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MEDIEVAL TALES IN THE PRINCIPALITY OF ACHAIA

Kindly sponsored by the Municipality of Andravida-Killini

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Ephorate of Antiquities of Eleia

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GLARENTZA



Tickets: Free admission
Tel.: 26240 22529

CHLEMOUTSI CASTLE



Tickets: 4€ standard, 2€ reduced
Opening hours: 08:00-15:00 (winter),
09:00-16:00 (summer)
Tel.: 26230 95033

SAINT SOPHIA AT ANDRAVIDA



Tickets: Free admission
Access to the interior of the monument
needs to be pre-arranged by phone
Tel.: 26240 22529

CHURCH OF PALAIOPANAGIA AT MANOLADA



Tickets: Free admission
Access to the interior of the monument
needs to be pre-arranged by phone
Tel.: 26240 22529

VIRGIN OF VLACHERIA



Tickets: Free admission
Opening hours: 10:00-12:00 and
18:00-20:00
Visits to the library need to be
pre-arranged by phone
Tel.: 26230 92205



ISABELLA OF VILLEHARDOUIN, PRINCESS OF ACHAIA

WILLIAM II OF VILLEHARDOUIN

CENTURIONE II ZACCARIA

CHARLES OF ANJOU

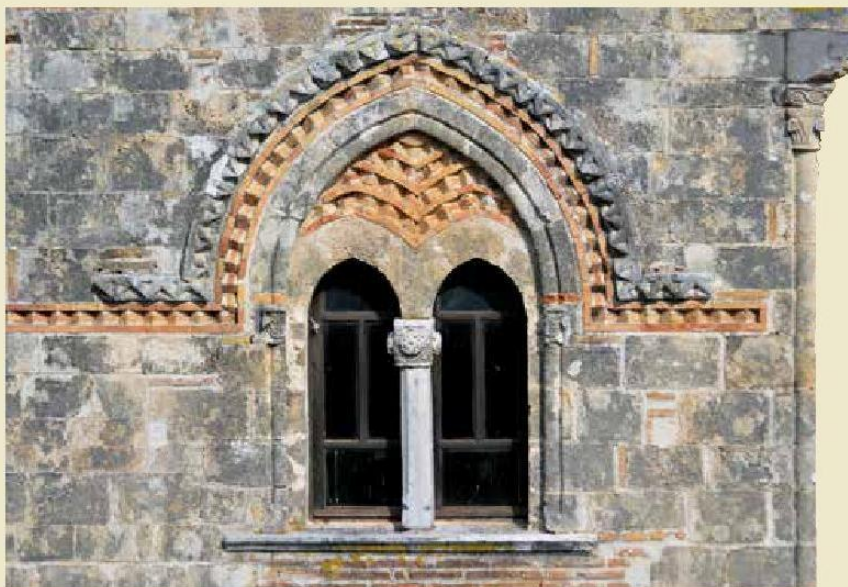
THE PRINCIPALITY OF ACHAIA

A fascinating Medieval tale

In 1204 the Latin Crusaders, who embarked on the liberation of the Holy Land from the Turks, attacked and conquered Constantinople. The Byzantine Empire was thus broken apart and small Latin, as well as Greek, states were established in its place. One of them - the Principality of Achaia - emerged in 1205 in the Peloponnese. It was founded by two knights from the County of Champagne in France, William of Champlitte and Geoffrey I of Villehardouin. The history of the Principality ends in 1432 with its abolition by Thomas Palaeologos.

With Andravida as its capital city, the crowded Glarentza as its port, and a robust stronghold, the Chlemoutsi castle, the Principality managed to become a powerful state in the Eastern Mediterranean Sea for two centuries.

The new society of the Principality was mixed. Locals and foreigners tried to live together in harmony, although conflicts between the two groups often arose. The Franks introduced different languages, customs and religious beliefs. At the top of the administrative hierarchy were the



Prince and the Barons. The Prince had the right to issue coins, administer justice and build castles.

The territory of the Principality was divided into feuds that brought wealth, authority and increased social status to the person that possessed them. The feudarch - a Frank or local lord - granted his land to knights and noblemen, so as to be used for profit. In exchange, the latter pledged allegiance to the ruler and offered him military services. The local rural population and the soldiers comprised the lower classes that lived in the countryside, paid taxes and survived with difficulty. The Franks had high living standards, resided in the cities - Patras, Andravida, Corinth, Glarentza - and

dominated trade. The women of the Principality could inherit property, have custody of their children, hold office and participate in governance.

In terms of ecclesiastical authority, the region was under the jurisdiction of the Pope. The property of the Orthodox Church passed to the Catholics, whereas Catholic priests and bishops performed the service in the parishes, the metropolitan sees and the bishoprics with Latin population. The Orthodox clergy retained their position and continued to exercise their duties for the local Greek population. It seemed that the two dogmas coexisted without any serious disputes between them. During that period, a number of monastic

+ *"Suddenly, upon turning a hill,
I raised my hand joyfully. High on
the hilltop ahead of me gleamed
the renowned castle of Chlemoutsi;
Square, wounded, still standing...
When I entered through the
narrow, wide open castle door and
crossed the ruined Gothic halls and
courtyards, overgrown with weeds,
and grasped a wild fig tree to climb
to the floor above and stood on a
stone, I felt the urge to let out a
shrill cry like a hawk..."*

**N. Kazantzakis,
Travelling: the Moreas, 1937**

orders - Dominicans, Franciscans and Cistercians - settled in the Principality and founded imposing churches that differed from their Orthodox counterparts as they followed the Gothic architectural tradition.



Did you know that...

the "Chronicle of Morea", an anonymous narrative, dating from the 14th century, that provides particularly significant evidence for the history of the Principality, was written in Greek, French and later in Italian and Aragonese?

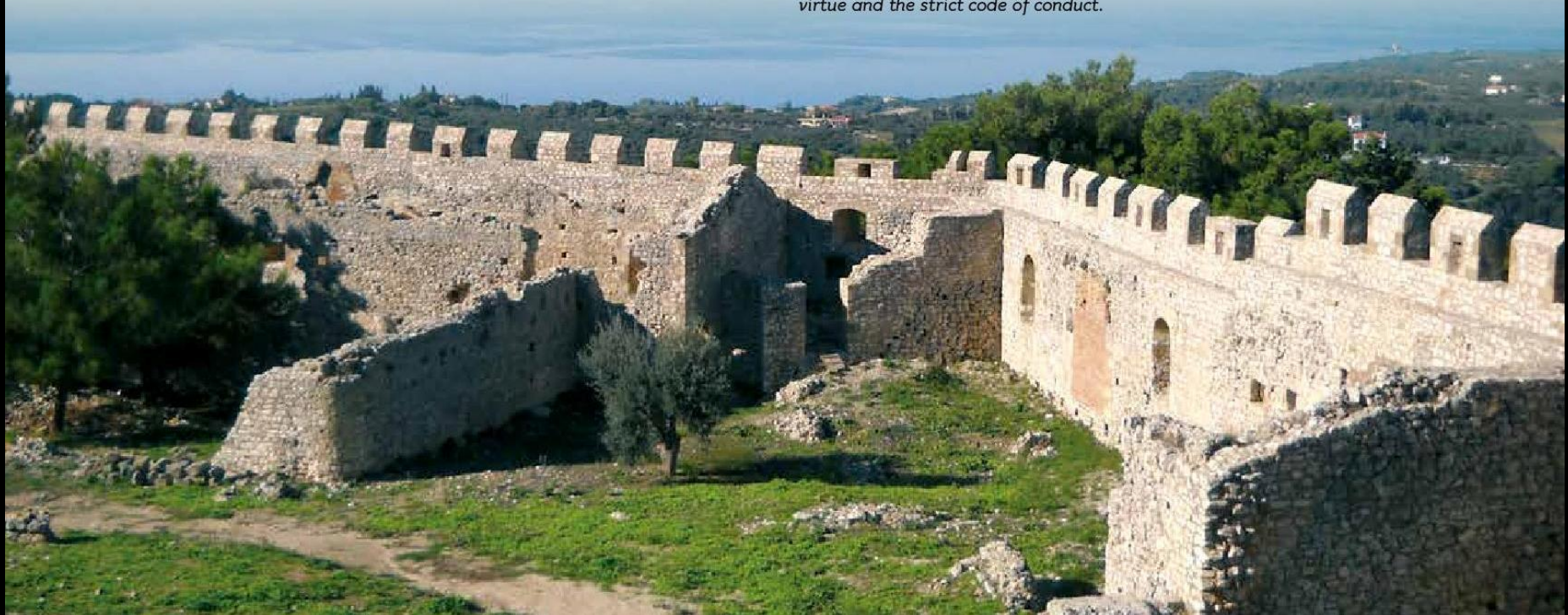


Crusader

The crusaders were soldiers who engaged in long military campaigns instigated by the Catholic Church for the liberation of the Holy Land from the Muslim Seljuk Turks. Their name derives from the cross that decorated their tunic and shield.

Knight

The knights were soldiers who fought on horseback. They offered their military service to the ruler and had the means of maintaining a horse, the tack, their armour and weapons. The knights were characterized by their faith in God, their virtue and the strict code of conduct.



GLARENTZA

A port between East and West

✚ *The land was lovely, the houses rich,
they had rulers powerful, extremely wealthy,
prosperous merchants, great and honest.
How is it possible to explain the things, the wealth,
the clothes, the dresses of the land of Clarentia?*

Cronaca dei Tocco, v. 648-652

On a plateau looking towards the Ionian Sea and the West, William II of Villehardouin founded in the 13th century a port, the legendary Glarentza. Nowadays, one can hardly imagine the size of the lively coastal town, since only a few ruins remained in the landscape of Killini.

For nearly 150 years, Glarentza was an important economic centre in the Mediterranean basin. A strong wall, reinforced with towers and surrounded by a moat, protected the commercial area, the harbour, the residence of the Prince and, of course, the inhabitants'

houses. In the cathedral of the town the believers worshiped God and the Frankish rulers assembled to discuss affairs of the Principality. Three gates led to the sea, the capital Andravida and the Chlemoutsi castle.

The town underwent a series of adventures: In 1430, following a period of upheaval, Constantine Palaeologos demolished its fortification. Later, when the Ottomans dominated the Peloponnese, Glarentza was abandoned. In 1922, the area was overrun by refugees from Asia Minor, whereas during World War II the Germans blew up the last Medieval remains.

Today, visitors may stroll around the area in which the Medieval town laid, spot the fortification ruins or the bridge, discover the cathedral of Saint Francis with the graves of the nobles and imagine the activity of the harbour before its glory faded.




Did you know that...

this crowded city had numerous craftsmen workshops, stores, banks, custom houses, consulates, even its own mint, the so-called "charageion"?



THE CHLEMOUTSI CASTLE

“Château Clermont”, the Principality’s sleepless guard

In 1220 an impressive castle, the largest in the Principality, was built by the Franks at the top of Chelonata hill, with a breathtaking view to the plain of Elis and the Ionian Sea. The original name of the castle was Château Clermont, the travellers referred to it as Castel Tornese, but the Byzantines preferred to call it Chlounoutzi. Due to its strategic location, the imposing stronghold guarded the capital Andravida, the harbour of Glarentza and, of course, the palace of the House of the Villehardouin that was situated within its walls.

The castle was equipped with double fortification. The outer rampart, stretching down the smooth hillsides, was tall with battlements. This area sheltered the barracks, stables, storerooms for food and ammunition, and also the water cisterns. The central part of the castle, which stands at the hilltop, was a two-storey hexagonal structure that hosted the princely palace. The halls were arranged around a central courtyard. The Throne Hall was on the upper storey, where the Prince governed, received his notable guests or organized banquets. The adjoining wings housed the private apartments of the Prince’s family, the chapel and also the kitchens. The storerooms of the palace and other auxiliary spaces were situated on the ground floor.

When the Franks abandoned the Peloponnese, the castle continued to be in use for many centuries, despite the fact that it had lost its former glory.

Nowadays, the restored halls of the palace, with their vaulted ceilings, cabinets and large fireplaces, house a unique exhibition, entitled “The Era of the Knights - Crusaders in the Morea”. Rare artefacts, such as coins, sculptures, wall paintings, architectural members, knights’ accessories, jewels, adornment items, keys and household vessels give the visitors the opportunity to explore life in the Principality.

The approximately 500 objects on display take us on a “journey” through time, to the enchanting world of the Crusaders, and invite us to discover unknown aspects of the Medieval world:

How were the settlements of the Principality organized? What does a Medieval castle look like? What happened when the Orthodox dogma met with the Catholic? How were western artistic elements combined with the Byzantine tradition? Which were the favourite forms of entertainment in the Middle Ages? What was the role of women? What did the Medieval cuisine include?

All these stories, and many others, unfold at Chlemoutsi and the other sites of the Principality of Achaia.

Let’s discover them ...

SAINT SOPHIA AT ANDRAVIDA

A church with Frankish identity



Andravida was a particularly significant town in the Peloponnese, ever since the Byzantine period. For that reason, following its conquest, Geoffrey I of Villehardouin made it the capital of the Principality of Achaia. Three churches embellished the new seat, Saint Sophia, Saint Stephen and Saint James, which was the burial chapel of the Villehardouins. Nowadays, no material evidence of this Medieval

town has survived and only the Church of Saint Sophia remains, to remind us Andravida's former glory.

The church was erected in the 13th century by Dominican Catholic monks who had settled in the new state. Its length exceeded 45 m., but today only the sanctuary of the church is preserved.

Saint Sophia was built in accordance with the features of Gothic architecture, with pointed arcs at the vaults, doors and windows. The Church was made of poros limestone, yet the builders added into its masonry small parts of earlier buildings - Ancient or Byzantine. Robust walls supported this large construction at the outside. In the magnificent interior, impressive cross-vaults attracted the attention of the worshippers.



Did you know that...

the Church of Saint Sophia did not only serve religious purposes, but was also the place where the "Grand Court" - that is the Prince, the Barons and the local Lords - assembled, in order to discuss affairs of the Principality?

THE CHURCH OF PALAIOPANAGIA AT MANOLADA

A Byzantine "contrast" in the state of the Franks

Within the area of the modern cemetery of Palaia Manolada lies a Byzantine-style church, dedicated to the Dormition of the Mother of God. This Orthodox place of worship, known as "Palaiopanagia", was built in the 14th century. The history of the church could be associated with the famous "Battle of Manolada" that took place across the fertile plains, in the summer of 1316. In this conflict, the forces of the Prince of Achaia, Louis of Burgundy, crushed the army

of the Catalan Ferdinand of Majorca, who claimed the Principality.

Even though the church was erected in the era of the Frankish domination, it features all the characteristics of Byzantine architecture: It is built of well-dressed stone blocks, framed by red bricks. The outer walls, mainly on the octagonal dome and the apse of the sanctuary, are richly decorated with fine bricks, in a variety of patterns. Meanders and teeth-shaped stripes run around the walls of the building, whereas the west entrance is flanked by two crosses made of stone. Two small chapels serve worship purposes.



Did you know that...

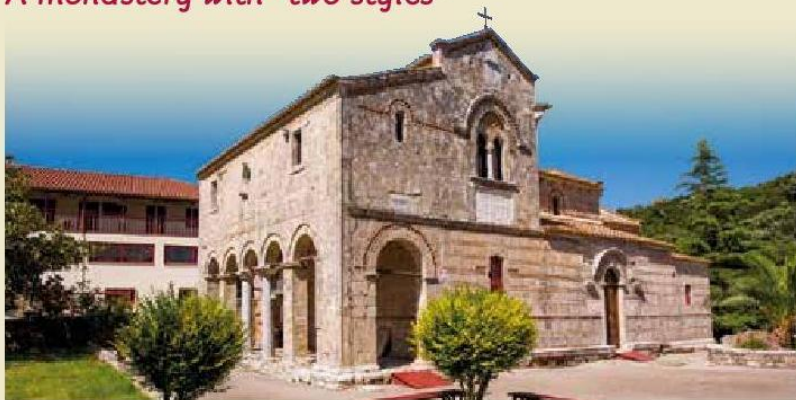
in the south chapel of Palaiopanagia Byzantine painters depicted the scenes of the "Last Judgement" and the "Second Coming"?

Inside the church, under the dome, the visitor can identify the "cross-shaped" plan of the building. Beautiful wall paintings unfold sacred narrative scenes, such as the life and miracles of Saint Nicholas.



VIRGIN OF VLACHERNA

A monastery with "two styles"



Set in the verdant landscape of Kato Panagia, a remarkable monastery, dedicated to the Virgin of Vlacherna, comes into view amidst the hills.

The monastery was built in the 13th century by the Orthodox subjects of the Principality and therefore the craftsmen closely followed the rules of Byzantine architecture: They used rectangular blocks of stone, framed by red bricks. They decorated the walls with teeth-shaped stripes and other ceramic ornaments. They reused

sculptures originating from earlier buildings, so as to embellish the outside, as well as the interior, of the monastery.

Later on, when Catholic monks occupied the Virgin of Vlacherna, the monastery underwent some changes: pointed arched windows were introduced, together with columns, rain gutters imitating human masks and a charming lion in relief - elements that lent to the church its Gothic character.

The interior of the church is equally attractive. Visitors may observe the columns with the decorated capitals that divide the church into three sections. As they move along to the sanctuary they may contemplate the wall paintings dating back to 1754, that illustrate scenes from the life of the Mother of God. Finally, in the monastery library they may come across particularly interesting objects, such as patriarchal documents, Gospels and ecclesiastical vessels.



Did you know that...

the monastery owes its name to the famous church of Constantinople, situated in the district of "Vlacherna", in which the standing congregation chanted the "Akathistos (Unseated) Hymn" in 626 AD, praising the Virgin for her intervention and the victory against the enemy?



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