



Birmingham Byzantine and Ottoman Studies

AN OTTOMAN ERA TOWN IN THE BALKANS

THE CASE STUDY OF KAVALA

Velika Ivkowska

ROUTLEDGE



An Ottoman Era Town in the Balkans

An Ottoman Era Town in the Balkans: The Case Study of Kavala presents the town of Kavala in Northern Greece as an example of Ottoman urban and residential development, covering the long period of Kavala's expansion over five centuries under Ottoman rule. Kavala was part of the Ottoman Empire from 1387 to 1912. In the middle of the sixteenth century, Ibrahim Pasha, grand vizier of Suleiman the Magnificent, contributed to the town's prosperity and growth by the construction of an aqueduct. The Ottomans also rebuilt and extended the existing Byzantine fortress.

The book uncovers new findings about Kavala, and addresses the key question: is there an authentic "Ottoman" built environment that the town and its architecture share? Through the examination of travelers' accounts, historical maps, and archival documents, the Ottoman influences on the urban settlement of Kavala are assessed. From its original founding by the Ottomans in the late fourteenth century to the nineteenth century when the expansion of tobacco production in the area transformed its prosperity, the development of Kavala as an Ottoman era town is explored.

The book will be of interest to scholars and students interested in Ottoman history and urban history.

Velika Ivkowska was born in Skopje, then the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia. She is a trained engineer architect and an academician. She completed her doctoral studies at Istanbul Technical University, Turkey and is currently an Assistant Professor at Bahçeşehir University, Turkey. She is a member of the International Council on Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS) Macedonia and she actively participates in conferences and seminars concerning the built heritage and its protection and preservation. She has published widely on the architectural, vernacular, and urban environments.

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Velika Ivkowska

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To my son Miron and my parents Blagoja and Elena



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Contents

<i>List of figures</i>	ix
<i>Preface</i>	xii
<i>Acknowledgments</i>	xiii
<i>Abbreviations</i>	xv
<i>Summary</i>	xvi
Introduction	1
1 Formation of Ottoman era towns in the Balkans	9
<i>The “Orientalism” of the Ottoman Balkans</i>	11
<i>The multi-layered face of the Ottoman Balkan town</i>	15
<i>Plan and siting of the Ottoman town</i>	23
<i>The core of the Ottoman town</i>	26
<i>System of mahalle and street layout</i>	29
<i>The Ottoman house plan typology in Rumelia</i>	32
2 History and urban development of Kavala	44
<i>Before Kavala: Neapolis and Byzantine Christoupolis</i>	44
<i>Ottoman conquest of Kavala – the aftermath (1391–1478)</i>	50
<i>Urban development in the sixteenth century</i>	52
<i>The house program in the walled town</i>	60
<i>Kavala’s urban development between the seventeenth and early nineteenth centuries</i>	65
<i>House program and typologies</i>	86
<i>Kavala’s development extra muros: the era of the tobacco industry (between the early nineteenth and early twentieth centuries)</i>	94

3 Conclusion	128
<i>Appendix</i>	136
<i>Glossary</i>	190
<i>Bibliography</i>	193
<i>Index</i>	204

Figures

1.1	Eighteenth-century drawing of Thessaloniki with its walls and fortress	19
1.2	Town morphology of the residential urban fabric of Sarajevo, second half of nineteenth century	28
1.3	The <i>cul de sac</i> and the morphology of the residential urban fabric in Safranbolu	30
1.4	Eighteenth-century urban map of Thessaloniki	31
1.5	House plan types with (1) outer hall; (2) inner hall; (3) central hall	35
2.1	Via Egnatia and the settlements on its route	46
2.2	Map of the island of Tassos from Piri Reis's <i>Kitab-i Bahriye</i> , 1521	52
2.3	Sultan Selim I fortress built on the top of the peninsular hill, with Ibrahim Pasha aqueduct and Mosque. From an old engraving	53
2.4	Sultan Selim I fortress today	54
2.5	Interior of the Sultan Selim I fortress of Kavala today	55
2.6	Kavala's aqueduct today	55
2.7	Kavala's aqueduct	56
2.8	Ibrahim Pasha Mosque, today converted into the Church of St. Nicholas	57
2.9	View of the Ibrahim Pasha Mosque from the port	59
2.10	The urban layout of seventeenth-century Kavala seen by Evliya Çelebi, showing the first Ottoman neighborhood (light gray) and the extension towards the tip of the peninsula (dark gray)	60
2.11	House examples in the residential part of Ibrahim Pasha neighborhood	61
2.12	Fountain in the middle of the residential area of Ibrahim Pasha <i>mahalle</i>	62
2.13	View of the mosque and the Ibrahim Pasha neighborhood's walled residential area (late eighteenth or early nineteenth century)	63

x *Figures*

2.14	Road network in the Ibrahim Pasha neighborhood	64
2.15	Kavala's neighborhoods and public structures in the nineteenth century	66
2.16	Drawing of Kavala	67
2.17	Panorama of Kavala showing the old walled town, the new structures built in the plains by the neck of the peninsula, and the many minarets	68
2.18	Edward Lear's watercolor painting of Kavala, 1856	69
2.19	View of the middle-walled town with the fortress and the twentieth-century expansions in the distance	70
2.20	No longer extant Hüseyin Bey Mosque across the street from the <i>Imaret külliye</i> , c. 1920	71
2.21	The remains of the fountain built by Mehmed Ali Pasha in Hüseyin Bey <i>mahalle</i>	72
2.22	Halil Bey Mosque today	72
2.23	Halil Bey <i>medrese</i> today	73
2.24	Kadi Ahmed Efendi Mosque's minaret foundation remains today	74
2.25	Postcard from Kavala with the customs building, the <i>Imaret</i> , and the residential area on the hill	74
2.26	The <i>Imaret</i> complex following restoration (from the sea) – with the Kavala <i>Kalesi</i> (fortress) in the background	75
2.27	<i>Imaret</i> in the urban fabric in Hüseyin Bey neighborhood in the middle town	80
2.28	The primary school (<i>mekteb</i>) seen from the third inner courtyard	81
2.29	Section of the second <i>medrese</i> with view of the, now lost, second <i>dershane</i>	82
2.30	First floor plan of the <i>Imaret</i> complex with its different structures	82
2.31	Road network in the middle town	83
2.32	The neighborhoods of Ottoman Kavala <i>intra muros</i> (fourteenth to eighteenth centuries)	85
2.33	House with symmetrical floor plan and wide front	86
2.34	Mehmed Ali's House	87
2.35	Schematic plan of the ground floor of Mehmed Ali's House before its restoration in 2004	88
2.36	House plan types A, B, and C existing in the historical peninsula of Kavala	91
2.37	House on Mehmed Ali Street	92
2.38	House on Mehmed Ali Street, No. 15	93
2.39	The tobacco depots of the Commercial Company of Salonica Ltd	96
2.40	The first offices of M.L. Herzog et Cie, built after 1891	98
2.41	M.L. Herzog et Cie office (1899), today Kavala's Town Hall	98

2.42	The warehouses by the coastline	99
2.43	Photo of Kavala from 1903 with the Agios Ioannis church in construction and the neighborhood around it, from the book of George Frederick Abbot <i>A Tale of a Tour in Macedonia</i> , end of the nineteenth century	101
2.44	Plan of Agios Athanasios church in the village of Karaorman from 1886	102
2.45	General view of the <i>türbe</i> (mausoleum) of Ibrahim Ağa, father of Mehmed Ali Pasha, c.1930	103
2.46	<i>Türbe</i> (mausoleum) of Zeyneb Hatun, mother of Mehmed Ali Pasha, c.1930 (destroyed c.1967–1970)	103
2.47	View of Hamidiye neighborhood and mosque behind the aqueduct (after restoration)	104
2.48	Hamidiye Mosque in a postcard from the beginning of the twentieth century (after restoration)	105
2.49	The plan for the Hamidiye Mosque from July 18, 1908	106
2.50	Re-elaboration of the urban plan from 1901 for the new Selimiye neighborhood (main Ottoman toponyms indicated and translated into English by V. Ivkowska)	107
2.51	Plan for the new Agios Pavlos church in the <i>Çaylar</i> area of Kavala from 1903	109
2.52	The church of Agios Pavlos today	109
2.53	The <i>Kumluk</i> area with the <i>türbe</i> and the new land plot allocated for a Christian Girls' School from 1893, signed by the Vice Consul of France	110
2.54	Re-elaboration with English translation of the urban plan of the existing area made by the Kavala Municipality's engineer, a certain Fahri, as the site for construction of the Catholic Church and a school in the <i>Çayırbaşı</i> area from 1894	112
2.55	The façade project for the Catholic Church made in 1896	113
2.56	Baron Adolf Wix House built in 1899	115
2.57	Demetrius Tokkos's property built in 1879	116
2.58	Kavala's intra- and extramural neighborhoods by the end of its rule under the Ottomans	117

Preface

After working as an architect for more than ten years and then completing my postgraduate studies in my hometown of Skopje, I decided to continue my work and conduct research on vernacular architecture, focusing on Ottoman domestic architecture in the Balkans. I always found domestic architecture, especially that left from our ancestors, alluring and inspirational, especially since I come from lands that once were part of the great Ottoman Empire and which bear invaluable traces of their domination. Therefore, my aim was clear: I decided to focus my new research on Ottoman urban, public, and domestic architecture.

This direction led me to Istanbul on the advice of Professor William B. Bechhoefer, editor of a book of proceedings from a conference in Amasya that had a strong influence on me. He declared Istanbul Technical University the pre-eminent place to study the subject I was interested in, even passionate about. I was lucky enough to be granted a scholarship by the *Yurtdışı Türkiye Bursları* to conduct my PhD studies at this university.

The four years of my studies were filled with incredible growth of my knowledge of Ottoman architecture in general. The topic of this book chose me rather than the other way around: after a summer visit in 2014 to the small port town of Kavala in Northern Greece I ended up mesmerized by its old walled town and its domestic architecture. That is when I knew that I had to work on Kavala. The research phases were intense and astonishing because they brought so much amazing information about the town as well as wonderful people who all had their own influence on the path of my work.

This publication mainly concerns the town of Kavala in Northern Greece. It has been chosen as an example of Ottoman era urban and architectural environment. Within this framework, this work covers the period of Kavala's development under Ottoman rule between 1391 and 1912, for which I try to explain the urban development of the town, taking into account all the historical, architectural, economic, social, and political conditions that influenced its establishment, growth, and development throughout five centuries of Ottoman rule.

In recent years, my studies have taken me to many conferences where I had the chance to present my works, compare my ideas with other colleagues and researchers, and also meet remarkable figures working in the field of Ottoman, Islamic, vernacular architecture and the field of the protection and preservation of the cultural heritage, especially in the Balkans.

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Professor Dr. William B. Bechhoefer, who suggested I do my PhD at Istanbul Technical University, where I was warmly welcomed by the exceptional Professor Dr. Sinan Mert Şener who, at the time, acted as the Dean of the Faculty of Architecture. I also want to thank my adviser Professor Dr. Aygül Ağır, as well as Professor Dr. Murat Gül, Professor Dr. İlknur Kolay, Professor Dr. Turgut Saner, Assistant Professor Dr. Luca Orlandi, all from Istanbul Technical University. Meg Dreyer for editing and proofreading the manuscript.

The people and the officials of Kavala were always more than willing to help me. Professor Sapfo Ageloudi selflessly shared materials and printed works from her private collection. Gratitude to Professor Kostantinos Lalenis who provided amazing visual materials from his private collections; Charalampos Papadopoulos for his efforts providing official illustrated materials, and Ioanna Dalkitsi for being the wonderful person she is and for her friendship. Further thanks to Assistant Professor Dr. Despoina Zavraka, Professor Dr. Maria Doussi, Professor Dr. Nicos Kalogirou, Professor Dr. Vilma Hastaoglu Martinidi, all from Aristotle University of Thessaloniki.

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From my home country of Macedonia, Professor Dr. Blagoja Kuzmanovski has followed my life and career for as long as I can remember. Maja Nacevska, the strongest and smartest woman I have ever met, whom I admire greatly and who is my role model; Nadica Velickoska, the woman with the strongest and kindest heart, who does for me what only a mother does for her children.

xiv *Acknowledgments*

And the most important people in my life, my deceased grandparents Afrodita and Risto, who taught me most valuable life lessons and both of whom I miss immensely. My parents, Blagoja and Elena, who are my pillars of strength, especially during these past four years, and without whose help I could have never achieved this. And last but not least, my son Miron, the greatest achievement in my life, my constant driving force, the reason we embarked on this incredible journey, whose existence makes me stretch beyond my limits to be what I am today, for shaping me and for being my greatest love and my brightest guiding star.

February 2020
Assistant Professor Dr.
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(Engineer Architect)

Abbreviations

BAU OTAK	<i>BAU OTAK Osmanlı ve Türk Tarihi Araştırmaları Koordinatörlüğü</i> (Bahçeşehir University Ottoman History Implementation & Research Center)
BOA	<i>Osmanlı Arşivi Daire Başkanlığı</i> (Directorate of Ottoman Archives)
EI2	Encyclopaedia of Islam Volume 2
OOZ	<i>Отдел Ориенталски Збирки (НБКМ)</i> (Oriental Department, National Library Ss. Cyril and Methody, Sofia)
TDV	<i>Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı İslâm Ansiklopedisi</i> (Turkish Religious Foundation Islamic Encyclopedia)
TPML	Topkapı Palace Museum Library

Summary

The town of Kavala grew out of the Ottoman conquest in the late fourteenth century to become a vibrant port city due to the activities of the sultans Selim I, Suleiman the Magnificent, and his grand vizier Ibrahim Pasha.

Originally the Ottomans conquered the Byzantine town of Christoupolis, believed to be located on the later site of Ottoman Kavala. However, not much remains from the Byzantine time. This suggests that the later town of Kavala was a pure Ottoman era settlement, with no pre-existing structures, other than the remains of the Byzantine fort and the recently excavated basilica.

Within the framework of the period from the end of the fourteenth century until the end of Ottoman rule, this study observes and presents the development of Kavala as an Ottoman era settlement in the Balkans. On a smaller scale, this work focuses on the organization of the Ottoman *mahalle* system and the development of the town's urban space.

In the first chapter, this work introduces the Ottoman town through the prism of Orientalism and introduces a view of it within the frame of the Ottoman Balkans, considering how much, or even if, the Saidian Orientalism can be applied to the Ottoman Balkans. It further moves on with introducing the specific characteristics of plan and siting, considering the geography, topography, and morphology of the area. Moreover, this chapter defines the peculiar urban features characterizing Ottoman towns and centers, including the concepts of *çarşı*, *imaret*, and *mahalle*, and the important relationships between the residential and commercial activities in these areas. In more detail, this work analyzes life inside the *mahalle* and the spatial organization of public and private areas within it.

The second chapter focuses more closely on the main topic of the work and includes a short introduction to the town and its history, from the ancient Greek colony of Neapolis to the Byzantine Christoupolis; next, the study presents the urban development of the town of Kavala after the Ottoman conquest of the region, analyzing the progressive transformation of the town under Ottoman rule. In the subchapters, all the phases of the transformation of the town are presented chronologically, from early Ottoman occupation (1391–1478) of the region until the first mention of Kavala appears in the historical record.

This analysis crosses the period of Suleiman the Magnificent and his grand vizier Ibrahim Pasha in the sixteenth century; the period of Mehmed Ali Pasha

between the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries; and the development of the industrial town in the era of the expansion of the tobacco industry in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Each of these subchapters addresses the different phases of the urban development, including public structures such as the aqueduct, the military fortress, the fountains, mosques or *mescids*, markets, and *imarets*, and identifies the street layout and the characteristics of the Ottoman houses inside the *mahalles*. Moreover, the increasing population and consequent urbanization of new areas outside the original walled Ottoman settlement of Kavala are taken into consideration and elaborated, as is the process of Westernization, recognizable by new approaches in its architectural aesthetics.

The conclusion synthesizes all the work and presents Kavala's authenticity as an example of a true Ottoman era settlement in the Southern Balkans. The final part of the work consists of references and annexes.



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Introduction

This work falls within the category of Ottoman heritage studies, addressing the formation and development of an Ottoman era town in the Balkans. It examines previously unexplored and under-researched Ottoman architecture related to the urban development of the port town of Kavala in Northern Greece, supported by numerous original primary archival sources. Kavala was built along the Via Egnatia on a peninsula facing the Aegean Sea. It was probably built on the site of the ancient city of Neapolis, which later became the Byzantine Christoupolis before falling under Ottoman rule in 1391. For almost one hundred years thereafter the site was abandoned. No activities there can be tracked until the end of the fifteenth century, at which time the earliest mention of a village/town named Kavala is found in an Ottoman tax register (*tahrir defter*) dated 1478 (Hicri: 883).¹ This document opens a door to extensive research on the settlement's development, confirming Kavala to be a newly founded Ottoman era town rather than an urban center overlapping the previous Byzantine Christoupolis.² Is there a genuine, authentic Ottoman built environment? By discovering new facts about this town and its structures and reviewing the available literature (travelers' accounts, historical maps, and archival documents), this work examines the state of the art of Ottoman era urban planning in Kavala's urban settlement.

The literature dealing specifically with the urban development of Ottoman Kavala is limited; the only extensive work on Kavala's urban development is the book published by Professor Amelia Stefanidou in 2007, entitled *The Port Town of Kavala during the Period of Turkish Rule: Urban and Historical Investigation (1391–1912)*.³ Stefanidou analyzes the population and its ethnic background, examining the site in three different periods, occasionally interrupted by discussion of important Ottoman monuments built within these separate time frames. However, Stefanidou's work does not develop analysis or theories about the formation and development of Kavala's urban areas, from its conquest in 1391 until its falling under Greek rule. Her work is a survey of the historical monuments built on the historic peninsula; she follows secondary sources about the demographic changes which exist in BOA, and finishes by linking this archival data to the development of the town's population. The research concerns only the public structures. It does not deal with the establishment of the first urban site or the increasing number of individual houses and further development of the neighborhoods, the so-called "Turkish

2 Introduction

mahalle". The town's growth from an urban and architectural point of view is incomplete.

The present work is a complex synthesis, examining the urban development of Kavala and its Ottoman era architecture in one integral study. The research consolidates previous findings on Kavala's history, economy, architecture, and culture with new research on the Ottoman town system and its architecture's interaction with space, vernacular traditions, history, and life. Based mostly on original and unpublished archival documents, as well as pious foundations, mostly those for which there is evidence in BOA – which are those of Mehmed Ali Pasha as well as the smaller foundations of Halil Bey and Kadi Ahmed Efendi – the work covers almost five centuries of Ottoman domination, from 1478 until 1909. Among the archival documents on this topic a selection is presented in a separate appendix; these relate to shifts in the society, such as appointments of imams and judges, payment of taxes, construction works, and other activities that were ongoing in Kavala under Ottoman rule. All these documents, given in chronological order, provide, where possible, continuity in the settlement's expansion through which we follow Kavala's urban, architectural, religious, social as well as industrial development and growth.

Many and disparate factors influenced the town's birth and development. Physical factors included land configuration and geography. Geographic factors included the proximity of water, the sea, and other natural resources. Social factors included the housing program and the consequent aggregation of dwellings forming the *mahalle* giving the inhabitants a sense of community. Multi-confessional factors were determined by the presence of ethnic groups within those *mahalles* following different religions and their mutual cohabitation. Most important of all were safety factors related to protecting the settlement and its further development. Crucial for the town's establishment, expansion and growth were: the reconstruction of the fortress and the walls surrounding the inhabited nucleus for the purpose of protecting the settlement; conveyance and distribution of water inside the protected settlement, providing life and prosperity; the town's adaptation to the geography of its site; the organic street layout that enabled circulation inside the settlement; the coexisting ethnicities, which reflected Ottoman tolerance, acceptance, and respect; trade, especially the tobacco production and export in the later centuries that boosted the town's economic prosperity; and finally the home/house, that core of Ottoman society representing family values and standing in the community.

Many research trips and surveys were conducted to understand the development of the urban settlement together with its life, traditions, and culture. Attention was given to the period of Kavala's industrial peak in the nineteenth century when the town became one of the biggest tobacco centers in the Mediterranean, which influenced its urban and residential growth at the turn of the century. The population explosion following this industrial development demanded new residential areas for the newcomers, many foreign, who introduced Western modes of urban planning and architectural styles to the town. As the old district on the peninsula grew overcrowded, the further urban development of the town offered

another opportunity to introduce new architectural approaches to the domestic architecture. Considering all these important factors, this research tries to explain the town's urban transformations occurring during five centuries of Ottoman rule.

The purpose of this work is to determine the authenticity of an Ottoman era urban environment in the Balkans through a case study, the town of Kavala, through description and analysis of the town's phases of urban development and its geographical environment. To this end, several objectives have guided the published work:

- Examination of primary archival resources related to Kavala's establishment and the town's historical continuity in Ottoman times.
- Presentation of a historical overview of the urban development of the town through published works as well as re-elaborated maps.
- Review of relevant texts dealing with the town's development through historical, architectural, economic, and social aspects in order to comprehend the Ottoman context.

This work also tries to describe and analyze the phases of the development of the town's urban environment, locating the first established nucleus of the town (the intramural area) and following the later phases of urban development (the extramural area) on the outskirts beyond the primal urban zone. This research aims to determine the urban layout and development of the settlement according to its important historical phases. Using travelers' itineraries, memoirs, and visual materials, this work considers the neighborhoods built at the time of Ottoman arrival in the town and locates them geographically on the peninsula. A review of the literature, including primary resources from archives, travelers' accounts, and on-site photo documentation, supports this work's purpose of proving the town's uniqueness and demonstrating its urban continuity in the Ottoman era. The literature-based findings led to determinations of when and where the town was established after Ottoman subjugation and how it continued its urban development, ultimately permitting answers to the question, "Is there an authentic Ottoman era urban environment in the town of Kavala?"

To answer this question, this work researched the urban development and transformations of Kavala from its establishment in the late fifteenth century through five centuries under Ottoman rule, arriving at the era of the expansion of tobacco production in the area and tracing this burgeoning industry's socio-economic influences on the town. This is presented through re-elaboration of maps, indicating the most important phases of the urban development throughout the centuries. In order to follow those changes, the work presents three main historical phases⁴ that coincide with three architectural milestones: the construction of the aqueduct and the complex of Ibrahim Pasha in the sixteenth century; the setting of the foundations and the building of the *imaret* complex by Mehmed Ali Pasha in the early nineteenth century; and the building of the tobacco depots by the end of the nineteenth century, shaping the settlement's future.

4 Introduction

Based on the course of the town's urban transformations, this work presents Kavala's development in two stages. The first stage concerns the formation of the first intramural nucleus, the Ibrahim Pasha neighborhood, located by the harbor and influenced by the hilly side of the peninsula, that later continued to develop into the second intramural area; this second area consisted of Hüseyin Bey, Halil Bey, and Kadi Ahmed Efendi neighborhoods, covering the whole peninsula of the town. The second stage of Kavala's expansion is the urban growth and development of the town outside the walls in the space referred to as *extra muros* (outside walls), with Agios Ioannis, Hamidiye, Selimiye, *Küçük, Yeni, Dere*, Agios Pavlos, and *Çaylar* neighborhoods and the so-called *Kumluk* (sandy) area by the sea shore.

This work places importance on the "street layout"; through its development we perceive how urban patterns mark different phases of the town's growth. The street layout is important; it grew out of the morphology of the terrain but also influenced the architecture of the built environment and the individual housing program. To understand the formation of the town, this work examined morphogenetic analyses of the urban site and its street patterns. These elements define the layout plan typologies. The aim of this method is to describe the relationships between the morphology of the area and the man-made environments within it, and one of the theoretical arguments is that the settlement patterns also originate in the social life of the inhabitants.⁵

This work uses the town of Kavala in Northern Greece as a possible example of an authentic Ottoman era urban environment in the Balkans; Kavala developed, over a period of five centuries, as an Ottoman era settlement that was built on the site of a previous and no longer existing Byzantine town. The discontinuity between the Byzantine and the Ottoman periods allows us to think about Ottoman Kavala as a new settlement not necessarily linked with the previous urban development. In fact, this study does not trace the typical Ottoman pattern of establishing settlements and consolidating power in pre-existing built environments. In general, it was a common Ottoman practice to extend power in conquered domains through integrations and overlays in the existing urban environments, slowly adapting to the environment and modifying it into a more "Ottomanized" one. The coercive transfer of entire populations from different religions, from one province to another, within the borders of the huge empire was one of the successful Ottoman strategies to colonialize the newly conquered territories.

Even considering the fall of the Ottoman Empire in the early twentieth century and the subsequent integration of Kavala into the new Greek state, the town still kept and preserved its peculiar Ottoman era appearance. This was especially true on the old historic peninsula, where the Muslim population settled and lived for five centuries.

This work presents Kavala as an amalgamation of morphological structures, urban fabrics, and networks of interrelated streets. A town was generally subdivided into quarters; major street layouts and urban facilities, residential fabrics, secondary layouts, and parcel divisions all developed within those quarters,