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# DIFFERENT APPROACHES TO THE STUDY OF SOME OTTOMAN SETTLEMENTS ALONG THE VIA EGNATIA. ELBASAN, FLORINA AND APPOLLONIA LOUTRÀ (15<sup>TH</sup>-17<sup>TH</sup> CENTURIES)

## Forewords

South– Eastern Europe is a region characterized by a cultural heritage of unique richness and diversity, which has to be preserved for the benefit of all. Ottoman Heritage resides not only on monuments or buildings but features relevant reflections on usage of current languages. Turkish words or expressions are today still in use in these countries but the same term may cover different meanings in different parts of the peninsula.<sup>1</sup>

Generally speaking, the period of transition covering approximately the last fifteen years, has generated the consciousness of culture as a critical factor in determining the social and political attitudes, either in the direction of fostering dialogue or in that of increasing the causes of ethnic and religious conflicts; in this sense it is even more essential to promote understanding and respect for the specifics of each country's cultural identity, and to raise awareness over the importance of preserving the Islamic Heritage as a shared resource, both within the region and toward the international community. The energy of the inhabitants of the successor states was wasted in the destruction of almost everything that was reminiscent of their fallen masters, causing the disappearance of approximately 98% of all works of architecture the Ottomans produced in Southeast Europe.<sup>2</sup> Therefore, it is not an easy task to recover exhaustive information about that immense architectural patrimony.<sup>3</sup>

Road history is more than just the history of roads as functional transportation network. The influence of the construction of roads on people's consumption and perception of landscapes is massive. Roads

shape both landscapes both people. People's modes of travel conceptualize mobility as an expression of identity making process in landscapes. The recognition of local landscapes is linked to the interpretation of a social-home landscape. An extremely relevant approach to this perspective is to study how a "home-valued" landscape is connected to a historically specific and socially diverse traveling space.<sup>4</sup>

## 1. The historical *Via Egnatia* and its sources

The *Via Egnatia* is the infrastructural work with which the Romans, starting from the second half of the 2<sup>nd</sup> century B.C., structured the millenary route that ran from the southern regions of the Adriatic coast to the northern Aegean, ensuring thus communication from East to West. It ran from the Eastern Adriatic coast across the Balkan Peninsula to Byzantium. As a sort of extension of the *Via Appia*, starting from Rome, it provided Southern Italy and the Western Mediterranean with a short land route to the Aegean, the Eastern Mediterranean, the Euxine (Pontus) Sea and Asia. The *Egnatia* runs through the central regions of the Balkan Peninsula, from Illyria and Epirus in the West, across Macedonia to Thrace in the East.<sup>5</sup> The modern bitumen road from Durrës in Albania to Istanbul by way of southern FRY Macedonia, Thessalonica and northern Greece, largely follows the route of the *Egnatia*.<sup>6</sup> The *Egnatia* undoubtedly falls within that category of roads, which take their name from their builder, or better, from the person who paved them; it seems that the only eligible Egnatius, which has been founded in the written sources, could be Cneus Egnatius C. f. Stell(atina tribu), though it is not certain. In his *Geography* Strabo wrote:

From Apollonia the Via Egnatia runs east to Macedonia. It has been measured and marked with milestones as far as Cypsela<sup>7</sup> and the river Hebrus<sup>8</sup>, the distance being 535 miles. If we reckon the mile, as most people do, at 8 stades, this makes 4280 stades, but if like Poybius we add to the 8 stades 2 plethra, i.e. the third of a stade, we must add 678 stades, the third of the number of miles. Travellers starting from Apollonia and from Epidamnus strike the road at an equal distance from their point of departure. The whole road is called Via Egnatia, but the first section passing through the town of Lychnidus<sup>9</sup> and through Pylon, the point on the road, which separates Illyria from Macedonia, derives its name from Candavia, a mountain of Illyria. Thence it passes along Mt. Barnus<sup>10</sup> through Heraclia

Lyncestis,<sup>11</sup> and Eordea to Edessa<sup>12</sup> and Pella and finally Thessalonica. The length of this part is according to Polybius 267 miles.<sup>13</sup>

[...]

When the empire of the Macedonians was broken up, they fell under the power of the Romans. And it's through the country of these tribes that the Egnatian Road runs, which begins at Epidamnus<sup>14</sup> and Apollonia.<sup>15</sup>

[...]

Macedonia is bounded [...] on the south, by the Egnatian Road, which runs from Dyrrachium towards the east as far as Thessalonica.<sup>16</sup>

And quoting Polybius:

From Perinthus to Byzantium the distance is 630 stades, from the Hebrus to Cypsela to Byzantium as far as the Cyanean rocks it is 3100 according to Artemidorus, and the whole distance from the Ionian gulf at Apollonia to Byzantium is 7320 stades, Polybius adding a further 180 stades, as he reckons the mile at 8 1/3 stades.<sup>17</sup>

The main ancient sources of our knowledge of the *Egnatia* are one ancient map of the Roman Empire, known as the *Peutinger Table*<sup>18</sup> and two Itineraries: the Antonine Itinerary<sup>19</sup> and the Jerusalem Itinerary.<sup>20</sup> The importance of the *Egnatia* in ancient times was strategic and economic. One would expect the importance of this road to increase during the Middle Age; on the contrary the *Egnatia* functioned only partially in Byzantine times.<sup>21</sup> The "*Anonymous Description of Eastern Europe*", a Medieval Latin text from the year 1308 A.D., which contains a survey of the lands of Eastern Europe, reports:

De Apulia et de civitate brundensima nocte potest transiri in Duracium et de Duracio per Albaniam potest iri in Graciam et in Constantinopolim valde facilliter et bene absque difficultate viarum et periculo aquarum eh hanc viam faciebant antiquitus imperatores romanorum, nam nimium tediosum est exercitum copiosum ducere tanto tempore per mare et per tam longam viam.<sup>22</sup>

Having been practically abandoned for some centuries, the classical road obviously had fallen in disrepair, but by the middle of the 13<sup>th</sup> century, Byzantium had re-established its authority over the eastern part of the *Egnatia*, which became once again the major axis between Thessalonica and Constantinople.

To function again, it needed a unifying political power in control of the whole region from one end to the other, with a keen interest in its strategic and economic potential, caring for its maintenance and security. These conditions were satisfied only with the Ottoman conquest. The Ottoman conquest was significantly marked by the construction of new fortresses, such as Yenice-i-Karasu (Genisea) to the south of Xanti, Yenice-i-Vardar (Giannitsa) between Thessalonica and Edessa, and much later Elbasan, on the river Shkumbin.

The main ancient sources of our knowledge of the *Egnatia* during the Ottoman time are: some volumes of the *Seyahatname* (vol. 5, 6, 8) written by Evliya Çelebi (1611-1684), the diary of the journey made in 1591 by the Venetian nobleman Lorenzo Bernardo, reported by his secretary, Gabriele Cavazza and then several other Ottoman primary sources.

Evliya Çelebi, pen name of Dervish Mehmed Zilli, was born in Istanbul as the son of the chief goldsmith to the Ottoman court. From 1640 to 1676, Evliya Çelebi traveled widely throughout the Ottoman Empire and in neighboring lands, sometimes in a private capacity and at other times on official business. Evliya Çelebi's extensive travels, exceptional for the period, were recorded in his ten volume's *Seyahatname* (Book of travels). The *Seyahatname* contains a wealth of information on cultural history, folklore and geography from the countries Evliya Çelebi visited.<sup>23</sup> His lengthy descriptions of the Balkan cities in particular, give proof of a refined and highly developed Oriental culture in that region, of which few architectural traces have remained.

In 1591 Venetian ambassador or *bailo* to Constantinople, Girolamo Lippomano, was accused of high treason and sentenced in absentia to death by the Council of the Ten. Senator Lorenzo Bernardo, himself a former Venetian ambassador to Constantinople (May 1584-mid-1587), was charged with traveling to the Ottoman capital to carry out the sentence. Bernardo set out from Venice by boat on April 26, 1591. On his arrival in Albania, he chose the rarely used route overland through the country so as to maintain the secrecy of his mission. The accused Lippomano was eventually arrested and sent back to Venice. In the conclusion of his report, Bernardo recounts how at the vessel's arrival in Lido, Lippomano plunged into the sea and drowned. This account offers many interesting details of life along that road at the time, as he experienced it on his secret journey:



Vennero con l'antedetto Pticovich il cavalier domino Tomà Pellessa Albanese, e insieme missier Vincenzo Decca con missier Piero Volvizza d'Antivari,<sup>24</sup> li quail dissero, che la strada per Uscopia<sup>25</sup> sarebbe più sicura e più facile; ma quattro giornate più lunga. E così affermaron li turchi. Onde sua signoria illustr. Per compensar con quest'avvantaggio la tardità interposta dal tempo contrario nel viaggio di mare, e delle difficoltà prenarrate nel prender quello di terra, deliberò di tener la via di Elbassano<sup>26</sup>, perchè anche, essendo insolita a personaggi, fuggisse l'occasione che a Costantinopoli pervenisse l'avviso della sua andata prima del suo arrivo. [...] Questa deliberazione di tener lo viaggio per la via di Elbassano insolita ad ambasciatori e baili, mi fece risolvere di scrivere quest'ltinerario, acciocchè secondo la riuscita, se ne possa dar informazione a chi per avventura disegnasse per l'avvenire d'incamminarsi per la medesima strada.<sup>27</sup>

Cavazza confirmed that the road to Skopje was the safest and easiest, but was four days longer and the decision to take the road to Elbasan, which was not used by ambassadors or bailies, was what caused him to write the Itinerary so that, whatever happened, it could serve as information for anyone who might happen to consider taking the same road in the future. And the 19 May 1591, when the *bailo* and his suite was already in Elbasan he adds:

19 Maggio, domenega. Ci fermassimo in Elbassan hieri et oggi per provvedere di nuove cavalcature per Salonicchi,<sup>28</sup> havendo sua signoria illustr. Voluto eleggere questa strada piuttosto che quella di Euscopia,<sup>29</sup> perchè per l'informazioni havute, è più corta, più facile e più sicura, e s'intese anche che per essa si era incamminato il sanzacco di Scutari<sup>30</sup> nuovamente deposto, per andare a Costantinopoli.<sup>31</sup>

He said that the *bailo* preferred to take the *Egnatia* over the one to Skopje because, because according to the information received, it was shorter, better and safer and recently used by the Sanjak Bey of Shkodra on his way to Constantinople. These sources are rich in detailed descriptions of the cities along the *Egnatia* (called in Turkish *Sol Kol*, i.e. The Left Way) and of the constellation of buildings such as mosques, hospices, baths, caravanserais, *tekkes*, fountains and others public buildings. For example, Bernardo found the towns he saw usually provided with well-built and properly looked after caravanserais, where he lodged. This is a clear indication that the *Egnatia* was used at that time. It is also a proof of the

existence of several *vakıf* supporting the management and the maintenance of those caravanserais.<sup>32</sup> Examining the situation along the *Egnatia*, we can see that several large *vakıf* had been founded mainly during the expansion of the Empire. It seems that the Ottomans started the construction work along the *Egnatia* right after the conquest of Western Thrace and Eastern Macedonia in the 1360s and 1370s.<sup>33</sup> We can observe an increase in the number of *vakıf* created during the reigns of Murat II, Bayazid II<sup>34</sup> and Süleyman.<sup>35</sup> We might say that those were the period in which the *Egnatia* was of greater importance to the Empire and for this reason special care was taken in promoting the route. For instance, the Ottoman army crossed segments of the western Egnatia during the military campaign in 1537 against Avlona.<sup>36</sup> According to the “Journal de la septième campagne de Souleïman contre Avlona en l’année de l’hégire 947 (1537),”<sup>37</sup> the itinerary followed by the Ottoman army was very close to the one followed by Lorenzo Bernardo and his suite in 1591:

Itinerary of the Ottoman army (1537) <sup>38</sup>	Lorenzo Benardo’s itinerary (1591) <sup>39</sup>
28/09/1537 Monastir (Bitola)	23/05/1591 Monasterio (Bitola)
02/10 Türbeli Koy	25/05 Frobelli (Florina)
03/10 Ostrova (Armissa)	26/05 Ostrova (Armissa)– Vodena (Edessa)
04/10 Vidana (Edessa)	27/05 Genizze (Giannitsa)
07/10 Selanik (Thessalonica)	28/05 Salonicchi (Thessalonica)
09/10 Lankaza ılıcası (Langhadhas)	31/05 Langazada (Langhadhas)
[...]	
15/10 Kavala	04/06 Cavalla (Kavala)
17/10 Karasu Yenice (Giannitsa)	05/06 Carassu Gianitzè (Giannitsa)
[...]	
20/10 Meghri (Makri)	06/06 Makri (Makri)

The military usage of the road is also underlined in some passages of the *Seyahatname*. In fact, according to Evliya Çelebi:

The Sinan Pasha mosque [in Elbasan] inside the fortress with its large congregation has a spiritual atmosphere, but it is now full of biscuits stoked for the Ottoman army preparing to attack the fortress of Kotor in

Venetian territory. In fact, 1000 quintals of these biscuits were loaded onto carts and sent to Durrës and from there to Mania by ship for the Ottoman troops there.<sup>40</sup>

## 2. The Case of Elbasan, on the River Shkumbi (16<sup>th</sup>-17<sup>th</sup> Centuries)

It's essential to point out some important problems belonging typically to Albanian Islamic Heritage. There were 1,127 mosques in Albania itself at the end of the Second World War. An estimated 1,050 of the mosques in Albania survived unscathed up to 1967, but then, in an unprecedented act of extremism, Islam and all other religions were simply banned by the communist authorities. The willful destruction of Islamic culture in Albania became all the more severe during the late sixties and the early seventies, when almost all the mosques in the country, including some, which had just been restored and were of inestimable cultural value, were demolished or transferred for other use. A few buildings were simply locked up and thus survived the cultural carnage in a more or less recognizable form, among which the Nazireshes Mosque (pre-1599) of Elbasan. According to Elbasan scholar Lef Nosi (1873-1945), there were still 31 mosques in Elbasan in 1931. Of the five mosques that survived the Cultural Revolution of 1967, four were destroyed in the following decade.<sup>41</sup> According to architect Sulejman Dashi, of the 1,050 mosques that existed before 1967, 800 survive today. About 30 of the most important ones have been well preserved as a result of 1967 edict, which, he says, "protected Albania's cultural patrimony while allowing the people to destroy those mosques and churches which had no historical value". Dashi says that the edict was issued only because the chief of Albania's Institute of Architectural Preservation convinced the Communist that the destruction had to be stopped. "If it had gone on for another three years," he says "you wouldn't be able to find any mosques of churches in Albania today".<sup>42</sup>

The Albanian Portion of *Via Egnatia* participates in an active regional and international trade. Furthermore we should connected the interests of Sultan Murad II in *Via Egnatia* with his efforts to secure the conquest of Albania against Venetians, who at that time, dominated routes of Adriatic Sea.<sup>43</sup> Elbasan<sup>44</sup> (T. *él-basan* '[fortress] which subdues the land'), is a town of central Albania (41°06'N., 20°06'E.) on the sites of the ancient *Scampis* (*Mansio Scampa VI* in the *Peutinger Table*) on the *Via Egnatia*, situated in a strategic position controlling the fertile valley of the Shkumbin (*Genysos*),

which here emerges from the mountains. Nowadays, the road that linked Tirana with Elbasan is still very narrowed and difficult, not very far from the Venetian description:

Da Petrella,<sup>45</sup> onde si comincia ad entrar ne monti, incomincia anche la cattiva strada, la quale, più si va innanzi sir ova peggiore, con ascese e discese anguste e dirupate, per le quali le some passano difficilmente, e bisognò che li portalettiche portassero in molti luoghi a mano la lettica.<sup>46</sup>

So at that time the ascents and descents were so narrow and steep so that it was difficult to travel with the luggage and in many places, the litter bearers had to carry the litters with their own hands.

The fortress is a typical *castrum statum*, the military camp of a Roman legion. The fortress, called nowadays with the word of Turkish origin, *kala*, has a rectangular form of 308 x 348 meters, oriented with the shorter side northeast-southwest and defined by a crossing where two roads meet at a right angle (one of these roads is the *Egnatia*). A moat of approximately 11 meters wide once surrounded the fortress. The first fortress was built during the time of the Roman emperor Diocletian (284-305), using the roman technique so called *opus mixtum*.<sup>47</sup> Remains of the original walls can now be seen in the lower parts of the existing walls. During the time of the Byzantine emperor Justinian (527-565) the fortress underwent extensive repairs. In the Ottoman period, the fortress, round which the town grew up, was built with great speed at the command of Mehmet II while Kruje was being unsuccessfully besieged in the summer of 1466, as a base for future operations against Iskandar Beg; it resisted a siege in the following spring.

The fortress of Elbasan is situated on a fertile plain, which stretches northwards and southwards for a quarter of an hour. The surrounding hills and mountains are covered in vineyards. This square and solid built, ancient construction is situated in a broad valley on the bank of Skumbin River. It is 15 ells high. The outer ramparts of the fortress are skillfully constructed and have 50 towers.<sup>48</sup>

Actually there were only 26 towers and not 50 but otherwise the description of the *kala* by Evilya Çelebi is very accurate. Beginning in 1998 the space belonging to the southwest zone of the Elbasan *kala* has

been restored and revitalized through a project thanks to the Albanian arch. Reshat Gega. Further archaeological works are about to be carried out in order to excavated the Roman *Egnatia*, which is supposed to lie a couple of meters under the modern road that crosses the *kala*.

Is it characteristic of Albania that the largest works of Ottoman architecture from the 15<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> century was works of military engineering.<sup>49</sup> At first administrated as part of the *sancak* of Ohrid, within a few years Elbasan was made the chief-lieu of a separate *sancak* of Rumelia, having four *kadi* district: Elbasan, Cermenika, Ishbat, Dirac.

Elbassano è luogo posto in pianura, e con muraglie antichissime. Qui fa residenza il sanzacco di questa provincia, che al presente è uno nominato Mehmet bey fratello di un signo persiano che nella Guerra passata si diede all'obbedienza del Signor turco, il qual fu fatto visitare col solito presente dall'illustrissimo sig. Bernardo, ricercandolgi favore et huomini per passar sicuri per il suo sanzacato; il che concesse cortesemente. Questa è terra mercantile di cordovani e lane. Vi sono due cavarserà. Vi corre un fiume detto Egrede, il qual si guazza due volte prima che si giunga alla città.<sup>50</sup>

With these words Cavazza described the city of Ebasan as a town on the plain with ancient walls; from these lines we know that *sanjak bey* of the province lived in there. And also that the city was a trading post for hides and wool and there were two caravanserais. After the consolidation of the Ottomans on Northern Albania and the Adriatic coast, the fortress rapidly lost its military importance. But the town, always and still predominantly Muslim, remained a flourishing trade-centre. Evliya describes a prosperous and attractive town with 18 Muslim and 10 Christian *mahalle*, 46 mosques, 11 *tekkes*, 11 *hans* and a very frequented market. The following is the description of the *bazaar*, as it should look in 1670:

The grand bazaar of Elbasan has 900 shops although they are not all on the main street. Rather the shops are laid out along all the public thoroughfares. These attractive markets are well stocked, clean, orderly and well kept, roofed and shaded. The nicest markets are those of the saddlers, the silkmakers and the goldsmiths [...]. The city has no stonework *bedestan* adequate to its prosperity, but precious goods from all over the world can be found...<sup>51</sup>

What is very interesting in Evliya's account of Elbasan, is that it is still possible to identify objects and places as they are described in the *Seyahatname*. The followings are some examples of these comparisons.

On the vault over the southern or bazaar gate there is a block of white marble on which are inscribed, in celi script, the names of the forefathers of Mehmet the Conqueror back to Osmancik and the date of the conquest of Elbasan.

[...]

And also above this gate there are three blocks of white marble, suspended on chains, and showing traces of arrow and bullet shots; all who go in and out the gate remark on them.

[...]

Near the mosque is a high clock tower. The clock was very skillfully constructed and is quite accurate, never losing a minute or a second, so the muezzins of all the mosques follow it faithfully.<sup>52</sup>

The three blocks of marble mentioned still hang from the southern gate as well as the marble inscription over the vault of the bazaar gate. The clock tower may be the one that was destroyed by a fire around 1839, so that the clock tower that there is nowadays in the *kale* is a reconstruction of the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

In the middle of the fortress is the large old Mosque of Sinan Pasha, a one-story construction. The outer sides of its four walls are completely covered in couplets, poems, qasides, hadiths and single verses inscribed by travelers from Turkey, Arabia and Persia, each of whom wrote in his own hand, in fine calligraphy.<sup>53</sup>

This mosque, known as the Xhamia e Mbretit or (Mosque of the King), is the largest and oldest mosque in Elbasan; in fact it was built ca 1490-1500. It was mutilated beyond recognition and used initially as a painter's studio, then by the Democratic Front as a "Centre for the Political Instruction of the People" and eventually as a puppet theatre. It has been reconstructed recently, even if without the minaret it once had.<sup>54</sup>

Elbasan has three heart-relieving bathhouses. First of all is the Bathhouse of Sinan Pasha within the fortress near the eastern gate in an old building. Its water and atmosphere and construction are quite pleasant.

This *hamam*, still standing, was founded around 1500 and restored in 1989 and nowadays is employed as a bar-restaurant. The choice of the colors for the interior is nevertheless objectionable (pink, yellow and light blue), but at least the building is well preserved.

### **3. The forgotten Ottoman legacy of Florina on the River Sakoulevas (17<sup>th</sup> century)**

It is a fact of that the number of works, which are living witnesses of the Ottoman culture and civilization in Greece, decrease day by day. For this reason is very urgent for present monuments to be taken photographs, measured, made their plans and elevations and read the writing and inscriptions. Recently some remarkable examples of restoration and preservation of these buildings have been carried out in Greece such as in Thessalonica, and so not only where at the places where the Muslim population is dense like Komotini or Xanti in Western Trace.<sup>55</sup> By the way, there are still too many buildings about to collapse and unfortunately those ones along the *Egnatia* are prevalently in a very bad situation because in Greece there has been no through registration of the existing Ottoman building.<sup>56</sup> The most evident example of this situation is probably the city of Giannitsa (Yenice Vardar).<sup>57</sup> Quoting Kiel:

Not many of the places in the former Ottoman provinces of Europe, which remained in Moslem hands until 1912 and played a role of any importance, have preserved so few monuments from this period as did Yenice Vardar. In the now neglected quarter of the market, the *Çarşı* of old, we still find a basin of white marble which once stood in the courtyard of a mosque; the massive *Bedesten* has vanished entirely and no one remembers the place where it once stood. Until 1967 there still was a large *hamam* in a bad state of decay but still, architecturally speaking, fairly well preserved. During my second visit to this place in 1969 I was unable to find it again. In its place a large, new house was built.<sup>58</sup>

The Ministry of Culture, supervised by the 13th Eforeie of Byzantine Monument Department, legally protects the buildings, which belong to the Department. On the other hand, there are many cases where Ottoman buildings belong to private owners.

In the remaining part of this article I want to focus on two basically unknown situations: the case of Florina on the River Sakoulevas and a little known Ottoman building on the Lake Volvis.

Florina is a town in Greece. It lies in the central part of Florina prefecture, of which is the capital. It is located east of Korçë, Albania and Lake Prespa, south of Bitola, FRY Macedonia, west of Thessalonica and Edessa, northwest of Larissa and Kozani, and northeast of Ioannina and Kastoria. It is the first town across the border with FRY Macedonia (13 km) and stands on slightly rising ground of about 680 m above sea level. The historic *Egnatia* is situated to the east. Florina is the site of the ancient Melitonus.<sup>59</sup> The site has been inhabited continuously since prehistoric times, as archaeological finds show, though its present name is perhaps related to the Byzantine settlement, Chloro. It remains under the Ottomans from 1385 to 1912 inclusively. In 1591 the city is mentioned in Gabriele Cavazza's Itinerary:

25 Sabato. Di mattina a due ore di giorno montassimo a cavallo, et a mezzo di giungessimo alla villa Frubelli [Florina].

[...]

All'uscir da Monasterio [Manastir/Bitola], cavalcassimo circa due ore e mezza per una spatiosissima campagna tutta piana e fertile, attorno la quale vi sono diverse ville; e poi entrassimo in altra campagna, la quale si va rilevando con diversi colli, e si mostra rida e sassosa in molte parti, e si dimanda la campagna di Calassi, a differenza di quella di Monsterio. A Frubelli nn si trova nè pane nè vino, ne v'è cavarzerà.<sup>60</sup>

Cavazza describes the city as a city where is not possible to find bread, wine and neither a caravanserai, while Evliya Çelebi reports that Florina (Filorina) had 6 neighborhoods, 1500 houses, 17 mosques (Abdühalim Efendi Camii, Çarşı Camii, Kâtip Ali Mahallesi Camii, Kara Ahmet Ağa Camii, Yakup Bey Camii...), three *medrese* (Abdülkerim Efendi Medesesi...), 7 *mektep* (Kara Ahmet Ağa Mektebi, Yakup Bey Mektebi, Rüştiye Mektebi...), 1 *tekke*, 1 *imaret* and 2 *han* and 2 *hamam*. Of all these buildings only few traces survived until nowadays. This fact is not surprising because there is no mention about any Ottoman architectural legacy in all the references for Florina.<sup>61</sup> Actually only three completely unknown Ottoman buildings remain in the city. The first is the basement of a minaret located at the number 6 of *Papakon Nou Neretis*; the masonry's technique is the so-called *opera mista* as the Ottomans used



local Byzantine construction methods. This type of masonry consists in a number of layers of alternate bricks and stones. In the particular case of the unknown minaret in Florina, the masonry consists in alternation of three rows of bricks and a layer of stone; every stone is separated from the other by a couple of vertical bricks. Plain bricks constitute the remains of the minaret's shaft and its shape reminds the one from the Alaca Imaret Mosque in Thessalonica built by Ishak Pasha in 1487. The minaret's basement has six equal sides, while the seventh side, which originally was the side attached to the mosque, is larger and hosts the access door. Part of the winding staircase is still visible.<sup>62</sup>

The second building is situated not far from the minaret and it is located at the intersection between *Fuledaki* and *Elefterias*, basically at the bank of the Sakoulevas River. It is called by locals "the Byzantine Castle", probably due to the employment of brick in the masonry. This is a very interesting building. The outer part is very simple: two walls with irregular stonework; the side of the building, which is located in *Elefterias* is decorated with a small window, surmounted by an arch made by vertical bricks (33 bricks). The original wooden lintel is still visible. Unfortunately the whole building is overgrown by plants and it is very difficult to see and in particular the side, which lays in *Fuledaki*. Entering the interior of the building is even more difficult since it is protected by barbed wire. By the way, it is possible to identify a vaulted or domed space, while two and half pointed arches decorate the wall. The first pointed arch in reality is a niche in the wall. Both ceiling and walls are made by fine brickwork.

The third building is situated a bit far from the other two but is also located around the neighborhoods of the bank of the Sakoulevas River, where probably the Ottoman city developed. This building completely covered by plants and used as a public dumping ground, is a small *hamam*. It is about to collapse. The outer part is made by stonework. Vertical bricks frame the entrance door. In the wall, on the right of the entrance door, there is a small rectangular niche. Two rooms compose the interior of the *hamam*, which is plastered. Lighting is provided by some square shaped openings in the dome. These openings often form interesting decorative motif: placed according to a geometrical design, these light channels caused a diffused light fall in to the room below, in a ever changing direction. Square shaped openings have been found also in *Zambeliou and Douka str.* in Chania (Crete) and in the *B* bath at Methoni castle.

One of the most interesting visual sources for the history of this city it is a picture postcard with a view of a main street in Florina, with single-storey

and two-storey buildings, from the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century (Thessalonica, Euth. Georgiadi-Koundoura archive).<sup>63</sup> The picture shows the market area and in the background the clock tower (*saat kulesi*) and behind that an unknown minaret's silhouette. Both buildings don't exist anymore. Only from the picture it cannot be said for sure but that clock tower shows a resemblance with the one in Bitola (FRY Macedonia), the one in Travnik (Bosnia) both dated back to the 18<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>64</sup>

#### **4. A little known Ottoman building on the Lake Volvis (16<sup>th</sup> century)**

The *Mansio Apollonia XI*, as it is referred in the *Peutinger Table*, corresponds with the site of the modern village, Nea Apollonia. It appears to have been founded by the Macedonian king Perdiccas as an outpost against the Thracian and Athenians on the Strymo. The modern village is near Lake Volvis, on sedimentary land built up by the stream Kholomendas, upon the upper course of which stands the village of Melissurgos. At 52 km from Thessalonica is Loutrà, where there are the medicinal waters (quoted also by Evliya Çelebi, who described the water as sulphur waters comparing them with the ones in Bursa).

The building that I'm about to describe is located in an abandoned area between the contemporary operating thermal baths and the village of Nea Apollonia, on the side of Lake Volvi.<sup>65</sup> Its dating is not certain: there are different positions that date back the building to the mid 15<sup>th</sup> century or to the beginning of the 16<sup>th</sup> century. It is an octagonal shape building, probably originally covered by a brick dome, supported by an octagonal drum. The masonry of the outer sides is very chaotic and is a mix of bricks and irregular stonework. There is not a real entrance to the interior of the building. Nowadays, it is possible to enter the building through a large hole in the wall. In the centre of the structure there is an octagonal basin for the waters; the walls are enriched with 8 pointed arches within which there are 8 small pointed niches. Both arches and niches are made by brickwork.

According to Arch. Nikolas Dikas, the building is a *hamam*. He proposed a project for the renovation and the reuse of the building suggesting the following points: the maintenance and restoration of ruined parts, to develop its structural and sensual totality, the completion of the ruined dome, the addition of a new building complex that would

support the function of a small bathing nucleus and its relationship with the old bath.<sup>66</sup>

But is this building a *hamam*? I am quite skeptical with this interpretation. For first its location: in fact it is situated in a very unusual position for a *hamam*, almost on the shore of the lake; the distance between the lake and the building is approximately 30 m. Then, it is an isolated building: the village with the remains the Ottoman Yeni Bazar, is not in the near proximity. After the events of the beginning of our century, the Turks left, whilst the local Greek continued to live where they had before, leaving the Ottoman settlement to disappear as in the case of Pazargah (Pazaroudha), outside the present village of Apollonia. Both Gabriele Cavazza and Evliya Çelebi give descriptions of the site of Yeni Bazar. Gabriele Cavazza reports:

1591 primo Giugno. Sabato ad un'ora di giorno, partiti da Langazada<sup>67</sup>, venissimo dopo mezzodì a Genibazar.<sup>68</sup> Passassimo fra le rive di due laghi, l'uno circa due miglia lontano dall'altro. Quello alla destra è detto di Langazada, e quello di sinistra è detto di Genibazar. Si vedono diverse ville alle sponde d'ambidue. In Genibazar vi è un luogo come un seraglio di circa un miglio e mezzo di giro, fabbricato da Mehmet bassà primo visir, che fu ammazzato dal pazzo (sic) nel suo divano l'anno 1579, per l'anima sua, dove è comodo per i cavalli, moschea, bagno, con molte botteghe per comodità di quelli che vanno al bazarò che vi si fa ogni venerdì. Quivi arrivò la sera a 23 ore un nator con 130 cavalli, che era stato mandato dalla Porta per far festis, et alloggiò di fuori alla campagna sotto il suo padiglione.<sup>69</sup>

From the Seyahatname (summer 1667):

Eulogy of the borough of Yeni Bazar.<sup>70</sup>

This is a prosperous, charming and well-built borough, founded on flat and fertile meadows and tulips bed near the mountains and the shores of lake Beşik.<sup>71</sup> Formerly however, there was only a very small place. In the year [...], during the reign of Sultan Selim II,<sup>72</sup> the Grand Vizier Sokollu Mehmet Pasha spent a large sum of money and brought this road station to life by constructing there a light filled and lofty mosque, a house of instruction and school for children who learn the a-b-c, a tekke for the dervishes, those who believe in the oneness of God, a hamam, a repose of the soul, and shopping street for members of the guilds and craftsman, and a khan for merchants and traders, and an imaret to eat, a banquet

house for travelers coming and going. Now it has become like a large town, which because its population is free from all extra ordinary taxes, becomes more prosperous.<sup>73</sup>

But of course there is no mention of the octagonal building on the lakeshore. One of the possible explanations is that in effect the building is not a *hamam* but something less important. Something, which maybe was not so striking to be reported in any travel accounts. The most eligible hypothesis is that the building was a cistern for the waters as similar buildings with this function has been found in southern Turkey. Another hypothesis considers the possibility that the building was an icehouse. Icehouses were buildings used to store ice throughout the year, prior the invention of the refrigerator. The most common designs involved underground chambers, which were built close to natural sources of winter ice such as freshwater lakes. This allowed the ice to be collected when water had frozen over in the winter and quickly transport for storage in the icehouse. The ice would stay frozen for many months, and would be used to preserve and chill food all year round. Eventually, it could be compared to a Persian *yakh-chāl*.<sup>74</sup>

## Conclusions and remarks

Cultural heritage is a witness to the history of a country. Each historical influence, such as the Islamic influence, gives a specific contribution to a growing heritage, thus enriching cultural diversity and giving shape to specific, complex, stratified cultural identity as in the case of the countries of South-Eastern Europe.<sup>75</sup> The economical, political and social changes South-Eastern Europe underwent during the last fifteen years, have contributed to make local populations aware of the exigency of reaffirming their cultural identities and cultural heritage. Nowadays, in some of these countries the protection of the Ottoman architectural heritage is almost absent or very limited; sometimes the monuments stand in a very dilapidated state. Also, the damages caused in the last century by the war are still visible and sometimes, unfortunately, irreversible. What is required now is a guiding strategic plan, which will define the heritage, explain institutional responsibilities and practices. The plan should also be made clearly comprehensible to the general public, emphasizing its role in the appreciation and protection of the heritage, which is shared by all citizens of the South-Eastern Europe.

## GLOSSARY OF THE TURKISH-OTTOMAN WORDS

*Arasta*: *Ott.* < *Pers.*; term for a covered street or row of shops.

*Aşevi*: soup kitchen for the poor, students and wandering dervishes.

*Bazaar*: *Ott.* < *Pers.*; commercial area in Turkish city. A Turkish bazaar will normally contain a number of specialized buildings such as *hamams*, *hans*, *bedesten*, and *caravanserais* as well as covered market (*kapalıçarşı*), private shops, market stalls and mosques.

*Bedesten*: originally referred to the area of the market where cloth were sold or traded from the 'bezzaz han' (cloth market). Then the *bedesten* was a covered market, a kind of enclosed stone structures in the center of a bazaar with shops for precious textiles and jewelry. It used to have also the function of a bank and it was the place for important commercial transactions. The usual form of *bedesten* is a long domed or vaulted hall two storey high with external shop units.

*Bimarhane*: *Ott.* < *Pers.*; hospital for mental illnesses.

*Bimaristan*: *Arab.* ; hospital.

*Cami*: *Ott.* < *Arab.* ; mosque.

*Caravansaray*: *Ott.*; roadside building which provides accommodation and shelter for travelers.

*Çarşı*: market.

*Çeşme*: *Ott* < *Pers.*; public fountain.

*Elayet*: *Ott.*; an Ottoman province.

*Hamam*: *Ott.* < *Arab.*; public bath.

*Han*: *Ott.* < *Pers.*; building which combines the function of hotel and trading centre.

*Imaret*: *Ott.* < *Arab.*; architectural complex which might include several different buildings. After 16<sup>th</sup> century the term refers only to the public kitchen.

*Yakh-chāl*: *Pers.*; icehouse.

*Kalenderhane*: *Ott.* < *Pers.*; a lodge for wandering dervishes.

*Kahvehane*: *Ott.* < *Arab.*; coffee shop.

*Kapalıçarşı*: *Tur./ Pers.*; covered market.

*Kaplıca*: > *Tur.*; thermal bath or thermal complex.

*Kütüphane*: *Ott.* < *Arab./Pers.*; library.

*Küllüye*: *Ott* < *Arab.*; architectural complex which might include several different buildings, developed around a mosque.

*Mahalle*: *Ott.* < *Arab.*; neighborhoods.

*Medrese: Ott.* < *Arab*; building which functions as teaching institution primarily of Islamic sciences.

*Mektep: Ott.* < *Arab.*; primary school (also called *sıbyan mektebi*).

*Mescit: Ott.* < *Arab.*; small mosque without *mimber*.

*Mimber: Ott.* < *Arab.*; pulpit.

*Mihrab: Ott.* < *Arab.*; niche which shows in the mosque the direction for the prayer.

*Saat Kulesi: clock tower.*

*Sancak: Ott.*; a sub province or a country of an *elayet*.

*Sancak Bey: governor of the sancak.*

*Tekke: Ott.* < *Arab.*; dervish lodge.

*Türbe: Ott.* < *Arab.*; tomb or mausoleum.

*Vakıf: Ott.* < *Arab.*; pious foundations.

NOTES

- 1 In August 2007 I was able to travel along the *Via Egnatia* thanks to a grant awarded by the Barakat Trust in Oxford. The main purpose of the travel was to understand the current situation of the Islamic architectural heritage, crossing the four countries that belonged to the territories of the Ottoman Empire and linked by an ancient Roman road, the *Via Egnatia*. They are: Albania, FRY Macedonia, Greece and Turkey. The itinerary followed the journey made in 1591 by the Venetian *bailo* Lorenzo Bernardo and reported by Gabriele Cavazza who was among the *bailo's* suite: "Relazione del viaggio fatto da Lorenzo Bernardo, fu altra volta bailo a Costantinopoli e di presente rispedito al sultan Amurat III, onde ivi trattenersi, riuscendogli di mandare a Venezia Girolamo Lippomano cavaliere, imputato di rivelare li secreti del Senato a Principi, e scoperto infedele alla propria patria. 1591. Aprile", *Monumenti Storici pubblicati dalla R. Deputazione di Storia Patria. Serie Quarta: Miscellanea*, Vol. IV, Venezia, 1886; ZAJMOVA, R., "Les voyages en Orient: Rêve ou Réalité?", *Études Balkaniques*, 1-2, 1997, 146-148.
- 2 KIEL 1996, 145-146.
- 3 See: GOODWIN, G., "Ottoman Architecture in the Balkans", *Association of Architects' Quarterly*, (AARP), 9, 1976, 55-59; ASLANAPA, O., "Yunanistan'daki Türk Eserleri ve Türklerin Durumu", *T.K.A.*, 41, 1966; AYVERDI, E.H., "Yugoslavya'da Türk Abideleri ve Vakıfları", *Vakıflar Dergisi III*, Ankara, 1957, 151-223; AYVERDI, E.H., *Avrupa'da Osmanlı Mimarı Eserleri. Yugoslavya*, II (3., kitap), İstanbul Fetih Cemiyeti, İstanbul, 1980; AYVERDI, E.H., *Avrupa'da Osmanlı Mimarı Eserleri. Yugoslavya*, III (3., kitap), İstanbul Fetih Cemiyeti, İstanbul, 1981; AYVERDI, E.H., *Avrupa'da Osmanlı Mimarı Eserleri. Bulgaristan, Yunanistan, Arnavutluk*, IV (4., 5., 6., kitap), İstanbul Fetih Cemiyeti, İstanbul, 1982; EYICE, S., "Yunanistan'da Türk Mimarı Eserleri I", *Türkiyat Mecmuası XI*, 1954, 57-182; EYICE, S., "Yunanistan'da Türk Mimarı Eserleri I", *Türkiyat Mecmuası XII*, 1955, 205-30; ZDRAVKOVIĆ, I., *Le choix des matériaux pour l'étude des monuments de l'architecture islamique en Yougoslavie*, Belgrade, 1964; ACUN, F., "A Portrait of the Ottoman Cities," *Études Balkaniques*, 4, 2001, 116-140; Anon., "Islamic Monuments in Yugoslavia", *Islamic Review XLVI*: September, 1958, 22-26.
- 4 GUTTORMSEN 2007, 97-116.
- 5 O'SULLIVAN 1972, 11-13.
- 6 Today, a new modern motorway (E2) is under construction, following the ancient and traditional route of *Via Egnatia*.
- 7 Now Ipsala in Turkey.
- 8 Now the Maritza.
- 9 Now Ohrid in FRY Macedonia.
- 10 Now the Neretschka Planina Mountain.
- 11 Now Monastir (Bitola) in FRY Macedonia.

- 12 Now Edessa in Geece.
- 13 STRABO, *The Geoghrapy of Strabo*, vol. III, LOEB Classical Library, 1995, 293-95.
- 14 Now Durrës.
- 15 STRABO 1995, 309.
- 16 STRABO 1995, 333.
- 17 POLYBIUS, *The Histories*, vol. IV, LOEB Classical Library, 2000, 333.
- 18 For an outstanding and complete work on the Peutinger table, see: LEVI, A.C-LEVI, M., *Itinera picta-Contributo allo studio della Tabula Peutingeriana*, Rome, 1967.
- 19 See: *Itinerarium Antonini et Hierosylamitanum*, ed. Partley & Pinder, Berlin, 1848.
- 20 See: *Itineraria romana*, ed. Otto Kuntz, Lipsiae, 1929-40.
- 21 For a very detailed paper on the Egnatian Way during Medieval times see: OIKONOMIDES 1996, 9-16. But the basic monograph on the *Egnatia* in the Middle Ages is: TAFEL, L.F., *Via militaris Romanorum Egnatia qua Illyricum, Macedonia et Thracia jungebantur; pars occidentalis*, Tübingen, 1841; and from the same author: *De via Romanorum militari Egnatia*, Tübingen 1842.
- 22 ELSIE, R., "Albania in the 'Anonymi Descriptio Europae Orientalis' (1308 A.D.)", *Zeitschrift für Balkanologie*, Berlin, 26/1, 1990, 24-28; reprinted in: *Albanian Catholic Bulletin/Buletini Katolik Shqiptar*, San Francisco, 15, 1994, 157-159; full-text is downlodable at: [www.elsie.de/pub/articles/A1990Anonymi.pdf](http://www.elsie.de/pub/articles/A1990Anonymi.pdf).
- 23 Evliya Çelebi is an imaginative writer with a marked penchant for the wonderful and the adventurous. Sometimes he prefers legend to bare historical fact, indulges freely in exaggeration, and at times does not eschew bragging or anecdotes designed for comic effect. But, in spite of these reservations, the *Seyahatname* offers a wealth of information on cultural history, folklore and geography. The charm of the work lays not least the fact that it reflects the mental approach of the 17<sup>th</sup> century Ottoman Turkish intellectuals in their attitudes to the non-Muslim Occident, and throws some light on the administration and internal organization of the Ottoman Empire at that time. For further information about the *Seyahatname* and his author see: The Encyclopedia of Islam (New Edition), Vol. II, C-G, E.J. Brill, Leiden, 1991, "EWLİYA ÇELEBİ", 717-720; DANKOFF, R., *An Evliya Çelebi Glossary: Unusual, Dialectal and Foreign Words in the Seyahat-name*. Cambridge, Mass, 1991. [In Sources of Oriental Languages and Literatures, ed. Şinasi Tekin & Gönül Alpay Tekin].
- 24 Nowadays Bar in Montenegro.
- 25 Now Skopje in FRY Macedonia.
- 26 Nowadays Elbasan in Albania.
- 27 STEFANI 1886, 25.



- 28 Now Thessalonica in Greece.
- 29 Nowadays Skopje in FRY Macedonia.
- 30 Now Shkodra in Northern Albania.
- 31 STEFANI 1886, 29.
- 32 DEMETRIADES 1996, 95; and also: ŠABEV 1998, 130-145.
- 33 KIEL, 1996, 145.
- 34 The number of *vakıf* along the *Egnatia* founded by Bayezid II and his dignitaries was considerable. The *Egnatia* was again of a great importance for the Ottoman Empire during the second war with Venice (1499-1502).
- 35 During the time of Sultan Süleyman we observe a new increase in the Importance of the *Egnatia*, related to his purpose of invading Italy.
- 36 Now Vlorë, in Albania.
- 37 For the complete itinerey of the Ottoman army see: DE HAMMER, J., "Journal de la septième campagne de Souleïman contre Avlona en l'année de l'hégire 947 (1537)", *Histoire de l'Empire Ottoman*, Tome V, Paris, 1836, 523-526; and also: YERASIMOS 1991, 188-189.
- 38 YERASIMOS 1991, 188-189.
- 39 YERASIMOS 1991, 407-409.
- 40 DANKOFF-ELSIE 2000, 171.
- 41 DANKOFF-ELSIE 2000, 169.
- 42 LUXENER 1992, 38-47.
- 43 EGRO 2005, 89.
- 44 See: BABINGER 1931, 1-10, 94-103 (plan, photographs, inscriptions); and also: BALLAURI 1978, 45-64.
- 45 Nowadays Petrela in Albania.
- 46 STEFANI 1886, 28.
- 47 Opus mixtum = mixed brick and stone.
- 48 DANKOFF-ELSIE 2000, 165.
- 49 KIEL 1978, 547.
- 50 STEFANI 1886, 28-29.
- 51 DANKOFF-ELSIE 2000, 173-175.
- 52 DANKOFF-ELSIE 2000, 165.
- 53 DANKOFF-ELSIE 2000, 169-171.
- 54 DANKOFF-ELSIE 2000, 169.
- 55 See: KIEL, M., "Historical and Architectural Descriptions of the Turkish Monuments of Komotini and Serres", *Balkan Studies*, Thessaloniki, 12/1, 1971, 415-462; and from the same author: "Two Little Known Monuments of Early and Classical Ottoman Architecture in Greek Thrace", *Balkan Studies*, 22/1, 1981, 127-146.
- 56 See: Anon., The problem of protection of the Ottoman Turkish Architectural Heritage in Greece, *Türk Kültürüne Hizmet Vakfı*, Istanbul, 1992; and also: ÇAM 2000, 5-7.

- 57 Giannitsa was visited in June 1591 by Lorenzo Bernardo and his suite: "Ma poco dopo arrivassimo a Cavassù Gianizè, ch'è terra di cadilaggio non murata e sottoposta al bey della Cavalla. Alloggiasimo in un luogo di Imaret assai commodo. Vi trovassimo pane e carne; ma il vino si mandò a pigliare ad una villa un miglio vicina. Là trovassimo anca penuria di acqua buona, se ben vi corre la fiumara. E' luogo abitato quasi solo da turchi, in pianura", STEFANI 1886, 36.
- 58 KIEL 1971, 317-318.
- 59 Even without the evidence of the ancient remains nearby, we can be sure of this, because the number of Roman miles from Heraclia Lyncestis (Bitola) to Melitonus (Florina) and the number of statute miles, 17, almost coincide.
- 60 STEFANI 1886, 30.
- 61 For instance in the web, even in the official web sites of the city, there is no mention of Ottoman buildings. Just to mention some example, see: <http://www.florina.gr>; <http://www.culture.gr/maps/macedon/florina>.
- 62 The only source that mentions this minaret is BIÇAKÇI 2003, 89 (in Turkish).
- 63 The picture can be found at: [www.macedonian-heritage.gr/HellenicMacedonia/en/img\\_C391a.html](http://www.macedonian-heritage.gr/HellenicMacedonia/en/img_C391a.html).
- 64 ACUN 1994, 49-51.
- 65 I would like to thanks Mr. Zissios Reizopoulos for sending me more pictures of the building.
- 66 The project has been elaborated and presented as a Master thesis during the postgraduate program Protection, Conservation and Renovation of Architectural Monuments in Aristotle University of Thessalonica in March 2006. See also: HADJITRYFONOS 1988, 167-168.
- 67 Now Langadikia in Greece.
- 68 Now Apollonia in Greece.
- 69 STEFANI 1886, 34.
- 70 Now Apollonia in Greece.
- 71 Now Lake Volvis in Greece.
- 72 Sultan Selim II (1566-1574).
- 73 KIEL 1996, 148.
- 74 A *yakh-chāl* was a subterranean domed structure where the ice was stored. One of the most stunning examples is the *yakh-chāl* in Kerman (Iran), located about a mile from the centre of the city.
- 75 KLUSÁKOVÁ 2001, 358-360.

All the pictures in the text belong to personal archive of the author of the article who took them during the survey supported by the Barakat Trust from Oxford in August 2007.

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**Fig. 1.** Elbasan, Albania. The *Via Egnatia*.



**Fig. 2.** Elbasan, Albania. Southern or bazaar gate, exterior: the three blocks of white marble quoted by Evliya Çelebi.



**Fig. 3.** Elbasan, Albania. Southern or bazaar gate, detail of the interior: the marble inscription mentioned by Evliya Çelebi.



**Fig. 4.** Elbasan, Albania. The Xamie e Mbretit (Mosque of the King): external view of the reconstructed mosque.





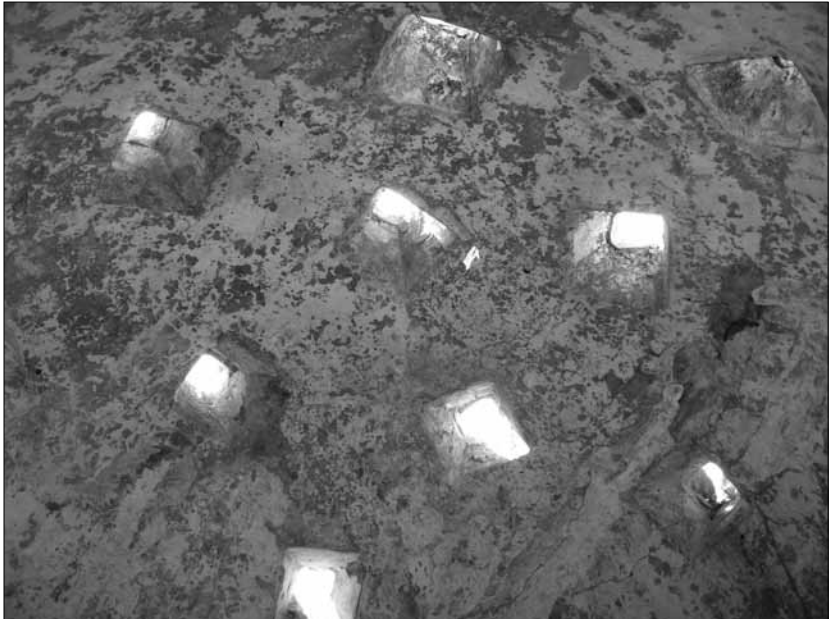
**Fig. 5.** Florina, Greece. The unknown minaret.



**Fig. 6.** Florina, Greece. The so called "*Byzantine Kastellos*": the interior.



**Fig. 7.** Florina, Greece. The *hamam*: general view.



**Fig. 8.** Florina, Greece. The *hamam*: the square shaped openings of the dome.



**Fig. 9.** Apollonia Loutrà, Greece. The octagonal building: general view.



**Fig. 10.** Apollonia Loutrà, Greece. Interior of the octagonal building.