

## Religious monuments of Messinia

which cover the entire main temple and the narthex still exist. In the monastery there was a faculty which was founded in 1712 and had renowned monk professors, who taught theology, philosophy, geography, mathematics, ancient Greek and Latin.



### The ... Byzantine side of Messinia

For archaeologists and historians, the Monastery of the Transfiguration, the Andromonastiro of Petralona is an inexhaustible source of study of the monastic life from the 13th to the 19th century. The architecture and the Byzantine art fascinate visitors, and every year on the 6th of August hundreds of pilgrims arrive. This is the most important monastery complex of Messinia and one of the most beautiful of the Peloponnese.

### Holy Pilgrimage of Panagia Sgrapa of Pylos

The Holy Pilgrimage of "Panagia Sgrapa" is built on a small hill northeast of Pylos, opposite the island Sfaktiria and it dominates the green valley of Gialova.

The "Panagia Sgrapa" represents an important spiritual treasure for the region of Pylos.

The Sacred Icon of "Zoodochos Pigi" was discovered in 1890, after the continuous visions of a Christian woman, on the ruins of a Temple destroyed in 1886.

The "Pilgrimage of Sgrapa" celebrates twice a year: The celebration of "Zoodochos Pigi" on the Friday following the Easter Sunday and on the "Dormition of the Theotokos" on August 23rd.

### Holy Pilgrimage of Panagia Eleistra of Koroni

At the southwestern edge of the Venetian Castle of Koroni, surrounded by palm trees and overlooking the blue Messinian Bay is standing the Holy Pilgrimage of "Panagia Eleistra".

The Stone Temple dedicated to the "Yperaghia Theotokos" and the True Cross was built on the place where the icon of "Panagia" was found on 1897, after consecutive visions of an old woman of the village. According to residents of Koroni, the icon of "Panagia Eleistra" is miraculous.

The "Pilgrimage of Panagia Eleistra" is the patron saint of Koroni and celebrates twice a year: The celebration of "Zoodochos Pigi" on the Friday following the Easter Sunday and on January 22nd, anniversary of the discovery of the sacred Icon.



### The church of Ayios Spyridon in Kardamili (1700-1734)

Family church of the Troupakides-Mourtzinoi, a structure that displayed the power and economic well-being of the family. It belongs to the type of the aisleless domed basilica that is common in the region and the period, with architectural influences from both the west (pointed arches, round fanlights, bell-tower) and from the Byzantine past (octagonal dome, relief double eagles).

# Messinia, religious destination...

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### The Byzantine churches and monasteries of Messinia

Messinia holds unique experiences associated with religion, whether the tourists are pilgrims or people with special interests in architecture and decoration of churches, small country churches and monasteries.



#### The Metropolitan Cathedral of Kalamata "Ypapanti tou Sotirios" or "Presentation of the Savior"

In the heart of city historic center and under the shadow of the Castle rises majestic, the Byzantine Metropolitan Cathedral of "Ypapanti". The Cathedral was founded in 1860 and consecrated in 1873 by the then Archbishop of Messinia Prokopios Georgiadis.

The miraculous icon of the Holy Virgin named "Panagia Ypapanti" is a real treasure for the Cathedral. The "Panagia Ypapanti" is the Patron and Protector of the City of

Kalamata and the entire region of Messinia

The Cathedral celebrates annually, on 1st and 2nd February, feast of the Presentation of the Lord into the Temple. In 1948, the then Metropolitan bishop, Chrysostomos Daskalakis, established that the celebration would last for 14 days, from January 27th to February 9th.

The eve of the feast, a Panegyric Vespers is held and the day of the feast, a litany of the Holy Icon of "Panagia Ypapanti" is held throughout the city.



#### Temple of Saint Apostles in Kalamata

A Byzantine church that was built in 1317 by Byzantine Emperor Andronikos. On Wednesday, 23rd of March 1821, Theodoros Kolokotronis, together with Petrombeis Mavromihalis, Papaflessas, Nikitaras and other Greek freedom-fighters liberated Kalamata from the Turks and were assembled with the population and the clergy at the square of Saint Apostles, where the first Christian doxology was performed in free Greek territory, after 400 years of slavery. The same day, in this place the "Messinian Senate" convened and an important text

was drawn up that was sent to "the European Courts" and in which they explained the national aims of this revolt and asked the "philanthropic contribution" of the Great Forces of the time in order to shake off the Turkish oppression.



#### The monastery of Voulkanos

Not far from the archaeological location of Ancient Messini, in the ruins of the ancient temple of Ithomatas Dias, the well-known holy monastery of Voulkanos (or Epano Kastritissa or Katholiko or Korifis) was built in the Byzantine years. According to tradition, in this place some hermits found the icon of the Virgin Mary, which was the reason for building the monastery. A little below, between the mountain Voulkanos and the lower hill of Agios Vassilios, in the narrow passage between the two mountains, the big new monastery of Voulkanos was later

built. The old monastery has been characterized as a listed monument, but also the new monastery has its own history, since in 1821 it was the base of operations of the Greek rebels against the Turks. In the monastery, which celebrates on the 15th of August, important manuscripts but also relics of Saints

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are preserved (those of Ioannis Chrisostomos and Dionisos Aeropagitis), holy utensils and vestments (those of Patriarch Grigorios the 5th) but also the miraculous icon of Virgin Mary, work of Evangelist Lucas. Each year on its name day a big "panigiri" (religious festival and commercial fair) takes place and there is a procession of the icon of Virgin Mary, which is carried up to its original residence, the monastery standing on the top of the mountain.



#### The little church of Saint Theodora

If you head towards Diavolitsi, Dessila and Karnasi, a region, which is famous for its numerous waters and its beauty, you will meet, in the village Vasta, the little church of martyr Saint Theodora, built in the 10th century, which has the following characteristic to which it also owes its uniqueness: 17 big and small trees 200-250 years old impressively stand on its roof and are supported by it; their roots however are inconspicuous both internally and externally, which means that they go through the stonewall which is 6 cm thick. Under the foundations of the temple there are sources of potable water, that flow during the whole year and which the pilgrims consider to be holy waters. It is a wonder of nature, a unique sight that you should visit.



#### The monasteries of Alagonia (Taygetos Mountain)

Mardatsi or Mardaki, the Holy Monastery of the Assumption of Virgin Mary. It is located in the region of Nedousa and was built in 1504. During the Ottoman domination and the war for the Independence from the Turks, it was a shelter for "kleftes" and "armatoloi" (Greek rebels) and later the base of operations of Papaflessas, Anagnostaras, Nikitaras and other fighters. According to the popular tradition, no Turkish foot ever stepped in the monastery because its head monk, Nikoforos Pratis, had cured with various herbs the Sultan's daughter from a serious illness and an

order prohibiting Ottomans from trampling the monastery had been published.



#### Sideroporta (iron door), the Holy Monastery of the Assumption of Virgin Mary

Was built in 1586 and stands near the villages of Karveli and Lada. Initially called Virgin Mary the Perivleptos (seen-all-around), it took its current name from an iron door donated by its owner, Parthenios Psomas, in 1623. It is the most well-maintained monastery of Alagonia. However, various interventions (lime washes) during the last decades covered the marvellous murals of the temple.

#### The Monastery of Saint Ioannis Theologos

In an enchanting locality across the village of Alagonia, from this monastery, built in the 18th century, only its little temple is preserved to this day.

#### Mele, the Holy Monastery of the Holy Precursor

It stands between the castle of Mele and the village Artemissia and it is considered that it was built in the 17th century. Its most beautiful Byzantine temple with exceptional "folk"(naïf) hagiographies