

The Heritage of Wakfs: Muhammad Ali Pasha's Imaret in Kavala, Greece, and its Integration in Urban Functions

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ABSTRACT

A “wakf” is an “Islamic trust” that helped the Ottoman Administration to provide essential social services to citizens, also crucial for regulating urban communities. This paper focuses on the case of the Muhammad Ali Pasha wakf in Kavala, Greece, and covers a variety of its dimensions: planning legislation, architectural heritage, and urban renewal. It is based on a previous article of the authors, which is updated, revised, and modified here, by giving emphasis to the architectural elements of the main building of the Kavala wakf, Imaret, the techniques and processes of its restoration, and even more, to its integration to the functions of its host city of Kavala. The original research was based on bibliographical research, interviews, on site visits, and the personal experiences of the authors. Bibliographical research included historical references, articles relating Imaret to urban regeneration and architectural renewal, and articles about the research projects of MOHA – the cultural organization of Imaret. Interviews were taken from the directorial team of Imaret, from city administrators of the Municipality of Kavala, the architects involved in the restoration process, and from the local community. Visits and photographic data covered the periods of Imaret before, during, and after its restoration.

Keywords: Architectural heritage, Imaret, Islamic architecture, Kavala, MOHA, Wakf.

Published Online: August 02, 2022

ISSN: 2796-1168

DOI: 10.24018/ejarch.2022.1.4.7

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I. INTRODUCTION

The present paper is based on a presentation by K. Lalenis and E. Samourkasidou and on a subsequent publication in International Journal of Architectural Research (Lalenis & Samourkasidou, 2012). The presentation was mainly focusing on the legal aspects of wakfs in Greece, and was further examining the wakfs specifically at the city of Kavala in the north of Greece. The wakfs of Kavala presented uniqueness in their legal status, officially being property of the State of Egypt, and they were subject of legal disputes and controversial planning decisions and implementations. The present paper updates, revises, and modifies this presentation by downplaying – but not ignoring or omitting – the legal dimensions of the wakf issue, and instead, giving emphasis to the architectural elements of the main building of the Kavala wakf, Imaret, the techniques and processes of its restoration, and even more, to its integration to the scientific, cultural, educational, and economic functions of its host city of Kavala.

A wakf is an “Islamic trust” that helped the Ottoman Administration to provide essential services to citizens. According to Inalcik, wakf is an act of providing a property for a humanitarian purpose, in commission to public good, similar to providing financial and organizational support to a mosque or caravansary, contributing to one or more families directly or indirectly related to the donor, to support and provide for the education of young person(s), or to provide shelter and food for the poor. Wakf is also the trust created in this way, or the property in trust. The primary objectives of a wakf, its functions in detail, the financial sources and the means to increase its income, etc. are documented in an official document (“vakfiye”). Besides the Muslim wakfs, there were also the “ecclesiastic wakfs” which were established for Christian monasteries and churches, and they consisted of properties in land owned and managed by the monasteries, churches, and related organizations.

Wakfs were in general of two broad types: a. buildings such as schools, mosques, hospitals etc., reflecting the infrastructure used to serve the public good for which the wakf was established, and b. the appropriate

sources of income / endowments which were used to support the equivalent charitable foundations. These sources of income were either real estate to be given on lease, seized for a certain period equivalent to the wakfs, or land parcels with specific land uses vested on it for a monthly or an annual amount of money granted to the wakf, or in terms of a wakf land property, assigned to the users with the form of a lease.

According to Lalenis *et al.* the establishment of wakfs was either by the Sultan and high-ranking officials of the High Gate, or by usually wealthy private individuals. The will of the donors to support the underprivileged was praised by the religion, and according to the teachings of the Koran. At the same time, though, wakfs were providing a secure way to the aristocracy to transfer their properties to their descendants and protect their interests, since among the means used to cover their operation expenses and ensure their viability, was the granting of public land and the benefits accruing by this endowment, which were added to the equivalent private land granted to the wakfs by the establishing individuals. The Ottoman State, on the other hand, was encouraging this practice to mainly because large funds for public works was fulfilled, and at the same time, high incomes accruing to state administrators were possible to be scrutinized (Stefanidou, 1987).

II. WAKFS: IMPACT ON HOST CITIES

Wakfs contributed significantly in the construction of public works, and the building of technical and social infrastructure of the host cities, being, thus, an important factor of their economic prosperity. They also played a significant role in creating employment, providing space for economic activities, granting low interest loans, consuming local production, and contributing in a fairer redistribution of wealth to the local citizens. In many cases, wakfs were a catalyst for urban renewal and development in the host cities. Quality of life was also affected positively, as well as the competitiveness of the hosting environment (Karababa, 2012; Lykourinos, 2005; Nefissa, 2001; Yahya, 2008). The most significant means, through which wakfs achieved effective urban renewal and upgraded urban life, was the construction and function of külliyes, usually applied within the framework of the wakf practice. The construction of külliyes were the implementations of the intentions and policy of the Ottoman state to encourage urban development and preserve the health, safety, and well-being of its citizens, since the specific buildings usually succeeded in renovating and improving the urban environment. The külliye consisted of a group of establishments providing public goods, and including kitchens preparing food for the poor (imaret), a mosque, a library, a hospital, schools of learning (medrese) – usually teaching religion but often arts too – and a hostel (khani) for travelers and their horses. The külliye compound was usually located in the urban centre (Acun, 2002), surrounded by the commercial zone with bedesten, caravanserais and other shops representing all sorts of commercial activities. A number of constructions and places of activities of the commercial zone quite often belonged to local wakfs, and were important for the commercial facilities of the whole city (Lalenis & Samourkasidou, 2012). The Ottomans built mosques and other buildings like the above, in most cities in the Balkans, right after their conquest, in order to give them an Ottoman character. Hayashi described the significant impact that wakfs had in the development of cities. According to him, the wakf practice undoubtedly was directly related to urban economic activity (Acun, 2002). Indeed, in cities like Istanbul, Bursa, Edirne and Konya, most of the economic and commercial growth was taking place around the külliyes (Celik, 1987), which were usually of high architectural value and were broadly considered as landmarks of Ottoman architecture. Külliyes were also an expression of centralized initiatives for urban expansion.

III. IMARETS: HISTORY AND FUNCTIONS

Ottoman imarets were defined mainly as public kitchens, embodied in the whole complex of wakfs as parts of their immobile property. They were usually part of a group of buildings, usually around a mosque, with a public use like schools, founder's tomb, caravanserai or a bath (Lalenis & Samourkasidou, 2012). In Ottoman Empire, imarets existed in almost every city in Anatolia and the Balkans. As mentioned above, they were built in Balkan cities right after their conquest, in order to give them an Ottoman character. The majority of them were constructed around the 1600 AD, and continued to function for decades whereas some even for centuries (Singer, 2010). According to Lowry's research, 149 imarets were found to be in the Ottoman Balkans, with most of them being established during the first 200 years of the Ottoman Empire's period. Today, 65 of imarets are preserved in Greece, 42 in Bulgaria, 9 in Albania, 29 in countries of former Yugoslavia, 2 in Romania, and 2 in Hungary. In northern and central Greece, alongside the imarets there were over 250 zaviyes, institutions offering food and shelter, although mostly presented a somewhat modest architectural character, it is likely that were almost everywhere in the early Ottoman period.

All imarets prepared meals mainly for personnel of a mosque, medrese teachers or students, Sufis, government officials, travelers and local citizens, at no charge. In some places, non-Muslims had also access to food at no cost, a fact that was mentioned in both Muslim Ottoman and non-Muslims records. As it concerned the distribution of food, there were regulations which defined who had the right to eat, what type of food was offered, in what quantity / portions, and in what order. Upper class “clients” had the right to more food, and to the choice of a variety of different meals. Food service was following a social class structure pattern, according to which, people of a low social class dined with people of same social class. Furthermore, in cases that after high-class people had eaten and the remaining food was not enough, poor women and children would miss a meal¹⁸. Poor people in general would receive smaller meals with just a half ladle of soup and one loaf of bread.

According to Lalenis *et al.*, Imarets developed under the Ottoman Empire were highly complex group of buildings. Their function was to encourage and promote charity, but at the same time they served the imperial authority, thus each institution was named after its founder. Imarets public kitchens were meant to portray the image of Ottoman Empire as a just, charitable, and decisive entity, capable of providing a set of benefits for different groups of people in its domain. This image was considered to be an attraction to people to convert to Islam.

Imarets kept on functioning until the late nineteenth century. Then, they were negatively affected by the reform initiatives of the Tanzimat, initiated under the Sultan Mahmud II (1808-1839) and continued later by his successors. Tanzimat reforms significantly modified to some extent the nature and institutions of Ottoman administration, and cultural practices were also changing. According to these reforms, new government sectors were established to undertake the functions previously provided by means of private endowments, and provide social and welfare services. All these reforms affected crucially wakfs and the public kitchens as well (Singer, 2009).

IV. WAKFS IN GREECE: INSTITUTIONS, LAWS AND POLICIES

With the establishment of the new Greek state after the liberation of the Ottoman Empire, wakfs were assigned to the Greek government according to the London Protocol of 4/16 June 1830. Furthermore, according to the article 12 of the Greek-Turkish Treaty in Athens in 1913, all wakfs in “new territories” (Singer, 2009) would continue administered by Muslim communities of Northern Greece. This status quo is currently active, mainly for the wakfs of the Muslim minority in Western Thrace called as “Muslim wakfs”. The rest wakfs in Greece are called “ex-changeable wakfs”, characterized as such by the Lausanne Treaty of 1923.

V. “MUSLIM” WAKFS

This category includes wakfs in the prefectures of Xanthi and Rhodopi (Komotini) in Western Thrace north of Greece. The 1913 Athens Treaty, and the 1923 Lausanne Treaty (Chousein, 2005; Eleftheriadis, 1913) granted to the Muslim population living in Thrace the right for the wakf administration. The directors administering a wakf were usually Muftis, elected directly from the Muslim community (Bahcheli, 1987). During the Greek military dictatorship period (1967–1974) the power to nominate directors was re-considered. Later on, according to Law 1091/1980 and the related Presidential Decree 1/1991 (Chousein, 2005), the administration of the wakf consisted of a board of five officials, all members of the Minority, appointed by the Governor of the Region. The management of the budget of the wakfs has also to be approved by regional services. The issue of whether the administration of the wakfs should be elected or appointed, is an ongoing dispute between the Region of East Macedonia and Thrace, and the local Muslim minority. A matter of dispute is also the funding of schools of the Muslim community, which used to be a duty of the wakfs, today a responsibility of the Greek Ministry of Education. According to the minority, these measures deprive the wakfs of their traditional role of social, cultural, and educational contribution, with the administration countering funding of all public schools in the country, and the control over their curricula are constitutional provisions concerning the responsibilities of the Ministry of Education (Lalenis & Samourkasidou, 2012).

VI. “EXCHANGEABLE” WAKFS

The “exchangeable wakfs” in the rest of Greece were considered public property, managed by the National Bank of Greece, and later by the Greek State, in accordance to Law 1909/1939. This type of property, consisting of land property of all kinds, was subjected to specific legislation of the Directorate of Exchangeable Properties (Doris, 1980) at the Ministry of Finance.

According to Tsouderos, registration of exchangeable wakfs started officially at 1916 with the Directorate of Urban Regeneration under the responsibility of the Ministry of Transport. It is worth noticing that since that time and until the early '80s, a large number of wakfs many of them presenting remarkable architectural and cultural value, were either abandoned in decay, or appointed uses often inappropriate to their traditional character – an indicative example was the Hamzar Bei Tzami or Alkazar in Salonica which until the beginning of the '80s was working as a porn theatre- or even converted to Christian churches (Myrilla, 2010). As Stefanidou indicates (Stefanidou, 1987), these were the outcomes of government adopted policies, as the Greek state was questing for a new national identity, leading to an attitude against its Ottoman inheritance seeking to eliminate all symbols of Ottoman past occupation. In this respect, religious and educational establishments, such as wakfs, were often the most affected of such hard-restating identity procedures. This became even worse during the military dictatorship in Greece (1967–1974) and due to its nationalistic orientations but ceased after it collapsed. Things changed in the early '80s and wakf architectural buildings such as külliyes (currently more than 400 all over Greece) are preserved as part of local cultural heritage, hence are restored and given uses of mainly cultural nature (i.e. museums, art galleries etc.).

VII. THE KAVALA WAKF: FROM MUHAMMAD ALI PASHA, TO THE PRESENT

Kavala is the second largest city in northern Greece and the most important seaport of East-ern Macedonia region. Its population reaches 80.000 inhabitants, being, thus, a mid-sized city by standards of the Greek urban hierarchy index. Kavala is a significant transportation hub combining port and airport traffic, the Egnatia international motorway and rail transport, in addition being the most important tourist destination in North Eastern Greece.

Kavala was founded in the late 7th century BC and its original name was Neapolis. It was an important port and commercial location of Via Egnatia during the Macedonian, Roman and Byzantine eras. Between 1387 and 1912 was part of the Ottoman Empire and was known by its current name since the 15th century. Kavala was the birthplace, in 1769, of the founder of the last Egyptian dynasty, Muhammad Ali. Muhammad Ali studied in Istanbul and became a prominent general of the Ottoman Empire. In 1799 the Sultan sent Muhammad Ali to Egypt to fight Napoleon's forces. He then took advantage of the ongoing clashes between the Ottoman Empire and the Mamluks who were the local elite in Egypt and established himself as the first governor of the independent Egypt. This dynasty sustained power in Egypt and Sudan regions from 1805 to 1952. As Muhammad Ali never forgot his birthplace, Kavala, he founded a remarkable wakf especially with the “Imaret” building complex. The construction of Imaret started at 1817 and completed at 1821, with main function to provide shelter for the poor and act as a religious and boarding school. During that period Kavala was economically prosper as a major global centre for tobacco cultivation, elaboration, and exportation – major tobacco companies had their headquarters in Vienna, Havana, and Kavala. In this booming city, Ima-ret being a remarkable example of Islamic architecture became one of the most important landmarks.

The Muhammad Ali wakf was officially established on 26th of June 1813 with the management appointed to his family and to his descendants. They were responsible for the preservation, technical interventions, real estate lease, as well as the legal representation of it, at any time needed. This was indicative of the importance given by Muhammad Ali to the particular wakf, since the responsibility of preserving the wakfs reflected the status of the wakf manager. During the first period of its functioning, the Kavala wakf was managed by relatives and close friends of Muhammad Ali, a condition also reflecting some employees and staff. Its immobile property increased by the purchase of land in Kavala and the island of Thasos, with funds coming from the property of the wakf 38,39. The purchased lands, according to the Ottoman Code of Land Property, incorporated into the original wakfs represented a special category (“tahsistat”) for which only the rights of use and trusteeship (“hakki tasarruf”) belonged to the wakf and not the property of the land parcels, which remained public property (Tsegelidou, 1988).

The exclusion of Kavala wakf from the “exchangeable wakfs” and its consideration as Egyptian property, something that also excluded it from the “Muslim wakfs” and granted it a unique status, was greatly due to political pressure of Greek community in Egypt upon the Greek government, which considered it as an asset to be exchanged with favourable treatment by the Egyptian administration. Consequently, the Egyptian state considered the wakf as a royal property of Egypt. After the deposition of king Faruk I (1952), the wakf property was nationalized and its management was assigned to the Egyptian Ministry of Wakfs. This legal status is kept until today (Tsegelidou, 1988).

VIII. THE HISTORY OF IMARET

The Imaret of Muhammad Ali was the last one established in the Ottoman Empire, and the only one preserved almost intact (Fig. 1). Therefore, it attracted the interest of many historians (Toledano, 2003; Stefanidou, 1987; Bruni, 2003; Kiel, 1996; Haluk, 1976). As mentioned above, its construction lasted from 1817 to 1821, and a significant addition to an impressive mosque – “medrese” complex, in Panagia peninsula of the city, with a view of the whole bay. Its impressive size and style, compared to the, then, comparatively small size of the hosting town, suggests that “Muhammad Ali’s Imaret may also have been intend-ed to fill a void created by the lapsed functioning of the nearby imaret founded by Grand Vizier “Makbul” İbrahim Pasha (died 1536) as part of his complex, some 300 meters north of the new one” (Singer, 2010), and it was planned to serve – among its diverse “clientele” – a community of scholars quite influential for that part of the Empire.



Fig. 1. Imaret at the Beginning of the 20th Century.

“The first expression of interest for the wakf from the part of the Egyptian administration was recorded around the middle of 19th century, after the establishment of the Central Directorate of Wakfs in Egypt (1851). In 1854, a special envoy (mudir) was sent from Egypt to serve as Commander of the island of Thasos, and manager of the Kavala wakf. From then on, commanders were appointed, guided, and controlled by the Central Directorate of Wakfs. The directorate was issuing its decisions and/or guidelines with special firmans, and whenever there was need, they would also send a special envoy to provide solutions to more complex situations. Officially, managers of the wakf were the successive kings of Egypt, until 1952, when the latest one, king Farouk, was deposed by Gamal Abdel Nasser. The new regime appropriated the property of the Kavala wakf by appointing the Egyptian Minister of Wakfs as manager” (Lalenis & Samourkasidou, 2012).

The Egyptian presence in Kavala was intense and continuous for the entire 19th century. At the beginning of the 20th century, public infrastructure plans were completed but not implemented with Egyptian initiatives, for the Imaret neighbourhood of Panagia (Lykourinos, 1912). As mentioned above, Egyptians invested significantly in local real estate market with funds originated from the wakf and some of them were later sold again by the Ministry of Wakfs of Egypt to private buyers. Since 1922, the Imaret complex was used to shelter refugees from Asia Minor, and in June 1924 the Kavala wakf officially ceased to operate. In 1931, part of Imaret was demolished as a result of public works to the adjacent street that needed widening.

Moreover, the Greek government designated the Imaret as a listed monument in need of preservation on March 4, 1954 (Fig. 2). In addition, the Greek Ministry of Culture together with the Egyptian Embassy in Athens, developed plans for an extensive restoration scheme, which however was not implemented. In 1967 a military junta seized power in Greece and forced all residents (mostly refugees) of Imaret to leave and the monument was sealed. In 1984, a series of intergovernmental agreements between Greece and Egypt concluded that Imaret was to remain a property of the Egyptian government and be restored as a site for cultural activities. These agreements were unfortunately never implemented and for almost thirty years the Imaret remained completely vacant. Then, around mid ‘90s, after an unofficial and not so transparent settlement of property and land use issues, one part of it started operating as a bar and restaurant, while other parts were used as warehouses. With the exception of the bar – restaurant part, in the rest of the Imaret the decay was very serious, and seemed to be irreversible. Most of the roof had collapsed, patios were destroyed, and a number of walls were cracked and ruined. At the same time, several efforts of the

Municipality of Kavala failed to achieve an agreement with the Egyptian government for the restoration of Imaret, since the intentions of the municipality were to transfer property rights of Imaret from the Egyptian government to the Municipality of Kavala, something that for the Egyptians was not even a matter for discussion (Missirian, 2018; Stefanou, Hatzopoulou & Nikolaidou 1995). In 2001, though, the deadlock was finally over. Anna Missirian, a tobacco merchant and local entrepreneur, after long lasting negotiations with the Egyptian government, managed to arrange for a 50 years lease of Imaret. Consequently, the whole building complex was restored and converted into a luxurious and elegant hotel maintaining much of the ambience of its traditional era.



Fig. 2. Imaret at mid-1950s.

IX. BUILDING FUNCTIONS AND LAYOUT

The Imaret architectural and building complex included a public kitchen, two Islamic schools (“medrese”), an elementary school (“megteb”), a private mosque and various administrative offices. In its total area of 4167 sq. m., it accommodated (Stefanidou, 1987) cells, 25 on the first and 36 on the second floor, a “meskit” (mosque with no minaret) a teaching compound, various kitchen spaces, storage spaces, Turkish baths and restricted patios. The total construction cost of the Imaret reached 15.000 English pounds, a mythical number for that period of time. Nonetheless, it was a great urban intervention in the fabric of Kavala, probably the most significant in the 19th century.

Furthermore, Muhammad Ali’s kulliye was constructed at a period of changes in Ottoman Empire towards liberalization and modernization, which, fifteen years later, produced Tanzimat (Fig 2). It was a transition period, which was caused by both, external and internal factors. Externally, the Great European nations of that time were pressing the staggering Ottoman Empire for modernization, and internally, the religious system of education was questioned and Muslim society was divided between traditions and modernity. The clash between conservatives and reformists was quite intense in cosmopolitan Kavala, which, despite its comparatively small size, had a significant influence on financial and political processes of the broader area of Eastern Balkans. In contrast to his progressive administration in Egypt, Muhammad Ali’s intentions were to enhance the religious sense of the local society of Kavala, but also strengthen its conservative reflexes, in accordance to the wishes of the High Gate of Istanbul. Thus, he decided to build a great institution of religious nature in Kavala. And according to historical sources, the activities of religious students (“softa”) of the mendreses, very often had controversial effects on local society. According to Lykourinos, “the number of these people was occasionally higher than 600, which made them a social group remarkable in size and very influential for the local politics. Their diverse origins from all over the Ottoman Empire, the long period of their studies (often reaching the decade), their devotion to religious tradition, and their antithesis to every modernization in social developments consolidated their conservatism. Thus, in periods of tensions between ethnic and religious groups in Kavala (often due to tensions between Greece and Turkey), softas were at the forefront of the conflicts”. A record from 1859 indicates that the faculty also included professors teaching History, Geography, Calligraphy, Mathematics, Arabic, and Poetry (Lowry, 2008). The operation of the two mendreses lasted until July 1902 and was interrupted due to administrative changes in Kavala and Thasos, whereas provision of food continued until 1923.

X. THE ARCHITECTURAL ELEMENTS

The architectural elements of the Imaret building complex were described in fine detail by Stefanidou, in her PhD thesis, and in other related articles. According to her description, “the Imaret complex was better perceived at its totality integrated in the structure of the old city, when seen from a distance. It followed the

traditional intro-vert internal spatial arrangement and was adapted to the physical environment” (Stefanidou, 1987). The architectural style of Imaret varies according to different parts of the building, since some parts were constructed in different periods. Nevertheless, the formal and spatial layout of “kulliye” was clearly distinguishable in contrast to the spatial irregularity of the rest of the city. As Celik (1987) commented “The monumental pattern once more emphasized the prominent element of the Ottoman city, its introversion”. The key and dominant elements of the architectural style of this Imaret are the successive curved features, the arched gates, the numerous chimneys, and the more than 100 lead domes that are visible from most parts of the city.

Kulliye consists of four consequent parts, organized around four patios. Each part has a relative autonomy from the others, and patios are the main and common focus of all spaces. The structural and functional characteristics of all four parts of the Kulliye are aligned in parallel, without any standing out from the rest. Patios are key architectural elements of the whole building complex offering collective ways of living. The first structure at the north side of the building complex is the Imaret, with *mekteb* located at northeast corner. In the southeast corner there was one of the *mendreses* with the main *dershane*. Next to it there was the second *mendrese* also with a *dershane* in its northeast corner, whereas the “wet” spaces were located at the south side. Office spaces of the wakf administration were located at the south end side of the complex. *Dershane* and *mekteb* were internal elements, integrated in separate building parts and given – due to their functions – comparatively high importance. In the construction, in points where corners are formed, *alems* made of marble or bronze were created. Another characteristic element of the complex is the domes, which are forming groins, being distinguishing elements for Ottoman architecture (Unsal, 1959). All rooftop domes were covered and filled with sheets of lead, at an overlapping order at their sides for better insulation and water proofing. The large variety of constructional details and elements, i.e. the different type and sizes of domes and chimneys, constitute an intriguing architectural character (Fig. 3). The main surrounding walls of the Imaret are made of roughly carved stones and scattered bricks with no specific order, with their width reaching between 0,90–1,00 m. This type of construction is present at the point where arcs and domes are being formed. Above that level there is exclusively brick construction with no wooden frames, which is typical for ottoman architecture. The architectural dialogue between the original construction and the later additions (such as the second *dershane*) is interesting, since the first one is a very solid construction, unique of its kind, giving the impression that it was meant to be a distinguishing element of the surrounding building stock, while the second is much lighter, having adopted a style of traditional architecture, which was quite usual for this area and era.



Fig. 3. View from the rooftop with the distinct domes and chimneys of the Imaret.

In general, the Imaret of Kavala is characterized by a formal minimalism in construction and by a decorative character of both external and internal facades. The internal patios and the continuous succession of indoor, semihypaethral and outdoor spaces with the equivalent gradual shadings are probably the most exciting architectural elements. Nevertheless, the religious internal layout concentration was preserved by keeping an autonomy of each internal space with few windows usually fenced with iron bars.

XI. IMARET TODAY – RESTORATION AND CURRENT OPERATION

The Imaret was forced to close and have no use from 1967 to early 1990s. Its revival and incorporation in urban functions was due to the efforts of Anna Missirian, a tobacco merchant, who, after long negotiations with the Egyptian government managed to arrange a 50 years lease of this historic establishment. The negotiations with the Egyptian officials lasted seven years and the lease was finally signed in 2001, whereas the restoration of the buildings lasted 22 months, and in 2004, the Imaret started functioning as the first boutique hotel in Greece within a historic building (Missirian, 2018). Most of the distinct ironwork elements was carefully preserved and some were reused for example as balustrades. More

precisely, new refused iron bars were mostly consolidated with molten lead and rigid original metalwork was cleaned and restored. Furthermore, most of the original main doors of the building complex are preserved, though bearing several coats of new and old paint. Very important handprint of fatima was revealed, which represent the only known remaining print of that type in the area. The kulliye retains four dedicatory inscriptions in verse by the famous poet of the time Chalabi, all of which were cleaned and neatly restored (Tsegelidou, 1988).

Many traditional construction practices and materials were revived as today are obsolete (Fig. 4). For example, the brickwork of the domes was covered but in some places was intentionally left exposed. Moreover, mortar similar in texture to the original was prepared in situ to fill in various wall cracks and gaps in different locations of the building structure before they were plastered. Another example of careful restoration applied at the pavement stones of the loggias that were previously numbered and later removed, in order to install infrastructure systems. Furthermore, meticulous studies for the discovery of the original coloring of the building complex was carried out and resulted in preparing mortar in situ according to the traditional texture and characteristics. This mixture of traditional mortar was used for plastering all surfaces, both indoors and outdoors⁷⁴. The total cost of restoration reached a number of 7 million Euros and managed to revive the original architectural identity of the monument, from distinct architectural details to even minor ones like the material of the original armchairs (Fig. 5). Today, the main dershane is functioning as a library and the old cistern of the primary school as an internal pool. There are 30 exquisitely decorated rooms, with Egyptian chandeliers and antique kilims on stone floors, which resemble Byzantine chapels. The hotel is also equipped with an external pool decorated with mosaic details, a Turkish bath, plenty fireplaces and a restaurant with a view to the golf of Kavala (Missirian, 2018).



Fig. 4. Restoration Process and Techniques.



Fig. 5. Imaret Today.

XII. INTEGRATION OF IMARET IN CONTEMPORARY CITY IDENTITY

Further to its function as a luxurious hotel, the Imaret has significantly contributed to the cultural identity of the city as a large scale (mega scale?) local landmark. It also hosts a Non-Governmental Organization named MOHA (Muhammad Ali Research Centre) founded in 2006 as a civic, non-profit, nongovernmental organization, recognized by the Greek State as a Research Center, supervised by the Greek Minister of Education.

The general objectives of MOHA lie within a broader framework of cultural cooperation between Greece and the Muslim world. In Greece, despite the undoable historical and cultural bond with the Muslim world, no significant policies and efforts have been made to honour this heritage. Based on that framework the Muhammad Ali Research Centre attempts to foster this gap through its activities and assist Greece to engage on a role as a hub of cultural interaction between Europe, South East Mediterranean countries and the Middle East. As stated in MOHA's brochure,

«...At a time of increasing xenophobia and extremism, we believe that mutual recognition, acceptance and respect between people, is the only way to counter violence and fanaticism that stand in the way of progress and development. To that end, we aim at furthering the study

and knowledge of the Islamic civilization and the impact it has had on Western thinking, the appreciation of intercultural exchange, as well as, at introducing scholars and youth from both sides to each other through joint research and discovery projects».

The main goal of MOHA (Missirian, 2018) is to «unite people against “violence in the name of religion” by highlighting the importance of common cultural paths, which is further broken down in:

1. Explore the shared historical heritage between Europe and the Middle East and examine distinctly their differences and identifications.
2. Analyze and explore the mythical narratives that have shaped the historical heritage and at the same time the individual cultures, in Europe and the Middle East from late antiquity to date.
3. To conduct comparative research on the a) key themes and b) time definitions of modernity-modernism in Europe and the Middle East, through a conceptual and historical perspective.

The fields of activities include elaboration of themes of science, social sciences, and architecture and environment.

The expressions in space of the above aims, are the hosting of the relative functions in the restored Imaret compound, with significant impact on the historic neighborhood of Panagia, and the city of Kavala in general. The broad activities of Imaret in Kavala contribute in the formation of an integrated urban framework, appropriate and essential to fulfill the requirements of a city aiming to serve as the meeting point of Western and Eastern civilizations, Christianity and Islam. During its rich history as a tobacco elaboration and exportation centre, Kavala was always a multicultural city, with an exemplary cooperation of different cultures and religions, in various social classes and ethnic groups: Greek, Turkish, Jewish and Armenian tobacco companies were operating in the city, and tobacco workers of different religions, ethnic origins, and gender were united in common strikes and struggles. In the new circumstances of the global village, Kavala has the background and the conditions to thrive in the creative co-habitation of cultural, religious and ethnic trend.

MOHA activities include research, seminars, conferences, lectures, arts and exhibitions, book presentations, publications, restoration activities, and cultural activities of various kinds. Indicative examples are the invitation of Cairo Opera Symphony Orchestra in 2006, the research project “Sheltering Humanity–Hosting Proposals for People in the Mediterranean Sea”, educational programs for schools etc. (Fig. 6). Accordingly, it has built a cultural cooperation between Kavala and Alexandria resulting in significant research on various manuscripts from the library of Alexandria related to the Egyptian presence in Kavala specifically related to the Imaret. Moreover, an issue of great importance is the planning and implementation of educational programs for Syrian refugee children (2016–2017) aiming at preparing them for their integration into the Greek education system, and organizing courses in art, music, and theatre in basic Greek, English, and Arabic (Missirian, 2018) (Fig. 6).



Fig. 6. Cultural and Educational Activities.

XIII. CONCLUSIONS

Wakfs represented institutions of particularly significant for implementing social policy in the Ottoman Empire, and as such, offered greatly broad benefits to cities which were hosting them. Their positive role in the development of Ottoman cities has been recorded in various historical sources, and keeps on being obvious until today, either in Muslim or non-Muslim cities with an Ottoman cultural past.

Wakfs contributed in the construction of public works, and the building of technical and social infrastructure of the host city, being, thus, an important factor of its economic prosperity. They also played

a significant role in increasing employment, providing space for economic activities, granting low interest loans, consuming local production, and contributing in a fairer redistribution of wealth to the local citizens. In many cases, wakfs were a catalyst for urban renewal and development in the host cities. Quality of life was also affected positively, as well as the competitiveness of the hosting environment (Lykourinos, 2005). The main elements of wakfs, külliyes and the commercial buildings related to them, contributed largely to a revival of city centres as well as to an urban expansion. Furthermore, the wakfs additionally contributed to an urban architectural, social and cultural enrichment. In contemporary Greece, wakfs were regarded in a variety of ways, mainly according to their historic and cultural context, which they transpired also on a symbolic level and in interaction with the predominant political climate of the equivalent historic periods. In the last part of the 20th century reconsidered approaches recognized wakfs as part of cultural inheritance in need of restoration and protection. The Egyptian wakf in the city of Kavala was also affected positively, since through private initiatives Imaret was restored and is currently used as a boutique hotel and a cultural centre.

The architecture of Imaret of Kavala is exceptional. It is a sample of ottoman baroque, rare in Europe and unique in Greece. Consequent curved surfaces, arched gates, domes covered by sheets of lead, and different type and sizes of chimneys constitute an architectural intriguing whole, which attracts the attention of the viewer (Fig. 8).



Fig. 8. Imaret at the Traditional Neighbourhood of Panagia.

The restoration of Imaret has been awarded twice with European awards. In accordance with the perspective which supports the global importance of cultural heritage and underlines an obligation of humanity to preserve it, Imaret could be considered among the pioneers. At the same time, an ethical line of action is raised which affects the cultural orientation of social and scientific institutions, as well as the attitude of the public towards historic places and monuments like the Imaret⁸⁵. The main goal of the cultural organization hosted by Imaret is to «*unite people against “violence in the name of religion” by highlighting the importance of common cultural paths*». The expressions in space of the above aim are the hosting of the relative functions in the restored Imaret compound, with significant impact on the historic neighbourhood of Panagia, and on the city of Kavala in general (Fig. 9). The activities of Imaret in Kavala contribute in the formation of an integrated urban framework, appropriate and essential to fulfill the requirements of a city aiming to serve as the meeting point of Western and Eastern civilizations, Christianity and Islam.



Fig. 9. Imaret and the Old City as Viewed from the City's Port.

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