



## Visitors Attractions

ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITES. MONUMENTS. MUSEUMS

GREECE



ARTA

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# INTRO DUCTION

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*Arta has a history of 2700 years.  
The visitors, will discover that the  
ancient and the modern history  
of the city are a continuous whole  
and not two irrelevant with each  
other time periods.*

The main links to the historical tradition of Arta are the Byzantine castle and the famous Bridge of Arta. Their construction – or at least the first attempts of construction – started in ancient Amvracia.

Through the years and with the help of the technological development, the Byzantines constructed an impenetrable fortification and a famous bridge, that both constitute the landmarks of modern Arta.

The links are many more, since Ancient Greek and Christian Orthodox tradition perfectly shared the same buildings, something that can be seen throughout the whole city.



BUILT UPON THE RUINS OF THE WALLS OF ANCIENT AMVRACIA, THE CASTLE OF ARTA IS A REPRESENTATIVE EXAMPLE OF THE BYZANTINE ARCHITECTURE.

# THE CASTLE OF ARTA



It was constructed during three periods: in the 13th c., the 14th c. and during the Ottoman rule, when it finally took the form it has nowadays. Some features of the building show that Ottomans may have called Venetian engineers to contribute to the strengthening of the fortification during the last stage of the construction.

Outside the main gate of the castle was lying the market of Arta. It was there that the Jewish community was doing business.

Inside the castle was a space reinforced with a second wall, the Kastraki (“Little Castle”) or İç Kale, which was probably the ultimate point where the defenders of the castle could run to, when they were besieged. It was here that Makriyiannis was imprisoned during the Greek Revolution of 1821. Nowadays, it hosts cultural events during summer.





# THE CLOCK

It is the oldest clock in Epirus and one of the oldest in Greece. The original mechanism of the clock made it unique in the whole Ottoman Empire. The clock had Arabic numbers at first and was decorated with enamel.

The first historical attestation about the existence of the clock comes from the "Book of the Travels" by Evliya Celebi.

The Turkish traveler mentions that the clock made a full rotation every 24 hours and had a big bell which could be heard from an one-hour-distance. He also emphasizes on the fact that he hadn't seen anywhere else a clock of such perfect making.

The 21 meters tall Clock Tower was probably built between 1630 and 1650.

The clock was closely connected with the historical, economic and social transformations of this area. Because of its central position, next to the Castle, it quickly became one of the landmarks of Arta.

The square of Time, in front of the clock was one of the most frequented places of the city as well as a meeting point for its inhabitants.

The existence of the clock is a proof of the high economical status of the town, as both building and maintaining a clock tower was particularly expensive.



# THE BRIDGE OF ARTA



The bridge of Arta has gone down in history: the folk song describes the difficulty of its construction, since “All day they were building it, and in the night it would collapse”. Thus, the famous legend of the Bridge was born: the Chief Mason sacrificed his wife in the foundation of the bridge, in order for the construction to be completed.

However, the way the foundations of the Bridge was constructed indicates that the first attempts to build it had already been made in the Hellenistic period, when king Pyrrhus transferred the capital of his kingdom to Amvracia. During the Byzantine period the arches of the bridge and its relief arches were constructed, while in the 17th c. the bridge took

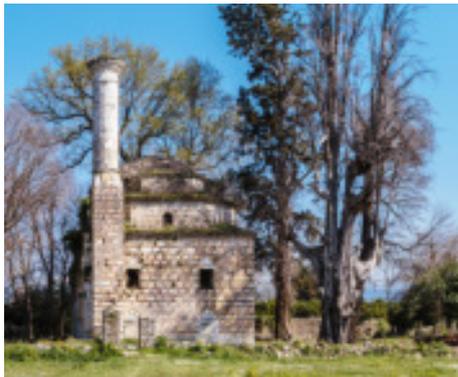
the form it has nowadays.

The dimensions of the Bridge (145 meters length and 3.75 meters width) cause the admiration of the visitors. Even from today’s perspective it is considered as a miracle of mechanics and proves the amazing technique of the Epirus stoneworkers.

Next to the bridge, the historical plane tree stands tall. It has been declared as a “listed natural monument” since 1976. The neoclassical building on the other side of the bridge was used as a customs office after 1881, since the Bridge of Arta was the border between the Greek territory and the areas which were still under the Ottoman rule. Today it houses the Folklore Museum of the city.



# THE MOSQUE OF FAIK PASHA



It is located a couple of kilometers outside Arta. Faik Pasha conquered Arta in 1449, and he was probably the one who built this mosque in the middle of the 15th c. The mosque was part of a larger complex of charitable buildings, named Imaret. It included a madrasa (religious educational institution), a hammam (Turkish baths), a poorhouse and an inn.

The area where the Imaret was constructed is still called Top Alti, a term referring to the area defined by the firing range of the cannons in the Castle of Arta.

*IT IS CONSIDERED TO BE ONE OF THE OLDEST OTTOMAN CONSTRUCTIONS IN EPIRUS.*

The mosque was probably built on the foundations of a temple dedicated to Agios Ioannis Prodromos, while for its construction they used materials that were removed from monuments situated in Arta and the surrounding area.

Excavations that took place in this area revealed plundered tombs and headstones. It is probable that the founder of Imaret was buried there, after having withdrawn and stayed there for 40 years, until his death.



# THE WALLS OF ANCIENT AMVRACIA

*THE WALLS CONSISTED OF TWO ROWS OF STONES FILLED WITH RUBBLE. FOR THE CONSTRUCTION OF THE EXTERNAL FACE CARVED BOULDERS WERE USED (UP TO A HEIGHT OF 1.5 M).*

Amvracia was one of the strongest colonies of Corinth in Western Greece, and this led its inhabitants to fortify the city in order to protect it. Furthermore, the hillock on which the walls were built was considered to have an important strategic position ever since antiquity.

So, it is possible that Amvracia was surrounded by a simple precinct already in the 6th c. BC., while a new one of monumental size was constructed in 4th c. BC.

The fragments of the walls that were saved indicate a neat construction, that surrounded the city following the course of Arachthos river.

Today, remains of this ancient construction are still visible in various points of Arta, such as the hill of Metropolis, the Byzantine castle, in the vicinity of the churches of Agii Theodori and Agios Markos, as well as in the Monastery of Phaneromeni.



# THE SMALL THEATER

It was constructed on the slope of an earth fill and upon the foundations of baths.

Except from the exquisite mosaics of the baths, the excavations unveiled the orchestra and a part of the cavea of the theater, the proscenium pillar and the parodoi (passageways).

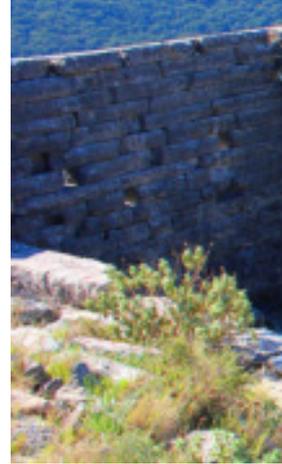
The theater was constructed between the late 4th c. BC and the early 3rd c. BC, when Amvracia flourished residentially, artistically and economically. It is of particular interest that

the theater is so close to the center of the city, and what is striking is the fact that there is no proedria (chairs for officials in the first row).

The most important of the movable findings during the excavations was a golden stater of Philippe II of Macedon, the first golden coin ever found in excavations in Epirus.

*THE SMALL THEATER OF AMVRACIA IS THE SMALLEST OF THE ANCIENT GREEK THEATERS AND THE ONLY ONE INTEGRATED IN THE URBAN NETWORK OF AN EPIRUS CITY.*

# THE TEMPLE OF APOLLO PYTHIOS SOTIR (SAVIOR)



It was the main sanctuary of the city and the place where the local authorities kept public documents. We are drawn to this conclusion by an inscribed stele defining the limits between the cities of Amvracia and Haradros. The stele goes back to the 2nd c. BC and provides us with important data about the administration of Epirus cities.

The temple was a majestic construction of impressive dimensions - 44x20.75 m- built according to the Doric rhythm. At the far end of the cella survives the foundation of the pedestal supporting the statue or the symbol of Apollo.

The monument is preserved only until the leveling course just above the walking surface, since from early times it was used as a quarry. During the same period, tombs were constructed upon ancient ruins.





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# ORRAON

*THE SURPRISINGLY GOOD CONDITION OF THE PRIVATE HOUSES OF ORRAON IS UNIQUE IN GREECE. THE MOST IMPRESSIVE EXAMPLE IS HOUSE 1, THE WALLS OF WHICH ARE PRESERVED UP TO A HEIGHT OF 5-7 METERS.*

Ancient Orraon was an impressive ancient citadel of Molossoi, which served both as a fortress and a way-point for products handling.

It was founded in 4th c. BC on an especially strategic position – guarding the passage from the Amvracian Gulf to the basin of Ioannina. It was fortified with double walls, and at its peak was inhabited by 2000 people.

In 168 BC Orraon was destroyed by the Romans. Its walls were totally grounded, because it was one of the four Epirus cities that resisted the Roman legions.

Orraon kept being populated until 31 BC, when it was abandoned and its inhabitants moved to the newly founded city of Nikopolis.



# WESTERN CEMETERY SACRED WAY

The Western Cemetery of Ancient Amvracia was the most important of the two cemeteries of the city. It was located along an ancient road that started from the south main gate of the town and led to Amvracos, the harbor of the city in the Amvracian Gulf.

The Sacred Way, with a width of 12 meters, was covered with cobblestone and had circled monumental tombs on both sides, as well as a public polyandrion cenotaph that goes back to 600 BC. It is a monumental construction which measures 12.40 meters long, 8 meters wide and more than 2.40 meters high. Of particular importance is the inscription of the cenotaph, where, for the first time, the name of the ancient town "Anprakia" is mentioned.

## THE KOULIA OF KORONISIA



Koulia is located in the picturesque fishing village of Koronisia, in the middle of the Amvracian Gulf. It is a fortress-observatory of the 19th c., built in a period when the Ottomans were trying to reinforce their defensive fortifications in the north side of the Amvracian Gulf.

The building has a distinctive architecture. Nowadays, it is renovated and functions as a reading library, while it often hosts various cultural events.



## ARCHAEOLOGICAL MUSEUM

Its construction started in 1999 and was completed in 2006. The opening of the museum took place in 2009, after the study and the organization of the exhibits finished.

The presentation of the displayed items is arranged in a thematic way, including three large units: public life, cemeteries and private life of the Amvracians. Besides, there are exhibits that date back from the

Palaeolithic Age to the Roman times.

Most of the exhibits belong though to the Hellenistic times, a period that was the economical and political peak of Amvracia. The Archaeological Museum of Arta is the place where Culture and History meet the modern way of displaying the unburied “treasures” of the region.

## HISTORICAL MUSEUM

The Historical Museum of “Skoufas” Association is located opposite of Byzantine church of Panagia Parigoritissa. It aims at helping visitors to learn the history of Arta from the antiquity until nowadays.



It has been organized based on the modern concepts of Museology, according to which the museums are active educational places. Consequently, some scenic compositions have been created inside the museum, helping the visitors watch the history of Arta by chronological order and learn it in a pleasant and easily understandable way.



The museum is housed in a two-storeyed neoclassical building next to the bridge of Arta. Built in 1864 by an Austrian architecture, it was initially used as the outpost of the bridge and later as the frontier post of the Turks, since after the 1881 treaty the borders between Greece and Turkey were in the middle of the Bridge.



Collections of the museum include objects from every day life, houseware, handicraft objects, carnival costumes, clothes, as well as material related to the legend of the Bridge of Arta.

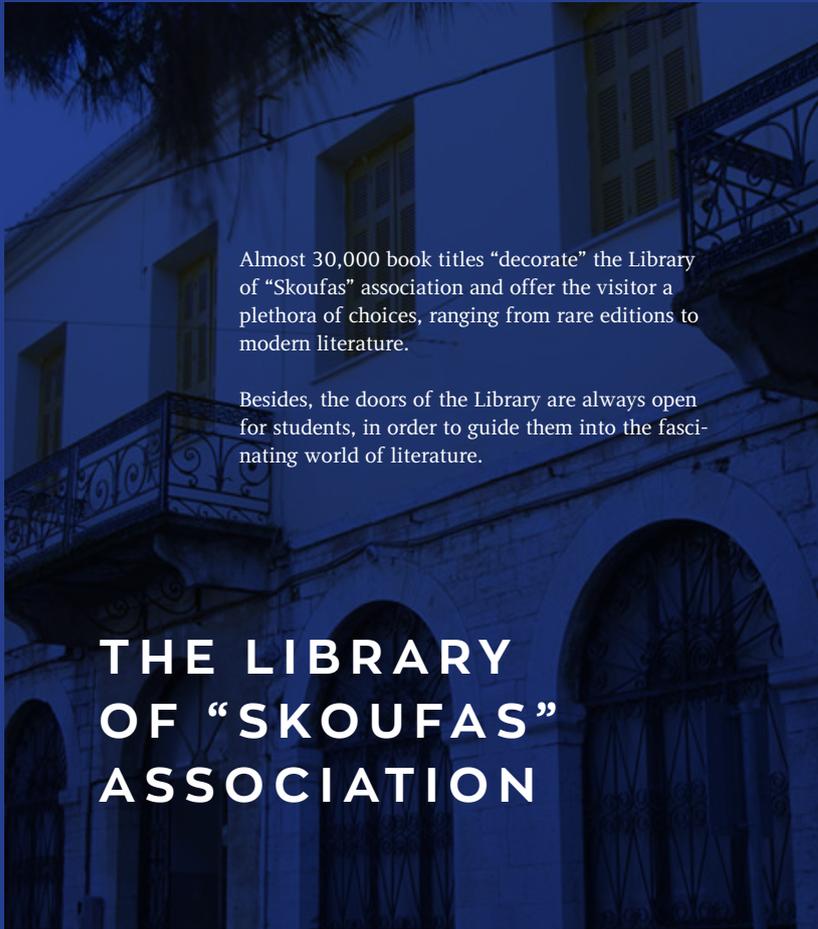
## FOLK MUSEUM



## “GIANNIS MORALIS” MUNICIPAL GALLERY OF ARTA



Arta's Municipal Gallery is housed in the old building of the Fire Department near the center of the city and opened its doors for the public in December 2010. It honours one of the greatest Greek artists, Giannis Moralis (who was born in Arta), and has two central halls, one for the regular collection and one for the temporary or periodic exhibitions.



Almost 30,000 book titles “decorate” the Library of “Skoufas” association and offer the visitor a plethora of choices, ranging from rare editions to modern literature.

Besides, the doors of the Library are always open for students, in order to guide them into the fascinating world of literature.

## THE LIBRARY OF “SKOUFAS” ASSOCIATION

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## INFORMATION AND RESEARCH CENTER OF SALAORA



On the road to Koronisia, in a renovated building where in the past the customs office of Salaora was functioning, the Research and Information Center of Salaora is housed.

The Center has halls both for the public and scientists/researchers. In these halls the public has the opportunity to watch a comprehensive introduction to the geomorphology, the plants, the animals and the main sites of the Amvracian Gulf.



**ARTA**

connecting seasons

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