

Post-Medieval to Modern

Dimitris N. Karidis. *Athens from 1456 to 1920. The Town under Ottoman Rule and the 19th-Century Capital City*. pp. 292, illustrated throughout in black and white. 2014. ISBN 978-1-90573-971-4 paperback £35.00. ISBN 9781784910723 -publication £15.83.

Dimitris N. Karidis. *Athens from 1920 to 1940. A true and just account of how History was enveloped by a modern City and the Place became an Event*. pp. viii+194, illustrated throughout in black & white. 224 2016. ISBN 978-1-78491-311-3 paperback £34.00. ISBN 978-1-78491-312-0 e-publication £15.83.

Dimitris Karidis has given us a veritable feast in these two volumes, while opening us up to a sustained barrage of iconoclastic opinions, definitively backed up by the most impressive research, that rewrite our handed-down narratives about the post-Classical city of Athens and its fate up to the 20th century AD. To do this he does not confine himself to the city itself, but lets us know what was happening in the contemporary Attic countryside. He also regularly provides a detailed background history of the wider Greek world so that the progression of urban life in Athens is set into the broadest relevant context. Thus for example you could read the first volume just to get an excellent informed history of the society and economy of the Ottoman Empire. He also treats us to a great deal of useful architectural theory which will not be well-known to archaeologists and historians.

The largest part of volume 1 is indeed when Athens was under Ottoman rule, and Karidis reflects the tenor of most recent scholarship in rescuing its early centuries from the mythical tales of barbarism and backwardness till recently, and in some quarters even today, put forward as typifying that period after the end of Frankish rule. Athens has long been shown to have been one of the largest towns in the early Ottoman Balkans. We might have anticipated such an approach, after his collaborative volume with the Ottoman text-specialist Machiel Kiel on the Ottoman monuments and population of Lesbos (2002). This reviewer finds it rather curious however, that Karidis, in contrast, is very negative about the Western feudal rulers of Greece in the 13th-15th centuries, and I suspect we shall eventually need to summon up a similar revisionism to reassess the real nature and achievements of

the Franks in their palaces on the Acropolis or on the Kadmeia in Thebes. Certainly surface survey suggests that rural population flourished and grew between the preceding Middle Byzantine era and the Frangocratia. However to be fair, this volume after all is officially focussed on the post-Crusader centuries.

The story of Athens, its churches, mosques, streets and public squares, its roads and then its society and economy, during the almost 400 years of Ottoman rule, and then into the next century of the Greek independent state, are painstakingly reconstructed using the surviving and lost monuments, paintings and contemporary descriptions. Probably only the late John Travlos, who paid even more attention to documenting the physical traces of Athens' buildings from Antiquity to the Ottoman period (Travlos 1993), would not be surprised at the information given here, mostly quite unknown to scholars let alone tourists. Yet just as Ottoman monuments long known and dated lie neglected and unlabelled today, one must wonder to what extent Karidis' reminder of the fascinating survivals of these centuries will have any influence on conservation and presentation strategies in the modern city. This reviewer has pointed this out with reference to the beautiful ruined, unfenced and weed-befested 18th century entrance gate of the Medrese or religious school facing the enclosed and well-presented Tower of the Winds near the ancient Agora (Bintliff, 2012, 453).

The decline of Ottoman power in the 17th-19th centuries does live up to a significant extent to the black legend of local abuse of power and corruption, resulting from a weak central government and the rise of regional elites exploiting the vacuum of authority. Equally depressing is the tortuous history of the successes and failures of the Kingdom of Greece in replanning, or failing to plan, the growth of the city after the Independence War, a story continued to 1940 in Volume 2. Few love the modern townscape of Athens as a whole, although there are places and localities of charm and atmosphere and even architectural distinction: Karidis charts with clarity how all this came about as the city grew exponentially and largely out of centrally-directed control.

For anyone with an interest in Greece after Byzantium, these books are a must, and they come with an unexpectedly rich body of maps and images to complement the text.

JOHN BINTLIFF
EDINBURGH AND LEIDEN UNIVERSITY
johnbintliff@gmail.com

- Bintliff, J. L. 2012. *The Complete Archaeology of Greece, from Hunter-Gatherers to the Twentieth Century AD*. Oxford-New York: Blackwell-Wiley.
- Karidis, D. N. and M. Kiel 2002. *Mitilinis Astigraphia ke Lesvou Chorographia*. Athens: Olkos.
- Travlos, J. 1993. *Poleodomiki Exelixis ton Athinon*. Athens: Ekdoseis Kapon ke Angeliki Kokkou.

Multiperiod

Peter Talloen. *Cult in Pisidia. Religious practice in southwestern Asia Minor from Alexander the Great to the rise of christianity*. pp. xix+412, 96 b/w illustrations, 1 map. 2015. Turnhout, Belgium: Brepols Publishers n.v. ISBN 978-2-503-99114-6 paperback €109.

P. Talloen's research into cults and religious practices in Pisidia is the subject of the 10th volume in the series entitled 'Studies in Eastern Mediterranean Archaeology' edited by Marc Waelkens, which contains the copious results of the investigations conducted as part of the Sagalassos Archaeological Research Project.

The main value of this work lies in its systematic gathering of data, which represents a big step towards providing a complete picture of the available evidence, which previously had been scattered across a wide variety of specialist publications, at times quite hard to obtain. Testifying to this are the 41 pages of the bibliography, which constitute a point of reference for the investigations, whose target region, in contrast to the coastal plain of Pamphylia, lies deep inland. Indeed, Pisidia is characterised by rugged mountainous and forested terrain, and was inhabited in ancient times by warlike tribes. Apart from the innovative Project involving excavations, research and restoration, conducted with extraordinary results in Sagalassos by the Belgian Archaeological Mission of the University of Leuven, this region has never been subject to such wide-ranging research into the settlements and their surrounding territory.

The volume opens with a detailed and useful introductory chapter (pp. 1-44) presenting the *Status Quaestionis* of the research into cults in Pisidia, the methods used and the historical and geographical background of the region. The chapter is accompanied by a map (Map 1) of Pisidia indicating the main ancient settlements and the neighbouring regions of Lycia, Phrygia, Lykaonia and Pamphylia, the latter characterised by large coastal cities. Antioch in Pisidia, despite its name, is correctly listed as one of the 'ancient cities outside Pisidia'. However, as the author points out (p. 13), '... the geographical definition of that region remains a complex problem, as the boundaries of the geographical and ethnic unit... seem to have shifted through time...'. In practical terms, the region between the lake of Eğirdir and the broad plain at the foot of the Sultan Dağları, dominated by the city