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***Settlement history of Byzantine Attica (4th-12th c.)***

***A reconstruction based on old and new evidence***

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Elli Tzavella is currently working as a postdoc researcher at Leiden University. She specialises on the academic fields of Byzantine Archaeology and Topography and on Byzantine and Post-Byzantine pottery from Greece and the Aegean. Her doctoral thesis (University of Birmingham, 2013) dealt with settlement patterns, economy and defence of Early and Middle Byzantine Attica (Greece, 4th-12th c.). In this, she combined the interpretation of recent excavation results, early traveller accounts, historical sources, with her own fieldwork in the area, in order to produce a spherical image of settlement and activity in Byzantine Attica. Her MPhil (University of Birmingham, 2006) dealt with Burial and Urbanism in Early Byzantine and 'Dark-Age' Athens (4th-9th c.).

In her capacity as a ceramics specialist, Tzavella is involved in the Sikyon Survey Project, the Cambridge Keros Project, the Priniatikos Pyrgos excavations on Crete, and the excavation at Agios Georgios sto Vouno on the island of Kythera. In addition to her involvement on these research projects, Tzavella has also worked as an archaeologist for the Hellenic Ministry of Culture, and in this capacity has conducted excavations at the Byzantine monastery of Osios Meletios on Mt Kithairon (2007), undertook research on the castle of Acrocorinth (2009-2010) and was responsible for recording and data procession of finds from recent excavations in Ancient Corinth (2011-2013).

The project 'Material Culture, Consumption and Social Change: New Approaches to Understanding the Eastern Mediterranean during Byzantine and Ottoman Times' (2010-2015), led by Dr Joanita Vroom (Leiden University), aims to provide a new archaeological approach to the material culture of the Byzantine and Ottoman Empires in the eastern Mediterranean (from the 7th to the 20th c.). Within this frame, Tzavella is working primarily on ceramic finds excavated in the Athenian Agora and on their integration to their social context.

***Settlement history of Byzantine Attica (4th-12th c.): A reconstruction based on old and new evidence***

Byzantine Attica, the hinterland of Athens, has not so far been studied as a whole. Our understanding of Byzantine Attica has until now mostly relied on excavation results from a high number of Early Christian basilicas, as well as on architectural and art-historical studies of Middle Byzantine churches and monasteries, which show a high level of craftsmanship and execution.

In the last decades, the conduction of intensive excavation of large and small scale has allowed the formulation of preliminary remarks regarding settlement patterns. Moreover, updated archaeological methods have enabled the identification and salvage of Byzantine finds, which were earlier not focused upon. The most important among these finds have already been discussed by distinguished scholars. However, there remains a large, non-utilised quantity of material which attests to habitation and activity.

The present paper makes use of this material, as it relies on a systematic collection of all relevant published archaeological data from recent excavations and field surveys, as well as accounts of early travellers and Classical archaeologists. The outcome is an attempted reconstruction of settlement history of Early and Middle Byzantine Attica.

At the same time, this paper discusses the role of settlements in the administrative and economic organisation of Byzantine Attica. The relevant literary sources are scant, however, when considered combined with the available archaeological evidence, they allow the formulation of remarks which may function as legitimate hypotheses for future research.