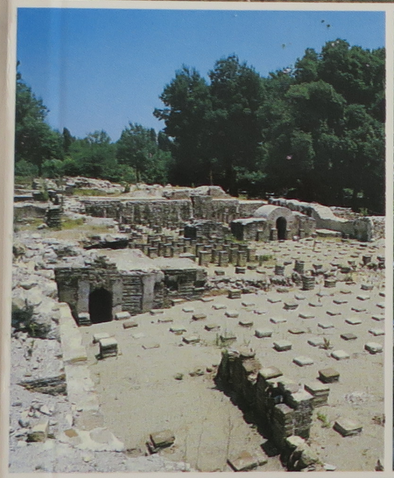
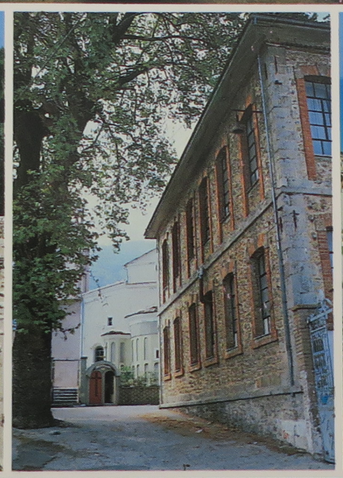
MT. OLYMPUS – DION
THE COAST OF PIERIA

history - archaeologie - tourism













MT. OLYMPUS – DION
THE COAST OF PIERIA



Rekos

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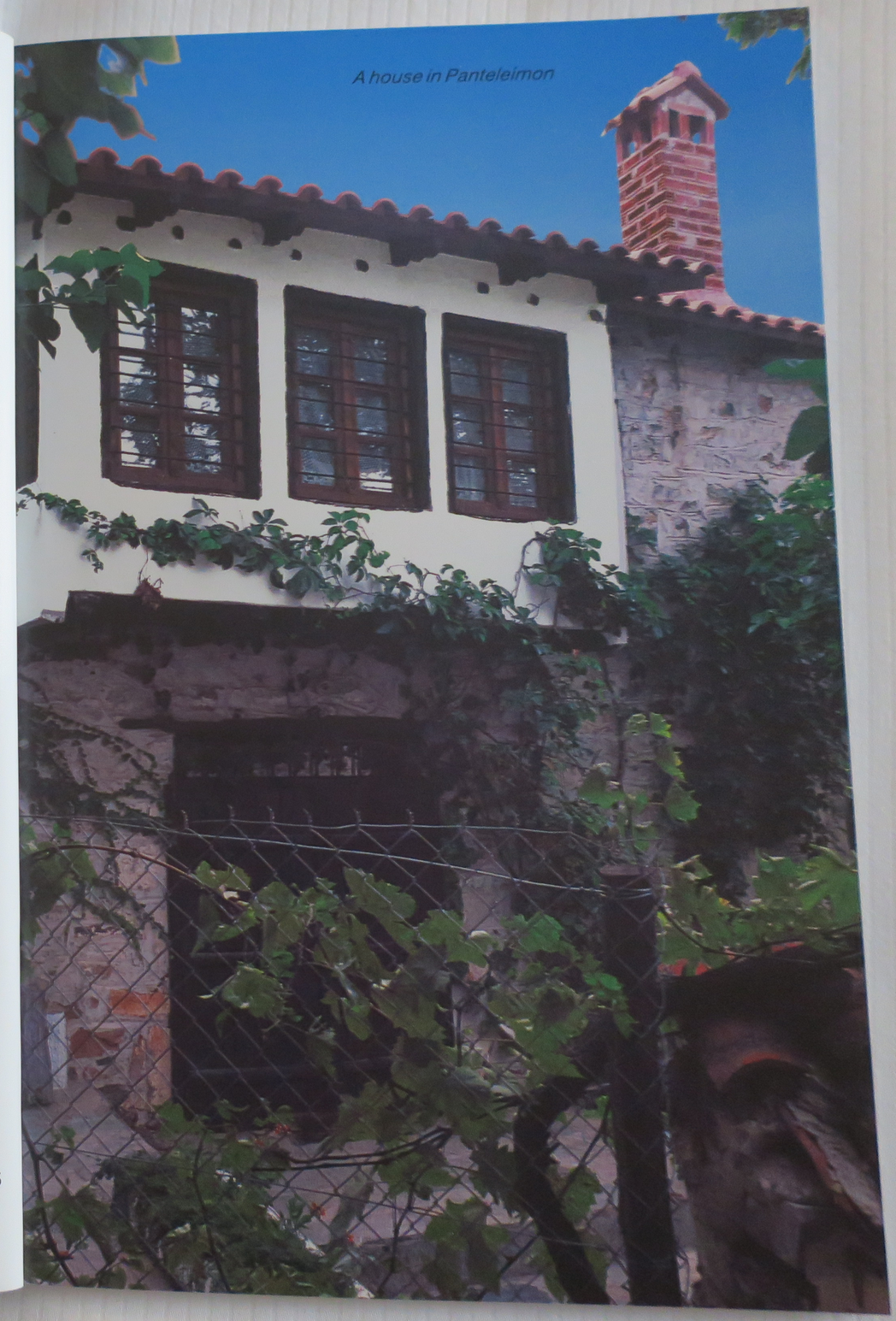
Publisher: *Rekos Ltd.*
Text: *Konstantinos Faridis*
Translation: *A. Pantazidou*
Lay Out: *Zandes DTP*
Photography: *Rekos Photographic Archives*
Leonidas Papadopoulos, Hionidis
Map: *Periklis Galatos*
Colour separations: *Raster One/Demetris Tsatsis*

© REKOS Ltd

ISBN: 960–358–078–3

REKOS Ltd
Published by: Rekos Ltd, 7th km Oreokastrou, tel. (031) 696587, 696070, fax: 697685
Distributors: 13 Agiou Mina st., tel. (031) 271063, Thessaloniki



A house in Panteleimon





Mt. Olympus



THE PREFECTURE OF PIERIA

Geography–Climate–Resources

The prefecture of Pieria is the smallest in area (1,516.7 km^2) and sixth in population (116,763) of the 13 prefectures that comprise Macedonia. It occupies the south–east part of western Macedonia and borders on the prefectures of Imathia in the north, Kozani in the west, Larissa and Thessaly in the south, and the gulf of Thermaikos in the east.

The prefecture is mainly hilly and mountainous. 61% of its surface is covered by: 1) the Pieria mountain range (2,192 m) to the west, 2) the foot of Mt. Titaros to the north–west and 3) the east crest of Mt. Olympus to the south crowned by the peaks of Kardaras (1,527 m), Voulgara (1,689 m), and Varlamas (1,847 m). The summit of Mt. Olympus ("Pantheon"

2,917 m) is on the border of the prefecture of Larissa and slopes down into Pieria, still retaining a height of 2,254 m.

The fertile plain of Katerini opens up between the mountain ranges of Pieria and Olympus and occupies the whole east part of the prefecture.

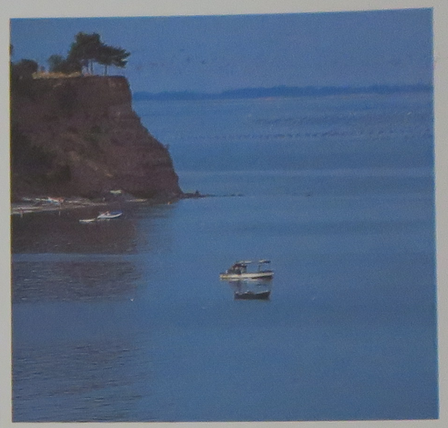
587,085 stremmas are used in the farming of grains, fruit trees (apple, pear, peach, apricot, cherry, almond, plum and walnut), pulses, vegetables, sugar beet and tobacco. Livestock raising and fishing are also important.

Forests cover 539,600 stremmas mainly of pine and beech trees which provide lumber.

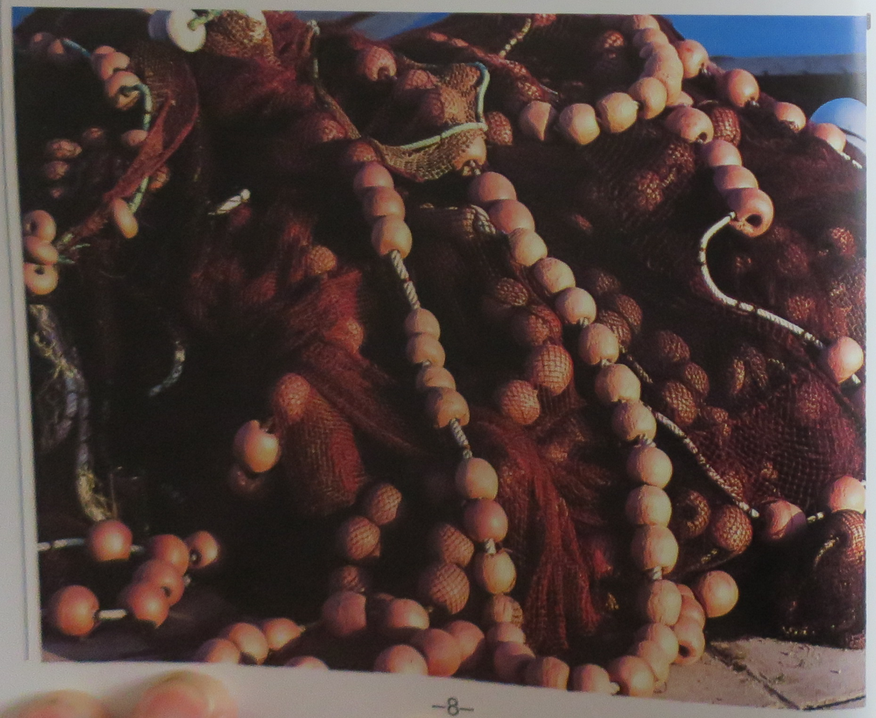
The main rivers are: Aliakmon to the north, running along part of the north–east border of Pieria and Thessaloniki; Mavroneri to the south of Katerini and the streams of Toponitsa, Alkovitsa, Gerakari, Tsiamali and Paptsiari; Enipeas river to the south, and the streams of Palioroumana and Zyliana.

The coastline of the prefecture presents no outstanding features: the mouth of the river Aliakmon and the inlets of Methoni run along the north, the promontory of Acherada to the south–east, and finally the beach of Platamonas with no particular indentations.

The climate is basically continental, but along the coast it becomes more moderate.

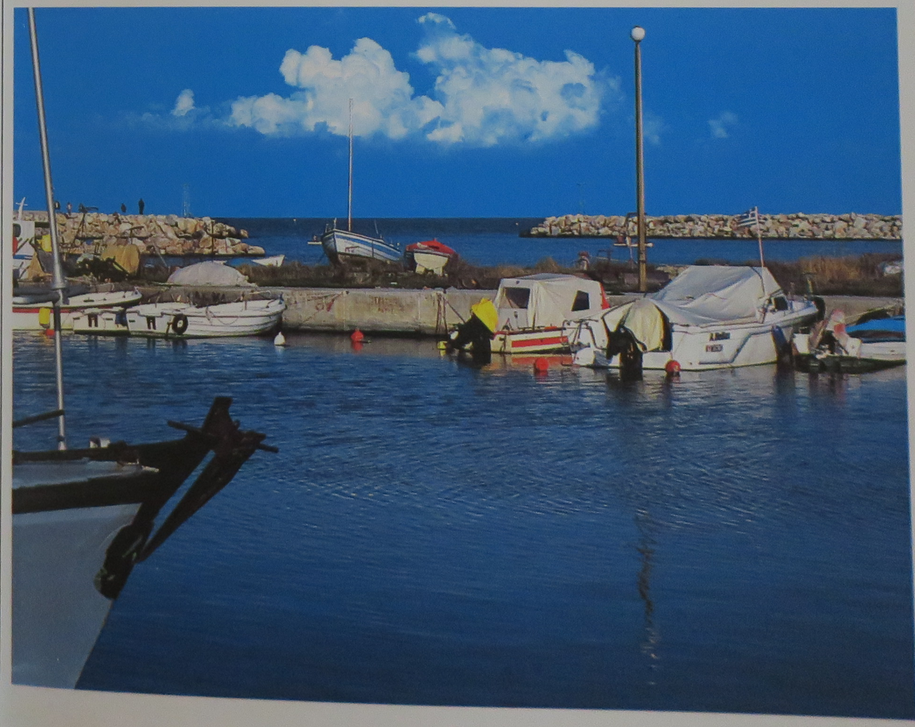


Makriyialos

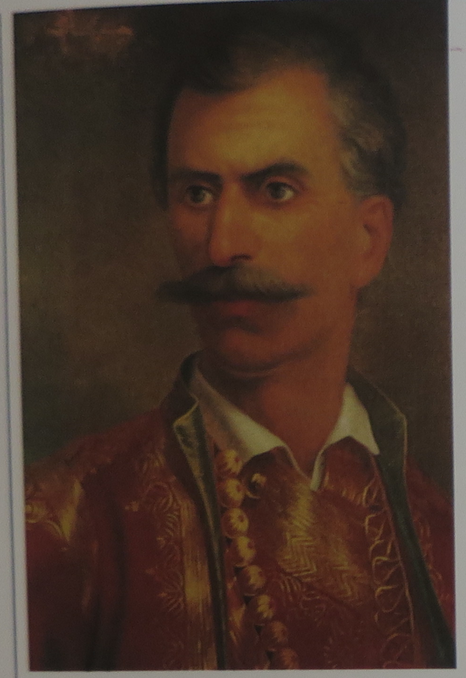


Paralia in Katerini →

The port of Paralia







Georgakis Olympios. Descendant of the Lazaioi

History–Mythology

In ancient times Pieria occupied a slightly greater area than the present–day prefecture, extending beyond the rivers Aliakmon and Pinios. The origin of the word "Pieria" is not known; nevertheless, it is not unrelated to the Greek language. The inhabitants of Pieria were called "Pierios" or "Pierotis" (in the singular form) and "Pieres" (in the plural) which was most common. The present–day Pieria mountains were called "Pieria" or "Pieros". Rivers known in ancient times were: Apilas near Aliakmon, Zos (present–day Ziliana) near Skotina, Enipeas near Litochoro, Elikonas and Vaphyras near Dion, Aesonas (present–day Mavroneri), Lefkos (present–day Pelekas) near Katerini, Mitykas near Ayiannides, and Askordos (present–day Krasopouli). Homer mentions that the gods of Mt. Olympus had to travel through Pieria, along the steep banks of the river Enipeas (near Litochoro), on their way to far and wide places. Hermes "skimmed over the multitude of waves" of the Pieria coast to reach the mythical island of Ogygia to find Calypso and rescue Odysseus: "Πιερίην δ' ἐπιβὰς ἐξ αἰθὲρος ἔμπεσε πόντῳ" (Odyssey, E, 50). Hera on her way to Troy came down Mt. Olympus: "Ἥρη δ' αἴξασα λίπεν ῥίον Οὐλύμποιο..." (Iliad, 225–226). Apollo, on his way to Delphi to slay the Python, came down Mt. Olympus along the sandy beach of Lektos and, after passing through the land of Aeneanes, crossed the land of the Perrhaebi: "Πιερίην μέν πρῶτον ἀπ' Οὐλύμποιο κατῆλθες· Λέκτον τ' ἠμαθόεντα παρέστεκες ἠδι Αἰνιῆνας καὶ διὰ Περραιβούς..." (Homeric Hymns 3, 216).



Mt. Olympus

Lektos was the name given to the coast near the mouth of the river Enipeas (west of the Litochoro railway station).

During prehistoric times powerful tribes such as Magnetes, Perrhaebi, Aeneanes, and Boeotians, occupied the land surrounding Pieria and constituted a continuous threat to its people.

During the Macedonian era Pieria enjoyed a period of prosperity. Some of the cities at the time were: Dion –a cultural centre; Pydna –a commercial centre; Leivithra, Pimpleia, and Iraklio (near present–day Platamonas).

Its economic development was halted in 168 BC when the Romans occupied the area. Pieria came under the authority of the praetor of Thessaloniki in 146 BC. During the Byzantine period Pieria was repeatedly plundered by barbarian raiders: in 395 by Alaric's Visigoths; at

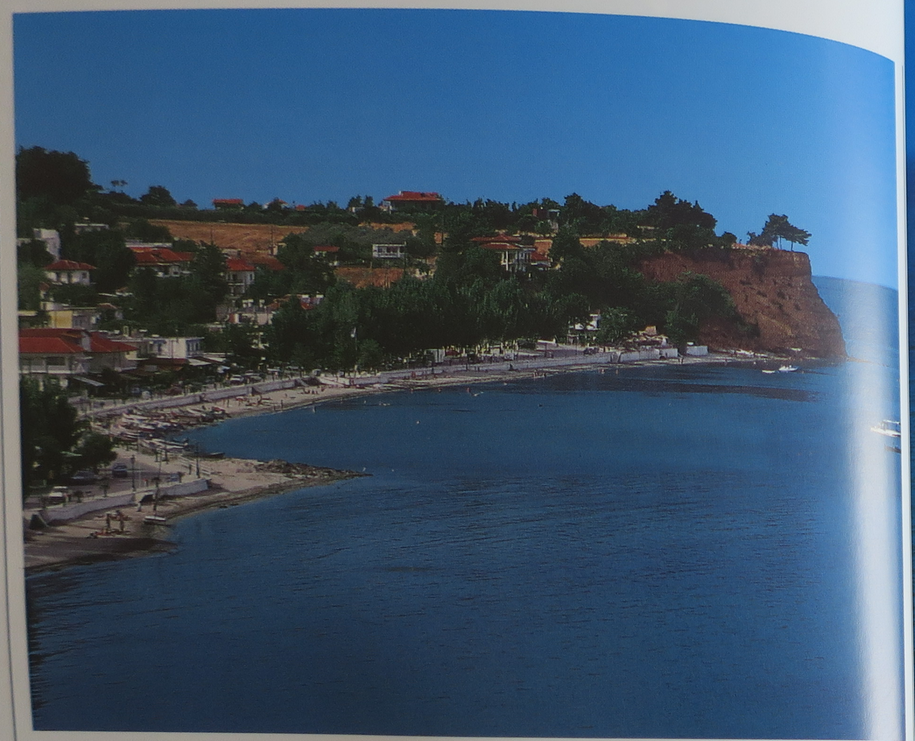
the end of the next century by the Ostrogoths and the Getae; in the 6th century by the Huns, Avars, Slavs and Bulgars; in the 11th century by the Patsinaks and Uz; in 1204 by the Franks; in the 14th century by the Catalans; and in 1389 by the Turks, when Kitros, its religious and administrative centre, was captured. During the period of Turkish occupation, the mountains of Olympus and Pieria were inaccessible to the Turks and were the klepths' (brigands) hideouts and the centre for uprisings. Ruins of such hideouts survive on the Pieria mountains at a height of 1000 metres (in the village of Ano Milia) known as the hideouts of the Lazaeoi. Even today songs of the klepht chieftain of the Greek revolution, Georgakis Olympiou, are sung in the mountainous area of the prefecture of Pieria, and especially in the head villages of Milia, Ritini, Elatohori, Vrontou, Litochoro and Leptokaria. It is

Wooden bridge at "Prionia" on Mt. Olympus



Rich vegetation on Mt. Olympus →





Makriyialos

Paralia in Katerini →

said that the name of the highest peak on the Pieria mountains, Flambouro (2,199 m), took its name from the word "flambouro" (revolutionary banner) which had been raised there by the klephts.

The area of Pieria was liberated in 1912.

Administrative division of the prefecture

Pieria consists of one province, 4 municipalities, 51 communities and 89 "quarters" (neighbourhoods). The capital of the prefecture is Katerini (pop. 43,613) and some of its other towns and villages are: Litochoro (pop. 6,656), Aiginio (pop.4,289), Kolindros (pop. 4,056), Leptokaria (pop. 3,366), Kitros (pop. 1,789), Vrontou (pop. 1,800), Platamonas (pop. 1,586), Svoronos (pop. 1,611), Makrygialos (pop. 1,500), Sfendami (pop. 1,209), Dion (pop. 1,149), and Skotina (pop. 1,075).



Katerini. The church of the Ascensio

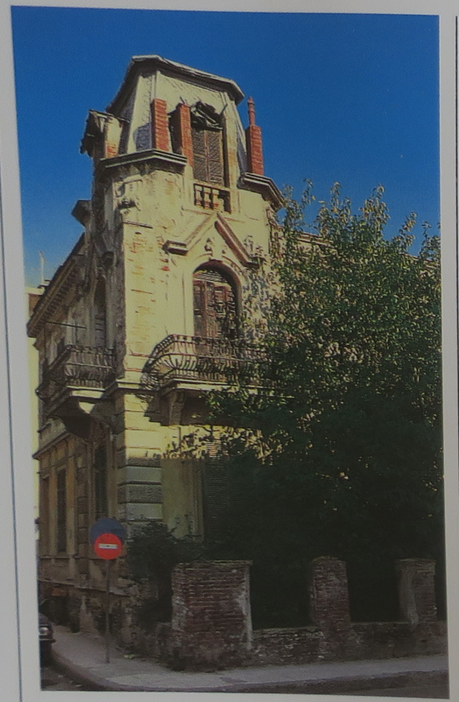


Katerini. The central town square

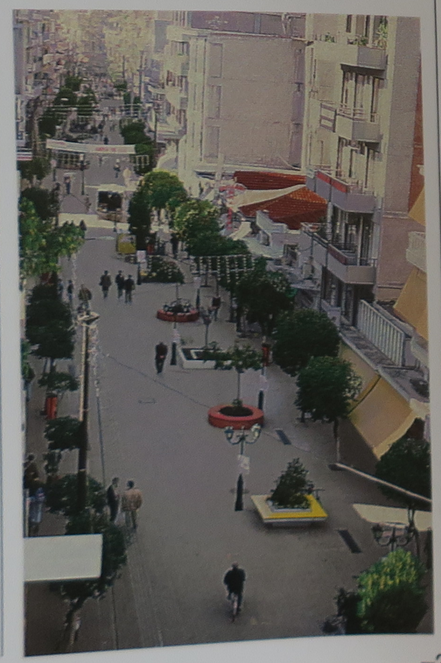
MAIN TOWNS AND VILLAGES

1. KATERINI

Katerini is the capital of the prefecture and is situated on the plain between the Pieria mountains and Mt. Olympus, 8 km from the coast of the gulf of Thermaikos, 35 m. above sea level. It is believed to have been built on the site of the ancient city of Hatera, mentioned in the Peutinger Table of 1264. W. Leake believes that the Christians altered the name "Hatera" to "Aikaterini" with the same ease with which they converted temples into Christian churches. Felix de Beaujour, who visited the town at the end of the 18th century, writes that it was called "Kateri", obviously a corruption of the word Hatera. At the time its population did not number more than 5,000 people. A "metochi" (monastic property) of St. Catherine's of Sinai was



Old house in Katerini



located in the area on which refugees from the Sinai peninsula later built the church of Aghia Ekaterini. This small community soon dominated the area.

In 1668, the local Sultan, a keen hunter, accompanied by his soldiers and village crowds, was often seen scouring the area for game. At the end of the 18th century, though, Kitros was considered to be the main town, and it provided overnight accommodation for the Sultan. In the end of the 19th/beginning of the 20th century, Katerini had developed into an urban centre and was the seat of the bishop of Kitros. Its population was 3,700, out of which 2,500 were Greeks. Greek schools were in operation since 1871 and new ones were built after 1900. After the town's liberation (16 October 1912), and particularly after 1922, the time when refugees from Pontus and southern Russia settled there, Katerini's economy was given a new impetus with the introduction of new varieties of tobacco and fruit trees.

Katerini. A view of the city

The present population of the town is 43,613 and is classified as a municipality under which comes the village of Neo Keramidi and Andromachi, and the housing estates of Olympiaki Akti (at a distance of 8 km) and Hrani. Katerini has nicely laid out streets and many squares. The Dimotiko Alsos (grove), which covers an area of 100 stremmas, is the municipal zoo.

Sites to visit in Katerini are: the church of Aghia Ekaterini, the summer resort (on the beach of Katerini 4 km away, which has hotels, camping and bathing facilities and is famous for its seafood) popular with tourists, the 11th century Byzantine church "Koimisis tis Theotokou" (Dormition of the Virgin Mary) 6 km south of Katerini in the village of Kondariotissa, the newly built monastery of Hosios Ephraim the Syrian, who lived in the 3rd century, and a graveyard dating back to the early Iron age.

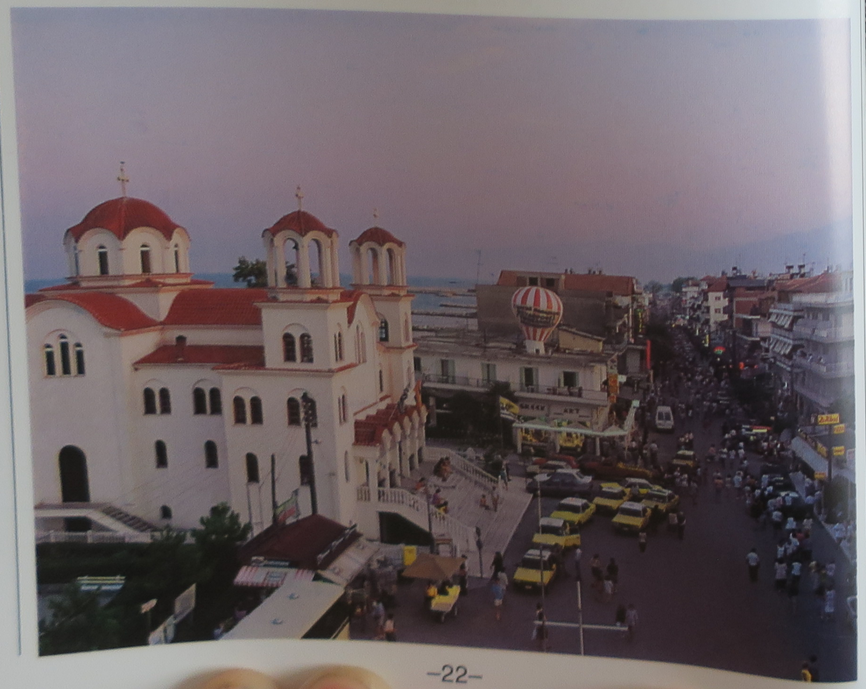
Katerini. The Greek Evangelical church

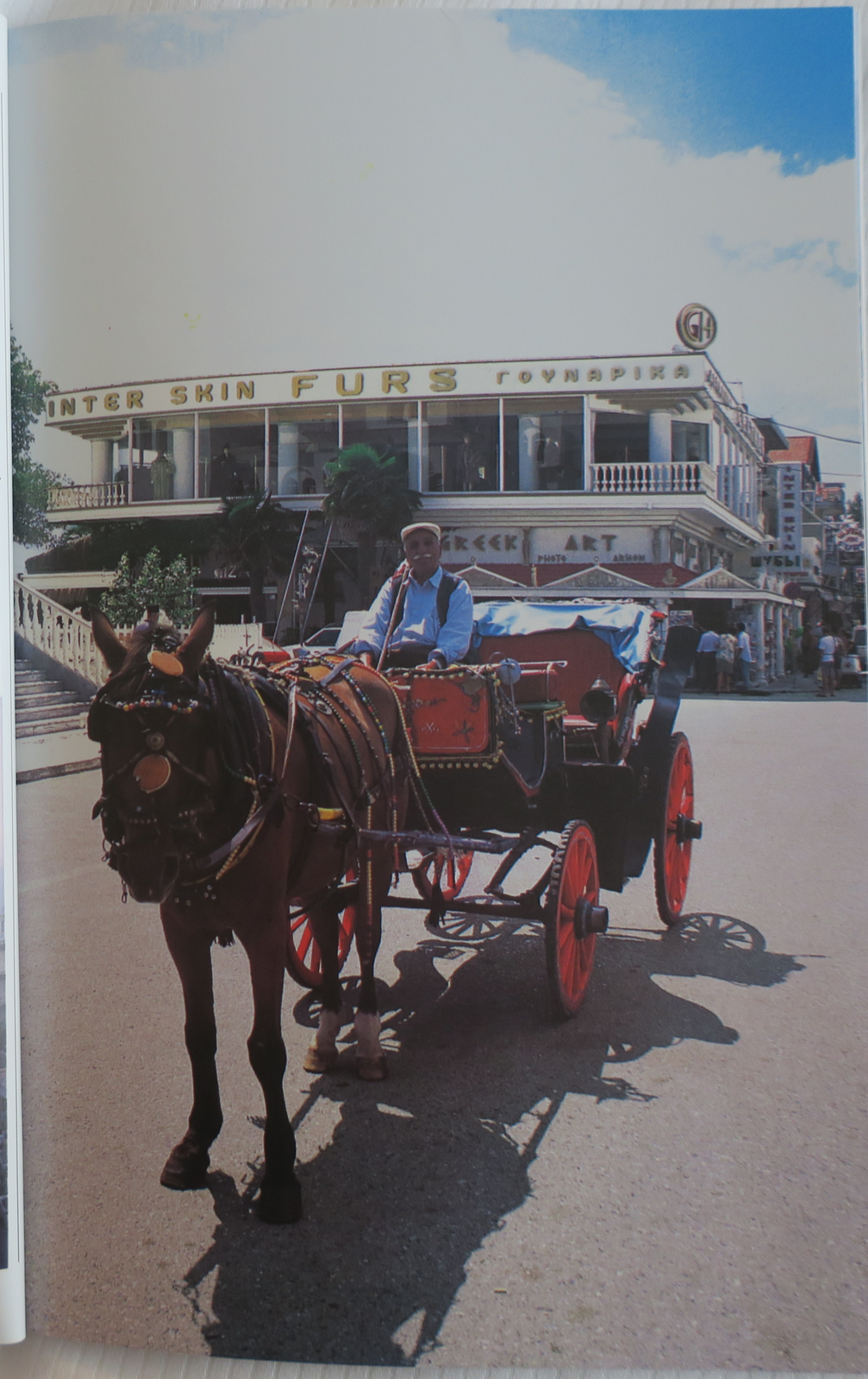


A significant monument in the area is the ancient tomb (2 km north–east of the town), dating back to the second quarter of the 4th century BC, rectangular in shape and containing features of a Macedonian tomb. Although the tomb has been plundered, iron swords, spears, and parts of a silver–decorated breast–plate and collar point to the fact that this was a warrior's resting place.

A horse–drawn buggy in Paralia →

The church of Aghia Ekaterini in Paralia, Katerini





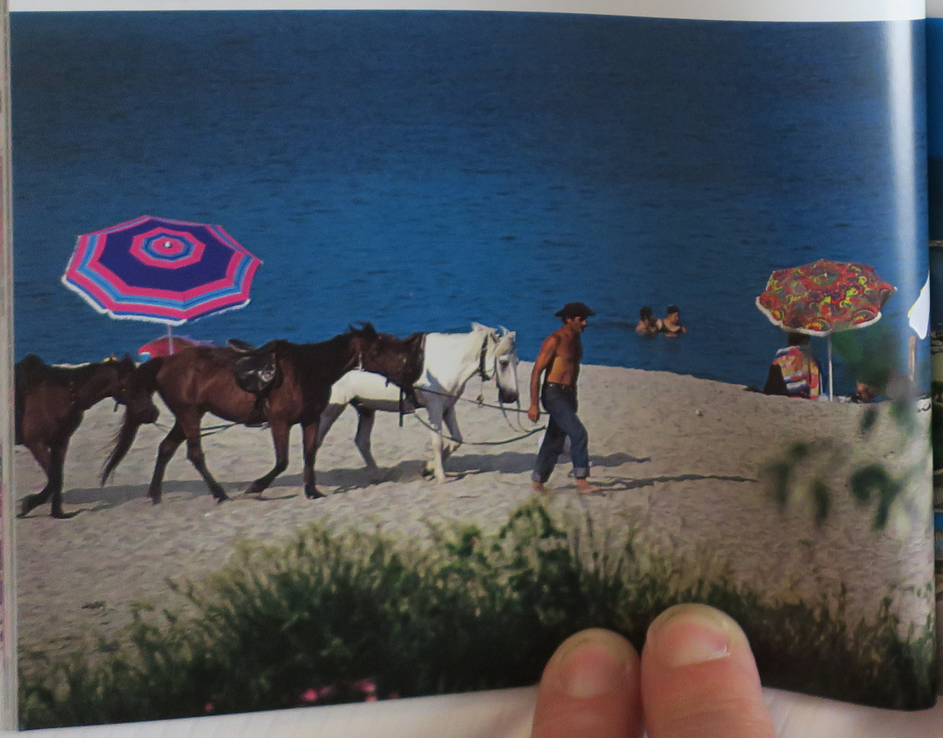


↑ *Air view of Olympiaki Akti*



Views of Paralia in Katerini

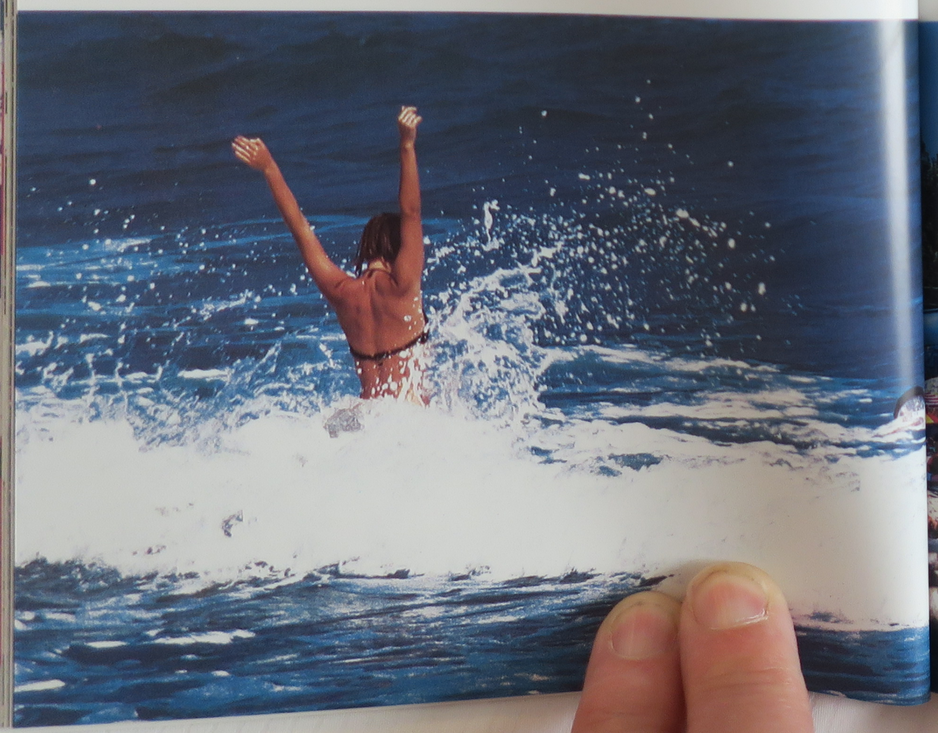
Walking the horses ↓







Fun on the beach



Fun on the beach



Views of Paralia in Katerini



Views of Paralia in Katerini



The church of Aghios Nicolaos in Litochoro

2. LITOCHORO

The small town of Litochoro is built on the site of ancient Pimpleia, on the left bank of the river Enipeas, at the feet of Mt. Olympus. It was founded during the first years of Turkish occupation, probably by the inhabitants of a destroyed Byzantine village on the same site, or close by, not far from the chapel of Aghios Ioannis where the archaeologist Soteriadis found the ruins of a small ancient city.

The name Litochoro (or previously Lithochoro) comes from the stony nature of the area where the small town was built or from its stone–built houses (λίθος =stone). [The view that the name is derived from the words λιτός+ χῶρος (austere+place) or Λητώ+χῶρος (the goddess Leto+place) is not correct].

During the years of Turkish occupation Litochoro was an important small town. Its people were mainly sailors to the extent that in the end of the 19th century about 100 of its sailing boats sailed the Aegean. The beach of Aghioi Theodoroi was known as "Stolos" (fleet) because



View of Mt. Olympus from Litochoro

of the great number of ships at anchor there.

The first settlement of Litochoro must date back to the end of the 14th or beginning of the 15th century. There is little doubt, though, that Litochoro had been established by the 16th century. Its people helped in the building of the monastery of Aghios Dionysios. During the Turkish rule, it was one of the hideouts of the klephts and armatoli. During the 1878 uprising it was the provisional seat of the revolutionary government.

Places worth visiting are: the



church of Aghia Solomoni; the gorge of the river Enipeas where, according to mythology, the maenads dismembered Orpheus and threw his severed head; the locations of Aghios Ioannis, Prophitis Elias, and Prionia, where there is a tourist pavilion with an excellent view of the gulf of Thermaikos; the monastery of Aghios Dionysios; and "plaka Litochorou", a summer resort on the beach 8 km from the town.

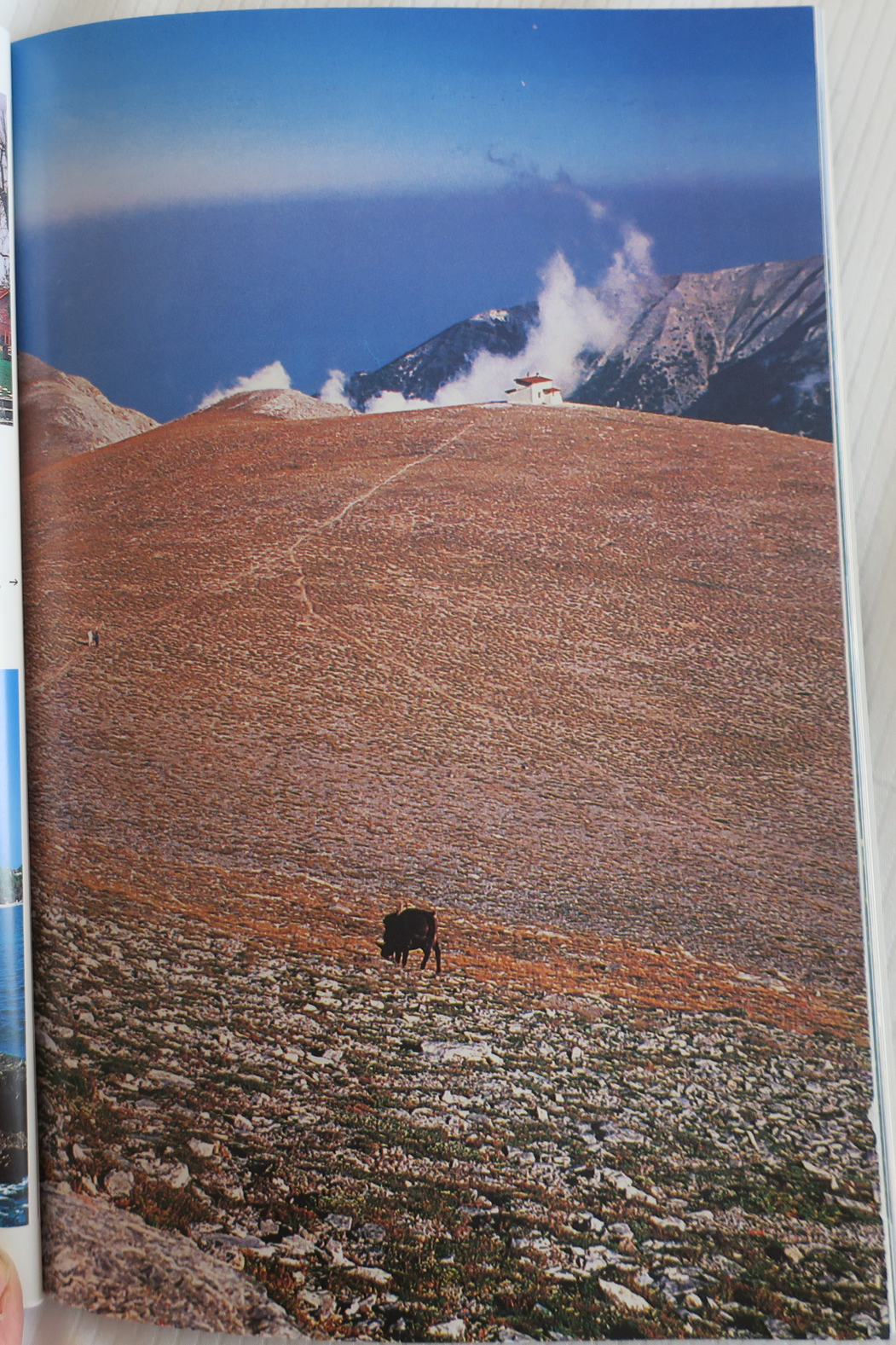


The small chapel of Ai–Yiannis in Litochoro

Plaka Litochorou



Mt. Olympus. The "Christos Kakalos" refuge. →



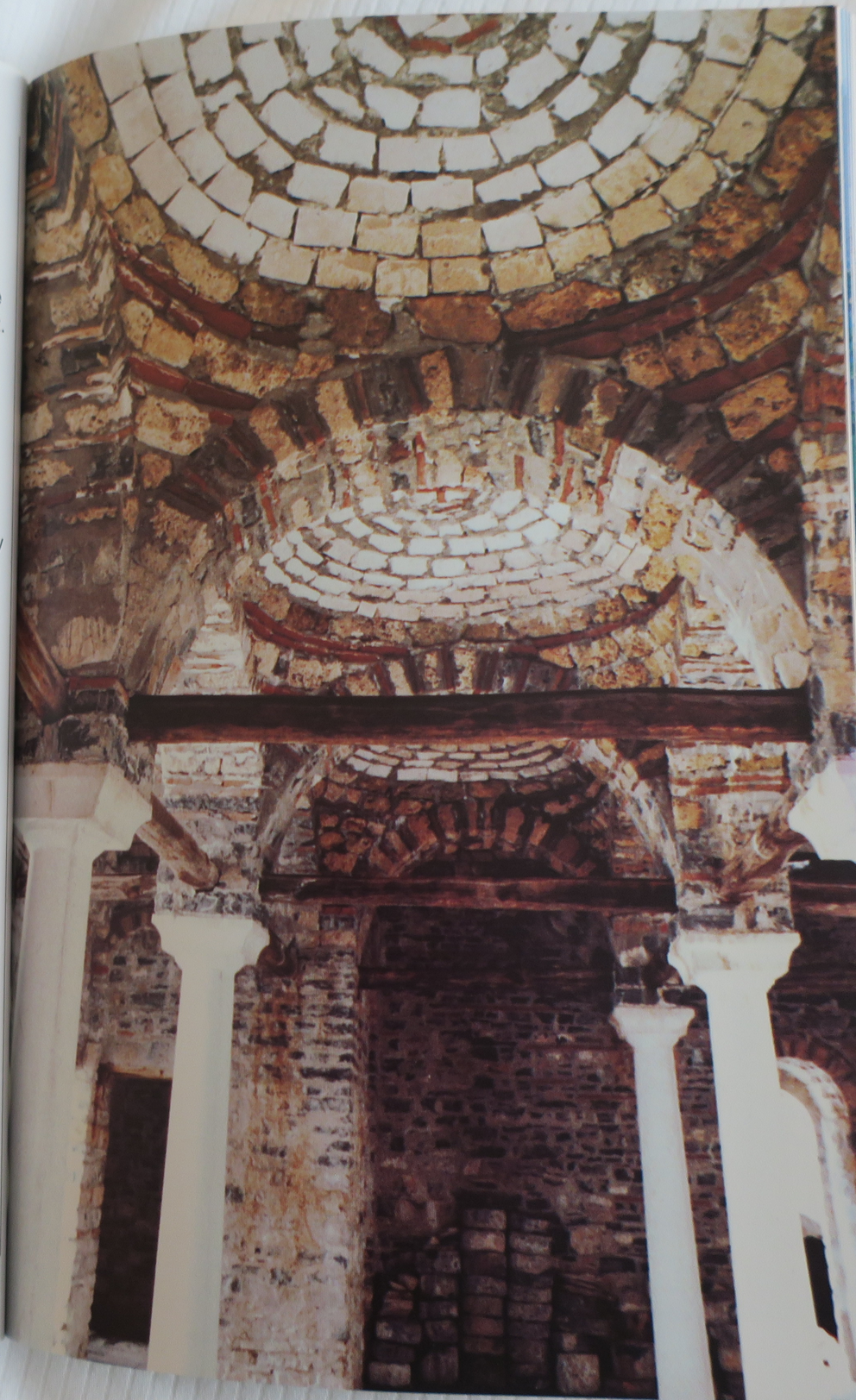


Ruins of the Monastery of Aghios Dionysios

The monastery of Aghiou Dionysiou

The monastery was founded in the 15th century and renovated in the 16th by a monk known by the name of Dionysios. Originally it was dedicated to the Holy Trinity (Aghia Triada) but later took on the name of its founder. The monk Dionysios came to Mt. Olympus from Meteora, gathered the pious, and founded the monastery. Some time in the 18th century, five ships dropped anchor at Aghioi Theodoroi of Litochoro, bearing jewels and gifts of all kinds offered to the monastery by the princes of Russia. During the whole period of Turkish occupation the monastery had become the base and shelter of the armatoli of Mt. Olympus. The Turks never dared to approach it. It was only after a failed uprising in 1822, when the fighters from Olympus were forced to move to southern Greece, that the Turks took the opportunity to raid the monastery (1828) and blow it up. Its lead roof was destroyed together with all the valuable holy vessels, manuscripts, codes and other documents, as well as its mosaics, wall–paintings, and icons of considerable artistic value. Only its walls remained standing on which later a roof was added and repairs made.

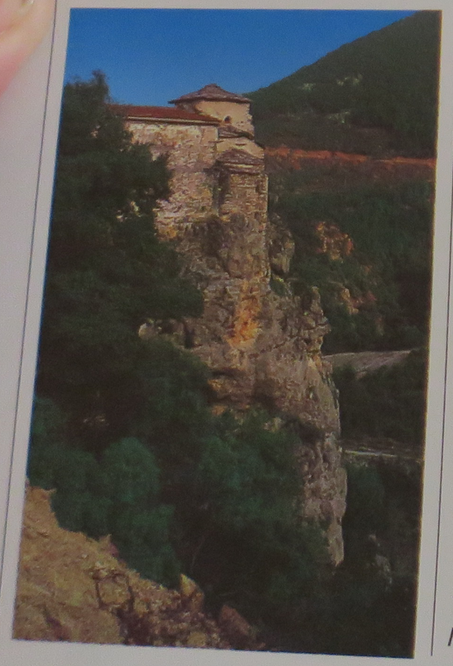
During the German occupation the monastery became the hiding place of Greek guerilla fighters and, in 1943, the Germans destroyed it completely in one of their raids. Today it has been replaced by the new monastery of Aghios Dionysios of Olympus on a previous "metochi" north of Litochoro.



→ *Interior view of the domes of the Monastery of Aghios Dionysios.*



Monastery of Aghios Dionysios, interior.



The Monastery of Aghia Triada on Mt. Olympus

An icon of Aghios Dionysios, considered to be miraculous and revered by the people of Pieria, depicts the saint as an abbot of the Eastern Orthodox church, holding an official document in one hand and the original five–domed monastery in the other. According to Apostolos Vakalopoulos, professor at the University of Thessaloniki, Aghios Dionysios came from Sthlatena of Fanarion in Thessaly. He was originally in the monastery of Philotheou on Mt. Athos and later at the monastery of Timiou Prodromou in Veria. He subsequently moved to Mt. Olympus where he founded the monastery of Aghia Triada. He also built Profitis Elias and Metamorphosi tou Christou on the peaks of Mt. Olympus. He died in the church of Aghios Lazaros, which he had built in a cave close to the monastery and had used it as a place of prayer. He died there and was buried "on January 23rd of an unspecified year in the 16th century" (Varnavas, Lefkoma (compedium), Metropolis (cathedral) of Kitros, 1962).



A house in Panteleimon →

3. AIGINIO

The small town of Aiginio is in the northernmost part of Pieria, a short distance from the Athens–Thessaloniki railway and motorway. It is a municipality, covering an area of 62 km^2 and it includes the small community of Megali Gefyra. Up to 1926 its name was "Libanovo". It became a municipality in 1946. Livius and Pliny refer to an ancient city by the name of Aiginion which was possibly located near the present–day villages of Koukos–Paliostani–Ryakia at an altitude of 500 m where, in 1964, villagers found a bronze head of the Roman period.

The alluvial deposits of the river Aliakmon endow the area with fertile soil suitable for the cultivation of wheat, corn, vegetables, tobacco, fruit trees and vineyards. Aiginion is an agricultural and commercial town.

Places of interest are: the church of Koimisis tis Theotokou (14th century), the church of Aghios Andreas and the church ton Apostolon Petrou ke Pavlou (Apostles Peter and Paul).

4. KOLINDROS

The municipality of Kolindros (with the village Paliambela and the deserted community of Kapsalos) has a population of 4,056 and is to the north of the prefecture at an altitude of 280 m, 40 km north–west of Katerini. Fruit trees are mainly cultivated in the fertile areas of Kolindros.

During the 18th century Kolindros grew at a much faster rate than Katerini. Some of the houses of the wealthy of the time still survive in the area. During the Turkish occupation (1822), Kolindros became the base for a number of uprisings in northern Greece after the failure of the uprising in Chalkidiki and the capture of Mt. Athos. On 8 March 1822, Nikolaos Kasomoulis, together with the chieftains Diamantis Nikolaou and Didjias, attempted unsuccessfully to take the fortified position of Kolindros. On 13 March, Grigorios Salas and Theophilos Kairis, in charge of 300 men, among whom were many German and Polish philhellenes as well as islanders, arrived from the Peloponnese and the battles to capture Kolindros resumed. On 15 March, although a Turkish counter–attack was initially contained, the Greek forces finally had to retreat to the village of Kastania. In 1872, Kolindros had a population of 2,000 people and was one of the most important towns in the kaza (province) of Katerini. During the Russo–Turkish war, the people of Kolindros, under bishop Nikolaos



Kiwi fruit. One of the main fruit to be cultivated in the area.

Lousis (1840–1882) raised the revolutionary banner (22 February 1878). When it later became known that the Turks were getting ready to counter–attack, the Greek forces moved their base of operations to another fortified position. The town, therefore, fell to the Turks without any resistance. Places worth visiting are the church of Aghios Athanasios (containing 16th century icons), the church of Aghios Georgios, as well as the municipal tourist pavilion with a magnificent view of the surrounding area. The St. Demetrius Fair is held on 26 October.

5. METHONI

Methoni is a seaside village (30 km from Katerini at an altitude of 25 m) with 1100 inhabitants, which has developed into a summer resort. Methoni was a small city in ancient times and was probably founded by Thracians or, according to Plutarch, Eritreans. It was a member of the First Athenian League (354 BC) and was



Water fountain in the village of Panteleimon

destroyed by Philip II after a siege during which he lost his eye. According to Strabo, ancient Methoni was located on the beach of the present–day village of Neo Eleftherochorio. ("μέση δ' οὖσα ἡ τῆς Ἁλώρου ἑβδομήκοντα").

Tradition has it that St. Paul, on his journey to Veria, went to Aiginio through Eleftherochori, the cove at Methoni, where he preached. The place where it is said that he preached is one of the local sights.

The most important village fairs are: the fair of Aghios Ioannis Prodromos on 7 January (when people go carol–singing) and the fair of Aghios Pavlos on 29 June.

6. KITROS

The village of Kitros belongs to the community of Pydna and is at a height of 60 m and 16 km from Katerini. The ancient city of Kitros is said to have been renamed "Pydna" by the Romans. Its people, though, never forgot its ancient name and continued using it until the 16th century. Even the bishopric of Kitros is occasionally referred to as the bishopric of "Pydna". During the Turkish occupation the people of Pydna were forced out of the village (end of the 14th century) and settled in a wooded peak of the Pieria mountains, 5 km west of the ancient city, which they named Kitros and which gave its name to the present–day village.

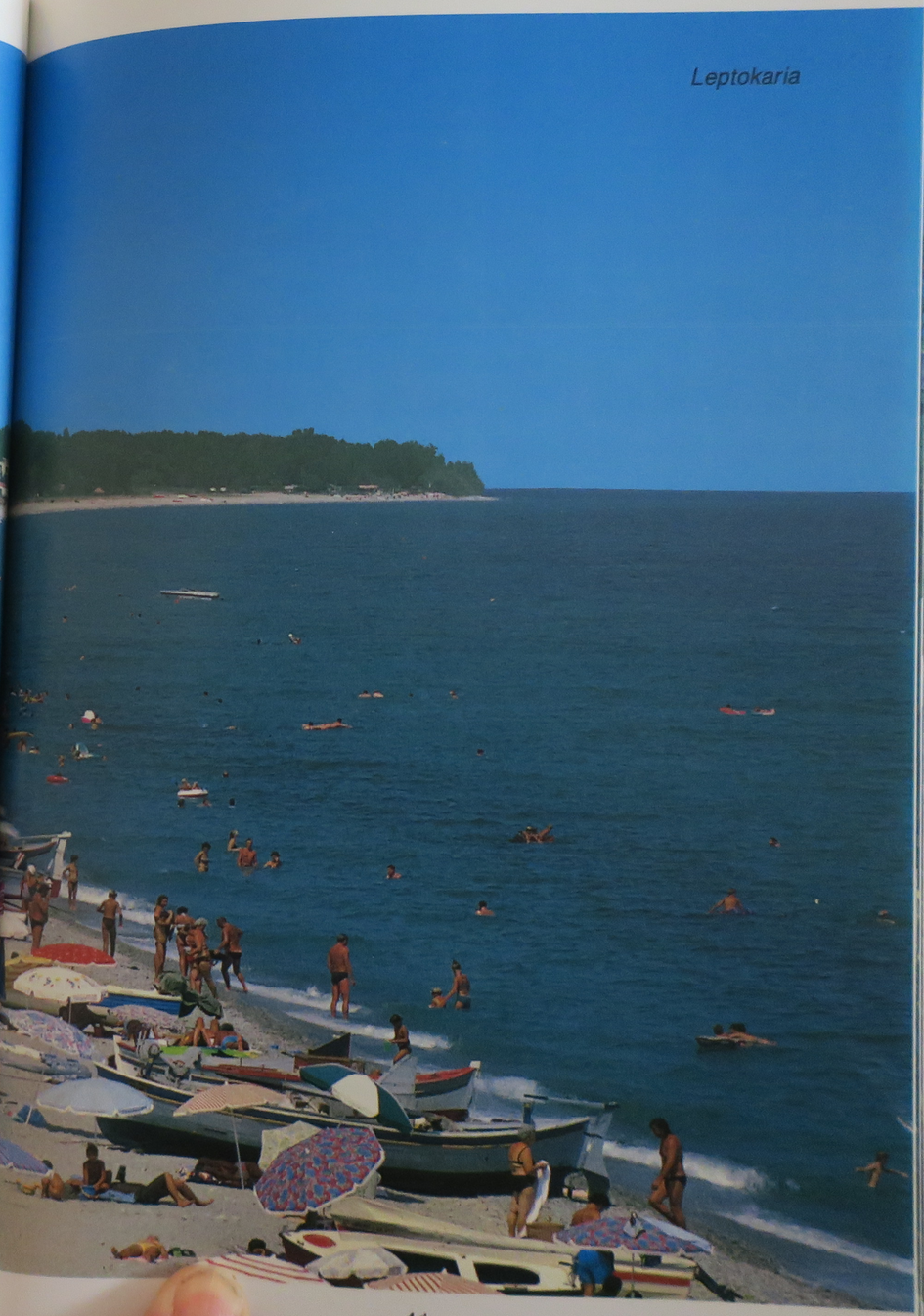
In 1669, on his way back to France, the Capuchin monk, Robert de Dreux, a priest at the French Embassy in Constantinople, was put up at the village of Kitros in the same house where Sultan Mehmed IV had stayed. The fact that Sultan Mehmed IV stayed at Kitros verifies that the village had developed into an important centre in Pieria. This was why from 1700 and on, it became the seat of the bishop, and the reason why the Thessaloniki to Athens main road was moved from Pydna to run through Kitros. At the time Kitros had a population of 3,000. During the end of the 18th century and the beginning of the 19th, the village rapidly declined as a result of a mass relocation of its inhabitants due to the many uprisings of the "klephts" and "armatoli" of Mt. Olympus. After the revolution of 1822 and the assassination of the metropolitan (bishop) of Kitros, Meletius, in Thessaloniki, the village was permanently deserted and the bishopric moved to Kolindros. It 1878 the bishop of Kitros in Kolindros, Nicolaos Roussis, set fire to the metropolis (cathedral), and joined the band of brigands on the Pieria mountains. Subsequently, the bishopric was moved to Katerini but retained the name of Kitros (metropolis of Kitros).

On the site of Alykon, Kitros, there is an ancient burial ground with graves dating to the 4th century BC.





Leptokaria





The church of Aghios Nicolaos on the coast of Leptokaria

7. LEPTOKARIA

Leptokaria is a summer resort with a population of 3,500 to the north of Platamonas, on the coast, at the foot of Mt. Olympus. It is an old agricultural and commercial centre on a fertile area where olive trees and fruit trees are mainly grown. Rented accommodation and numerous newly–built hotels cater for the ever–increasing number of tourists.

The early Christian basilica on the waterfront is worth a visit.

Local festivities include: the "Kedra" (cedar) —a feast held on "Clean Monday" (first day of Lent) when a bonfire is lit using cedar wood, people gather round it, drink and dance, and watch the procession of carnival floats; and the feast of the Pentecost.

8. SKOTINA

The village of Skotina and the Paralia of Skotina (a summer resort 3.5 km away) form a single community. Skotina was previously known as Skotiniotika.



Leptokaria

It is located in a wooded area, in the southernmost part of Pieria, on the west slopes of Mt. Olympus, at an altitude of 100 m, 32 km from Katerini. According to professor Soteriadis who conducted a research of the area, Skotina is near the ancient cities of Leivithra and Pimpleia. Legend has it, that Orpheus was born, lived and died in Leivithra. "Λείβηθρα δὲ πόλις Μακεδονίας, ὅθεν ἦν Ὀρφεύς". An ancient graveyard has been excavated close to Skotina dating back to the late Bronze age with finds bearing traces of strong Mycenian influence. The churches of Christou (Christ's church) and Koimisis tis Theotokou are worth visiting.

→

A view from the castle of Platamon



View of the coast of Platamon with its castle in the distance

9. PLATAMONAS

The village of Platamonas is 48 km north–east of the town of Larisa and 36 km south–east of Katerini. It is built on the waterfront, near the Castle (Kastro) and the railway station, on the site of the ancient city of Iraklia or Iraklion. After the First Balkan War (1912) and the liberation of Macedonia, the people from the nearby village of Panteleimon and refugees from the areas moved into present–day Platamonas. Its people are mainly engaged in farming (fruit, livestock) and fishing.

The area has developed into an attractive summer resort because of its pleasant climate, excellent beaches, wooded mountains (known for their fresh–water springs), and magnificent views. As a result numerous hotels have been built on either side of the main motorway to Athens, which attracted a great number of holiday–makers.

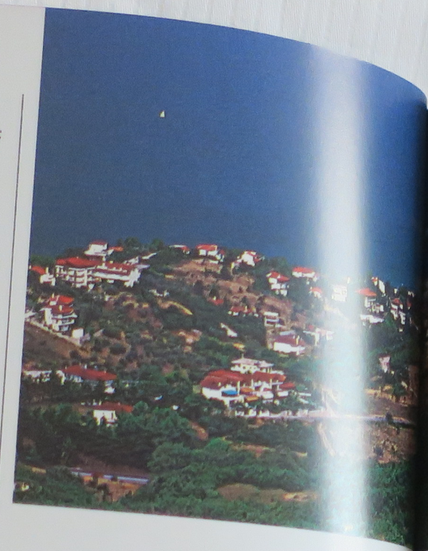
Places of interest are: the

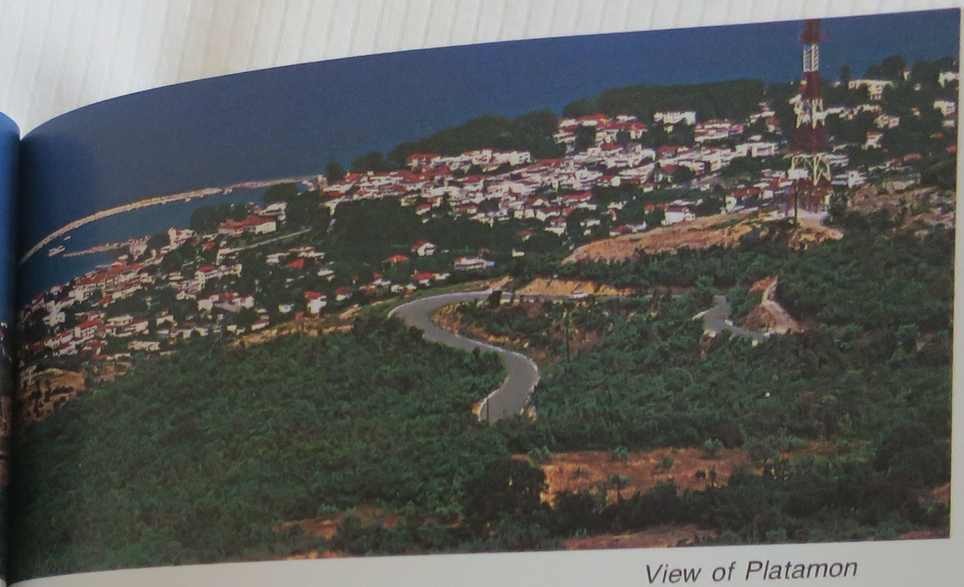
Castle, the spring of Artemis, the spring of the Muses, the spring of Aghio Vima, etc.

Local events include the Fair of Aghia Paraskevi (26 July), the Fair of Metamorphosi tou Sotiros (Transfiguration of Christ – 6 August), and the "tsagala" (last Sunday of Lent).

Historical Data: The first mention of Platamonas (referred to as Platenea) is encountered in a document to the Venetian authorities in 1193. The name Platamon is also mentioned in a "Golden Bull" of Alexius III in a 12th century commercial contract with Venice. In 1204, after the fall of Constantinople to the Franks, Boniface of Montferrat, who was made king of Thessaloniki by the Venetians, offered Platamonas as a fief to one of his knights. The Frank occupation lasted from 1204–1222 during which period the Castle (Kastro) of Platamonas was built, using some of the materials from the remains of the ancient and Byzantine walls in the area.

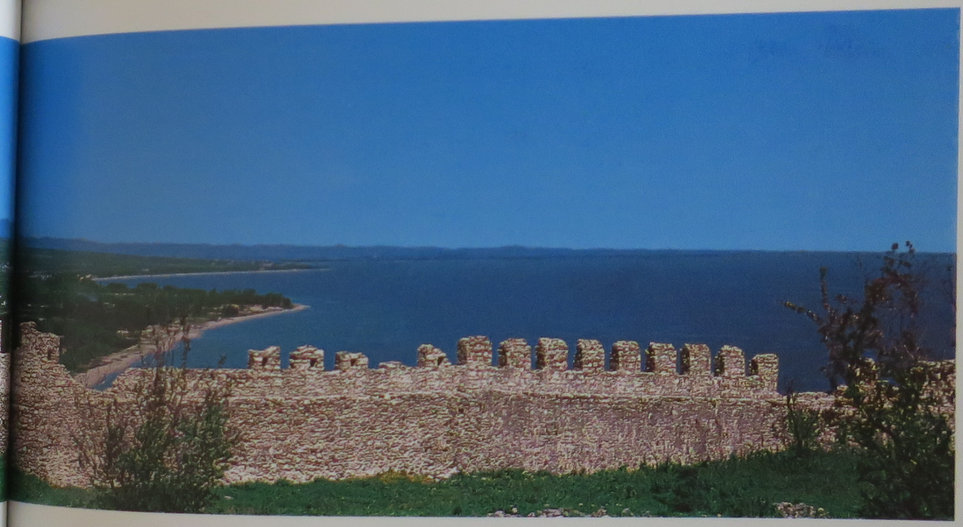
Platamon →





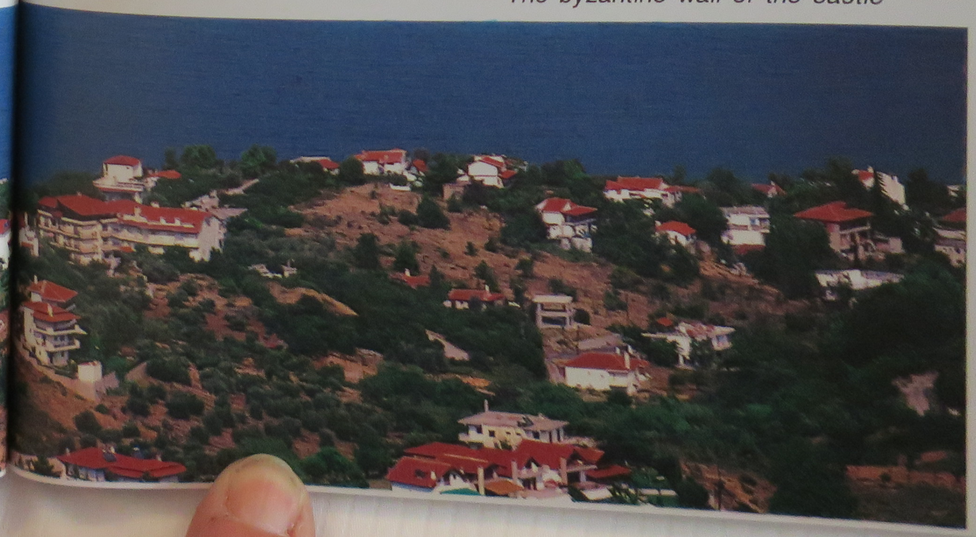
View of Platamon





The byzantine wall of the castle





The castle of Platamon – The coast of New Panteleimon



The entrance to the castle

The castle of Platamon →

The Castle of Platamonas

This castle bears Byzantine and Frank architectural features. It is a polygonal structure with square towers and ramparts built out of stone and mortar. The entrance to the castle is on its west side and consists of two gates which are protected by a tower which leads to the main court and the central great octagonal tower, the home of the timariot. This central tower protects the nearby gate to the inner wall and three other towers protect the south–west side of the court. On the right of the entrance gate there is a Byzantine cistern.

Heuzey considers the castle a Byzantine building with subsequent additions. He found the ruins of six old churches in the outer court, as well as the remains of four walls (which still survive), possibly belonging to an episcopal building, north of the castle on the opposite side of the motorway. Aghia Paraskevi, the only surviving church in the

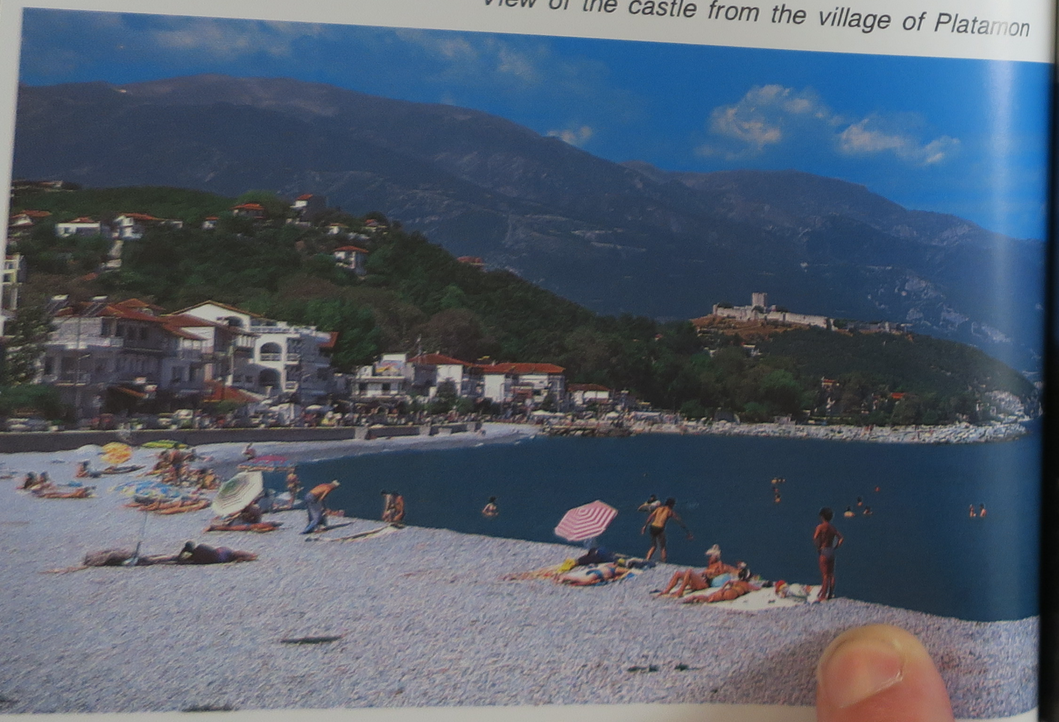


The octagonal tower of the castle

castle, was converted into a mosque by the Turks. Ruins of the ancient city of Iraklio were also found in the castle.

The castle was built in 1204 by Boniface of Montferrat to guard the pass leading to southern Greece. In 1218 it was captured by Theodore Angelus, the desport of Epirus. In 1389 it was taken by the Turks and it later fell to the hands of the Venitians who had in the meantime established their

View of the castle from the village of Platamon



control over Thessaloniki (1423). The castle was then strengthened so that together with the fortification of Cassandra in Chalkidiki it would effectively control the gulf of Thermaikos.

During the years of Turkish occupation it played an important role in the various uprisings in the area of Mt. Olympus. In 1773, it was captured by Yianni, the son of Kapetan Lazou of Olympus, after a fierce battle against its Albanian defenders.



New Panteleimon coast.

View of the coast of New Panteleimon from the castle





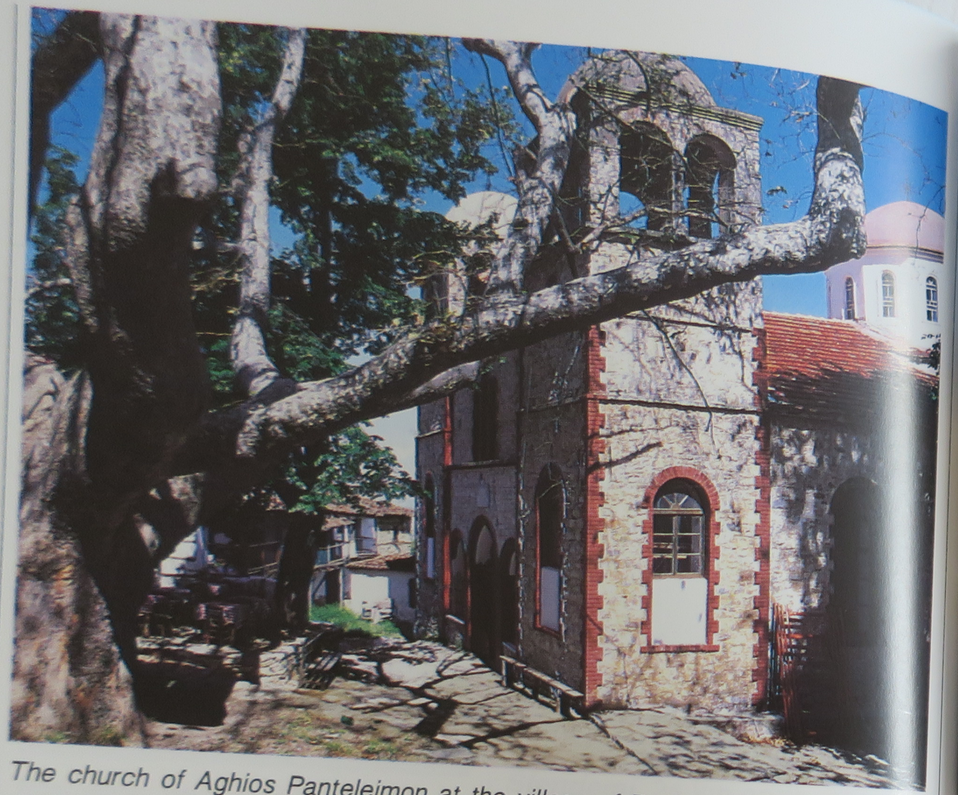
Holy water from the "Holy Daugther" of Vrontou on Mt. Olympus

OTHER COMMUNITIES IN THE PREFECTURE OF PIERIA

Other communities in the area are: ***Korinos***, a seaside village of 3,763 people, 15 km north–east of Katerini;
Elatochori, a mountain resort of 680 people, 28 km north–west of Katerini, a short distance from the church of Aghios Nicolaos with its wood–carved screen;
Aghios Demetrios, built on a plateau between Mt. Olympus and the Pieria mountains, 32 km from Katerini, on the road to Elassona, near the late bronze age burial ground (14th–12th century BC) in the wooded area of Spathes (Xerolakki) at an altitude of 1,100 m;
Makrigialos, a village of 1,4[illegible]5 people, 27 km north of Kate[illegible]ni, popular with local and foreig[illegible] tourists for its beaches and i[illegible] proximity to the archaeologic[illegible]l site of Pydna (2 km);
Nea Agathoupoli, a seaside village, 33 km from Katerini, known for its pine tree beach[illegible]nd fish tavernas;
Svoronos, 3 km west of Kate[illegible]ni, at an altitude of 45 m;
Sfendami, 24 km north–east [illegible]of Katerini, near the Alkovitsa stream at an altitude of 160 m;
Vrontou, 16 km north–west of Katerini at an altitude of 120 m, on the feet of Mt. Olympus;
Petra, belonging to the community of Photina, pop. 80, 27 km from Katerini, at an altitude of 520 m, on the north slope of Mt. Olympus, known for its timber and game. The large monastery of Petra, which was built during the Byzantine era, was located on the road Petra to Photina. The monastery was expropriated and the sanatorium of the monastery of Petras Olympou was built in its place. The church of Eisodia tis Theotokou (The Annunciation of the Virgin Mary), belonging to the monastery was founded in 1151. During the Byzantine period, Petra served as the seat of the bishop. Petra, a Byzantine fortified position, fell to the Turks after a siege, but was soon handed over to the bands of klephts and armatoli. According to Heuzey, who first discovered the site of the ancient city, the Turks and Albanians razed the village to the ground during the time of Ali Pasha. On 15 October 1912, the Greek 7th division defeated the Turks, who were guarding the pass of Petra, and liberated the area of Olympus;
Paralia Panteleimon (pop. 130), 36 km south–east of Katerini, near an 11th century Venetian castle and the village of Aghios Panteleimon, 5 km west of Neos Panteleimon;
Poroi (pop. 94), near the border with the prefecture of Larissa, 4 km from the Katerini to Larissa motorway, at an altitude of 500 m



View of the village of Panteleimon



The church of Aghios Panteleimon at the village of Panteleimon

on the east slope of Lower Olympus and 45 km south–east of Katerini, known for its church of Aghioi Apostoloi;

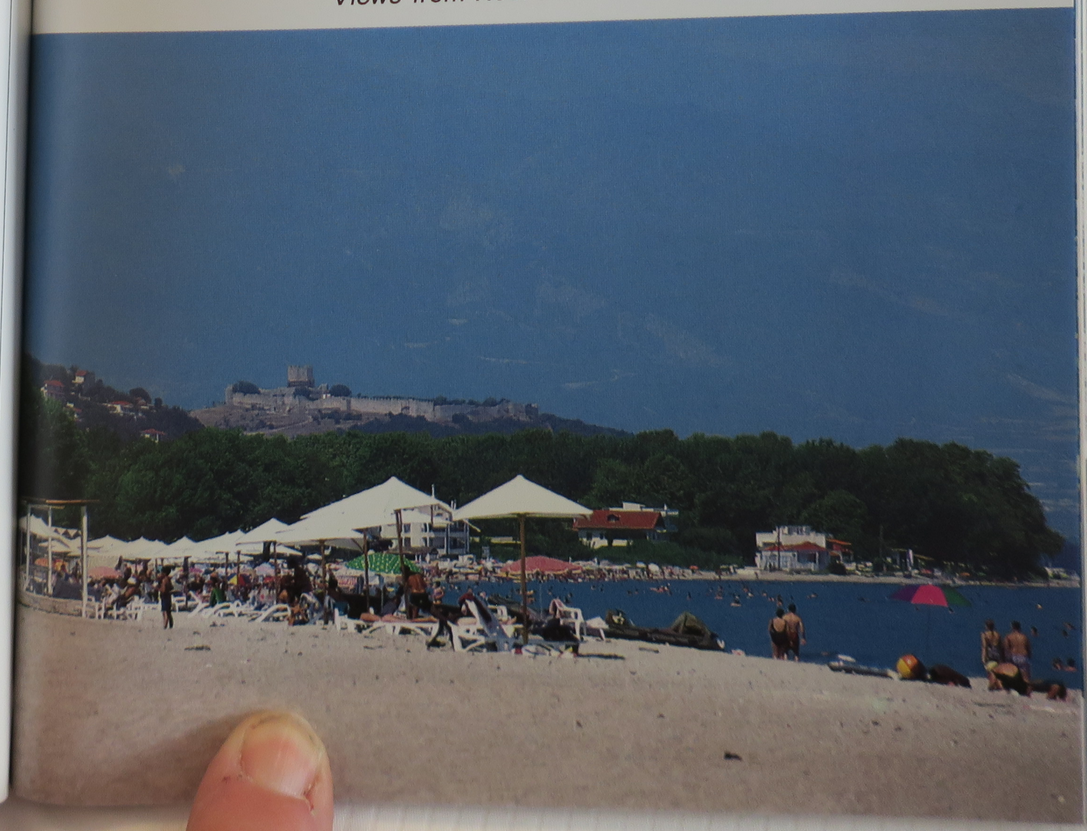
Neoi Poroi (pop. 630), a modern seaside resort, 2 km south of Platamonas, on a long beach, clear sea, and with complete tourist facilities;

Peristasi (pop. 1,730), 2 km from Katerini, known for its church of Zoodochos Pigi (Lifegiving Spring), possibly of the 14th century; and

Ritini (pop. 1,806), 20 km west of Katerini, at an altitude of 550 m on the slopes of the Pieria mountains, known for its monastery of Aghios Georgios and its 17th century icons.



Views from Neoi Poroi



Neoi Poroi →

Neoi Poroi

Neoi Poroi

A picturesque quarter of Panteleimon →



THE PIERIA MOUNTAINS

The Pieria mountains (or Flambouro) are on the borders of the prefecture of Pieria, Imathia, and Kozani and in a way form an extension of the north–west range of Mt. Olympus. Its summit, is Flambouro (2,192 m) and some of its other peaks are Tourla (2,104 m), Avdela (2,049 m), Thoma Rahi or Arvanitis (2,023 m), Skotrino or Lapousi (2,009 m), Plaka (1,938 m), Kteni (1,791 m), Pente Pyrgoi (1,710 m), Kria Vrysi (1,611 m), Grammeni Oxia (1,584 m). The Pieria range trends from north–east to south–west with minor subsidiaries to the east and west. The east side of the Pieria slopes gently towards the plain of Katerini, while the west side is precipitous and reaches the Aliakmon river. To the north–west of the Flambouro summit a plateau is formed where the village Katafygi is located. To the north–east, the low subsidiaries of the Pieria range, known as Kato Pieria or Platydromo, form the Moschopotamos ravine and an 800 m saddleback through which runs the road from Elatochori to Rizomata. Oak and beech trees reach the height of 1,000 m. The zone of alpine grassland reached lower levels due to extensive grazing. However, in recent years the forests are recovering as human activity in the area has declined.

There are a number of shelters at various scenic locations on the Pieria mountain range, one of which is Ano Milia at a height of 1,050 m, 25 km from Katerini, on the road Katerini–Mesaia Milia–Ano Milia (the first 20 km of which are paved). The shelter can accommodate up to 70 people. Enquiries: Tel. Shelter (0351) 81211 or EOS (Mountaineering Club) of Katerini (0351) 23102. Nearby is the Tower of Lazaioi, the freedom fighters in the 1821 revolution.



The Muses of Pieria

The SEO refuge or "Giosos Apostolidis" →

Mt. OLYMPUS

Mt. Olympus was known as the abode of the twelve Greek gods of antiquity. The steep banks of the river Zyliana (or Zyos in ancient Greek) divide it into Ano (Upper) and Kato (Lower) Olympus of 2,917 m and 1,600 m in height respectively. The south slopes of Olympus sweep down to the Tempi pass which was formed by the river Pineios, while to the north the mountain climbs to its highest altitude as it rises above the Enipeas gorge, near the village of Litochoro. It is 50 km in length, 41 km in width and covers an area estimated at 1,272 km. Mt. Olympus at its highest level has an alpine zone of shrubs and plants and below 1,800 m a forested zone of pine, oak, beech, chestnut and evergreens. The mountain harbours such animals as roe deer, wild goats, jackals, wild boar, foxes, wolves and birds of prey. In the past, deer and bears were not an unusual sight.

The deepest and steepest gorge on Mt. Olympus is that of Enipeas; from the "throne of Zeus", the peak of the mountain, it plunges into the depths of Olympus and reaches its narrowest point at the old monastery of Aghios Dionysios



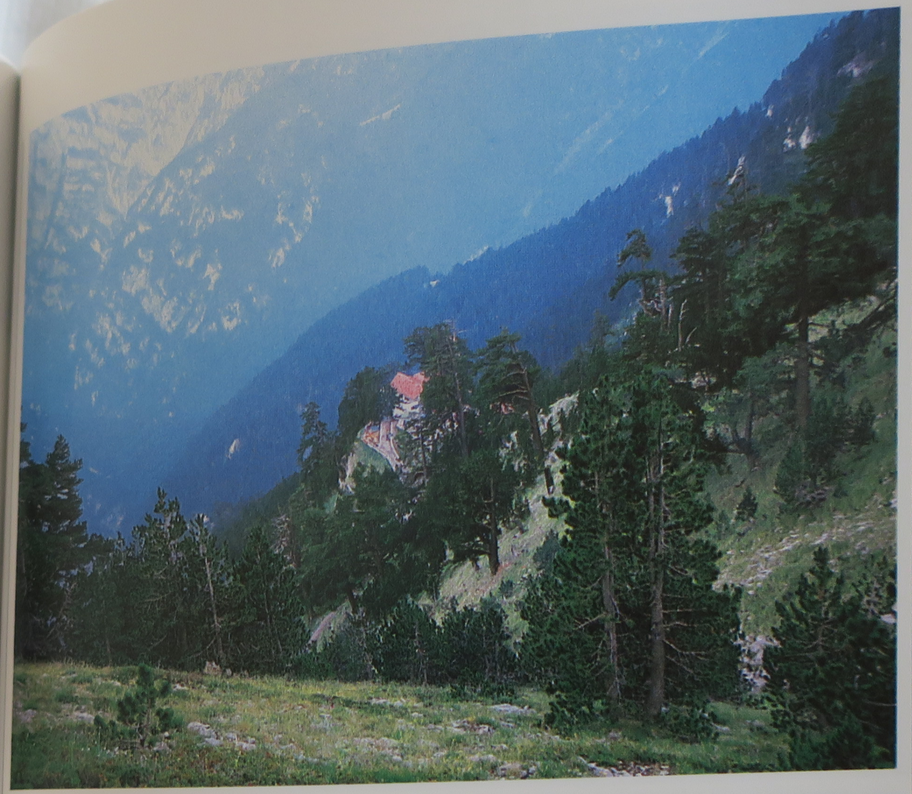


Mt. Olympus "welcomes" hundreds of mountain climbers each year



and the village of Litochoro. Above the Enipeas gorge rise the twin peaks of Mt. Olympus: Mytikas, or the "throne of Zeus" (2,917 m) and Pantheon or Stephani (2,909 m). Other peaks include Pagos (2,682 m) and Kalogeros (2,701 m) to the south, Paliomonastri (2,815 m) and Stavraitia (2,616 m) to the south–west, Toumba (2,801 m) and Ailias (2,803 m) to the north, and, finally, Scholio (2,911 m) to the north–west.

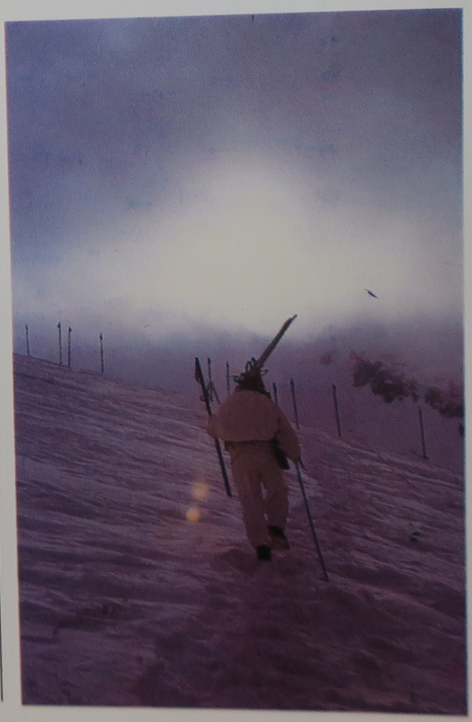
The monument of Giosos Apostolidis



Refuge A´ or "Spilios Agapitos"

The climate on Mt. Olympus is of a rather peculiar nature. There are heavy snowfalls from November to April (3–4 metres of snow on the high slopes, and deep drifts in the ravines which freeze to hard ice). In the spring, the mountain is often covered by fog, while in the summer and autumn, thick black clouds suddenly burst into violent storms and torrential rain.

Mountaineers usually start their ascent from Litochoro on



Skiing on Mt. Olympus



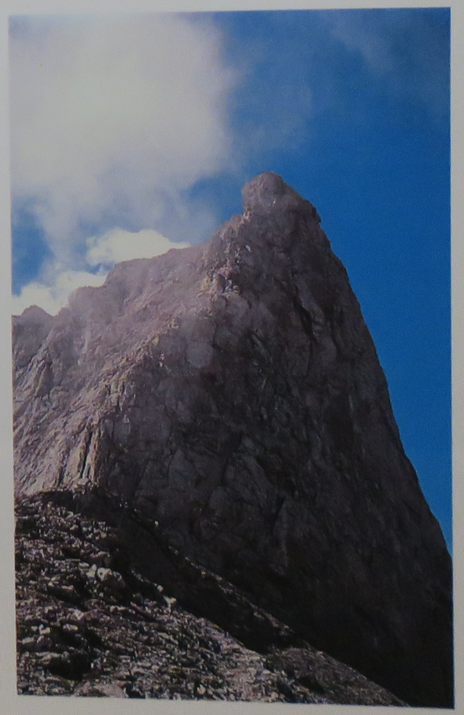
The SEO refuge or Giosos Apostolidis, built among the peaks of Prophitis Elias and Toumba

the east side of Olympus or Elassona–Kokkinoplo on the west. The east route follows the course: Litochoro–Metochi–Agios Dionysios–Stavros–Piges Enipea (Prionia). Along this route the following shelters have been built: (1) Giosos Apostolidis on the "Mouson" plateau at an altitude of 2,760 m, 14 km along a wooded road (six hour walk). It can accommodate up to 90 people. Enquiries: Σ.Ε.Ο. Thessaloniki (Greek Mountaineering Club) Tel: (031) 224.710 or 239.859. (2) Christos Kakkalos on the "Mouson" plateau at an altitude of 2,650 m, 14 km from Litochoro (six hour walk). It can accommodate up to 18 people. Enquiries: Ε.Ο.Σ. Litochoro (Greek Mountaineering Association) Tel: (0352) 81944. (3) Kostas Boundolas at "Stavros", at an altitude of 944 m, 9 km from Litochoro. It is open from November to April and can accommodate up to 35 people.

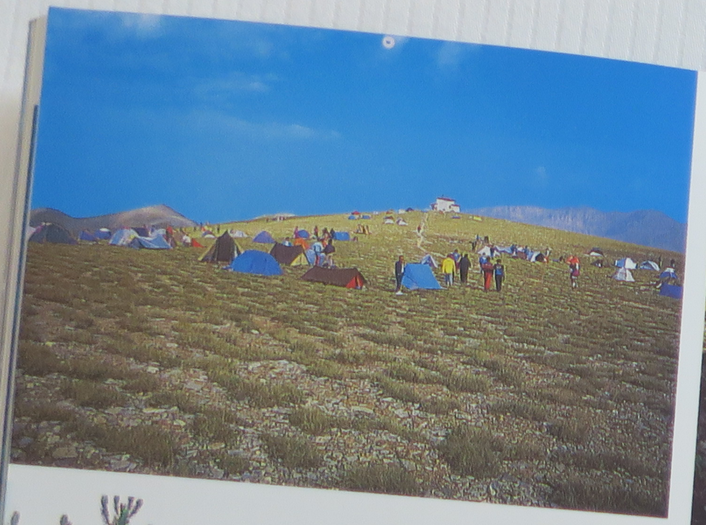


Mytikia

Enquiries: Ε.Ο.Σ. Thessaloniki (031) 278.288 or 267.282. (4) Spilios Agapitos at "Balkoni" at an altitude of 2,100 m, which can be reached from Litochoro (7 hour walk) and Prionia (2½ hour walk). It is open from May to October and can accommodate up to 100 people. Enquiries: Shelter Tel: (0352) 81800 or 81329 and Ε.Ο.Σ. Athens (01) 32.34.555.

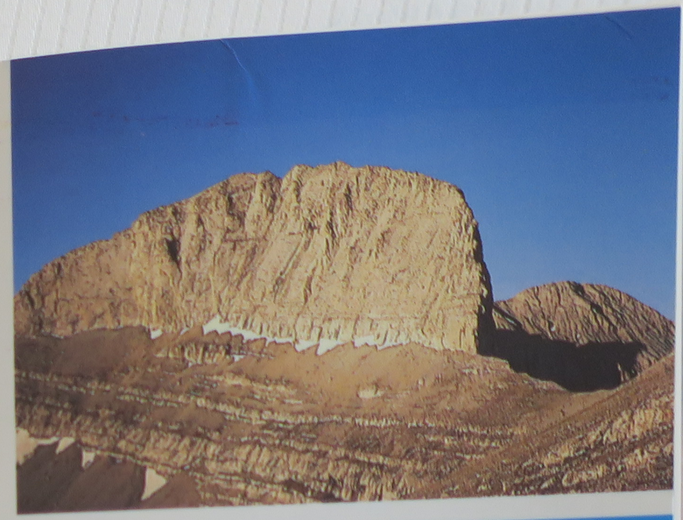


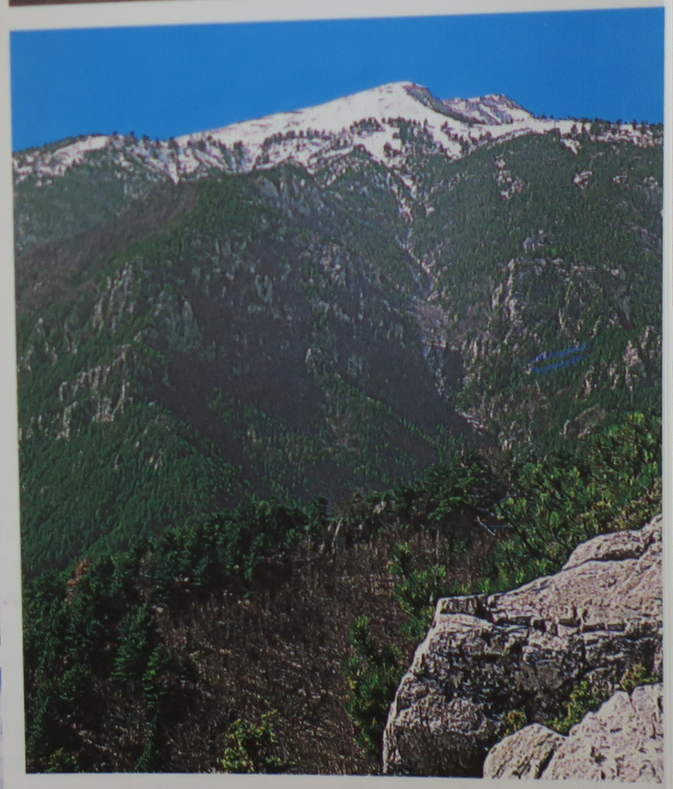
Mt. Olympus

















ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITES IN THE PREFECTURE OF PIERIA

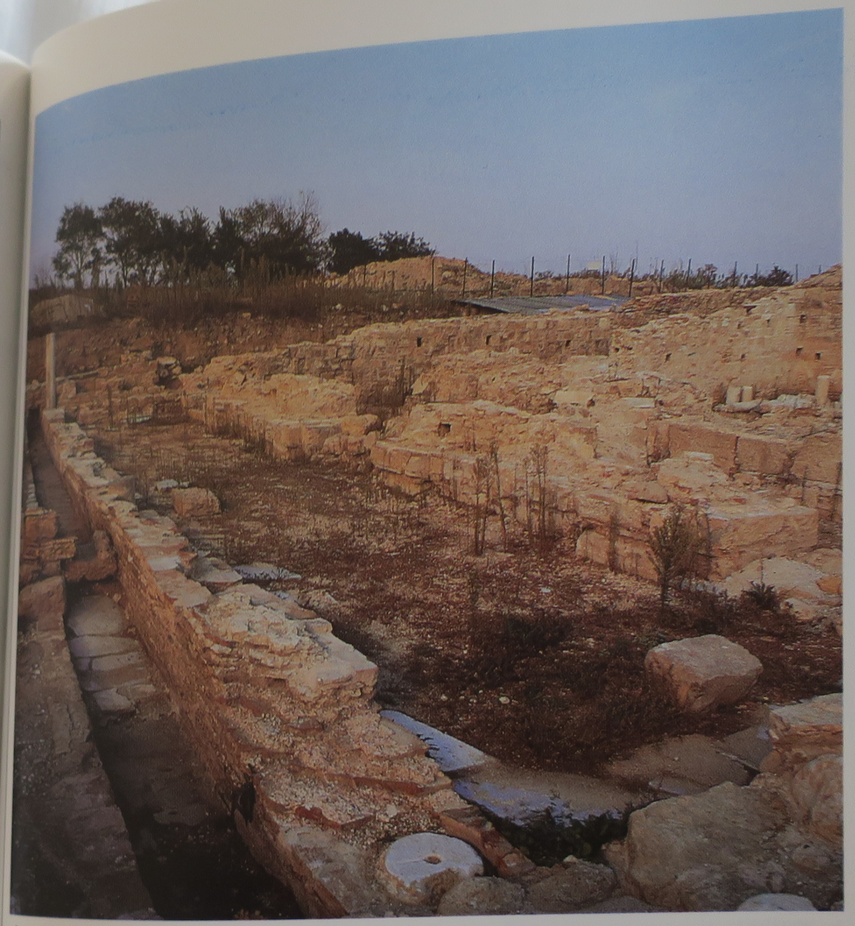
1. Pydna

The ruins of the ancient city of Pydna are located 2 km south of Makrygialos. The locals call the area "old Pydna" or "Palaiokitros". The city which was founded by Archelaus is near Kitros, while its port was situated somewhere near cape Acherada. Extensive excavations have not been carried out in the area, but in 1861 the French archaeologist, Leon Heuzey, discovered a Macedonian tomb, the contents of which are displayed at the Louvre museum. Excavations at the Pydna burial ground began in 1970 and important finds dating from the 5th and 4th century came to light, some of which are exhibited at the museums at Dion and Thessaloniki.

The name of the city, Pydna, or Kydna, as it was sometimes known in ancient times, appears on a coin from the end of the 6th century BC, and it is first mentioned by Thucydides as "Alexander's Pydna" ("Πύδνα ἡ Ἀλεξάνδρου"). The city played an important part during the Peloponnesian war: in 432 BC, it was captured by the Athenians and in 410 BC by the king of Macedonia, Archelaus, who transported its people 20 stadia (approx. 3,700 m) away from the coast. After the death of Archelaus, in 399 BC, the people returned to their homes. During the period between 389–37[illegible] BC, they resumed the issuing of their own coins. In 364 BC, Pydna was once again captured by the Athenians, and in 357 BC by Philip of Macedonia, who thus secured freedom of movement to the South. Pydna now became an administrative centre (seat of the "epistates"), while during the wars of the successors, it witnessed some of the tragic events of the Macedonian dynasty: in 319 BC, after the death of the regent Antipater, his son, Cassander, formed an alliance with Antigonus, Lysimachus and Ptolemy against the new king, Polyperchon, who was the favoured of the queen mother, Olympias. Olympias was unable to save Polyperchon, and took refuge in Pydna where she assassinated her son's half–brother, Philip III of Arrchidaeus, and his wife, Euridice. After a long siege, Pydna fell to Cassander who put Olympias to death.

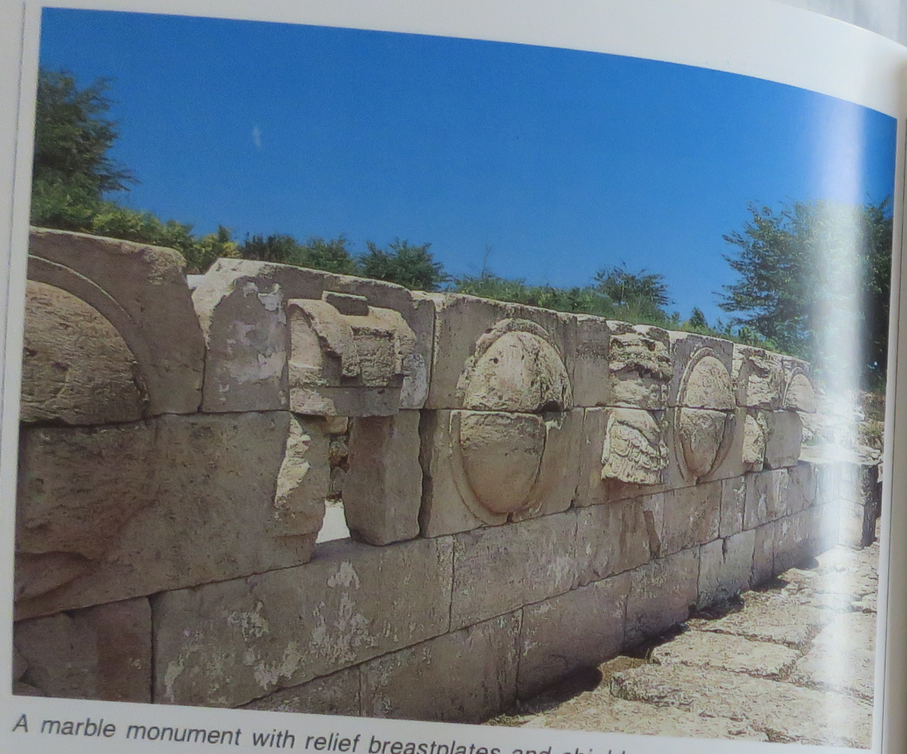
The battle of Pydna

In 168 BC, the area became the site of the last battles between the Romans under Aemilius Paulus and the Macedonians under Perseus



Ancient Pydna

which led to Greece's complete subjugation. The Romans took advantage of Perseus' (179 – 168 BC) indecisiveness and organized their strategy in Greece and the eastern Mediterranean. The Macedonians were left with the king of Odrysson as their only ally, and their well-equipped army of 40,000 foot soldiers and 4,000 cavalry as their only hope. The battle of Pydna was the last confrontation and the final Roman victory in Macedonia. Perseus fled to the island of Samothrace, where he was later captured by deception and adorned Paulus' triumph in Rome.



A marble monument with relief breastplates and shields

2. DION

a) Location

Dion, one of the most important archaeological sites in Macedonia and the whole of Greece, is 15 km south of Katerini, 6 km from the coast of the gulf of Thermaikos, at an altitude of 30 m, and near the present–day village of Dion (pop. 1,149).

b) History

Although Dion was known in the 5th century BC, the actual time of its founding has not been established. Tradition has it, that Dion was built by the people of Perrhaebi in Thessaly, who named it after Zeus (Δία). Its first inhabitants were called "Diestes" or "Diastes".

In mythology, Orpheus is said to have been killed by the Diastes women and, according to Pausanias (9, 30, 7–8), a column was erected at a distance of 20



Dion. The area of the public hot baths

stadia from Dion, on which a stone vessel was placed containing the bones of Orpheus.

The city of Dion flourished during the 5th century BC, i.e. the reign of Archelaus of Macedonia (414-399 BC). It became a centre of culture for Macedonia and later for the rest of Greece.

Archelaus foreseeing that Macedonia would become the ruler of Greece, established Dion as Macedonia's holy city, where the people offered sacrifices to Zeus, the Muses and the other gods. Archelaus graced the city with a stadium, a theatre, temples, statues, imposing walls, and wide streets.

Subsequent kings continued improving the city and holding arts festivals and, therefore, Dion acquired a reputation in Greece equal to that of Olympia and Delphi.

King Philip, after the capture of Olynthus, offered sacrifices and organized popular games at Dion. In 338 BC, Philip and his

son, Alexander, after their victorious battle at Chaeronea, once again offered sacrifices at Dion. After the sacking of Thebes in 335 BC and before his campaign against the Persians, Alexander offered sacrifices to the Olympian Zeus and organized drama games to honour Zeus and the Muses, according to the tradition established by Archelaus. Many dramatists and writers of comedy competed in these events, including Euripides who wrote "Archelaus", in honour of the patron king. The games at Dion were held towards the end of autumn, since the other pan–hellenic games usually took place in spring and summer.

It was at Dion where Lysippus was commissioned to set up his famous bronze statues of the 25 Companion cavalry who fell in the battle of Granicus river. These statues were later moved to Pydna and survived Marcius Philippus' raid (169 BC) and were subsequently taken to Rome by Metellus (148 BC).

According to Polybius, Dion was completely destroyed during the civil war (219–217 BC) between the Macedonian kingdom and the Aetolian League. Two years later, Philip V retaliated by sacking Thermum in Aetolia.

Dion was rebuilt only to be destroyed once again by the Roman consul Philippus and his army in 169 BC. This time it was Perseus who restored the city and hurriedly reconstructed its walls. In 168 BC, with the desolution of the Macedonian state, Dion was plundered by the Romans and those who survived surrendered to the enemy.

Dion enjoyed a period of prosperity during Roman rule. Many Macedonian cities were made Roman colonies with the right to issue their own coins. Augustus was the founder of the mint in Dion according to an inscription found there ("Augustus parens dedit").

During the early Christian era Dion became the seat of the bishop, a view supported by the discovery of two basilicas belonging to the 4th and 5th centuries.

In 395 Alaric's Visigoths raided, plundered and extensively damaged the city and thus put an end to its old glory. Nevertheless, Dion managed to survive and during the Byzantine period became one of the most important cities in Macedonia.

From the 10th century and on, Dion fell into obscurity, while during the 14th century the whole area of Pieria suffered successive enemy invasions and civil war.

In 1308, 5,000 Catalans and 3,000 Turks who had been driven out of Thrace looted Pieria.

There followed the hardships of the Byzantine civil war (1342–1346) and its final destruction at the end of the century, when Macedonia was occupied by the Turks –only the ruins of the ancient stadium survived and that area of the ancient city became known as Stadia.

In the 18th century people from Olympus founded a small community which they named Stadia and which the Turks destroyed in the early 19th century. The villages of Malathria and Karitsa were later built on either side of it.



Statue from the temple of Isis

c. Archaeological excavations

In 1806, the ruins of the ancient city of Dion were identified by the English colonel Leake and confirmed by the French archaeologist L. Heuzey in 1855 and 1856. This was a time when the looting of antiquities was rampant and the increase in population of the nearby villages (Malathria and Karitsa) resulted in the stones from the ruins of Dion being used as building material.

After the liberation of Macedonia in 1912, the French archaeologist A. Plassart and Gustave Blum working together with the ephor of antinquities of Macedonia, George Economou, collected, classified and recorded a great number of inscriptions.

Systematic excavations in the area began in 1928, for a period of 3 years, by G. Soteriadis, an academician and professor at the University of Thessaloniki, and funded by the university, the Archaeological Society, and Alexios Mitsotakis. It was during these excavations that the city walls were discovered (enclosing an area of 350–400 stremmas). Below the walls there was a trench flooded by the waters from



Dion. Mosaic floor from the public baths

the nearby streams of Mt. Olympus. Near the present–day chapel of "Agiasma tis Aghias Paraskevis" (Aghia Paraskevi's holy water) survive the ruins of a drainage system of the period of great importance since it was to make the nearby river Vaphiras navigable.

Leake had identified the actual site of the ancient theatre enabling professor Soteriadis to confirm the location of the stands buried under a crescent shape mound of earth. The ephor of antiquities, Ch. Makaronas, as well as the professor of archaeology, G. Bakalakis support the view that the temple of Zeus as well as all the other temples of Dion must have been located outside the city boundaries.

Roman inscriptions were found 100 m from the theatre and were transferred to the Archaeological Museum of Thessaloniki. During the same year, three flagstone–paved streets were unearthed

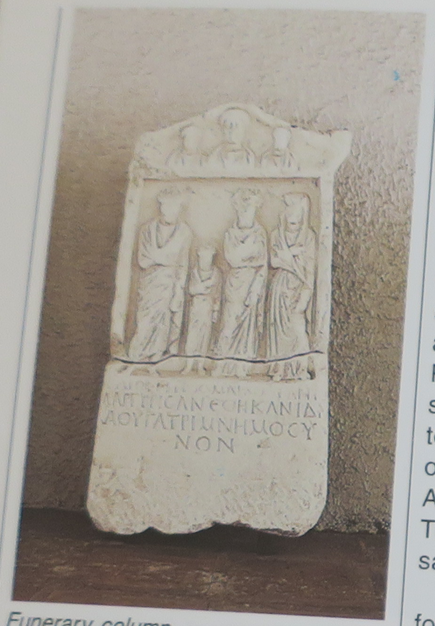


Mosaic floor from the group of buildings on the east side of the ancient city

(2.5–5.6 m wide), an early Christian basilica, two sculptures of the hellenistic period, and many brick tiles bearing the name "Dion".

After the excavations of 1929, professor Soteriadis concluded that the top stratum of the city belonged to the Roman period. A number of finds, all Roman, came to light such as ruins of buildings, street drainage, as well as pieces of a sarcophagus adorned with a hunting scene, an arched building which was part of an aqueduct, a marble head representing emperor Severus, and the base of a statue of emperor Tiberius, bearing a Latin inscription. Floor mosaics in geometrical patterns were also discovered, as well as coins of the Macedonian era (4th century BC), baths (the name of the builder "Neikopolianos" appears on the pipes), and a large, plundered, Macedonian tomb outside the city.

In 1930, a tomb was unearthed outside the city walls,



Funerary column

facing Mt. Olympus. It was constructed out of stone in the shape of a small temple with an antechamber and a main chamber. It belongs to the hellenistic period (300 BC) and was plundered during the early years of the Christian era.

During the 1931 excavations a small bronze statue of "Κερδώος" Hermes (god of merchants) was discovered together with a number of Roman buildings, most probably erected over the ruins of earlier Macedonian structures. Professor Soteriadis concluded that the best part of the city lay outside its walls, near Agione and the river Vaphyras. During the same year a local museum was founded by the Ministry of Education to house some of the finds which included small statues, tomb inscriptions, reliefs, and various vessels mainly of the Roman period. A beautiful tomb sculpture of the 5th century BC together with two marble heads of youths were taken to the Archaeological Museum of Thessaloniki for better safekeeping.

All excavation work ceased for 33 years until 1964 when it was resumed by professor G. Bakalakis for only one month. This brought to light parts of the outer fortifications, tombs and coins of the period (4th century BC to 4th century AD), the stage of the theatre, and the Odeum across from it and near the river Vaphyras.

In 1973 began the third phase of excavation work under the direction of Demetrios Pantermalis, professor of classical archaeology. Among the abundance of finds were sacred sanctuaries, the Greek and Roman theatre, the stadium discovered outside the city walls; all of which prove that Dion was a holy city, not only of local



During the summer months plays are staged at the ancient theatre of Dion.





Gravestone of a young girl

religious importance, but of panhellenic significance.

Thousands of pilgrims deposited votive offerings in the sanctuaries. In the temple of Dion inscriptions were placed, relating to the important matters of state such as treaties, alliances, voting results, district boundaries, etc., informing pilgrims from all parts of Macedonia on the latest developments.

Excavations brought to light two of the oldest small temples in the "Megaria" style containing various votive offerings of the classical period. It is almost certain that Demeter, the goddess of fertility, was worshipped in these temples, as shown on an inscription bearing her name and numerous sculptures found in buildings of the hellenistic period depicting the deity, as well as a series o statues representing other go such as Asclepius and his lar family. On the bases of these sculptures appear the names Asclepius' children, Machaon, Podalirius, Hygeia and Panac a.

A number of sculptures, incriptions, as well as the bas of the statue of king Cassand were found near the theatre a in the temple of Dionysus.

The 1978 excavations unearthed the temple of Isis, a Egyptian deity, imported to Dio by Ptolemy, containing numerous votive offerings. Despite the difficulties encountered during this excavation, because the floors of the buildings were located two meters below the water level, the finds proved unexpectedly rich: two votive statues and a bust were found on the steps of the temple between the columns and near the altar. The worship of Isis in the temple took the place of the worship of Artemis. In a smaller temple the goddess Aphrodite "Υπολυμπιδία" (under Mt. Olympus) was worshipped. Demetrios Pantermalis, professor of archaeology at the Aristoteleion University of Thessaloniki during the 9th Conference of Archaeologists (8.2.96) announced that during the latest excavations the stadium at Dion was discovered, bringing to light



The statue of Aphrodite "Hypolympidias"



The small theatre near the public baths

many 4th century BC finds, where the Olympia games of Macedonia were most probably held. Further excavations under the Roman ruins revealed a large group of buildings dating back to the hellenistic times. At the temple of the Olympian Zeus, an important sanctuary due to its direct relevance to the history of Macedonia, an inscription/royal communication by Antigonus was discovered.

It is worth noting that as part of the archaeological project at Dion, a computer lab has been installed, which not only records the topographical distribution of the finds, but will furnish the archaeologists with a complete picture of the site based on available data and computer projection. "The computer rotates the images of the buildings, presenting an overall view and a sense of the interior", professor Pantermalis stressed.

The city of Dion was built north of Pimpleia, at the foot of the east side of Mt. Olympus, between the present–day villages of Malathria and Karitsa, on a site rich in spring water from an underground river. The river has its source on the side of Mt. Olympus and makes its way to the foot of the mountain, down a steep ravine where it disappears underground for 3 km to surface near the ruins of Dion. Known in antiquity as the river Helicon, its present–day name is Ourlias (ουρλιάζω=howl) because of the sound of its torrential waters which resemble the howling of beasts. The part of the river from Dion to its mouth at the gulf of Thermaikos is called Vaphyras or Chelopotamos (χέλι=eel, due to the abundance of eels).

Although the ruins of the ancient city are located at a distance of 6 km off the coast, Strabo places the city only 7 stadia (1.5 km) from the sea.

The century–old acorn trees on the archaeological site are often struck by lightning during the violent summer thunderstorms. The lightning–struck trunks of these huge trees were taken as a divine sign in chosing the location of the sanctuary and the ancient city in the shadow of imposing Mt. Olympus.

The fortification of the city mainly consisted of a wall in the shape of a trapezium, enclosing an area of 400 stremmas. Dion had a perfect city plan based on two intersecting main thoroughfares. People made their way to the numerous public buildings, stores and workshops through a network of flagstone–paved streets (2–10 m wide). Research has shown that political life in Dion was centred near the sanctuaries in the south. Changes in the plan of Dion during the Roman period were very few, if any.



Mosaic floor from the baths area

Special care was taken in the provision of water in the city. Water was conveyed from the springs to the reservoirs through a perfect system of distribution consisting of stone–built or lead pipes. Equally thought out was the sewage system where drain pipes from the various buildings ran into the main sewer underneath the flagstone streets.

d. Places of Interest

The most impressive part of the area excavated is the entrance to the archaeological site at Dion at Agioneri. The main thoroughfare (670 m long) starts from the walls and crosses the city from north to south. It is paved with flagstones and dates back to the initial 4th century BC city plan. The large flagstones are of clastic conglomerate nature, and were laid down during the Roman period and bear the traces of cartwheels.

On the left side of the road, at its south extremity, excavations revealed stores, warehouses and workshops of the 2nd and 3rd century BC, as well as a marble monument carved with relief representations of breast–plates and shields possibly from the hellenistic period.

The first building block contained luxurious homes and public buildings in which floor mosaics, a fountain, a storeroom and a well were found. A side street at right angle to Mt. Olympus led to the facade of e building which collapsed in ar earthquake. A propylium at th side of this road leads to the atrium of the main early Chris n basilica in Dion (Basilica A), decorated with mosaics, marb reliefs, and rare wall–paintings. A metre and a half under the floor of the church lie the mosaics of an earlier three–aisled basilica. Basilica A features a number of peculiarities worth mentioning; such as a semi–circular apse externally resting on two "shoulders" and supported by three buttresses, while the twin colonnades which separated the aisles are not encountered in other basilicas of the period (4th–5th century).

The fortification walls (end of 4th century BC) of Dion extend 2,700 m and contain gates and square towers.

Another early Christian basilica (Basilica B) was found in 1981 in the area of a later cemetery, outside the south walls, where a large tomb was discovered underneath its floor.

To the south–east of Basilica A (south end of the ancient city) the public baths or thermes, which were built during the Severus years, were located. They were divided into cold, tepid and hot baths and included



Part of the main thoroughfare in front of the shops

recreation areas.

The baths comprised a large group of buildings with its front court facing east. The floors were paved with marble and mosaics. Next to the marble built–in basins of the hot baths area there is a striking floor mosaic depicting scenes of marine life.

In the north wing of the baths the marble sculptures of Asclepius were found as well as of his sons, Machaon and Podalirius and of his daughters Hygeia and Panaceia. On the west side centre of the court a single chamber structure was unearthed where part of a wall-painting survives in imitation of multi–coloured rivetments. Fragments of sculptures were found on a semi–circular pedestal in the back of the chamber.

The baths were connected to a small wooden–roofed theatre where musical events were held. The sanctuary of Isis (or Iseio), consisting of three temples, is located outside the south–east



The church of Aghia Paraskevi in Dion

corner of the walls. In addition to the monumental size of the main temple, stand impressive copies of statues where the originals were found. These originals are exhibited at the Archaeological Museum. The goddess Isis "Lochia" was worshipped in the main temple, while Isis "Tyche" was worshipped in the three-nave temple, where her statue was discovered under its floor. An oblong ceremonial basin with curved ends was also found. Two rooms, divided by a single wall from the north part of the temple, were obviously used as servants quarters.

The goddess Aphrodite "Υπολυμπιδία" (under Mt. Olympus) was worshipped in the third temple, left of the temple of Isis "Lochia". The sanctuary of Isis together with the other buildings in the area (inscriptions found refer to additional buildings which are the object of further excavations) were constructed during the period of Roman rule. This was also the place of worship of the birth–goddess Artemis "Ειλείθυια" during the Hellenistic period.

The oldest known sanctuary is that of Demeter, located near the walls south–east of Agioneri. It consists of two Megarian–style temples (500 BC) with porch and chamber, containing sculptures, clay figurines, oil lamps, pottery, glass beads, etc.

South of this sanctuary is the altar of Asclepius where sculptures, inscriptions, and various small objects were found. The sanctuary of Dionysus is located near the theatre.

The theatre of Dion is of the hellenstic period (Philip V), the only theatre whose seats were made out of large bricks built on a landfill. An underground passage along the orchestra stand was used by the actors when portraying characters from the underworld.

The 2nd century Roman theatre of Dion was built to complement or replace the Hellenistic theatre.

The Macedonian tomb at Dion is one of four that have been excavated. It is a large underground construction with a Doric facade, decorated with reliefs, metopes, pediment, an Ionian antechamber, which leads through a marble door to an arch–covered burial chamber containing a marble bed.

Imperial portraits and funerary columns of Roman military men

Two portrait heads of Septemus Severus were found at Dion; one with the countenance of Sarapis and the other facing slightly to the left. Among the funerary columns of Roman military men found at Dion, the relief depicting Picenes is worth mentioning. Picenes who was a Roman "signifer" (flagbearer), became an "aedilis" (overseer of the market), and later reached the highest position in the Roman colony of Dion. Apart from his rank, the relief also shows his weapons and decorations.

Archaeological Site
Tel.: (0351) 53206.

e. The Archaeological Museum of Dion

The museum is housed in a newly constructed building located in the village, near the church. It was founded in 1931 and has been in operation since 1964. Archaeological finds from the excavations in the area (5th century BC–5th century AD) are exhibited on the ground floor and first floor of the building.

The ground floor exhibits are: the statues of Asclepius and his children, the statues of Isis "Tyche" and Aphrodite, clay figures from the temple of Demeter, the ivory heads from



Podalirius. A sculpture found in the north wing of the public baths.

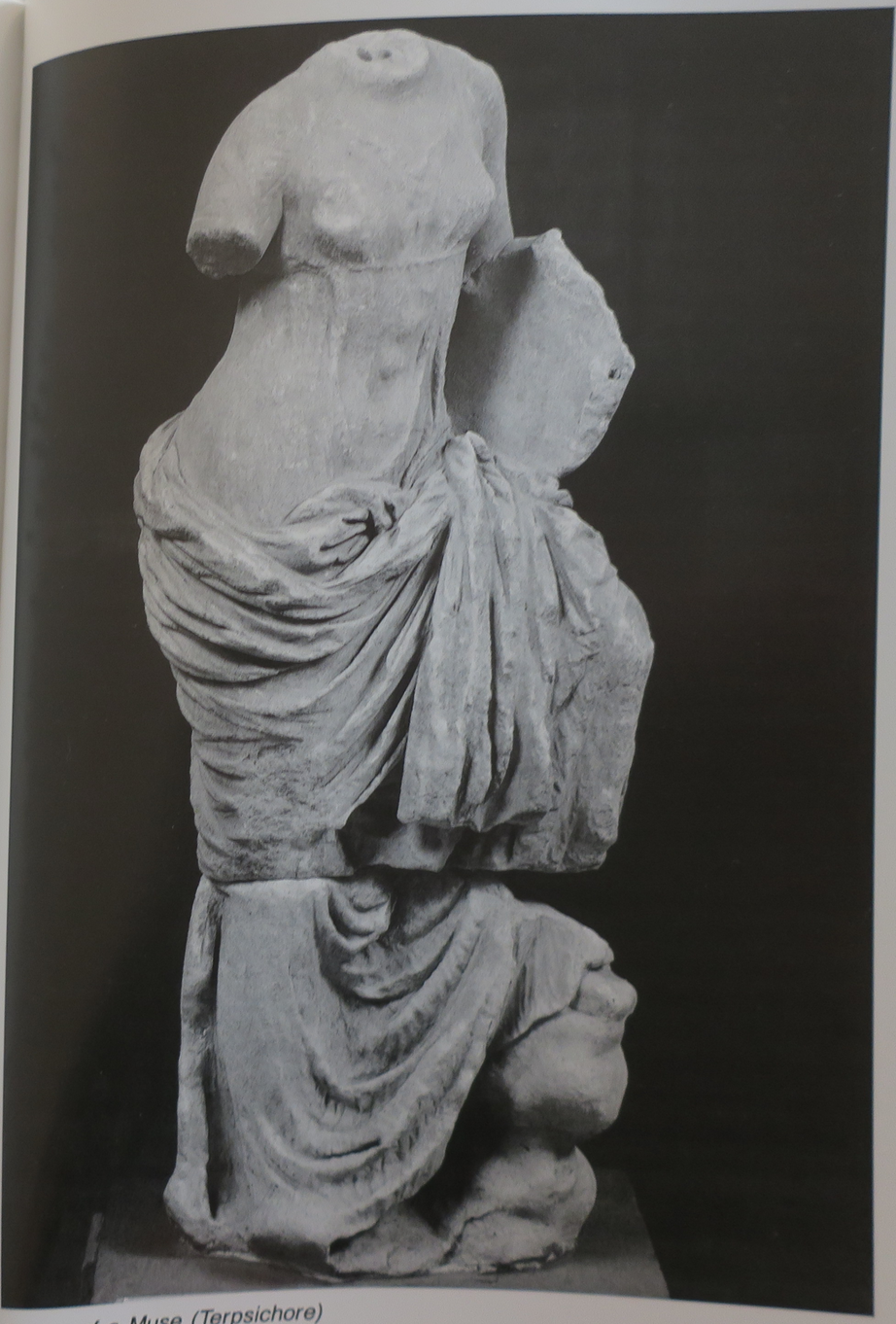
the decorations in the Macedonian tomb, sculptures from the public baths, items found in the early Christian basilicas, stone objects and coins.

On the first floor are displayed the gold ivy wreath (4th century BC), the Attic red-figured pottery from the Pydna burial ground, the 4th century BC marble relief column depicting a mother and child, the bronze statuette of a Kouros, a relief depicting agricultural life, the five statues of the seated philosophers, ceramic objects from the burial ground at Olympus, funerary columns, small objects from the Retina sanctuary and, finally, items of daily use from the city of Dion.

Museum opening hours:
Monday: 12.30´ – 19.00´,
Tuesday – Friday:
08.00´ – 19.00´,
Saturday & Sunday:
08.30´ – 15.00´.

Getting There:

Train and coach services to the prefecture of Pieria are available from Athens and from Thessaloniki (KTEL coaches, tel. 01/83.17.059, Trains, tel. 01/52.40.646) and from Thessaloniki (KTEL coaches, 031/579.101, Trains, tel. 031/517.517).



Statue of a Muse (Terpsichore)

The theatre at Dion →





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Dion

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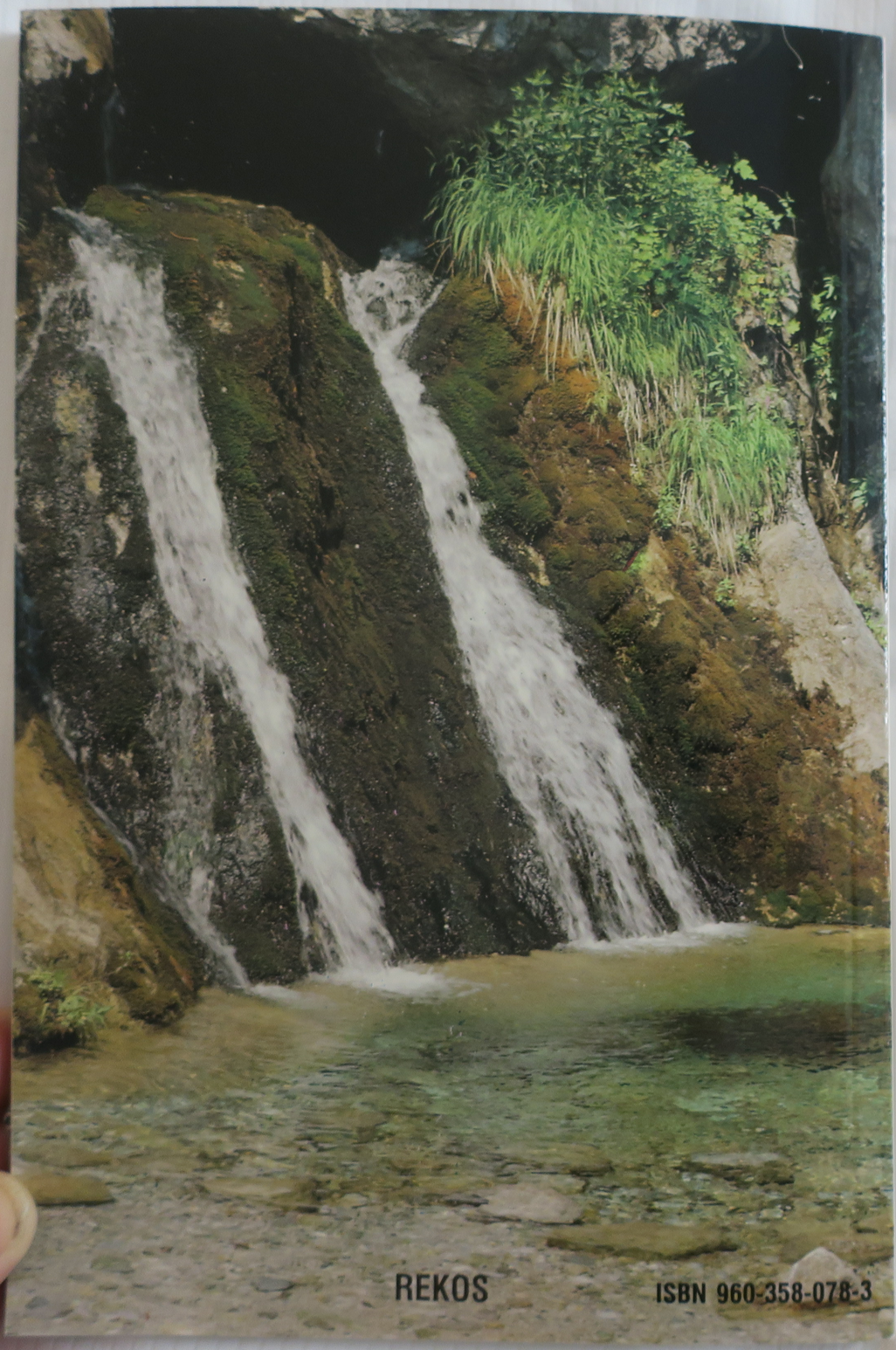
Monastery of Aghios Dionysios	81220
Camping Site at Mt. Olympus	91263



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ISBN 960-358-078-3