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19th–20th Century Greek Ossuary Architecture and Islets of the Dead in the Gulf of Edremit

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ABSTRACT

Interdisciplinary studies, which have become even more common in the present day, can pave the way for further research in different scientific disciplines, including anthropology. Correspondingly, this study—employing insights from architectural history, landscape archaeology, and historical topography perspectives—focuses on Greek ossuary structures and funerary islets in the Gulf of Edremit during the 19th and 20th centuries. First, the ossuary of Burhaniye, deemed a lost and forgotten monument that belonged to the former Greek community of the town, is introduced through Ottoman archival records and oral history. Then, the abandoned ossuary in the old Greek cemetery of Cunda Island (Ayvalık) is taken into account as an extant and nearby example. Later, a discussion is conducted to determine the precise location of a funerary islet among the Ayvalık Islands, which had remained rather obscure in recent literature. Apart from this islet, there was another funerary islet in the region, although they served contrasting purposes. Sazlı/Oker/Kalemli Island (formerly Kalamaki) was for the *vrykolakas*, who were believed to be undead revenants. On the other hand, Kumru Island (formerly Nisopoula) was the resting place of a modern-day saint. For this study, different sources were considered and compared with archival evidence, and they were further elaborated through field surveys. While the results have secured the position of Sazlı/Oker/Kalemli Island, the previous use of Kumru Island as a sacred burial site establishes a unique case study with its own story. Finally, it is hoped that the outcomes of this study may guide advanced anthropological studies in the region.

Keywords: Architectural history, ossuary, funerary islands, Burhaniye, Ayvalık

Introduction

According to official data as of 2022, approximately 2,000 buildings are listed as civil architecture examples in Ayvalık, while the number is roughly 120 in Burhaniye. These are two major towns in the Gulf of Edremit in the provincial borders of Balıkesir. Moreover, five historical settlement centers within the district borders of Ayvalık are designated as urban protected sites. They include monumental structures like mosques and churches as well as residential buildings of any kind. However, those listings primarily cover the architectural heritage within the settlement centers, and monuments in peripheral parts of the towns, including rural areas, are mostly omitted (BKTVKK, 2022). Likewise, studies about the monuments that are no longer present in the region are quite limited. Nevertheless, in addition to the historical settlements, it can be argued that the surrounding lands hold a significant architectural as well as archaeological heritage (see Figure 1).

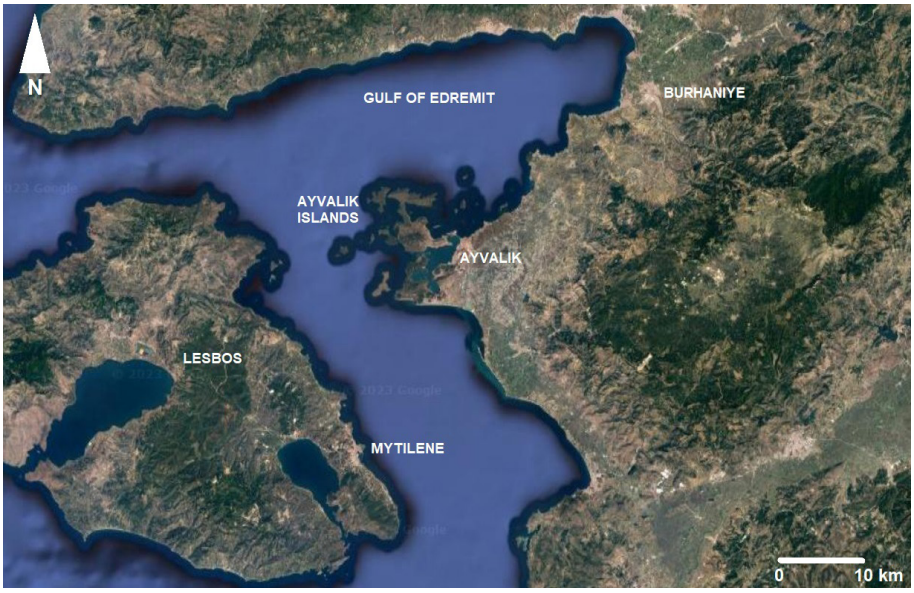

Figure 1. Gulf of Edremit's satellite image with the mentioned places in the research (Google Maps).

Previously, despite the compelling need, a comprehensive survey of the built heritage in the countryside of Ayvalık and Burhaniye had never been conducted. While recent archaeological field surveys for the whole Gulf of Edremit aim to enhance the rural heritage inventory of the two towns, it is obvious that certain connections are inevitable between the monuments and the historical topography, as well as their relationship with land use. Furthermore, in cooperation with those field surveys, the process of employing primary sources like archival records and cartographic studies as a complementary step allows us to encounter noteworthy information about lost monuments, especially from the late modern period, where available sources are relatively more abundant than previous centuries. Such

discoveries have not only scientific value but also the potential of being pragmatic tools for the preservation of the heritage under natural as well as anthropogenic threats, mainly vandalism. As an example of this threat, the *katholiko* (main chapel) of the Monastery of Profitis Ilias on Cunda Island can be mentioned as the most recent loss (Daily Sabah, January 4, 2021). The recent UNESCO World Heritage Tentative List designation of Ayvalık includes both the settlement center and the vast surrounding areas in the context of the 19th- and 20th-century industrial landscape (UNESCO, 2017, 15 April). Thus, it can be argued that further scientific findings of any kind will contribute to the preservation efforts for the neglected tangible heritage, which is an essential part of the multifaceted history of the wider region. Meanwhile, in contrast to studying buildings and monuments located in densely inhabited settlement centers, studying peripheral monuments of uninhabited areas, often with impassable topographical characteristics, will naturally require slightly different approaches. Once a research methodology is established and is proven feasible through preliminary discoveries, it may serve new archaeological and architectural studies in the future too. Nevertheless, like a relay race, research efforts might not be limited to those fields.

Interdisciplinary studies are becoming even more frequent nowadays and have the potential to trigger further studies in different areas, including anthropology and its scientific subbranches. With a research methodology centered around architectural history, landscape archaeology, and historical topography, this study is about two Greek Orthodox ossuary buildings and funerary islets each in the Gulf of Edremit, which were used during the late 19th and early 20th centuries. Speaking generally, the ossuary, also called a charnel house, is a place where the bones of the dead are deposited (Shipley, 1872, p. 340). The deposited bones are often obtained during the process of digging graves in densely occupied cemeteries. The ossuary can be either a portion of the crypt or a separate building in the churchyard, where chantry chapels were often attached to it (Ashpitel, 1867, p. 96).

Even though practices vary widely among different cultures, the work of the burials needs not only a physical space like the cemetery but also a symbolic space, of leave and memory. The bones alone, which are neither kin nor outsiders, are only the remnants and signs of missing human lives. Therefore, the ossuary is a spatial reflection of the treatment that their spiritual value deserves (Green and Murray, 2009, pp. 370–371). Besides its architectural context, the ossuary burial practice is a much older tradition in the Eastern Mediterranean, which dates back to classical antiquity, as Late Hellenistic and Herodian (2nd–1st century BC) ossuary tombs from Jerusalem demonstrate (Strange, 1975). During the Middle Ages, the ossuary was a necessity within the constrained spaces of urban cemeteries delimited by walls, and they rarely extended beyond those confined spaces. Because of the constant demand for burial spaces, particularly during pestilence, the same land was needed to accommodate new generations of the dead. Therefore, old graves were cleared, and the retrieved old bones were cleaned and preserved. Despite the Christian doctrine about the constitution of bodies at the end of time, regardless of disintegration and decomposition, medieval society paid attention to keeping bones on consecrated ground and close to an altar, where they were protected

until final judgment and could receive prayers. Since a vaulted space in which bones could be stacked and consolidated was provided, the ossuary was an efficient solution to meet this need (Boivin, 2020, pp. 79–80).

Concerning the Aegean Archipelago and the Greek Orthodox tradition, it has been reported by the mid-19th century that when bones from a previous interment were discovered while digging a grave, they were washed in wine and then placed in a common receptacle (Newton, 1865, p. 213). In the same community, the obligations that the living have to their dead kin continue even after funeral services. One of the major themes of those rituals is remembrance, which is embodied in naming practices and rites and within the distinctive features of the landscape, including family vaults and bone depositories. Moreover, such buildings and the associated human activities foster connections between families and the community as a whole. They can be interpreted as material expressions of memory and ritual obligations that constitute the remembrance phenomenon (Kenna, 2015, pp. 227–228). In fact, a similar attitude can be seen even in the Neolithic settlement of Çatalhöyük, where the dead were kept close to the living by placing burials within houses, primarily under platforms and floors but also in benches and foundation deposits. The practice also included various treatments of the remains, and later usages of the same burial places were fairly common. Thus, there had been a certain spatial relationship between families and the deceased on a daily basis (Boz and Hager, 2013).

Within the scope of this research, first of all, the ossuary of Burhaniye is introduced. Ottoman archival records and oral history helped to reveal the story of the demolished and hitherto unstudied landmark of the town. Meanwhile, as an extant and analogous building in the Gulf of Edremit, the abandoned ossuary in the former Greek cemetery of Cunda Island in Ayvalık is examined in its current condition. Subsequently, our objective is to accurately identify the location of a rocky islet in the vicinity of Cunda as the current literature presents significant disparities on such a fundamental issue. In this context, the research is in part also a methodological experiment concerning the late modern historical topography of the region. For that purpose, Turkish and Greek cartographic studies were taken into account and were compared with Ottoman archival registries. This was followed by field surveys for onsite documentation. It should be mentioned that Ayvalık Islands formerly had more than one funerary islet. The second islet, namely Kumru Island (formerly Nisopoula), is also included in the research as a nearby example. At the same time, a similar funerary islet located in Lesbos right across Ayvalık Islands is included in the brief. According to the outcomes, in terms of historical topography and land use, while Sazlı/Oker/Kalemli Island (formerly Kalamaki) was used for the disposal of the remains of the excommunicated members who belonged to the local Greek community, Kumru Island had the grave of a modern-day saint and was seemingly a sacred pilgrimage site. These findings should be considered not only for the preservation of the heritage but also for advanced anthropological studies in the Gulf of Edremit in the near future, which are strongly suggested in the face of numerous threats. Among these threats, vandalism is by far the most dangerous one, in addition to reckless new developments.

Former Greek Orthodox Community of Burhaniye and Its Cemetery with Ossuary

Being a town of the Balıkesir Province, Burhaniye is located in the Gulf of Edremit by the Aegean Sea, at a distance of 4 km from the shoreline to the west. It is bordered by Edremit to the north, Havran to the northeast, and Gömeç and Ayvalık to the southwest. It was called Kemer as well as Kemer-i Edremid until the late 19th century and was renamed during the last years of Abdul Hamid II in honor of his son Şehzade Mehmed Burhaneddin Efendi. According to the Ottoman state registry books (*tahrir*) dated 1530 and 1573, Kemer, then a village of Edremit, did not have a non-Muslim population in six neighborhoods of the settlement center. Based on those registry books, the total Muslim community consisted of 283 households (*hane*) and 69 singles (*mücerred*) by 1530, then 272 households and 183 singles by 1573(Sevim, 1993, p. 187). The first Ottoman census carried out in 1831 stated that 3,772 people lived in Kemer at that time, with Muslims being 3,649 and non-Muslims 123. However, it should be noted that only male individuals were taken into account, and the numbers included not only the town of Kemer but also dependent villages around it (Karal, 1943, p. 202). Correspondingly, the census book of Kemer dated 1833 indicated that the town center had a Greek population of 103 inhabitants, who particularly resided in the neighborhood called Cami-i Kebir (presently known as Koca Cami) (Genç, 2016, p. 385).

The number of Greeks in Kemer had increased mainly after the devastating earthquake of Lesbos in 1867. The islanders had migrated to the opposite coast of Asia Minor in great numbers, and many of them arrived and settled in Kemer as well (Kontogianni, 1921, p. 273). In the Ottoman state yearbook (*salname*) dated 1870 of the Hüdâvendigâr Vilayet, the whole township (*kaza*) of Kemer had 2,094 households, which accommodated 5,653 Muslim and 505 non-Muslim (i.e., Greeks) male individuals, totaling to 6,158 individuals (HVS, 1870, p. 151). Within a decade, the aforementioned statistics had increased to 2,982 households, 6,133 Muslims, and 602 Greeks, resulting in a total of 6,735 male residents. It must also be noted that no Armenians lived in Kemer at that time (HVS, 1880, p. 174). The earliest account of a Greek Orthodox church in the Kemer centrum with six neighborhoods appeared in the 1888 yearbook of the Karesi Vilayet. At that time, the township had 2,979 households with 16,683 residents in total, consisting of both males (*zükûr*) and females (*inas*) (KVS, 1888, p. 118).

According to the Hüdâvendigâr Vilayet yearbook of 1892, the Kemer township had 18,689 inhabitants. Out of the total inhabitants, 2,131 were Greeks, with 1,126 males and 1,005 females. The community had one church and two schools in the town center. Even though five mosques and a church corresponded to the six neighborhoods of Kemer by 1892, official sources do not confirm a Greek neighborhood as an administrative subdivision. However, it can be assumed that the community had a parish centered around its church (HVS, 1892, p. 442). As of 1894, the Kemer settlement had 4,132 residents—3,800 Muslims and 332 Greeks—who lived in 853 houses. Within its six neighborhoods, which had five mosques with minarets and a church, the Greek community also had a secondary school (with 20

students) and a boarding school for girls (with 25 students). There were also separate primary schools for boys and girls (Cuinet, 1894, pp. 271–273). In the Hüdâvendigâr Vilayet yearbook of 1898, it is stated that the Kemer township had 14,079 inhabitants, out of which 479 were Greeks (274 males and 205 females). The town center had 1,002 households with 4,132 people. The number of the students of the two Greek schools was 280 in total, with 190 boys and 90 girls (HVS, 1898, pp. 424).

According to a Greek geographical study, the Greek Orthodox church of Kemer/Burhaniye was called Agios Charalambos. It is described as a magnificent shrine, which was completed and inaugurated in 1900 (Kontogianni, 1921, p. 273). However, as mentioned previously, since the Greek Orthodox church of Kemer was already present in 1888, the work of 1900 was seemingly a reconstruction. Afterward, the 1906 yearbook recorded 23,529 inhabitants within the township. Out of this, 2,127 males and 1,832 females formed a community of 3,959 Greeks, who continued to possess a church as well as two schools for boys and girls in the town center (HVS, 1906, pp. 558, 560). By 1921, the township experienced a dramatic population decrease to 10,000, consisting of 4,000 Greeks and 6,000 Turks. However, it should be noted that while the former remained more or less the same in number, the change was mainly noticed in the number of the latter. This was apparently a result of the Greek invasion of Burhaniye in the course of the Greco–Turkish War (1919–1922), which was a part of the Turkish War of Independence (Kontogianni, 1921, p. 272). Following the war as well as the liberation of the town, on September 8, 1922, Burhaniye lost its entire Greek community as a result of the 1923 population exchange between Greece and Turkey (*Nüfus mübadelesi*/ *Ανταλλαγή πληθυσμών*).

Nevertheless, all the brief statistics mentioned above are insufficient to demonstrate the constant change and transformation of the built heritage in Burhaniye, which belonged to the Greek community. For instance, according to an Ottoman State Archives registry dated December 23, 1896, the Greek girls' school of Burhaniye needed to be reconstructed because the former building was demolished and became unserviceable (see Figure 2) (BOA, ŞD, 1567-31, H. 18.07.1314).[1] It is known that the former church of the Greek community was on Gazhane Street. Next to the so-called Church Bath (*Kilise Hamamı*), named after the shrine itself, there was a small two-story building that had a distinctive alternating masonry technique of yellow sandstones, where vertical sets of rubbles were inserted between roughly shaped blocks with regular courses. The square-shaped structure has a dome-shaped, amorphous roof. Below the roof, two sets of iron bars, fixed from the outside, supported the bearing walls. It was later converted into a residence, and several openings were inserted on its façades. The building was originally a part of the former church, probably its bell tower, where the nave was to the west of it. The church was demolished in the 1920s, and its debris was gradually removed until the mid-20th century (see Figure 3) (Sağlam, 2012, p. 18, 21, 93; Aras, 2014,

1 The new single-story building had a 19 x 17 m rectangular layout that included four corner rooms with four windows each, which were divided by a central aisle. The height of the masonry building was 9 m, marked by neoclassical pediments of its gable roof.

p. 181). Archival sources provide further information about the church and its later additions (see Figure 4) (BOA, İ.AZN, 105-11, H. 03.02.1330; BOA, DH. İD, 114-38, H. 14.02.1330).[2] The reason behind those constant reconstructions after certain damages was probably due to the occurrence of devastating earthquakes because the region was known to be seismically very active during the late 19th century and had several such disasters (Satılmış, 2020).

The elongated rectangular plan and relatively lower height of the former church in Burhaniye evoke the image of a roofed basilica. Numerous examples of it can be seen in Ayvalık, such as Taxiarches (1844), now a museum; Hagia Triada (1846), now in ruins; Kato Panagia (1850), now Hayrettin Pasha Mosque; and Küçükköy Hagios Athanasios (1850), now Merkez Mosque (Psarros, 2017). Moreover, the layout of the priests' building indicates that it once formed the northern corner of the church's plot, which presently remains at the junction of Yıldız Street and Şar Street (see Figure 4).

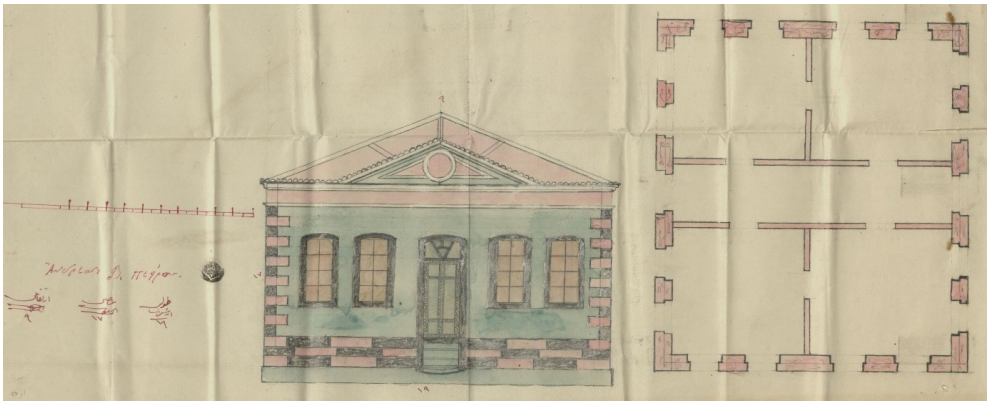

Figure 2. Floor plan and front façade view of the Greek girl's school to be reconstructed, drawn by master builder Andreas V. Petrou, dated 1896 (BOA, ŞD, 1567-31, H. 18.07.1314, fol. 1).

2 According to those two Ottoman State Archives records from January 23 and February 3, 1912, the Greek Orthodox church of Burhaniye was previously constructed without a valid building permit; it was recognized and a permit was issued only then. The work in question was seemingly the reconstruction of 1900. The church building in question had a width (*arz*) of 13 *arşın*, length (*tûl*) of 27 *arşın*, and height (*irtifa'*) of 9 *arşın* (1 *arşın* ≈ 0.75 m, so 9.75 × 20.25 × 6.75 m, respectively). In the meantime, a two-story masonry building for the priests as well as the janitor with five rooms each was permitted to be constructed in the courtyard of the church.

Figure 3. Survived part of the Church of Agios Charalambos in Burhaniye dated 1900, probably its belfry (Adramytteion Researches, 2023).

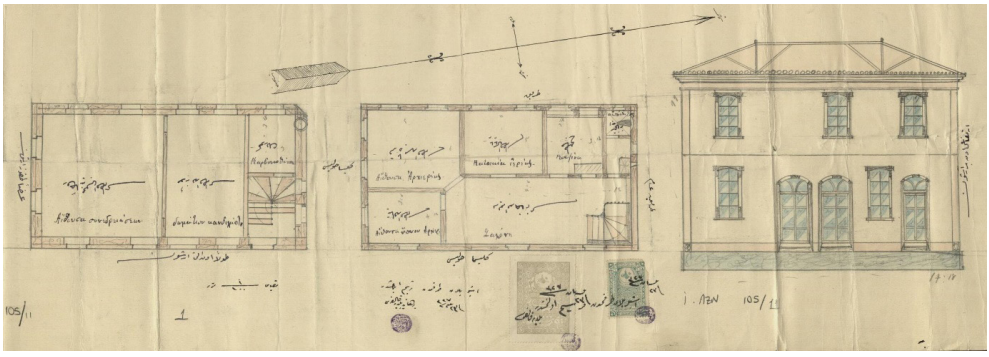

Figure 4. Floor plans and eastern façade view (dated 1912) of the building to be constructed in the courtyard of the church in Burhaniye. Width: 9 *arşın*; length: 16 *arşın*; height: 11 *arşın* (so 6,75 x 12 x 8,25 m, respectively). The ground floor (left) had a meeting hall, candles room, coal cellar, and staircase, while the first floor (right) had a living room, godfather archpriest's room, archpriest's room, priest's bedroom, kitchen, and lavatory. Its northern and western façades faced two public streets and the rest were in the courtyard (BOA, İ.AZN, 105-11, H. 03.02.1330, fol. 1)[3].

By the 19th century, the Greek community of Burhaniye had its own cemetery in the town center. Like the monuments discussed previously, the cemetery also had later additions. For

3 Width: 9 *arşın*; length: 16 *arşın*; height: 11 *arşın* (so 6.75 x 12 x 8.25 m, respectively). The ground floor (left) had a meeting hall, candles room, coal cellar, and staircase, while the first floor (right) had a living room, godfather archpriest's room, archpriest's room, priest's bedroom, kitchen, and lavatory. Its northern and western façades faced two public streets, and the rest were in the courtyard.

instance, a series of official documents from the Ottoman State Archives dated September 25, 1901, mention the addition of an ossuary to the Greek Orthodox cemetery in Burhaniye, along with the related building permit for it (BOA, ŞD, 1580-17, H. 11.06.1319). Archival correspondences with the registry date of October 29, 1901, include a detailed plan of that ossuary building. The plan shows that the Greek cemetery had an elongated rectangular layout, with a short side of 22 m and a long side of at least 27 m. Boundary walls had a thickness of roughly 0.60 m. The gate was on the short side, toward the frontal corner, and the rectangular ossuary was fitted to the rear corner. The inner dimensions of the masonry structure were 5.5 x 6.5 m. The bearing walls of the lateral and rear façades were approximately 0.75–0.80 m thick, while the entrance façade was around 0.50 m. The two-door entrance was oriented toward the burial ground as well as its main gate. A wooden portico of 2 x 5.5 m fronted the entrance. Accessed by four steps, the portico had a plain design with six rectangular pillars. These pillars were arranged with four in the front and two behind, separated by diagonal patterned railings. In addition, there were stylized capitals, a pseudo architrave, and plain eaves above each other. Each lateral façade had a window, and there were three internal niches on the rear façade, apparently for storage purposes. The ossuary had a hip roof covered in tiles, with its height reaching 6 m up to the eaves. The 1.5 m raised foundation of the plain structure may have been designed to accommodate a subterranean vault to provide additional storage space. Overall, it was a rather simple and pragmatic building in accordance with the bone depository function in question (see Figure 5) (BOA, İ.AZN, 44-11, H. 16.07.1319). A single document dated November 2, 1901, not only confirms the construction mentioned previously but also includes its procedure in the ministries of justice and interior (BOA, BEO, 1741-130559, H. 20.07.1319). Finally, a document dated December 8, 1901, states that there was no objection to the construction of a bone depository in the Greek cemetery in Burhaniye; however, it should be constructed in accordance with the building code. Its architectural details, as well as dimensions, were verified, confirming the presence of an entrance and two windows, with 6.5 *arşın* width, 10 *arşın* length, and 5 *arşın* height (so 5 x 7.5 x 3.75 m, respectively), which curiously do not correspond with precision to the plan (see Figure 5). Meanwhile, the total cost of construction was approximately 1,300 *kuruş* (BOA, DH.MKT, 2566-58, H. 26.08.1319). The Greek cemetery of Burhaniye, including the ossuary building, did not survive following the compulsory population exchange in 1923, and there have not been any studies about them to this date. Nevertheless, most recently, it has been reported that some elderly locals still recall the former cemetery and its ossuary with their approximate positions next to the old prison in the vast, longitudinal, and once-empty area along River Karınca. Formerly used for various public events, it formed the entire southwestern perimeter of the town and was called "Müsellâ" (Aras, 2014, p. 180).[4]

4 There used to be a walled open-air prayer place (*musalla*), which was the reason why the ground was called that way. The old prison, which no longer exists, was locally called "Dam" (gaol). Those public events included Friday prayers, rain prayers, circumcision feasts, firing the iftar cannon during Ramadan, football matches, camel wrestling gatherings, stunt performances, and military drills.

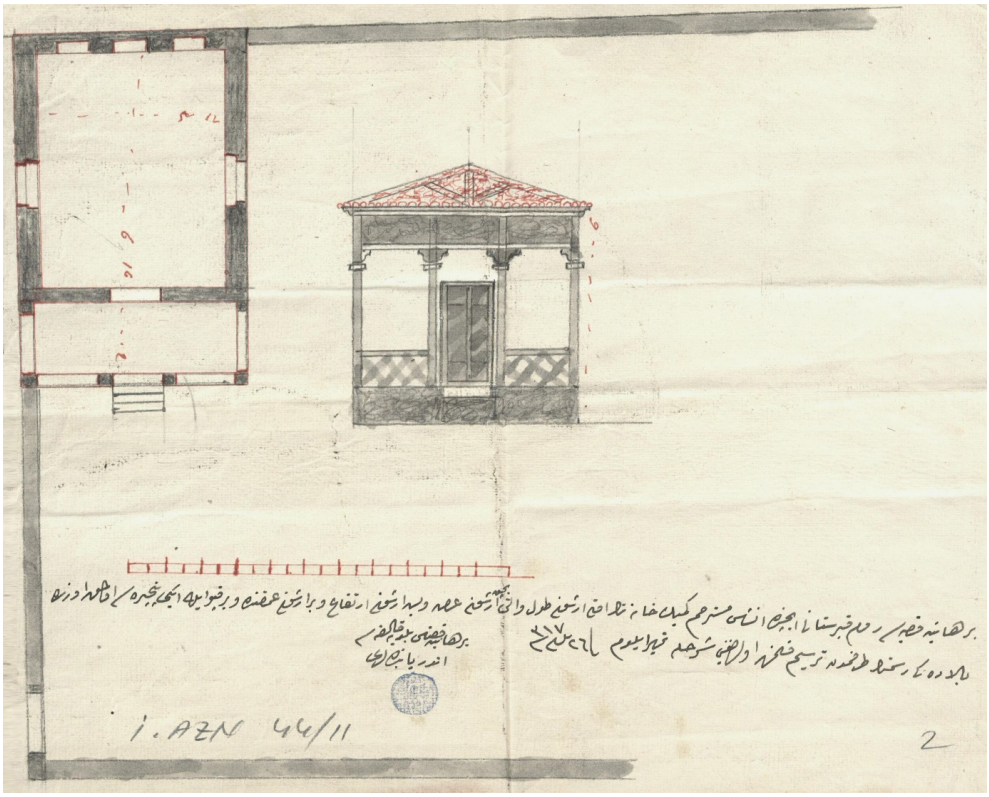

Figure 5. Floor plan and front façade view of the ossuary to be constructed in the Greek cemetery of Burhaniye, dated 1901 (BOA, İ.AZN, 44-11, H. 16.07.1319, fol. 2).

Considering the aforementioned collective testimony as a starting point, an oral history survey was conducted among the town's elderly residents and local researchers, with Architect M. Zeybek, who had served as a council member for two periods, leading the effort in identifying the precise position of the former Greek cemetery of Burhaniye. According to the testimonies obtained from multiple sources, there were two burial grounds. The first and smaller one was in the vicinity of the church, and the second, much larger one, was positioned along the southwestern fringe of the historical settlement center, which roughly corresponds to the modern Sevgi Park next to Uğur Mumcu Blvd, between Kadir Efe Street and Borazan Street. The area remained vacant and ignored despite surrounding urban development. Therefore, it was almost trapped in the middle of the town, before its designation as a park in 1999 (M. Zeybek, personal communication, July 25, 2023). The aerial images of Burhaniye dated 1956, 1958, and 1968 confirm that the area was empty and kept its initial limits to this date. All new building blocks, including large public buildings, were constructed further away to the southwest (HGM, 1956, 694/238; HGM, 1958, 918/364; HGM, 1968, 1955/100,196). However, it appears that a modern apartment occupies roughly one-fourth of the former area

in the present day. Curiously enough, despite its pivotal position in the town, the park still does not possess a building block as well as a plot register (*ada*/*parsel*). This increases the possibility of an ownership change in the context of it being a former public space that was transferred to the state treasury, following the population exchange.

During the field survey in the area, a masonry perimeter wall with a thickness of around 0.70 m and a total length of nearly 50 m was noticed along the section of the park adjacent to the boulevard. It appears that the wall had been standing for a long time since a 3 m gap toward the northwestern end and the final 20 m toward the southeast have quarried larger stones and unhewn small rubbles, respectively, both with cement mortar. However, the fundamental masonry technique used in the first 30 m from the northern end involves middle-sized mixed rubbles with roughly shaped surfaces. These rubbles were assembled using abundant lime mortar with few brick pieces that entirely fill the joints. Excess lime mortar was smoothed away and partially spread onto the stones. The whole upper level of the wall was slightly elevated with larger mixed rubbles and received a triangular section, which was later altered with cement mortar (see Figures 6–8). The fundamental section of the wall can be dated to the late 19th and early 20th centuries due to its similarity in masonry technique with nearby buildings with known construction dates. Considering the oral history testimonies, the structure in question was possibly the perimeter wall of the former Greek cemetery of Burhaniye (see Figure 9).

Figures 6–8. Perimeter wall that supposedly remained from the former Greek cemetery of Burhaniye, partially Sevgi Park today (Adramytteion Researches, 2023).

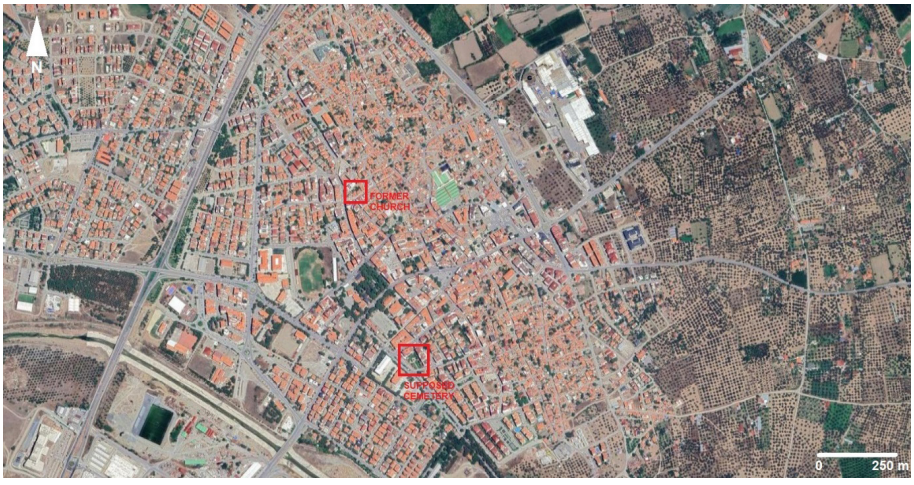

Figure 9. Aerial view of Burhaniye town centre with locations of the former Greek church and the supposed cemetery (Google Maps).

Abandoned Cemetery with Ossuary in Cunda: A Neglected Heritage

Formerly known as Yunda and referred to as Moschonisi by the Greeks, Cunda/Alibey, along with roughly 20 dependent islands, once formed the namesake Ottoman township of Moschonisi/Yunda. It was part of the Lesvos Sanjak, which belonged to the Vilayet of the Archipelago. Today, Cunda/Alibey is the largest of the Ayvalık Islands. The main settlement on it also had the name Moschonisi/Moskonisi/Yunda previously, though now it forms a peripheral neighborhood of Ayvalık (Ünver, 2012, pp. 103–106). According to some anonymous sources, the main settlement of the insular township was founded around 1580 (Drakos, 1888, p. 16;

1895, p. 19). In this case, the testimony of Pîrî Reis provides *terminus post quem*. There was no settlement around the "Yund Islands" as of ca. 1525, and nothing more than some geographical features were mentioned by the Ottoman chief navigator (Pîrî Reis, 2013, p. 42). It has been argued that at the beginning of the 17th century, Moschonisi developed around the Church of Agia Triada. The building of this church, dated 1865, is in ruins today. Through the parish of Agios Dimitrios, the settlement expanded toward the east in the 18th century. The expansion of Moschonisi followed two primary directions. First, it extended to the north with the establishment of the parish of Panagia (Koimesis Theotokou) in 1750, and then it expanded to the south with the parish of Taxiarches in the third quarter of the same century. After 1821, the parish of Agios Panteleimon, established on the northern slope of the hill (upon which the Moschonisi settlement leans on), became the last neighborhood of the historical town center. Meanwhile, just outside the eastern part of Moschonisi, Hamidiye Mosque, the sole Muslim shrine on the island, was built at the end of the 19th century (Psarros, 2017, p. 304).

The former Greek cemetery of Moschonisi is located at the junction of Maden Street, just north of the historical settlement center. It had a well-kept garden behind high walls, decorated with white marble funerary monuments with crosses, busts, and bas-reliefs. Today, only the rectangular perimeter wall and the bone depository in the northwestern corner remain. The large pile of rubble in the center of the northern portion is the demolished cemetery shrine, whereas the burials were primarily in the southern portion (Psarros, 2017, pp. 347–349). The cemetery church of Agios Nikolaos was built in 1882 by Archbishop Paisios II. The shrine is described as an elegant church with a belfry (Drakos, 1888, p. 19; 1895, pp. 22–23).

Cunda's former Greek cemetery is located in the Namıkkemal neighborhood, block 1014, plot 22, in front of the current Turkish cemetery and is currently a listed monument (BKTVKK, 25.06.2021/2934). It was reported that the cemetery church was dynamited by Sergeant Laz Ali one night following its abandonment due to the 1923 population exchange (Yorulmaz, 1977). The church was approximately 7–8 x 10–12 m in floor dimensions and seemingly had a single nave with a barrel-vaulted ceiling, as revealed by the curvilinear structural pieces made of bricks that are visible on the debris. The bearing walls had mixed types of local stone materials and were put together with lime mortar (see Figures 10–12).

The ossuary is 5.5 x 7 m in floor area and has a height of nearly 4.5 m. It is a single-space building with a doorway and has no openings except for a tiny gable window with a railing on the rear pediment. Today, it is used as a depot and has structural damages. In terms of masonry technique, the ossuary is similar to the cemetery church. It has roughly shaped, mixed, and middle- to small-sized rubbles, though the locally sourced pinkish ignimbrite stones (*Sarımsak taşı*) are distinctive. The doorway is surrounded by finely hewn stone blocks of that kind. The cornerstones of the building are relatively large, and only the entrance façade is plastered. There is a molding made of two rows of bricks on the pediment. The roof underwent a simple renovation at a later date, which is lower than the pediment level today. The floor is entirely covered with dirt, so it is difficult to determine whether the ossuary

has any subterranean vaults or not, but it is highly probable. Like the former ossuary of Burhaniye, it is a simple and pragmatic building in accordance with its bone depository function (see Figures 13–15).

In the quest to obtain lime through burning for new constructions, the marble tombstones in the cemetery have been removed throughout the 20th century. Despite the extensive destruction, the walls and floor of the church have been preserved beneath a 2.5 m high debris. Even though the cemetery is a listed monument and has a fragile spatial memory, it is being utilized as a wasteyard. Moreover, in July 2023, the debris of the church suffered severe damage due to an illegal excavation with an earth mover. This resulted in the complete removal of structural elements from the ground, including the foundations (see Figures 16–17).

Figures 10–12. Former Greek cemetery of Cunda Island with its perimeter walls, ossuary, and demolished church of Agios Nikolaos as a rubble heap next to a singular tree in front of the ossuary (Adramytteion Researches, 2018).

Figures 13–15. Ossuary building in the former Greek cemetery of Cunda Island (Adramytteion Researches, 2018).

Figures 16–17. Demolished cemetery church of Agios Nikolaos as a rubble heap in the former Greek cemetery of Cunda Island, which faced with excessive vandalism afterwards (Adramytteion Researches, 2018; 2023).

Funerary Islets: Isolated Resting Places for the Venerated and the Damned

According to Eustratios I. Drakos, a local researcher from Moschonisi who lived in the 19th century, Kalamaki (Καλαμάκι), a small and greenish island among Ayvalık Islands' northeastern group, was the place on which the islanders threw bones of the dead believed

to be turned into *vrykolakas* (βρυκόλακας), which is an undead, harmful creature in Greek folklore (Drakos, 1888, p. 5; 1895, p. 6). By the 19th century, the aforementioned phenomenon, which is loosely the equivalent of vampires, was not uncommon in the region. For instance, in Mytilene (Lesbos), which is right opposite to Ayvalık Islands to the west, the bones of those who supposedly would not lie in peace inside their graves were transported to an adjacent small island and were reinterred. This was done as it was believed that vampires could not cross salt water. Therefore, in accordance with the superstition, an effective solution was provided against any haunting visits, and the faithful ones were thought to be protected. There were many unpleasant stories in the Aegean Archipelago about vampire visits that disturbed the locals, such as in Rhodes, and local priests had to perform specific rites to get rid of them. In Mytilene, calling the vampire out loud terrified the people subjected to the macabre curse. They not only crossed themselves to thwart the curse but also tried to reverse the action that displeased the crier (Newton, 1865, pp. 212–213). Likewise, during recent archaeological excavations in Mytilene, it was observed that two separate burials from the 18th and 19th centuries were treated as potential revenants. They were interred with unusual burial practices in rather isolated places, with spikes driven into the corpses (Sulosky Weaver, 2015).

In one of the most comprehensive recent studies concerning Ayvalık and its surroundings, the funerary islet of Kalamaki is attributed to the tiny Mırmırca Rocks near Cape Karagöz, situated at the northeastern tip of Cunda (Psarros, 2017, pp. 448, 450). However, in the same study, a British nautical map dated 1958 shows Kalamaki as a reef with four rocks in the sea, roughly in the middle of Ayvalık Islands' northeastern group (Psarros, 2017, pp. 25–26). Therefore, the exact position of Kalamaki remains uncertain, which was unmistakably defined as a singular islet with a unique function as of the late 19th century by Drakos (1888, p. 5; 1895, p. 6). Likewise, Georgios Earinos, another contemporary scholar from the region, included Kalamaki as a singular geographical feature above the sea surface when listing the whole Ayvalık Islands, though underwater rocks were mentioned separately. Like Drakos, the scholar followed a very particular pattern in the text, listing all the islands from the southwest to the northeast, in accordance with the nearest adjacency. In this case, Kalamaki appeared as one of the three proper islands (or islets) that were exactly between Gkioumousli (Γκίουμουσλί, modern Çiçek/Gümüşlü Island) and Krommydonnisi (Κρομμυδοννήσι, modern Dolap/Soğan/Lale Island) (Earinos, 1876, p. 145).

Furthermore, when examining the geography of Ayvalık Islands in conjunction with the Hellenic Navy map of 1922 prepared by the hydrographic survey vessel Alpheios I and the Aegean Sea seafaring guidebook of naval officer Ahmet Rasim Barkınay dated 1925, it becomes evident that Kalamaki corresponds to the rocky islet called Sazlı/Oker/Kalemli in modern times (Hellenic Navy, 1925; Barkınay, 2005, p. 83). Sazlı Island belongs to the northeastern group of Ayvalık Islands and is located to the north of Dolap Island. It is the northwesternmost of the three islets that together form a triangular shape, with Taş Island to the northeast and Akoğlu Island to the south. Measuring roughly 35 x 20 m, it is a rocky islet covered with reeds and has a shoaly surrounding. No small findings were observed during

a preliminary field survey on the islet. However, along the upper surface of the islet, two ruins, in the form of a platform, were found. One resembled an open cistern and the other a collapsed building. The former was mostly filled with debris and can also be traced from a corner formed by the right-angled body walls. The latter was a mound-shaped ruin surrounded by mixed rubbles and tiles (see Figures 18–19). Thus, it can be argued that the islet was not just an open area for the disposal of the excommunicated members' remains, and it had some structures that highly likely served the funerary function. In this case, especially after the testimony of Newton (1865, pp. 212–213) about the *vrykolakas* myth in Mytilene, the open reservoir was seemingly a charnel house for the discarded bones, and the collapsed building was possibly a chapel.

Figures 18–19. Sazlı Island from the northwest, and the top, in the north-eastern group of Ayvalık Islands (Adramytteion Researches, 2020).

Furthermore, there was a second funerary islet in Ayvalık, but its purpose was totally the opposite when compared with Sazlı Island. George of Chios (1785–1807) lived in Ayvalık for a while and was reportedly a pious young man. He was beheaded by the Turkish authorities

of the town, and as a result of his dramatic execution, he was canonized soon afterward. His sainthood was officially recognized (Agios Georgios Chiopolitis) with a feast day on November 26, which commemorated his martyrdom. He was buried in an islet deep in the bays of Ayvalık. This islet, formerly called "Νησοπούλας" (Nisopoula), corresponds to Kumru Island today. It is on this islet that a small chapel was built on his tomb around the middle of the 19th century. According to the testimony of icon artist Photis Kontoglou (1895–1965), who lived very nearby and witnessed the period when the islet was in use as a sacred space, the chapel was a small and simple structure with a single space. It had a wooden roof with tiles, surmounted by a large cross. Fishermen and their families frequented it, especially during summers (Kontoglou, 2009, pp. 15–61, 117–125). According to popular belief, since the *vrykolakas* could not reach the inhabited mainland from a remote islet and vice versa, perhaps the saint was buried in another islet for spiritual protection, in addition to a venerated physical isolation. Thus, theoretically speaking, revenants would be unable to violate that sacred space due to the saltwater in between (see Figure 20).

Figure 20. Aerial view of Ayvalık and its surroundings with the discussed places in the research (Google Maps).

Kumru Island is a flat and rocky islet with an altitude of 2 m. Interestingly, it was marked as "Monastery Island" on the Ottoman map of 1910–1911, so it was probably a pilgrimage site. The Greek survey of 1922 marked the chapel with a tiny cross and as "Agios Georgios" obviously after the saint (Erkân-ı Harbiye-i Umûmiye, 1911; Hellenic Navy, 1925). Some ruins on Kumru Island in the Cennet Bay of Ayvalık have been identified during the field mission. They are unlisted, and no cadastral information is available for the islet as well (see Figures 21–22). The remains are a damaged cistern and the foundations of a rectangular building that had completely collapsed. The cistern measures 2.70 x 1.70 m and has a depth of approximately 2 m. It had a barrel vault made of brick, which is largely missing due to later damages. Lateral walls were made of medium-sized and roughly hewn local ignimbrites with a pinkish color, being the so-called *Sarımsak taşı*. Hydraulic plasters of the interior have

been almost entirely preserved. There was a small hole in the upper corner to supply water to the cistern. To resist internal water pressure, the vault bricks were placed vertically with their short sides facing inward, and the interior corners were beveled. It can be said that the cistern was quite robustly built despite its relatively small size (see Figures 23–24).

The east-west oriented foundation walls of the second ruin have a thickness of 0.50 m. The walls are part of the lateral façades of a building, which presumably is the aforementioned chapel dedicated to George of Chios. They can be traced on the surface at the ground level despite the dense vegetation. Medium- to small-sized, mixed type, and rough rubbles with a fairly weak lime mortar were used in the masonry technique, which does not follow any standard. More rubbles, broken tiles, and crumbled mortar fragments were noticed elsewhere on the islet, which seemingly spread around after the collapse of the assumed chapel. The ground level seemed mostly intact on the islet surface (see Figures 25–26).

Figures 21–22. Kumru Island from the north, and the top, in Cennet Bay between the Hakkıbey and Sarımsaklı peninsulas of Ayvalık (Adramytteion Researches, 2019).

Figures 23–24. Damaged cistern towards the west on Kumru Island (Adramytteion Researches, 2018).

Figures 25–26. Masonry foundations and mixed debris of a collapsed building on Kumru Island, supposedly the chapel dedicated to St. George of Chios (Adramytteion Researches, 2018).

Conclusion

According to the findings of this research, the two Greek Orthodox ossuary examples from the late 19th and early 20th centuries in Ayvalık and Burhaniye can be described as rather pragmatic and small buildings with plain façades, few openings, and tiled roofs. However, given the fairly modest dimensions of their ground floors and the bone depository requirements, the possibility of whether they had any subterranean vaults or not still needs to be addressed. Therefore, the former Greek cemetery with an ossuary on Cunda Island and the supposed location of the one in Burhaniye should be considered in future research. In addition, the position of a funerary islet in the Ayvalık Islands, which had previously remained quite uncertain in recent literature, has been clarified. However, it was not the only islet in the region with such a purpose. Sazlı/Oker/Kalemli Island (formerly Kalamaki), which had a charnel house, was for the *vrykolakas*, who were believed to be undead revenants. On the other hand, Kumru Island (formerly Nisopoula) was the resting place of a modern-day saint. It was at Kumru Island that a cistern and the foundations of a chapel were documented. Since bad spirits were believed to be unable to cross salt water, it can be argued that the choice of islets was not a mere coincidence. Perhaps, this choice played a crucial role in maintaining the attributed characteristics of the cursed and sacred spaces; one could not escape and the other could not be reached. From a methodological point of view, the research displays cooperation between multiple disciplines, such as architectural history, heritage preservation, and historical topography. This multidisciplinary approach was further strengthened by oral history, as was the case for Sevgi Park with a historical masonry perimeter wall in Burhaniye, which was said to be the former Greek cemetery of the town. At the same time, primary sources, either archival or cartographic, played an important role in demonstrating a portion of the previously untold aspects of the former Greek communities in the region as well as their monuments, especially in Burhaniye. Once multiple sources were considered and compared with each other, they were elaborated through field surveys to identify sites, where material discoveries corresponded to the preliminary findings obtained from the aforementioned sources. Furthermore, the results point to a certain number of destinations that can be subjected to advanced anthropological studies in the near future. As the case studies of this study show, landscape archaeology had a significant role in narrowing down the topographical limits. Also, in close cooperation with onsite scientific works, this research might guide conservation efforts against natural as well as anthropogenic threats, namely vandalism, which constantly threaten the rural heritage in the Gulf of Edremit. More damages are imminent, as demonstrated by current illegal activities for treasure hunting. Significant archaeological potentials of these areas were hitherto not considered from an anthropological perspective, especially concerning the 19th and 20th centuries. In the long run, the sites can be new heritage destinations that will represent the multifaceted cultural legacies of Ayvalık and Burhaniye.

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