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The history of oil exploration in Greece**Keywords:** Oil, Greece, Geology, Survey, Hydrocarbons, Experts, Mediterranean**Authors:**

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Abstract

Oil exploration in Greece has been attempted in various instances since the mid-nineteenth century, usually to no avail. What's more, this is a matter of notorious complexity that has rarely been subjected to historical scrutiny. The methodology we followed in order to come to terms with its peculiarities, focused on the history of the Greek petroleum experts. Indeed, as we found out, beginning in the 1910s, Greek petroleum experts built their expertise on a complicated crossroad between corporate and personal interests, state imperatives, public expectations and the demands of their scientific discipline.

Venturing on this crossroad has been particularly fruitful. On the one hand, it has already led to publications concerning specific instances of oil exploration in Greece, such as (a) the oil exploration attempts in Epirus between 1913 and 1922 and (b) the territory-spanning Greek oil exploration attempts that took place between 1936 and 1940.

On the other hand, our research has revealed important connections to other historiographical subfields and opened new research directions. Such directions include (a) the emergence of a "geological continuity of the Greek Lands" theorem during the 1910s and its abandonment after 1922 (connecting to political and diplomatic history). (b) The postwar involvement of the Greek ship-owners in oil exploration and transport (connecting to business history). (c) The social production of "natural reality" via scientific conflict (connecting to environmental history). (d) The history of the most recent Greek hydrocarbon exploration efforts, taking place since 2010 (connecting to the history of international relations). (e) The role of low-ranking laboratory personnel in the production of scientific facts (connecting to labour history).

These directions have received further funding, leading to the emergence of a small group of Greek historians, already acquainted with the history of oil exploration and its Greek aspect. As a result, the project is still ongoing and producing results, four years after its initial approval.