

Fortified Settlements during the Ottoman Conquest in Thesprotia

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Abstract

The area of the prefecture of Thesprotia was conquered by the Ottomans before Constantinople and the final decline of Byzantium. There are fortified sites built after the Ottoman conquest in accordance with the new techniques and requirements of the era. There are also fortified places that were walled in antiquity and continued to be inhabited throughout the Ottoman period. The choice of location had, among other reasons, natural causes such as physical protection, proximity to a river and the relationship of the settlement with the surrounding area. The aim of the work is to present the Ottoman fortifications of Thesprotia (for example: the castle of Margariti, the castle of Igoumenitsa, the castle of Paramythia and the fortified site of O(ou)sdina in Thesprotia and their relation to the natural environment as well as the possibility of a good tourist promotion

Keywords: Acherontas and Kalamas River, mountainous landscape, fortifications - castles, Ottomans, tourist promotion.

1. Introduction

This article refers to the fortified settlements which had a particular development at the time that Thesprotia was conquered by the Ottomans and their relation to the natural environment as well as the possibility of a good tourist promotion.

In Thesprotia there were mainly post-Byzantine and either followed the previous tradition, such as Osdina, or were built from the beginning like the castle of Margariti. Also, there were fortified settlements with long-lasting habitation since the past years, such as the settlements of Doliani and Paramythia. The castles are located in a unique natural environment and are surrounded by trees. There could be a tourist projection of all these castles with the creation of a network of cuarchaeological monuments and naturistic routes. Castles can be ideal places for walks and can become places where the natural and ltural environment are connected.

2. Castles in Thesprotia (Ottoman period)

2.1. General information about castles

The castle of Koutsi-Polyneri, the castle of Parga, which today does not belong to the Thesprotia, the Castle of Margariti, the Castle of Paramythia, the fortified Dolyani, the fortified place of the Saint Donato Zevrochori, the Castle of Igoumenitsa , the fortresses in Sagiada and Strovili, the fortification around the Tower of Ragi, the fortifications in the mountains of Tsamanda

and the fortified settlement in Osdina are the network of Ottoman fortifications in Thesprotia.

Important Ottoman elements in Thesprotia are also preserved in Liopsi, Margariti, Katavothra etc: towers, minarets etc. (Saltagianni 2008).

2.2. The most well-known fortified places of the Ottoman period

-Castle of Paramythia:The castle of Paramythia, which was probably built by Justinian for the protection of the inhabitants of roman Fotiki. The settlement reconstructed existing fortifications from the Hellenistic period. This castle played an important role when Epirus was an independent country and was known as the Despotate of the Epirus. Many repairs were made to the castle during the Ottoman period that began in 1449 until 1913. Evlia Tselempi describes it, as well as the city that was under the castle. (Papadopoulou 2008, Aravantinos 1984, Krapsitis 1991, Papadopoulou 2010).

- Fortified settlement in Ouzdina or Osdina in Thesprotia: It is located near the current village of "Pente Ekklisies", close to the river Kalamas. The settlement was known as Osdine, Paliosdine or Paliohora. The position was first fortified in the Hellenistic period and was inhabited in the middle Byzantine periodas a fortified position for the protection of the inhabitants from the Slavic penetrations and the invasions of various peoples. The walls were therefore repaired. The position was developed because it was safe and at a focal point of communication (Mitselos 1989, Papadopoulou 2014).

- Fortified Doliani: Doliani was a fortified settlement since the classic-hellenistic period. The findings that have been found show a timeless habitation in that particular location at a focal point of communication while controlling a fertile valley. The settlement Dulyani appeared in an Ottoman catalog of 1431. The settlement consisted of a small number houses. There is a building with pillars and arches that, according to Dakaris, is an Ottoman mosque (Kanta-Kistou & Lamprou, 2008, Kanta-Kitsou 2009, Dakaris 1971).



Figure 1. Castle of Paramythia,
File: E.Saltagianni



Figure 2. Ntoliani,
File:https://www.google.com/
place

- Tower of Ragi: This settlement is part of the old fortifications of Lygia, probably of ancient Toroni. The Tower, which belongs to the architectural type of the

tower-houses and specifically to the type of Koulia, dominated and supervised the surrounding area. It was the house of the lord (aga) of the region. (Kanta-Kitsou 2009).

-Castle of Igoumenitsa The castle of Igoumenitsa is located at the top of the hill of the city, where today there is a forest. This settlement is a significant position of control of the road and sea road network. The Venetians gained and acquired lands belonging to the Ottomans, such as the Peloponnese, Lefkada, Preveza, Igoumenitsa and areas on the Dalmatian coast during the sixth Venetian-Turkish war from 1684-1699. The war ended with an agreement between the Venetians and the Ottomans. The Ottomans took back the castle of Igoumenitsa. The Venetian Morozini blew up the castle. In 1798 Ali Pasha conquered the area and fortified it again (Kanta-Kitsou 2009).

-Castle of Margariti: Margariti developed after the decline of Mazaraki and Koutsis. There are references and descriptions of this village that show a small city with Ottoman architecture elements. E. Çelebi in 1670 mentioned the existence of mosques and no churches in the area of Margariti with Albanian population. The wider area of Margariti to the Phanari was run by Albanian lords who came in contact with the Venetians who owned Parga. In 1549 it was fortified by Vajazet Arzuoglu (Scuroglii). In December 1571 the Venetians destroyed the castle while in 1573 they conceded it to the Ottomans by agreement. The fortress with an irregular polygonal shape developed to two internal courtyards. Outside the north side stands a quadrangular bastion with a height of 2m. and on the southwest corner of the fort lies the second bastion. This fort was probably built on a pre-existing fortress or was chosen for its prominent position and in the middle of the 17th or the beginning of the 18th century repairs and reconstructions took place (Saltagianni 2008).

Χάρτης 7: Οθωμανική περίοδο έως τέλος 17ου αι.

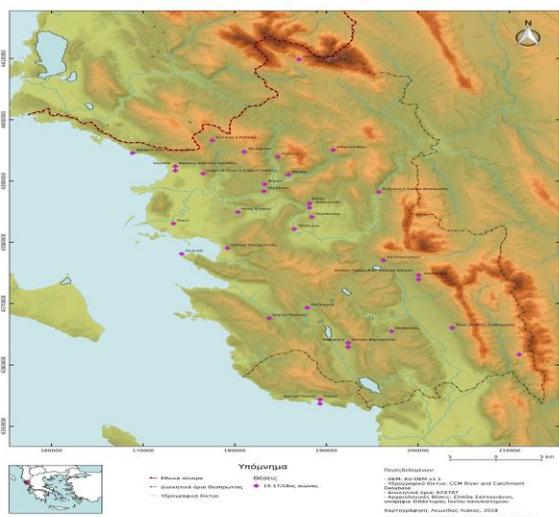


Figure 3. Map of fortified sites in Ottoman period, File:Map-Saltagianni E., Liakos L.

3. Natural environment, monuments and tourism development

The fortified settlements and castles are a distinct cultural and natural environment. Natural elements and human works are in interaction and have created a

historical and cultural tradition in the region, which should be emerged and preserved for future generations. At the same time, tourist activity in the region can be a lever of growth. These monuments can create an alternative tourism and tourism development. It is necessary that a network of fortifications of the Ottoman period to be promoted.

Specialized studies should be made to promote tourism development through the promotion and protection of environment. It is necessary to inform public opinion about the importance of the natural and cultural environment and the necessity of their protection and their emergence (Golfi et. all 1993).

All this will create immediately:

- Protection of the natural and cultural environment.
- Increasing employment in the tourism sector and activities directly dependent on it.
- The monuments are close to rivers and mountainous landscape,. Specifically, the fortified settlements are close to the Acherontas and Kalamas rivers. These rivers are suitable for tourist promotion and recreation.
- Increase of individual and regional income. (Golfi et all 1993).
- Increase population in the village that there are monuments and unique natural environment.

4. Conclusions

The environmental and cultural dimension of tourism will contribute to the development of the local economy and the protection of nature and its monuments.

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