

Byzantine Castle of Old Gynaikokastro

40.9416619, 22.741655



It is one of the most significant fortifications built during the Palaiologan period of the Byzantine Empire.

The castle is situated at the top of a hill in the center of the Axios River valley, approximately 59 km north-northwest of Thessaloniki and 15 km west of Kilkis.

The castle was constructed between 1328 and 1341 by the Byzantine Emperor Andronikos III Palaiologos. It was part of a fortification program initiated shortly after his ascension to the throne, aimed at strengthening the defenses of Thessaloniki, the Macedonian capital, and securing key routes leading towards western Macedonia.

According to legend, the fortress was so well-defended that it could be guarded by a female garrison, which is how it earned the name "Gynaikokastro" (literally "Woman's Castle"). The castle was frequently involved in military conflicts: it was seized by Stephen Dušan following the Byzantine civil war that broke out after the death of Andronikos III in 1341. Although it was returned to the Byzantines through an agreement, it was later captured by the Ottomans in 1373/74.

In the 15th century, the castle was granted to a Byzantine pronoia holder who had converted to Islam. Eventually, the castle was abandoned and fell into ruin by the 17th century.

In the early 20th century, the systematic removal of building materials from the north and west sides for the construction of houses in a nearby refugee settlement caused extensive damage to the castle walls.

Overview

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| Purpose: Excursion | Type: Castle | Country: Greece |
| City: Kilkis | | |

Agent info

info@omicronacademy.com – Μαρία Παππα

Greek Map