

Castles and fortresses in Prefecture of Preveza

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Abstract

In the Prefecture of Preveza the castles preserved in prominent locations. The castles were defensive fortifications and were built in suitable natural environment for the purpose of keeping the crossings and roads from antiquity to the Ottoman period.

Other castles, most of which are still visible today, are coastal and others are inland, but others were built from the Mycenaean period to late antiquity and others from the late Byzantine era to the Ottoman times.

Regardless of the date, the purpose was always the same: defense and protection from invasion, guarding key land and sea routes and trade development.

Many castles can be exploited to serve tourism development networks and environmental recovery of the beautiful landscape. The natural landscape and castles combine mountain and sea, and of course many forms of alternative tourism.

Keywords: castles, fortification, roads, tourist destinations, cultural management, protection, environment, network.

1. Introduction

The Prefecture of Preveza covers an area of unique natural environment (mountains, plains, rivers, beaches, Amvrakikos Gulf). Since ancient times this area was located in key geographical position on the trading ways. This area was in the crossroads of commercial activities since Bronze Age. In this part of the continent Mycenaeans came as settlers and founded the Mycenaean Efyra and Eleans (from Ilia). A race from Thesprotia (Kassopaioi) came here and founded Kassopea. In addition at this part of Greece archaeological sites have been identified of Stone Age on the Louros River and the caves of Kokkinopilos and Asprochaliko. The fertile land had become from early an installation site. the fortified settlements from Efyra to Ali Pasha visible signs of continuous habitation.

Separation according to the time of construction of the fortification

The castles (a quick separation) are divided into two periods: from the Mycenaean period to Late Antiquity (Early Christian times) and from the Byzantine era until the Ottoman conquest. Of course there are castles with more chronological periods, like Bouchetio (ancient times) that became Kastro Rogon (Byzantine period)



Fig. 1. Map of Preveza, <http://tropos11.blogspot.gr/>

2. Fortifications in Prefecture of Preveza

In Preveza there are two fortification networks:

2.a. From Mycenaean period to the early Christian times

This network consists of many different fortifications:

- The oldest fortification belongs to the last period of the Mycenaean era, it is **Efyra** in Mesopotamia, close to famous Nekromanteio. Near the mouth of the Acheron there was another great prehistoric city Efyra, founded by Efyra descendant of Thesprotia. This place The king of this city t Pheidon came to Ulysses to buy poison to put in arrows. Udyssesus visited this place (Homer).

Near Efyra there was another archaeological site known as Nekromanteio where people communicated with the souls of the dead. There was also the kingdom of Hades that had cities in Acherousia lake



Fig. 2. Nekromanteio, https://kontrastokyma.blogspot.gr/2014/06/blogpost_30.html

-The fortified position of Kassopi, which controlled the wider hinterland. A race of Thesprotians settled in Kassopi and gave the name to the city. They fortified the naturally protected location with strong stonework near Zalogo to protect the wider region, especially from the Ilia colonies and others.



Fig. 3. Kassopi, <https://el.wikipedia.org/>



Fig. 4. Kassopi: theatre, odeio, katagogio, agora (shopping), Prytanio, houses

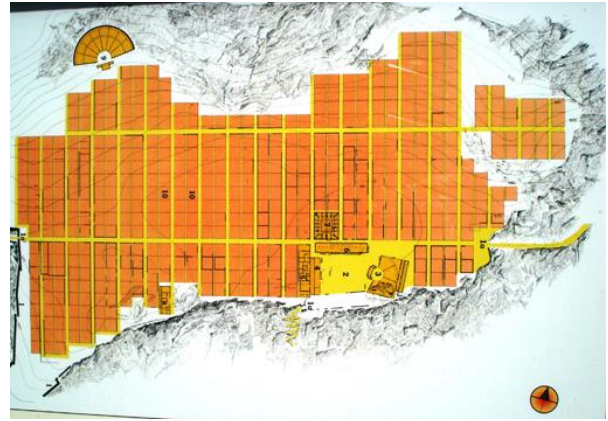


Fig. 5, Kassopi, [http:// www. http://ipiros.gr/](http://www.http://ipiros.gr/)

In the Prefecture of Preveza there were four Ilia colonies and of course many fortifications. These were as follows:

- Elatria (near the village of Oropos), with polygonal stonework system for the most of its part.



Fig. 6. Elatria. <https://el.wikipedia.org>

- "Kastri" in the region of Thesprotiko (Rizobouni) is considered the ancient Vaties. This was a fortification that was surrounded by a polygonal wall



Fig. 6. Rizobouni, ancient Batie, <https://el.wikipedia.org/>

- Ancient Bouchetion, which, according to the scholars, became the castle Rogon in Byzantine period (this place is connected to the Louros river which was navigable to this point) and



Fig. 7 Bouchetio-Kastro Rogon

- Pandosia is according to most scholars Kastro in the region of Fanari and was the most important city of Ilia settlers. It was fortified at the top and the southwest side of the hill to the foot. In Roman times was an important settlement. Many scholars believe that the inhabitants of the old Euroia (that was a settlement in Gluki in the region of Thesprotia, near the river Acheron) moved to this settlement.



Fig. 8. Pandosia – Kastro Fanari, <http://mygreekhistory.blogspot.gr/>

Of course besides the Ilia colonies and Kassopi there were other fortified settlements of earlier times, such as Trikastro in region of Louro, near the sources of Acheron river and other small beacons and fortifications for protection and defense needs against the invaders.



Fig. 9, Trikastro,

<https://el.wikipedia.org/>

The acropolis of Trikastro, with polygonal cyclopean walls, which perhaps was built in the helenistic period (or earlier pre-classical period). Just at the top of the hill stands the Church of his Prophet Elias (1813). The place was very important for the internal control road. Perhaps it is a creation of the times of King Pyrrhus of Mollosion. Various forts were created during this period in order to protect the mainland.

- Orraon is another fortified ancient site that was founded in the 4th century BC in a strategic position (hill) near Ancient Ambracia. The citadel is fortified with strong double wall and enhanced with square towers.



Fig. 10. Orraon, <http://www.huffingtonpost.gr>

- In this category also belongs the Nikoplis, the city of the Augustan Victory. There were Roman walls and the walls of the early Christian era. Justinian repaired these fortifications in order to protect the inhabitants from enemy attacks.

The next period was the time of "barbaric" invasion as it widely known. The Roman empire was then mutated in Byzantine. The new capital was Constantinople and a new era started.

2b) The second network includes fortified positions from the Byzantine to the Ottoman period.

Older fortified positions or new settlement are dated In Byzantine times, like:

- Except for Nikopolis (fortifications in the early Christian era) was possibly Pandosia, (Euroia?), Kastri-ancient Vatie and Castle of Rogon - ancient Vouchetio.



Fig. 11. Castle of Rogon, <http://www.kastra.eu/>

- In the Byzantine period there was the castle of Riniassa or Thomokastro. It was probably built during the reign of despotate (by Thomas) and conquered by the Byzantines, Serbs and Albanians.

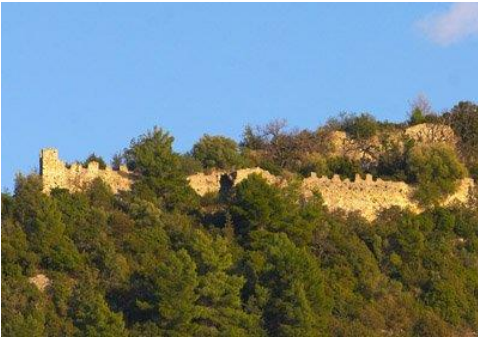


Fig. 12. Castle of Riniasa or Thomokastro, <http://cultureportalweb.uoi.gr/>

There are also castle that were built in byzantine era but they were repaired in Ottoman period. Their current form is a creation closed to the Ottoman and the Venetian stage but it is not easily distinguished.

-One of the most famous fort that belongs to the last byzantine period and ottoman era is the Castle of Parga. The castle was built in the end of the 14th century. The castle was destroyed and rebuilt several times whenever it was occupied by a new conqueror. What remains today is the fortress built by the Venetians in the 16th century, with changes and additions made by Ali Pasha



Fig. 13. Castle of Parga, <http://www.kastra.eu/>



Fig. 14. Castle of Parga, <http://www.kastra.eu/>

- There were many fortifications such as Castle of Agia or Anthousa (1814 was built by Ali Pasa) and Castle of Pente Pigadia that was built in 19th century.



Fig. 15. Castle of Agia or Anthousa, <http://www.kastra.eu/>



Fig. 16, Castle of Pente Pigadia in Kleisoura, <http://www.ethnos.gr/ipeiros>

- The castles in the city of Preveza are a network of fortifications in Ottoman period, too. The Castle of St Andrew, Castle of St George, Castle of Pantokratora, and Bastion of Vrisoula are until now important monument in significant points in the city. Some of these castles have strong Venetian presence while their current form is attributed to Ali Pasha



Fig. 17. Castle of Saint Andrea, <http://www.kastra.eu/>

The castle of St. Andrew is one of the three castles of Preveza and it is located on the north side of the city. All the castles in Preveza were built by Ottoman and Enetoi.

At first, they fortified the area of Bouka, near the region of Kiani Akti. This castle was occupied by Morosini in 1684.

After 1701 the Ottoman originally started building the castle of St. Andrew, which the Venetians continued. The French defeat by Ali Pasha shortly after the conquest of Preveza and Ali created his own defensive system and strengthened the castle of St. Andrew.

-The castle of St. George is, one of the three castles of Preveza and one of the castles that were built by Ali Pasha after the conquest of the city in 1807. Located at the southern entrance of the city retains almost intact the fortified precincts of the inclined outer wall.



Fig. 18. Castle of Sant George, <http://www.kastra.eu>

-The castle of Pantokratora whose the main part of the fort stands at almost regular pentagon with high walls and surrounded by bastion, this castle is connected with Ali Pasha, too.

3. Protection of archaeological heritage, tourist promotion and environmental development

The Prefecture of Preveza is a region with a rich cultural heritage and scattered antiquities all over it. The fortified settlements from ancient times to Ottoman period reveal not only the continuous occupation of space but also the network of community of each period of history.

The fortification shows a general way of life in the past. Its conservation requires maintenance while infrastructure must be accessible to visitors. The navigation routes and the creation of a network of fortified settlements will help to protect them as they will be maintenance and rescue operations and the navigation routes will contribute to tourism development in the region and increase revenue by imposing admission fee.

Tourist groups will visit the fortifications and the region of Preveza. Local society in cooperation with the archaeological department can carry out events within the fortifications, such as music festivals, hiking etc. Tourism development will benefit the whole society, such as restaurants, hotels, cafes etc. It will also help the development of tourism in remote areas, such as Trikastro and alternative forms of tourism, such as natural navigation routes, cycling tours, walks etc. Of course in this design, there must be special care for people with special needs and skills.

A SWOT analysis shows the way of tourist development:

Strengths:

1. The location and the stunning scenery of Preveza castles overlooking the sea (Pantocrator, St. George, St. Andreas, Parga Agia-Anthousa) or the mountainous landscape (Trikastro, Five Wells).
2. Their history and their architecture.
3. The connection to ancient Greece (Bouchetion-Rogon Castle, Ancient Vati-Rizovouni)
4. The use as spaces for other activities, eg cultural events, theatrical performances, musical performances, etc.

Weaknesses:

1. The current state.
2. Not using reused

3. No public service areas such as navigation routes and hygiene or refreshment areas
4. Roads and parking areas adjacent to these castles

Opportunities:

1. The new road network that soon one arrives at Preveza and therefore the increase in tourism
2. Increase quality tourism with the use of archaeological monuments such as castles
3. The castles in the center of Preveza in their current form is the Ottoman period and are examples of the architecture of this period.

Threats:

1. The premises abandonment image
3. The inability to service tourists

4. Conclusions

The tourism development will contribute to local economic growth. The creation of an organized network of fortified settlements, such as the connection of Ilia colonies, the creation of a link between the Ottoman castles will create organized archaeological sites to the public service capabilities and provide resources for the preservation of monuments. Further it will improve the local community, develop alternative tourism (all the castles are located in areas of natural beauty) and extend the tourist season to Preveza (now only the summer months).



Fig. 19, Castle Pantokratpra, <http://www.kastra.eu>

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