

Patrons of Ottoman Mosques in Greece reconsidered in light of the Ierapetra Mosque of Crete

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Abstract

The subject of this paper is based on reconsideration of patrons of ottoman mosques in Greece in light of analyzed study of the Ierapetra Mosque of the island of Crete. It focused on the shifting in the patronage of the construction of mosques replacing grand commanders or officials with the Muslim community as patrons of mosque construction. This pattern characterised the Late Ottoman Period 13th c. AH (19th c. CE). This new patronage was documented in the inscriptions of the Ierapetra mosque in Crete, the case study of this paper.

This paper draws a layout of the Ierapetra city under the ottomans based on the relevant sources with special reference to the salnames and old photographs. It examines in details the architecture, inscriptions, and the historical context of Ierapetra mosque. This paper also corrects the reading of some inscriptions, and proposes reading for some Arabic inscriptions for first time. It concludes that the Ierapetra mosque along with its architecture, inscriptions, and the close separate ablution fountain is a distinctive example among more than eighty Ottoman historic mosques in Greece still in existence based on a survey conducted by the author between 2006 and 2016. Moreover, the Ierapetra Mosque is a unique preserved example of the Ottoman mosques in Greece; it is not built with typical patronage, rather it was built by the contribution of the Muslim community of Ierapetra city.