1572,72 m², 746,38m² of these is expropriated which just allows the mosque to occupy a space of only 826,34m².

THE KAYALI MOSQUE IN KOMOTINI

& *Madrasah*



1730

Kayali Mosque and Madrasah in Komotini were constructed in the 18th century by Hacı Zekeriya Efendi, a madrasah teacher from Istanbul.

2008

Today, they are both quite decrepit, and needed to be restored.

Land area : 1141,35 m²
Expropriated area : 62,75 m²
Remaining area : 1078,60 m²



Medrese



THERE ARE MANY OTHER EXAMPLES

But still hopeful glimpse into the future...

KESIKBAS MOSQUE and WTMUGA Building

16th Century
Land area: 725,46 m²
Expropriated area: 247,23 m²
Remaining area: 478,23 m²

MASTANLI MOSQUE and Primary School | 16th Century

Land area: 819,30 m²
Expropriated area: 41,99 m²
Remaining area: 777,40 m²

OSMANIYE MOSQUE

16th Century
Land area: 253,73 m²
Expropriated area: 215,29 m²
Remaining area: 38,44 m²

SEHREKUSTU MOSQUE

Construction Date: 1530
Restoration: 1906 and 2006
Land area: 1094,79 m²
Expropriated area: 303,02 m²
Remaining area: 791,77 m²

SERDAR MAHALLE MOSQUE

Sabuncu Ali Mosque
Construction Date: 1530
Restoration Date: 1829)
Land Area: 1009,13 m²

SUPUREN MASJID

Construction Date: 1530
Land area: 128,30 m²
Expropriated area: 39,60 m²
Remaining area : 88,70 m²

TEKKE MOSQUE | 16th Century

Land area: 1974,63 m²
MOSQUE PLAN : 113,85 m²

THE YENI (NEW) MOSQUE

Construction Date: 1585
Restoration: 1902 and 2006
Land area: 2206,42 m²
Expropriated area: 126,75 m²
Remaining area: 2079,67 m²

YENICE MAHALLE MOSQUE AND PRIMARY SCHOOL

Land area: 957,50 m²
Expropriated area: 153,00 m²
Remaining area: 804,50 m²

YUSUF EFENDI MASJID

16th Century
Land area: 196,32 m²
Expropriated area: 41,25 m²
Remaining area: 155,07 m²

YUKSEK MASJID

16th Century
Land area: 457,97 m²
Expropriated area: 448,65 m²
Remaining area : 9,32 m²

SELVILI MOSQUE and RUINED MINARET

The mosque has been totally destroyed. Just a grave and a ruined minaret.

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