

INFORMATION

EPHORATE OF ANTIQUITIES OF CHALCIDICE & MOUNT ATHOS

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www.visit-halkidiki.gr — Halkidiki's official tourism website

instagram.com/efachagor facebook.com/efachagor youtube.com/@efachagor

TICKET PRICE

Archaeological Museum of Polygyros		10€ - Regular	5€ - Reduced
Monastery of Zygos			
Tower of Ouranoupolis		5€ - Regular	3€ - Reduced
Ancient Olynthos			

Access to all other areas is free of charge

OPENING HOURS:

Ancient Olynthos:	8:30 — 15:30 (Tuesday closed)
Sanctuary of Zeus Ammon, Kallithea:	8:30 — 15:30 (Tuesday closed)
Basilica of Sofronios, Nikiti:	8:30 — 15:30 (Tuesday closed) *
Cemetery of Akanthos, Ierissos:	8:30 — 15:30 (Weekends closed)
Tower of Galatista:	8:30 — 15:30 (Tuesday closed) *
Ancient Stageira, Olympiada:	8:30 — 15:30 (Tuesday closed)
Tower of Prosforion, Ouranoupolis:	8:30 — 15:30 (Tuesday closed) *
Monastery of Zygos, Ouranoupolis:	8:30 — 15:30 (Tuesday closed)
Center of Byzantine Culture of Chalcidice, Nea Flogita:	8:30 — 15:30 (Tuesday closed)
Archaeological Museum of Polygyros:	8:30 — 15:30 (Tuesday closed)

*Please note that the site will be closed from October 31st through March 31st

DIGITAL TOUR GUIDE

Take a tour in ancient colonies of Chalcidice.

Download the app and follow the tour!



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MINISTRY OF CULTURE
EPHORATE OF ANTIQUITIES
of CHALCIDICE & MOUNT ATHOS

ROUTES OF CULTURE

CHALCIDICE

ARCHAEOLOGICAL MUSEUM OF POLYGYROS



The Archaeological Museum of Polygyros was first opened in 1971 and the new permanent exhibition opened to the public in July 2022. The exhibition is structured in four thematic sections. In the first section, Place and History, the visitor learns about the nature, the history and the research in the region, accompanied by interactive multimedial applications with rich informative material in text and images. The same thematic section includes a 3d-projection mapping, where the visitor follows the progress of an excavation.

The second section, Prehistoric Societies, presents objects and rich visual material regarding the most significant settlements and cemeteries from the Neolithic Age to the Late Bronze Age.

In the third section, which occupies the largest part of the exhibition, the Historical Times are put on display, with sculpture and votive or funerary monuments from Roman Times; the most impressive ones are the finds from the funerary monument of Straton. The section will be completed with the presentation of the most important cities-colonies and sanctuaries.

The fourth section is dedicated to the private Collections and Donations, with the most noteworthy being the rich Lambropoulos Collection, consisting of mainly ceramic objects from the Archaic and Classical periods but also remarkable set of armour and jewelry.



CENTER OF BYZANTINE CULTURE OF CHALCIDICE, NEA FLOGITA



The Center of Byzantine Culture of Chalcidice, in the so-called Old Hospital, in the area of Nea Flogita, is a complex project of the Ephorate of Antiquities of Chalcidice and Mount Athos; it includes an extensive program of restoration-reuse of the preserved complex, but at the same time it aims at promoting Byzantine Halkidiki through the research and excavation work conducted there.

The complex was part of the Mount Athos Monastery of Agios Panteleemon. A milestone in its recent history was its transformation into a US Red Cross hospital in the 1930s. During World War II, the area became the seat of the occupying forces, while in 1960 it was abandoned after a catastrophic fire.

The whole complex, which has about 2000m² of built space (after the completion of the restoration work) in an area of about 28 acres, came into the ownership of the Hellenic Ministry of Culture in 1999.

It consists of three buildings dated exactly with inscriptions in the second half of the 19th-early 20th century, which were given conventional names: the Old Building (1853), the Central Building (1884) and the Individual Building (1909).

As the excavation research progress, the ruins of other buildings and facilities are gradually revealed: a square building with reinforced masonry (perhaps a tower), the oil storage room with various constructions for its function, a well which, according to testimonies, should have a depth of about 30 m., one other circular stone construction, which probably had the use of an olive mill and should have been protected by a large shed.

Also, on the west side of the complex, the remains of a mud-built building, probably of auxiliary character, are preserved.





ANCIENT OLYNTHOS

The ancient city of Olynthos extends over the flat plateaux and the eastern slopes of two natural hills. The city, which, according to Herodotus, was founded in the 7th century BC by the Bottiaean, was destroyed in 479 BC by the Persians. In 432 BC the King of Macedonians, Perdikkas II, persuaded the inhabitants of many coastal cities of Chalcidice to settle in Olynthos, which became the mightiest and the richest one of the region. It played a leading role in the political developments of Chalcidice, until 348 BC, when it was completely destroyed by Philip II.

The new city was built on the North Hill according to the "Hippodamian" grid plan. At least five avenues intersected by twenty or more vertical streets, demarcated 64 building blocks (*insulae*). During the excavations (1928-1938) by the American School of Classical Studies, more than 100 houses were revealed. In the southern part of the hill were located buildings of public character.

In the southeastern, unwall part of the city, the later sector of the city is located, built after 379 BC, also according to the "Hippodamian" system. Some wealthy residences have been excavated in this part. They are known by conventional names, such as Villa of Good Fortune, Villa of the Actor, Villa of the Twin Erotes, and are adorned with impressive mosaic pavement.

ANCIENT OLYNTHOS DIGITAL INFORMATION CENTER

The Ancient Olynthos Digital Information Center (AnODIC) which operates on the site, includes interactive applications of a digital timeline and an interactive ground plan, 3D images of houses and finds, as well as short videos which spotlight all the turning points in the life of the city.



SANCTUARY OF ZEUS AMMON, DIONYSOS AND ASCLEPIOS, KALLITHEA

The area of the sanctuary was first used in the Early Bronze Age. Later, after colonization of Halkidiki by the Greeks of the south and the founding of the Eretrian colony, Aphytis, the area was incorporated in the *chora* (territory) of the city. The beauty of the nature, the water springs, the vegetation and the cave that existed there, attracted the inhabitants of Aphytis to find a sanctuary of Dionysos – probably of the Nymphs, as well – by the end of the 8th century BC.

In the first half of the 4th century BC, the inhabitants of the Aphytis built a temple of Zeus near the sanctuary of Dionysos. The cult of Zeus Ammon was closely related to the water and a cistern with water existed in all sanctuaries of the god. Therefore, a fountain house was built near the cave and the water springs and from there, through a clay pipe, water reached the sanctuary of Zeus Ammon.

In the second half of the same century, after the incorporation of Chalcidice in the Macedonian kingdom, an impressive Doric temple was built, and east of it, two parallel rows of monumental bases, which supported sculpture. The two rows of bases, an unusual characteristic in Greek architecture, owe their existence to the Egyptian origin of Zeus Ammon. Such corridors and bases were popular in Egyptian architecture.

The sanctuary reached a peak in the 2nd century AD. Two constructions with seats, which accommodated the spectators, and an altar were built in front of the temple of Zeus Ammon and furthermore, a *balneum* (small bath), related to the cult of Asclepios and healing, was also built north from the temple.

The sanctuary was destroyed in the beginning of the 4th century AD. However, the use of the *balneum* did not stop before the middle or end of the century. In those years, or in the 5th century AD, a watermill was built near the cave and the water springs.



BASILICA OF SOFRONIOS, NIKITI

An important early Christian monument is the Basilica of Bishop Sofronios, east of Nikiti along with the neighboring Basilica, where the chapel of St. George. It dates back to the end of the 4th century AD.

The church was built as a three-aisled, wooden-roofed Basilica. In the apse of the sanctuary is preserved the synthronon with the bishop's throne, while traces of the altar were found. The area of the sanctuary is adorned with an *opus sectile* floor and is separated from the nave by a marble low iconostasis. The aisles of the nave are separated by colonnades.

A mosaic floor was constructed in the central aisle where an inscription with the name of the donor, Bishop Sofronios. On the walls are preserved traces of frescoes. To the west of the Basilica there is an atrium and a baptistery.

The Basilica was destroyed by earthquake. The ruins of the atrium were repaired and re-inhabited, as evidenced by the abundant utilitarian pottery, the existence of a cookhouse, wine press and other agricultural facilities.

Today the Basilica is partially restored with special care to the mosaic floor and is covered with a protective shelter.



ARCHITECTURAL SHELL FOR THE PROTECTION AND THE DISPLAY OF THE CEMETERY OF AKANTHOS, IERISSOS

Eighty-four tombs are protected and displayed at the shell of the cemetery of ancient Akanthos, and they date from the end of the 6th to the end of the 4th century BC.

It is about a small yet representative sample of the Akanthos cemetery, which numbers 13,220 tombs.

The usual entombments took place in simple or tiled pits, in clay sarcophagi and in burial vessels of various types and sizes, while cremated dead were placed in simple and brick pits.

The wealth and diversity of burial offerings evidence the socio-economic status and the commercial connections of the ancient Akanthos.



THE TOWER OF GALATISTA

The tower of Galatista is one of the best preserved towers of Chalcidice; it functioned as fortification and dwelling as well, yet unhappily there is no evidence for it in the written sources. It has two construction phases: the lower part belongs in the first phase and it dates in the 11th century, while the upper part belongs to in the second one, and it dates in the 14th century. The tower is currently preserved at a height of sixteen meters. For the needs of daily life there was a sink in the tower, restrooms and probably a kind of kitchen.

An excavation in the basement of the tower discovered a built water tank in the northwest corner.

Around the monument there is a group of buildings (two watermills with water tanks, an olive mill, and a workshop of producing *raki* (kind of rum)); along with the tower they comprise a whole which is associated with productive activities of the inhabitants of Galatista until recent years.

Today the tower hosts the exhibition "The Towers of Chalcidice".



ANCIENT STAGEIRA

Stageira, birthplace of Aristotle, was founded in ca. 655 BC on the slopes of a small peninsula in North East Halkidiki by colonists who arrived from the island of Andros in a search for mineral deposits. Being an independent city it issued its own coins, adorned with a boar.

After the Persian Wars, Stageira became a member of the First Athenian Confederacy. In 424 BC, during the Peloponnesian War, the city seceded and became an ally of the Spartans against Athens. Later, in 349 BC, as a member of the Chalcidian League, it was destroyed by king Philip II of Macedon. A few years after the destruction, however, Philip himself repopulated the city in return for Aristotle's tutoring of his son Alexander. Yet Stageira never recovered its former brilliance and by the time of Christ it was already deserted.

Excavations in Stageira brought to light public edifices, sanctuaries, houses, the wall and the acropolis as well as an apsidal building, which has been interpreted as the "Aristoteleion", Aristotle's grave-heroon, where the ashes of the philosopher were transferred, after his death at Chalkis in 322 BC.

Restoration and enhancement work made Stageira an attractive archaeological site in a beautiful landscape.



THE TOWER OF PROSFORI, OURANOUPOLIS

The tower of Ouranoupolis was constructed before the 14th century in the former *metochi* (monastic dependency) Prosfori, which then belonged to the monastery of Vatopedi. The tower is evidenced in historical sources of the 11th century, and it was apparently part to a wider building complex. Over the years it underwent many repairs until the middle of the 19th century, when it acquired its current form. The buildings that survive today are: the tower, the two-storey *barbakas* (i.e. a fortified enclosure) to the east of the tower, and the *arsanas* (i.e. where the boat of Prosfori was kept) to the north of the tower.

The tower of Ouranoupolis is the only tower in Halkidiki inhabited until recently, since refugees of the Greek-Turkish war from Asia Minor temporarily settled there (1924). In 1928, with the permission of the local community, the Australian couple Sydney and Joyce Loch lived in the tower, and for many decades they supported the refugees of the settlement. The Hellenic Ministry of Culture (Ephorate of Antiquities of Chalcidice and Mount Athos) restored the monument and today the *barbakas* hosts an exhibition of antiquities from the pre-Christian and Christian Chalcidice at the ground floor, while the upper floor is dedicated to the refugees.



MONASTERY OF ZYGOS, OURANOUPOLIS

The Monastery of Zygos is located at the area of modern Ouranoupolis, a few meters outside the borders of Mount Athos. Around 955 there was already a monastic community in the region Zygos. Saint Athanasios the Athonite, the founder of the Monastery of Great Lavra, first settled and practiced there. In the 11th century the Monastery of Zygos was one of the most important Athonite houses. In 1199 it was deserted and granted by the emperor Alexios I Komnenos to the Monastery of Chilandar. Around 1206, a Frankish lord settled there with his soldiers and looted Mount Athos; thereafter, the region is also known as "Frankokastro". In the 16th century, the monastery was granted to the Monastery of Vatopedi and it was added to the property of the *metochi* (monastic dependency) of Prosfori until 1924.

The location of the monastery by the sea, its natural environment, let alone the clear setting of the monastic complex, with its strong fortification, the large and luxurious *katholikon* (main church), the cells, the refectory and the workshops, are a pole of attraction for many visitors throughout the year. In addition, women are given an opportunity to visit, outside the borders of Mount Athos, a large Athonite monastery that is readable and understandable.