

Castle of Oria Tempo

39.8740685, 22.5763715



Once a significant stronghold, the castle controlled the strategic passage through the valley, which served as the only route into southern Greece through the mountains of northern Thessaly.

The visible remains on the high rock above the valley are not the complete castle; they are merely a bastion of the original structure. The main castle, which was situated lower down near the river, was demolished during road construction.

History

The Vale of Tempi (Greek: Τέμπη, Témpe) is a gorge in northern Thessaly, located between Mount Olympus to the north and Mount Ossa to the south. The valley stretches for 10 kilometers and narrows to as little as 25 meters in some places, with cliffs that reach nearly 500 meters in height. The Pineios River flows through the valley, on its way to the Aegean Sea. In ancient times, Greek poets celebrated the valley as a favorite haunt of Apollo and the Muses. On the river's right bank, there was a temple dedicated to Apollo, near which the laurels used to crown victors of the Pythian Games were gathered.

The Tempi Pass has long held strategic importance as the main route from Larisa through the mountains to the coast. While it can be bypassed by the Sarantoporo Pass, this alternative route is longer, making Tempi a focal point for numerous battles throughout history.

Given its strategic value, the valley has been fortified since ancient times. Remnants of defensive structures can still be found within the valley and at both entrances. The Byzantines established a significant castle here, named "Lykostomion." It is very likely—though not certain—that Lykostomion is the same as the "Castle of Oria."

The name "Castle of Oria" translates to "Castle of the Fair Lady." According to legend, this name dates back to the 15th century during an Ottoman siege. After a 12-year siege, the Ottomans finally captured the castle. The story goes that the lord's daughter, known as the Fair Lady, leapt from the rock to her death rather than be taken by the invaders.

Overview

Purpose: Excursion	Type: Castle	Country: Greece
City: Ampelakia	Zip code: 400 04	

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Greek Map