

Rebuilding the Monastery of Aya Yannis the Prodigios in the Ottoman Karaferye

Georgios A. Nathanail

Author:

Alumnus of MA program in Historical Research with Specialization: Modern and Contemporary History, Aristotle University of Thessaloniki

geohand1999@gmail.com

ORCID: [0009-0004-2551-6211](https://orcid.org/0009-0004-2551-6211)

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Context

The *ferman* presented below belongs to the monastery of Timios Prodromos in Veria (Ottoman Karaferye). It is the only Ottoman document that has been found in the archives of the monastery.¹ The document dates to a few years after the complete destruction of the monastery by Mehmet Emin Ebu Lubut Pasha in 1822² due to suspicions that the monasteries in the area³ were collaborating with the rebels. In fact, this document is in a sense a result of the failed revolution in Macedonia, which started in 1821, firstly in Halkidiki and then in the region of Olympus including Naousa (Ottoman Ağustos).⁴ In order to suppress the revolutions in the wider region, Mehmet Emin Ebu Lubut Pasha started out from Thessaloniki and after destroying some settlements in *Rumluk*⁵ (the wider region between Karaferye and Selânik), he defeated the rebels in Naousa, in the Monastery of Panagia Dovra⁶ (close to Veria), which he destroyed, and in

¹ After extensive research in the Ottoman State Archives [T.C. Başbakanlık Osmanlı Arşivi] an *i'lām* (BOA, C. ADL. 70-4194) was found about the rebuilding of the monastery. This document was issued on the 24 of April 1838, 4 years after the issue of the *ferman*, which means that the *i'lām* is chronologically the last document in the licensing process for the rebuilding of the monastery. There are no traces of this document in the monastery's codex and further research must be done in order to find out all the details of the document.

² D. A. Papazes, «Σύντομη ιστορία τῆς Ἱ. Μονῆς τοῦ τιμίου Προδρόμου (Σκήτη) Βεροίας» ["Brief History of the H. Monastery of T. Prodromos (Skete) of Veria"], *Nicolaus 1-2*, 1998, 376-377 and Γ. Χιονίδης [G. Chionidis], «Τὰ γεγονότα εἰς τὴν περιοχὴν Ναούσης-Βεροίας κατὰ τὴν Ἐπανάστασιν τοῦ 1822» ["The events in the area of Naousa-Veria during the Revolution of 1822"], *Μακεδονικά [Makedonika]* 8, 1968, 217-219.

³ There was an extensive network of monasteries along the Haliacmon river [İnce Karasu nehri], which were destroyed because there were groups of rebels in the area. For more details regarding the monastery network see: Μ. Χ. Χατζηγιάννου [M. C. Chatziioannou], *Ἡ ἱστορική εξέλιξη τῶν οικισμῶν στὴν περιοχή τοῦ Αἰιάκμονα κατὰ τὴν Τουρκοκρατία. Ὁ κώδικας αρ. 201 τῆς Μονῆς Μεταμορφώσεως τοῦ Σωτήρος Ζάβορδας [The Historical Development of the Settlements in the area of Haliacmon during the Ottoman period. The Codex no. 201 of the Monastery of the Transfiguration of the Jesus in Zavorda]*, 2000.

⁴ Β. C. Gounaris, "Macedonia" in P. M. Kitromilides, C. Tsoukalas (ed.), *The Greek Revolution. A Critical Dictionary*, 2021, 232-247 and Δ. Παπασταματίου, Φ. Κοτζαγεώργης [D. Papastamatiou, F. Kotzageorgis], *Στις παρυφές τῆς Ἐπανάστασης. Μία νέα προσέγγιση τοῦ Αγώνα στὴ Χαλκιδική με βάση οθωμανικό τεκμηριακό υλικό [On the outskirts of the Revolution. A New Approach to the Struggle in Halkidiki based on Ottoman Documentary Material]*, 2021.

⁵ Γ. Δ. Μοσχόπουλος [G. D. Moschoroulos], *Τὸ Ρουμλούκι (Καμπανία) κατὰ τὴν πρώτη και μέση οθωμανοκρατία (14^{ος} αἰῶνας – 1830) [Rumluk (Campania) during the Early and Middle Ottoman Rule (14th century – 1830)]*, 2012, 206-232.

⁶ Θ. Παπαζώτος [T. Papazotos], «Μονή τῆς Παναγίας Κουκουμητριώτισσας τῆς λεγόμενης Δοβρά» ["Monastery of Panagia Koukoumitriotissa of the so-called Dovra"], *Ἱστοριογεωγραφικά [Istorikogeografika]* 3, 1991, 282.

Kolindros, where in the wider region there was the Monastery of Panagia Makryrrachi,⁷ which he also destroyed. The latter two monasteries are similar cases to that of Timios Prodromos as they scattered at the same time and were rebuilt relatively soon. There are many other cases of rebuilding of monasteries that are much older and in other regions.⁸

This document was the most necessary one for the rebuilding of the monastery's main church (*Katholikon*) because it gives us information that we did not know until now, such as the characteristics that the new building should have had and that a question was put to the *Şeyhülislam*, who responded positively to the request for reconstruction by issuing a *fetva*. Within the Greek Codex of the monastery, we found the payment for the publication of the *ferman*, which cost 11,509 *ğuruş*,⁹ in the annual budget of 1834. Before the *ferman*, the monks requested permission to build other monastery buildings in 1825, but we do not know whom they approached. Then, in 1828, a permit was issued by the Ecumenical Patriarchate,¹⁰ which cost 1,274 *ğuruş*.¹¹ This *ferman* is the symbolic end of a document-issuing trail, and by combining Ottoman and Greek sources we can trace a pattern for the licensing process for building Christian places of worship in the late Ottoman world.¹²

⁷ Δ. Α. Παπάζης [D. A. Papazes], «Η συμμετοχή της Ι. Μ. Υπεραγίας Θεοτόκου Μακρυρράχης στους αγώνες του Μακεδονικού Ελληνισμού» ["The participation of the Holy Virgin Mary of Makryrrachi in the struggles of the Macedonian Hellenism"], *Μακεδονικά [Makedonika]* 44, 2020-2023, 212-214.

⁸ Φ. Κοτζαγεώργης, Μ. Κ. Σιμωνοπετρίτης [F. Kotzageorgis, M. K. Simonopetritis], «Συμβολή στην ιστορία του καθολικού της μονής Σιμωνόπετρας» ["Contribution to the History of the Catholic of the Monastery of Simonopetra"], *Αθωνικά Τετράδια [Athonika Tetrada]* 2, 2015, 45-84 and Ν. Τσιβίκης, Η. Κολοβός [N. Tsvikis, E. Kolonos], «Μαναστήρι-1 San Dito: Ο καθεδρικός ναός του Αγίου Τίτου στον Χάνδακα της Κρήτης μέσα από τις οθωμανικές πηγές» ["Manastir-1 San Dito: The Cathedral of Saint Titus in Chandakas, Crete, through the Ottoman sources"] in Τ. Κιουσοπούλου, Β. Φωσκόλου [T. Kiousoyroulou, V. Foskolou] (ed.), *Grata Dona: Μελέτες προς τιμήν της Όλγας Γκρατζίου [Grata Dona: Studies in honour of Olga Graziou]*, 2023, 521-565.

⁹ *Codex of the Holy Monastery of Timios Prodromos - Skete Veria (1825-1922)*, 4v.

¹⁰ For a detailed transcription of the text see: Π. Δ. Πυρινός [P. D. Pyrinos], *Ανέκδοτα έγγραφα αφορώντα εις τας Ιεράς Μονάς Τιμίου Προδρόμου (Σκήτη Βέροιας) και Μουτσιάλης [Unpublished Documents Concerning the Holy Monasteries of Timios Prodromos (Skete of Veria) and Moutsiali]*, 1975, 11-14.

¹¹ *Codex of the Holy Monastery of Timios Prodromos - Skete Veria (1825-1922)*, 14v.

¹² R. Gradeva, "Ottoman policy towards Christian church buildings", *Balkan Studies* 4, 1994, 14-36.

Transcription

[Tuğra of Mahmud II] *Maḥmūd ḥān bin ‘Abdülḥamīd el-muẓaffer dā’imā*

*Ḳıdvetü’n-nüvvābi’l-müteşerri’in Ḳaraferye ḳazāsı nā’ibi Mevlānā [] zīde ‘ilmuhū ve mefāḥirü’l-emāsil ve’l-aḳrān a’yān ve vücūh-ı memleket ve bi’l-cümle iş erleri zīde ḳadru-
hū[ma] tevḳī’-i refi’-i hümayūn vāsıl olıcaḳ ma’lüm ola ki Ḳaraferye ḳazāsına tābi ‘ Bodrum
Manastırı’nda kā’in Aya Yani Bodromus Kilisesi dimekle ma’rūf bir bāb Rum kilisesinüñ
cüdrān ve sakfı mürür-ı zamān ile müşrif-i ḥarāb olduğına binā’en ta’miri ḥuşuşı ḳarye-i
mezbūre re’āyāsı tarafından niyāz ve istirḥām olunmuş ve ma’rifet-i şer’le lede’l-mu’āyene
ḥarābiyyeti taḥaḳḳuḳ ile keşf ve misāḥa olınduḳda ḫūlen yigirmi ve arzen on beş ve ḳadden
on zirā’ olduğu tebeyyün itmiş olduğundan baḥşle vaż’-ı ḳadīm ve hey’et-i aşliyyesi üzre
ta’mir ve termimine ruḫşatı ḥāvī emr-i şerīfim şudūrı bā-i’lām recā ve istid’ā ḳılınmış ve
muḳteżā-yı şer’iyyesi bi’l-fi’l Şeyḫülislām ve Müfti’i’l-enām olan Mekkizāde a’lemü’l-
‘ulemāi’l-mütebahḫirīn efzālü’l-fuzālā’i’l-[müteşerri’in] mevlānā Muştafā Aşım edāme
llāhu te’ālā fezā’iluhūdan lede’l-istiftā bir beldede vāḳı’ kenise-i ḳadīme ḥarāb olduḳda
erbābı heyet-i aşliyyesine nesne ziyāde itmeksizin vaż’-ı ḳadīmī üzre şer’an ta’mire ḳadir
olurlar mı el-Cevāb Olurlar, diyü bir ḳıḫ’a fetvā-yı şerīf[e] virilmiş olmaḳdan nāşī mesāğ-ı
şer’-i şerīf olduğu üzre ta’mirine ruḫşat-ı seniyye-i mülūkānem bī-dirīğ ḳılınarak ol bābda
ḥatt-ı hümayūn-ı merāḫim-nümün-ı pādişāhānem şaḫīfe-pīrā-yı şudūr olmaḳla mantūḳ-ı
münīfi ve virilen fetvā-yı şerīfe muḳteżāsı olduğu ü[zre] ‘amel olunmaḳ fermānım olmaḳın
ruḫşatı ḥāvī işbu emr-i şerīfim ısdār ve tesyār olunmuşdur imdi kilisa-yı mezbūruñ ḫūlen ve
‘arzen ve ḳadden ve vüs’aten vaż’-ı ḳadīm ve hey’et-i aşliyyesini bir ḳarış ve bir parmaḳ
tecāvüz itmemek şartıyla ber-vech-i mesāğ şer’-i şerīf[e] ta’mirine müsā’ade-i ‘aliyyem
erzān ḳılındığı ve bu vesīle ile vaż’-ı ḳadīminden ziyāde nesne iḥdāsına irā’et-i ruḫşat
olinmaḳ ve bir gūne ḫama’ ve irtikāba düşilerek zımnında re’āyādan bir aḳçe ve bir ḥabbe
aḫz ve taḫşil ḳılınmaḳ lāzım gelür ise mütecāsir olanlar mazhar-ı mu’āḫaze ve ‘itāb [ola-
caḳlarından] şübhe olmadığı siz ki nā’ib ve a’yān ve sā’ir mūmā ileyhimsiz ma’lümüñüz
olduḳda aña göre ‘amel ve ḫarekete ihtimām ve diḳḳat ve ḫilāfından teḫāşī ve mücānebet
eylemeñüz bābında fermān-ı ‘ālī-şānum şādır olmuşdur buyurdum ki vuşul bulduḳda bu*

*bābda vech-i meşrūh [üzre] şeref-yäfte-i şudūr olan fermān-ı vācibü 'l-ittibā' ve lāzīmü 'l-
imtisālimūñ mazmūn-ı itā'at-maḳrūniyla 'amel ve ḫareket eylesiz şöyle bilesiz 'alāmet-
i şerīfe i 'timād kılasız Tahḫīran fī evāsiti şehri Rebī'ü 'l-āḫir sene ḫamsīn ve mi'eteyn ve elf
[11-20 Rebī'ü 'l-āḫir 1250/ 26.8.1834]
be-maḳām-ı Ḳoşantiniyye*

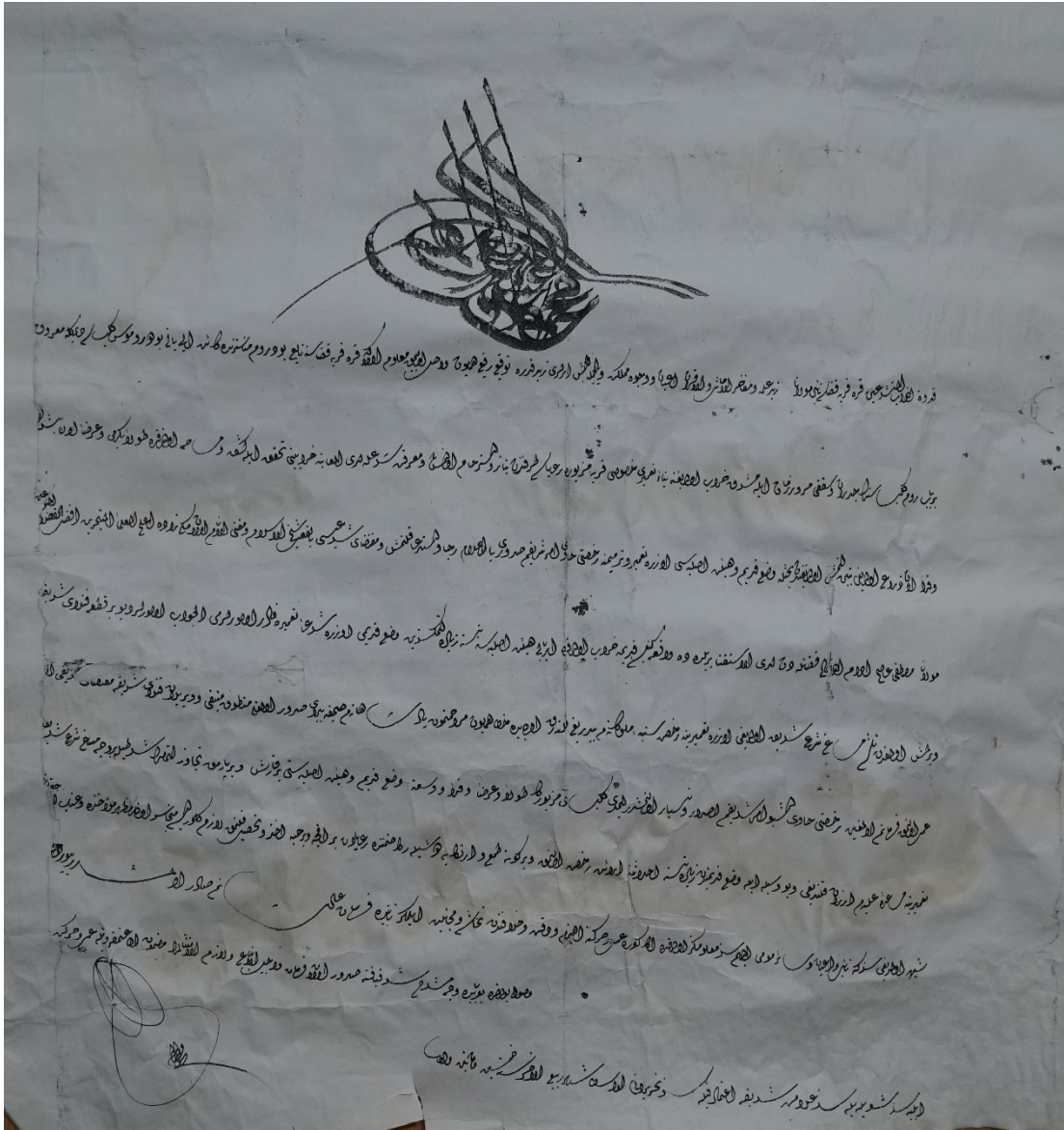
Translation

[Tuğra of Mahmud II] Mahmud Khan son of Abdulhamid, the eternal victor

To the exemplar of knowledge of the sacred law, Mevlana [...], regent of judge's office of Veria – may his wisdom increase –, to the excellent and brilliant primates and state officials and to anyone involved in this affair – may their wisdom increase – the following be known as soon as my imperial letter arrives: In the monastery of Prodomos, which belongs administratively to the kaza of Veria, there is an orthodox church with one door known as the church of Agios Ioannis Prodomos. With the passage of time, because the walls and the roof of the church were crumbling, a request and request for repair was made by the Christians of the aforementioned village, and after an on-site inspection and survey, according to a forensic opinion, an imperial order was requested to send an imperial order to issue a permit for repair and restoration according to the actual form and the old plan, which is 20 cubits long, 15 cubits wide and 10 cubits high and in accordance with the holy law the approval was sought from the illustrious, honored, exemplar of knowledge of the holy law, the Şeyhülislam Mekkizade Mevlana, Mustafa Asim, – may Allah increase his virtue and wisdom –, who was asked whether the holy law permits the construction of a church, which is dilapidated, according to the actual plan and as it was before without making a new addition. He said that it was permitted and he issued a holy fetva and in order to issue the imperial permission to make the repairs, the fetva was sent to the Sultan so that he could act to issue the imperial order. A high order was issued to me, authorizing the repair of the aforesaid church according to the sacred law, on condition that there be no variation and that it be repaired according to the original plan and as it was of old as to length, width, and height but

you, regent of judge's office and prelates and the rest of you, take care that nothing be done against the law and take your precautions and act accordingly and do not be suspicious of those who will consider or show greed when there is a need to obtain even a grain, even a little money from Christians falling into abuse and greed because of the establishment of the church by the old law. I order that: You act according to your powers as soon as this present and excellent ferman, issued in the manner aforesaid for this case, arrives. Be aware of the above and place your trust in my imperial emblem. It was written in the middle of the month of August in the year 1834 in Istanbul.

Facsimile



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