



CENTER OF BYZANTINE CULTURE OF CHALCIDICE "JUSTINIAN"

The Center for Byzantine Culture of Chalcidice "Justinian", in the so-called Old Hospital, in the area of Nea Flogita, Chalcidice, is a complex project of the Ephorate of Antiquities of Chalcidice and Mount Athos; it includes an extensive program of restoration-reuse of the preserved complex, but at the same time it aims at promoting Byzantine Chalcidice through the research and excavation work conducted there.

The complex was part of the Mount Athos Monastery of Agios Panteleemon. A milestone in its recent history was its transformation into a US Red Cross hospital in the 1930s. During World War II, the area became the seat of the occupying forces, while in 1960 it was abandoned after a catastrophic fire.

The whole complex, which has about 2000m² of built space (after the completion of the restoration work) in an area of about 28 acres, came into the ownership of the Hellenic Ministry of Culture and Sports in 1999. It consists of three buildings dated exactly with inscriptions in the second half of the 19th-early 20th century, which were given conventional names: the Old Building (1853), the Central Building (1884) and the Individual Building (1909). As the excavation research progress, the ruins of other buildings and facilities are gradually revealed: a square building with reinforced masonry (perhaps a tower), the oil storage room with various constructions for its function, a well which, according to testimonies, should have a depth of about 30 m., one other circular stone construction, which probably had the use of an olive mill and should have been protected by a large shed. Also, on the west side of the complex, the remains of a mud-built building, probably of auxiliary character, are preserved.

THE TOWER OF GALATISTA

The tower of Galatista is one of the best preserved towers of Chalcidice; it functioned as fortification and dwelling as well, yet unhappily there is no evidence for it in the written sources. It has two construction phases: the lower part belongs in the first phase and it dates in the 11th century, while the upper part belongs to in the second one, and it dates in the 14th century. The tower is currently preserved at a height of sixteen meters.

For the needs of daily life there was a sink in the tower, restrooms and probably a kind of kitchen. An excavation in the basement of the tower discovered a built water tank in the northwest corner. Around the monument there is a group of buildings [two watermills with water tanks, an olive mill, and a workshop of producing *raki* (kind of rum)]; along with the tower they comprise a whole which is associated with productive activities of the inhabitants of Galatista until recent years.

Today the tower hosts the exhibition "The Towers of Chalcidice".



The Archaeological Museum of Polygyros was first opened in 1971. Today, after the expansion of its exhibition halls, the new permanent exhibition is prepared. Its narrative tour is arranged in four thematic sections, Land and History, Evolution of the human societies in the Prehistoric Period, From the dawn of the historic times to the end of Roman domination and Collections and Donations, composed from the majority of the old exhibition and new finds from recent excavations, which organize and complete the presentation of specific sections, regarding the cultural features of Chalcidice.



Photorealistic rendering
of the permanent exhibition in progress



The temporary exhibition "A collector and an archaeologist from the past in a conversation in future tense, The Ioannis Lambropoulos Collection" opened in March 2019 and includes objects dated mainly to the Archaic and Classical periods. Presented are fine examples of Attic, Corinthian and local pottery, impressive weaponry, jewellery, clay figurines and busts, as well as a few artifacts of the Prehistoric and the Byzantine eras.



Chalcidice Routes of culture

Information

Ephorate of Antiquities of Chalcidice and Mount Athos
Address: Konstantinoupoleos 5, Polygyros 63100
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Ticket price: - Winter season (1 November- 31 March) 2€ : Monastery of Zygos,
Tower of Ouranoupolis, Ancient Olynthos

- Summer season (1 April-31 October) :
- Monastery of Zygos full 4€, reduced 2€
- Tower of Ouranoupolis full 3€, reduced 2€
- Ancient Olynthos full 4€, reduced 2€

Opening hours:

Ancient Olynthos: 8.30 – 15.30 (Tuesday closed)
Sanctuary of Zeus Ammon, Kallithea: 8.30 – 15.30 (Tuesday closed)
Basilica of Sofronios, Nikiti: 8.30 – 15.30 (Tuesday closed)
Cemetery of Akanthos, Ierissos: 8.30 – 15.30 (weekends closed)
Ancient Stageira, Olympiada: 8.30 – 15.30
Ottomanic bath, Sidirokafsia: 8.30 – 15.30 (weekends closed)
Tower of Proserion, Ouranoupolis: 8.30 – 15.30
Monastery of Zygos, Ouranoupolis: 8.30 – 15.30
Tower of Galatista: 8.30 – 15.30 (weekends closed)
Center of Byzantine civilization "Ioustinian", Flogita: 8.30 – 15.30
Archaeological Museum of Polygyros: 8.30 – 15.30
For more information Call +30 2310285163 or visit: www.culture.gr



Ancient Olynthos Sanctuary of Zeus Ammon, Dionysos and Asklepios



ANCIENT OLYNTHOS

The ancient city of Olynthos extends over the flat plateaux and the eastern slopes of two natural hills. The city, which, according to Herodotus, was founded in the 7th century BC by the Bottiaeanes, was destroyed in 479 BC by the Persians. In 432 BC the King of Macedonians, Perdikkas II, persuaded the inhabitants of many coastal cities of Chalcidice to settle in Olynthos, which became the mightiest and the richest one of the region. It played a leading role in the political developments of Chalcidice, until 348 BC, when it was completely destroyed by Philip II.

The new city was built on the North Hill according to the "Hippodamian" grid plan. At least five avenues intersected by twenty or more vertical streets, demarcated 64 building blocks (insulae). During the excavations (1928-1938) by the American Archaeological School, more than 100 houses were revealed. In the southern part of the hill were located buildings of public character.

In the southeastern, unwalled part of the city, the later sector of the city is located, built after 379 BC, also according to the "Hippodamian" system. Some wealthy residences have been excavated in this part. They are known by conventional names, such as Villa of Good Fortune, Villa of the Actor, Villa of the Twin Erotes, and are adorned with impressive mosaic pavements.



SANCTUARY OF ZEUS AMMON DIONYSOS AND ASKLEPIOS

The area of the sanctuary was first used in the Early Bronze Age. Later, after colonization of Chalcidice by the Greeks of the south and the founding of the Eretrian colony, Aphytis, the area was incorporated in the chora (territory) of the city. The beauty of the nature, the water springs, the vegetation and the cave that existed there, attracted the inhabitants of Aphytis to found a sanctuary of Dionysos – probably of the Nymphs, as well – by the end of the 8th century BC. In the first half of the 4th century BC, the inhabitants of the Aphytis built a temple of the god near the sanctuary of Dionysos. The cult of Zeus Ammon was closely related to the water and a cistern with water existed in all sanctuaries of the god. Therefore, a fountain house was built near the cave and the water springs and from there, through a clay pipe, water reached the sanctuary of Zeus Ammon.

In the second half of the same century, after the incorporation of Chalcidice in the Macedonian kingdom, an impressive Doric temple was built and east of it, two parallel rows of monumental bases, which supported sculpture. The two rows of bases, an unusual characteristic in Greek architecture, owe their existence to the Egyptian origin of Zeus Ammon. Such corridors and bases were popular in Egyptian architecture.

The sanctuary reached a peak in the 2nd century AD. Two constructions with seats, which accommodated the spectators, and an altar were built in front of the temple of Zeus Ammon and furthermore, a balneum (small bath), related to the cult of Asclepios and healing, was also built north from the temple.

The sanctuary was destroyed in the beginning of the 4th century AD. However, the use of the balneum did not stop before the middle or end of the century. In those years, or in the 5th century AD, a watermill was built near the cave and the water springs.

Basilica of Sofronios Cemetery of Akanthos



BASILICA OF SOFRONIOS

An important early Christian monument is the Basilica of Bishop Sophronios, east of Nikiti along with the neighboring Basilica, where the chapel of St. George. It dates back to the end of the 4th century A.D.

The church was built as a three-aisle, wooden-roofed Basilica. In the apse of the sanctuary is preserved the synthronon with the bishop's throne, while traces of the altar were found. The area of the sanctuary is adorned with an opus sectile floor and is separated from the nave by a marble low *iconostasis*. The aisles of the nave are separated by colonnades.

A mosaic floor was constructed in the central aisle where an inscription with the name of the donor, Bishop Sophronios. On the walls are preserved traces of frescoes.

To the west of the Basilica there is an atrium and a baptistry.

The basilica was destroyed by earthquake. The ruins of the atrium were repaired and re-inhabited, as evidenced by the abundant utilitarian pottery, the existence of a cookhouse, wine press and other agricultural facilities.

Today the Basilica has been partially restored with special care to the mosaic floor and is covered with a protective shelter.

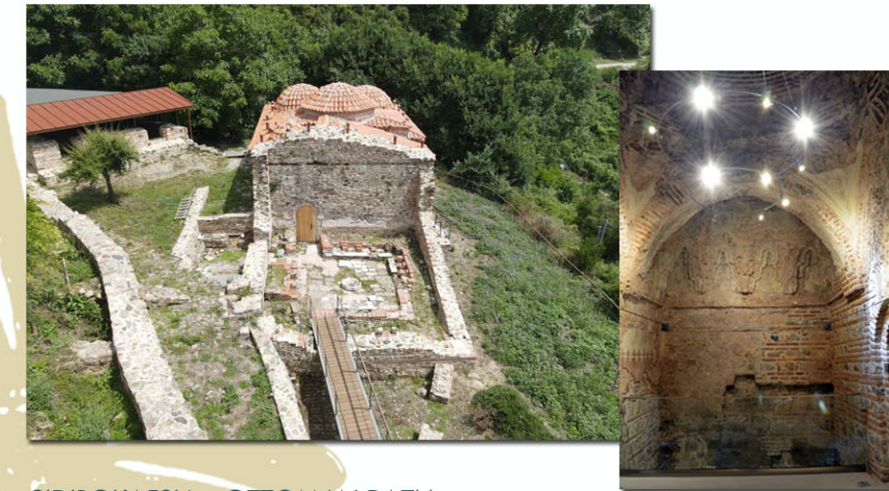


ARCHITECTURAL SHELL FOR THE PROTECTION AND THE DISPLAY OF THE CEMETERY OF AKANTHOS

Eighty-four tombs are protected and displayed at the shell of the cemetery of ancient Akanthos, and they date from the end of the 6th to the end of the 4th century BCE. It is about a small yet representative sample of the Akanthos cemetery, which numbers 13,220 tombs. The usual entombments took place in simple or tiled pits, in clay sarcophagi and in burial vessels of various types and sizes, while cremated dead were placed in simple and brick pits. The wealth and diversity of burial offerings evidence the socio-economic status and the commercial connections of the ancient Akanthos.



Sidirokafsia - Ottoman bath Ancient Strageira



SIDIROKAFSIA - OTTOMAN BATH

The Ottoman city of Sidirokafsia developed in the period between the 15th and 17th centuries, to the west of the settlement of modern-day Stageira village, Chalcidice.

The city flourished during the first centuries of Ottoman rule, when the Ottoman administration exploited the silver deposits of the area. There has been mining activity in the area since Byzantine times. With the name Siderokapsa or Sidrekaissi it was the seat of a nahiyesi (province), the most important urban center of Chalcidice, as indicated by the mint operation and the large area of the existing ruins. In the early 18th century, due to decrease in mining production, the city is declining. Total destruction and abandonment occurred during and after the revolution of 1821.

The medieval settlement includes the fortified administrative center - "Kastro" with two towers and the urban area with the complex of baths and mosques. Cobble streets run between them. The public buildings were probably constructed by Ishak Pasha, Grand Vizier and later Vali of Thessaloniki, between 1478-1487. Scattered ruins and retaining walls everywhere testify to the size of the medieval city.



ANCIENT STAGEIRA

Stageira, birthplace of Aristotle, was founded in ca. 655 B.C. on the slopes of a small peninsula in North East Chalcidice by colonists who arrived from the island of Andros. As an independent city, it issued its own coins adorned with a boar.

After the Persian Wars, Stageira became a member of the First Athenian Confederacy. In 424 B.C., during the Peloponnesian War, the city seceded and became an ally of the Spartans against Athens. Later, in 349 B.C, it was destroyed by king Philip II of Macedon. However, Philip himself repopulated the city in return for Aristotle's tutoring of his son Alexander. Yet Stageira never recovered its former brilliance and by the time of Christ it was already deserted.

Excavations in Stageira brought to light public edifices, sanctuaries, houses, the wall and the acropolis as well as an apsidal building, which has been interpreted as Aristotle's grave-heroon, where the ashes of the philosopher were transferred after his death in Chalkis in 322 BC.

Tower of Prosfori Monastery of Zygos



THE TOWER OF PROSFORI

The tower of Ouranoupolis was constructed before the 14th century in the former metochi (monastic dependency) Prosfori, which then belonged to the monastery of Vatopedi. The tower is evidenced in historical sources of the 11th century, and it was apparently part to a wider building complex. Over the years it underwent many repairs until the middle of the 19th century, when it acquired its current form. The buildings that survive today are: the tower, the two-storey barbakas (i.e. a fortified enclosure) to the east of the tower, and the arsanas (i.e. where the boat of Prosfori was kept) to the north of the tower.

The tower of Ouranoupolis is the only tower in Chalcidice inhabited until recently, since refugees of the Greek-Turkish war from Asia Minor temporarily settled there (1924). In 1928, with the permission of the local community, the Australian couple Sydney and Joyce Loch lived in the tower, and for many decades they supported the refugees of the settlement.

The Hellenic Ministry of Culture and Sports (Ephorate of Antiquities of Chalcidice and Mount Athos) restored the monument and today the barbakas hosts an exhibition of antiquities from the pre-Christian and Christian Chalcidice at the ground floor, while the upper floor is dedicated to the refugees.



MONASTERY OF ZYGOS

The Monastery of Zygos is located at the area of modern Ouranoupolis, a few meters outside the borders of Mount Athos. Around 955 there was already a monastic community in the region Zygos. Saint Athanasios the Athonite, the founder of the Monastery of Great Lavra, first settled and practiced there. In the 11th century the Monastery of Zygos was one of the most important Athonite houses. In 1199 it was deserted and granted by the emperor Alexios I Komnenos to the Monastery of Chilandar. Around 1206, a Frankish lord settled there with his soldiers and looted Mount Athos; thereafter, the region is also known as "Frankokastro". In the 16th century, the monastery was granted to the Monastery of Vatopedi and it was added to the property of the metochi (monastic dependency) of Prosfori until 1924.

The location of the monastery by the sea, its natural environment, let alone the clear setting of the monastic complex, with its strong fortification, the large and luxurious katholikon (main church), the cells, the refectory and the workshops, are a pole of attraction for many visitors throughout the year. In addition, women are given an opportunity to visit, outside the borders of Mount Athos, a large Athonite monastery that is readable and understandable.