



 **Paeonia**
Municipality

PAEONIA

Gateway to Greece

Identification – history – destinations



Town Hall of Paeonia

IDENTITY OF PAEONIA MUNICIPALITY

Main characteristics and spatial integration

Paeonia is a municipality of the Regional Entity of Kilkis, Central Macedonia Region, established by “Kallikratis”, New Architecture of Self-governing Entities and Decentralised Administration. Paeonia resulted from the combination of pre-existing municipalities of Axioupolis, Evrospos, Goumenissa, Polykastro and the historical township of Livadia . The extent of Paeonia is 929.7 Klm² and its permanent population is 28.493 inhabitants, according to Census 2011. Administrative capital of the new municipality is Polykastro, whereas historic capital of Paeonia is Goumenissa and overall inhabited settlements exceed 52.

Paeonia has a strategic geographical location as Axios River crosses its mainland and the New and Old National Evzoni - Athens route is the main roadway in the territory. Alongside, with two important border Stations of Evzoni and the Commercial Railway of Idomeni, Paeonia is the main entrance and exit



Goumenissa



Axioupoli



Evrospos

of Greece to Balkans and Central Europe.

It is worth noting that six million people pass every year through the Customs and Border Station of Evzoni, highlighting that it is the second largest Gateway in Greece following the airport «Eleftherios Venizelos» of Athens.

Painia shares borders with the Municipalities of Pella and Almopia, Chalcedona

From South, Kilkis from East and FYROM from its North National Borders.

It is located 30 km. from Kilkis and 60 km. away from Thessaloniki.

The total extent of the municipality represents 36,87% of Kilkis Prefecture.

Thanks to Mount Paiko and the Axios River visitors can meet rich fauna,

flora, fluvial fish and wildlife. There are two permanent animal shelters in Griva – Fanos of 24.740 acres and Idomeni of 800 acres.



Local Economy – Development

The main pillars of economic development are agriculture and livestock. Cultivated land occupies a percentage of 50.05% of the total area of the municipality. The largest cultivated area is located across Axios valley and surroundings with fertile thrive dynamic crops (cotton, wheat, corn and other cereals). The dominant livestock holding positions are occupied by sheep farms, cattle and goats. The main reason is the large dairies operating in the region. At the same time, significant is the number of holdings related to poultry (1554 farms). Regarding industrial production and similar activities, in the area of Paeonia there is organized industrial zone - craft activities (Industrial Area of Axioupoli). However, the area with the greatest industrial activity is called Industrial District of Aspros (Polykastro) neighboring the settlements of Limnotopos and Sitaria.





National Thessaloniki – Evzoni Road

Simultaneously, around the Industrial Park of Polykastro there are several industrial facilities and manufacturing enterprises in non-institutionalized areas mainly across the Old National Road of Thessaloniki – Polykastro.

The small military airstrip of Nea Kavala near Polykastro owned by the Greek Army and the municipality of Paeonia is a potential growth region and was utilized for training flights, freefall parachuting activities and for the organization of national car and motorcycle races (DRAGSTER).



N. Kavala airport



Industrial Area

Paeonia in Ancient Greek Mythology

The origins of the name of ancient Paeonia are first met in the mist of Greek mythology. Paion was one of the sons of Endymiontas, lover of the Moon. Along with his brothers, Epeios and Aitolos, they competed in a race in Ancient Olympia to claim the kingdom of his father. Paion was defeated by Epeios, and being disappointed, he left the kingdom and settled in the upper valley of Axios named 'Paeonia'. As founder of Paeonian, according to mythology is considered Pilegonas who was born after the love of God Axios with the eldest daughter of Akessamenos, king of neighboring Pieria, Perivia. Paeonia is also one of the titles given to the Goddess Athena and the Savior God, Apollo. Pausanias attributes the name to the eldest son of King Elis, Endymion the Paeonian. Homer refers to the Paeonians, their King Pyraechmes and Paeonia extensively in Iliad, describing them as top archers and describing the Axios as the most beautiful river land.

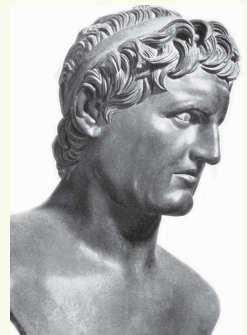
Historic and Cultural Heritage

“Evropeon i Polis” – Town of Evropians

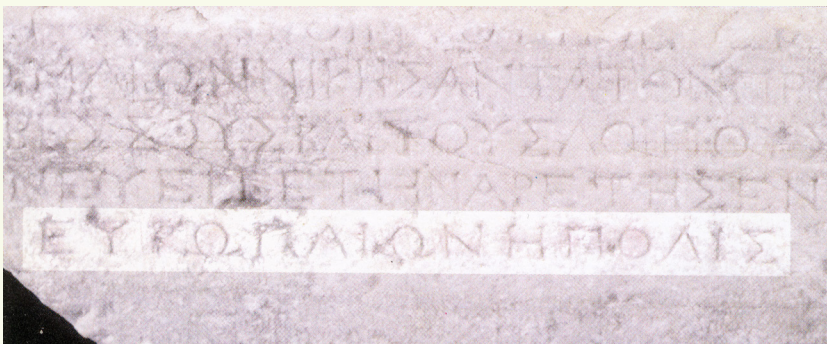


Alexander the Great

Ancient Evropos is one the most significant in archaeological terms, location of the region, with ancients finds, and treasures discovered from prehistoric time. It is the Birthplace of Seleucus I of Nicator (358 BC or 353 BC - 281 BC), son of Antiochus, General of King Philipos II, and founder of Selefkidon Empire.



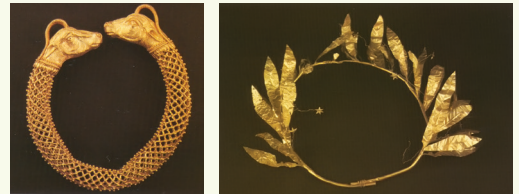
Selefkos,



Inscription of Markus Minufius Rufus



Archeological site of Evrosos



Golden bracelet and golden wreath of the cist grave

An important archaeological find is the famous ancient statue “Kouros” (650 BC), oversized sculpture of a young man, product of Cycladic laboratory, which is unique masterpiece in Northern Greece exhibited in the Archaeological museum of Kilkis.



Archeological site of Evrosos

Other known excavation finds and artifacts of the ancient city is the bracelet of gold cist grave and gold crown, exhibited in the archaeological museum of Thessaloniki. The ancient city of Evrosos is about 1000m southwest of the modern settlement, on the hillside that overtops the area. In the region excavations revealed significantly funerary monuments of the late Roman times that are properly formed in order for the ancient settlement to be accessible for tourists.

The ancient settlement was continuously inhabited from the 6th century until the end of seniority Community.

The identification and match of the site with the ancient settlement occurred in 1938. Excavations began in 1989 and revealed part of the necropolis. During the 4th-5th century BC, Evropos was one of the most developed fortified cities Vottiaia.

The majority of the tombs are in a great condition while there are looted with pottery, weapons, tools, figurines, jewelry and coins. More data and clues about life and in Ancient Evropos exist from the Roman times and Early Christian ages.



Kouros of Evropos

Macedonian Tomb in Toumba



Macedonian Tomb in Toumba

The settlement is known for the small hill near the village where medium and items found of the Late Bronze Age, Iron Age, as well various findings. Around that area archeologists excavated plundered Macedonian cist tomb of the 4th-3rd century



Interallied Memorial for the Breach of the Macedonian Front in Polykastro

In memory of the fallen, wounded, disabled and missing soldiers Allies of World War II countries was built in 1977, with expenditure of five states (Great Britain, France, Greece, Italy, Serbia) the Interallied Memorial at the 60th kilometer of the new National Road Thessaloniki – Evzoni near Polykastro. In each of the five sides of the monument there is a similar engraved inscription in the national languages of the Allies, while there are busts (sculptures) of the five Prime Ministers leading the allied countries to the Macedonian Front battles between 1916 and 1918.

Every year, the second half of September, Paeonia Municipality along with the Greek Army and Vetaran Societies organize the Ceremony of memory honoring and memorializing the soldiers that participated in the Breach of Macedonia Front.

The Military Cemetery is located just outside Polykastro in Karasouli area.

The architect was Robert Gkorimer and today there are more than

1,400 tombs of British soldiers, resting members of the Greek National Army and hand-picked British Army of the Macedonian Front.



Cemetery of British soldiers



Busts of Prime Ministers in Interallied Memorial

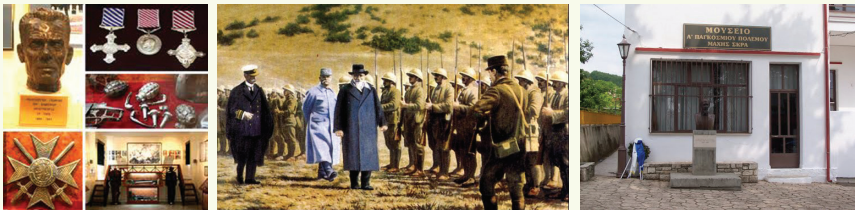


Interallied Memorial in Polykastro

Museum of the historic Skra Battle

The settlement Skra is considered the pilgrimage and site of glory due to the eponymous battle of Skra. In particular, in the dead soldiers Memorial of 1918 battle, every year on 17 May Paeonia honors the dead officers and soldiers of those battles, who belonged to the so-called Greek Division and Cretan Archipelagos Division.

In Skra was established a Museum of World War II in May 2002 with a specially designed area that hosts a significant exhibition of relics, photos, guns, pistols, army equipment, personal belongings and objects of soldiers and historical documents from Macedonian Front of World War II and the decisive for Greek people victorious battle of Skra.



Macedonian Front Museum in Skra

Natural History Museum of Axioupoli



The Natural History Museum was established on June 8, 1997 critically contributing to the cultural and touristic development of Axioupoli and Greece in general.

For four consecutive years, the initiators of the idea worked tirelessly to implement their ambitious vision, creating a Museum of Natural History in Axioupoli. They started with the renovation of the old building of the

Elementary School, to install there the Museum. The museum today includes 6 sections (geology, paleontology, mineralogy, petrology, botany and fauna) and features a number of exhibits mounted in specially designed rooms.

The museum has a fully equipped room offering a digital tour for visitors welcoming many visitors, mainly elementary and secondary school pupils and students, organized groups and cultural associations.



Natural History Museum of Axioupolis



Folklore Museums

The Museum of “Anatolikoromyliotes Polykastrou” Association

Using their artistry, creativity and enthusiasm, the members of the association along with the Development Company of Kilkis SA (ANKI) in the grounds LEADER program, have created the Museum of Folklore Art in an imposing building. In its various rooms exhibits everyday objects, household or objects of vocation use, agricultural tools (wooden and metal), costumes, uniforms or individual items of traditional clothing, some luxury gossamer, furniture and other objects, photos, notes and documents. Along with the archival material, the museum numbered over 500 items, some of which are remarkable with precious historical background.



Folklore Museums of Evropos and Goumenissa

The Museum of Evropos is situated at the first floor of the old primary school (1928) and highlights the cultural –agricultural–folkloric past and history of the region. It presents the lifestyle of residents in relation to the cycle of different local cultures, customs and traditions of the social groups of local population of Evropos (Asia Minor, Thracians, Locals, Pontiac Greeks, Vlachs), as well as the tools used for traditional agricultural works.

The purpose of Alevra family museum in Goumenissa is to preserve the tradition and culture and to introduce the younger generation to the secrets and beauties of popular culture. Most exhibits are folklore - traditional costumes, furniture, tools, decorations, and numerous documents of the nineteenth century, agricultural tools and machinery.

The story of Paeonia inhabitants through forced displacement, migrations and local traditions have bequeathed a rich legacy that is exposed to small folklore museums in the majority of the municipal settlements.



Post Byzantine monuments of the Holy Metropolitan Region of Goumenissa, Axioupolis, Polykastro

The monuments of Byzantine and post-Byzantine period are of particular interest, as you can find some unique samples of the architecture of this type in Greece. These temples despite the subsequent additions and alterations which have undergone, still retain much of their interesting frescoes.

The most important are:

- The Metropolitan Church of St. George of Goumenissa built in 1864. Implementation Model project involving the local community. The fixation, rehabilitation, maintenance and highlighting of the monument realized by NSRF (2007-2013).
 - The Assumption of Mary Church, in Goumenissa, inscription of the last renovation 1802. Fixing, restoration, maintenance and enhancement of the monument completed in 2003 with resources from the third CSF.
 - The Church of Ag. Paraskevi Kastaneri, built the third decade of the 19th century.
 - The Assumption of Mary Church, Koupa, built in the first half of the 19th century.
 - The Church of St. Constantine and Helen, Messia, which became a Christian church in 1924.
 - The Church St. George, Kampochori, which belongs to the type of three-aisle basilica.
 - The Church of St. Constantine and Helen, Valtotopi, built in the mid 19th century.
 - The Church of Ag. Athanasios in the settlement of Karpi, built in the mid 19th century.
 - The Church of Ag. Athanasios in the settlement of Griva, originally built in 817 AD, and reconstructed in 1801, with notable icons and frescoes.
 - The Church of Ag. Kyriaki in Filiria, basilica, built in the first half of the 19th century.
 - The Temple of the Archangels Michael and Gabriel in Gerakona, erected in the first half of the 19th century.
 - The Church of St. Peter and Paul in Pentalofo, built in the mid 19th century.
 - The Church of the Nativity of Mary, in Omalos village, built in the mid-19th in pace Basilica.
 - The Church of St. Peter and Paul in the village Stathi, built in the second half of 19th century.
 - The Church Ag. Dimitrios, Axioupolis, erected in the early 19th century and extended in 1922.
 - The Church Ag. Athanasios, Toumba, built in the early 19th century.
- The Church of St. Nicholas, Gorgopi, built in 1862 and belongs to the type of three-aisle basilica.



St. George Temple in Goumenissa



St. Nicolas Church in Gorgopi



St. Dimitrios Temple in Axioupolis



St. Athanasios Church in Griva



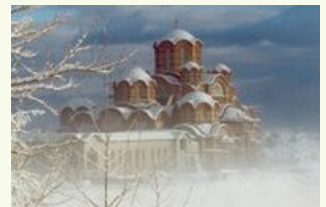
Monasteries and Hermitages

The Monastery of Panagia Goumenissa is a male monastery, the oldest in the region, created in 1346 AD during the period of Byzantine Emperor John V Palaeologus and is the seat of the Holy Metropolis of Goumenissa, Axioupolis and Polykastro. The monastery was religious center of the region during the Ottoman Empire period. The miraculous icon of Panagia of Goumenissa is honored four times a year.



The Monastery of Saints Raphael, Nicholas and Irene 2 km. away from Griva, is grounded in 1992 by Holy Metropolis of Goumenissa, Axioupolis & Polykastro by the Metropolitan Dimitrios. It is strategically located overlooking the magnificent valley of Axios. In the monastery are kept the Holy Relics of Saints Raphael, Nicholas and Irene, St. Mary Magdalene Myrofora and a small piece of the Holy Cross. The grace of saints has healed many pilgrims and religious people.

It attracts thousands of visitors every year from Greece and abroad.



The Sacred Convent of St. Nicodemus of Pentalofos is a dependent monastery of the Monastery of Simonos Petras of Mount Athos, founded in 1981. The main temple is double and the upper level is dedicated to St. Nicodemus and the ground segment to Saints Raphael, Nicholas and Irene. Particularly famous is the hagiography lab of the monastery, which produces icons of excellent quality.

The church services and ceremonies follow the typical methods according to Mount Athos standards.



The Holy Monastery of St. George of Anhydro founded in August 1991 and operates with high supervision of the Bishop of Goumenissa. The capacity is ten nuns and it is located on the ruins of the abandoned village of Anhydro, in a calm hilly region. At the small temple of St. George dated back around mid-19th century, is preserved a remarkable Byzantine decoration with wood carvings, frescoes and icons on the iconostasis and ceiling.



Traditional Architecture of Goumenissa

The historic capital of Paeonia, Goumenissa, is built on the eastern foothills of Mount Paiko at an altitude of 250 m. still preserving its traditional character. It is a viticulture center famous for centuries for its wines with the original brand name. It is well-known for the distinguished typical Macedonian architecture being a peaceful oasis for visitors.

Picturesque streets and old houses in a highly attractive combination with abundant water, dense vegetation, the uniqueness of the landscape and the hospitality of

residents, the area of Goumenissa offers visitors serenity and mental balance. In the town of Goumenissa one hundred and eight (108) houses have been listed as preservables including the old industrial building of Metaxourgeio “Chrysalis” (Silk Elaboration Unit) with the equipment of the old school building, a historical building aged in 1894. Moreover, Goumenissa has a particularly traditional character presented by old Manor Houses and Mansion Lioukas, Sanidas, Toulkeridi, Tregka, Gega, Koupani, Zaikos, Petsanouki, Intos, Ioannou, Balkani, Triakosta, Pazarentzou, Katragkou, Tzakou, Kaldi, Tsimerika, Aidarini, Petsou, Giourgi Alliou.





Wineries of Goumenissa



Paeonia is also known, besides its significant historic route, for the production of exceptional high quality wine and raki. The dry black wine «Goumenissa» has been characterize as a variety of superior quality (NameOrigin of Superior Quality) with fiathful friends and followers of this type of wine worldwide. The variety “Negoska» with bright red color, taste of berry and blueberry, good tannins and gives a sense of freshness in the mouth.

Some of the most known wineries are Boutari, Winery of Aidarinis, Ktima Eftichides, Ktima Tatsis, Ktima Hatzivariti, as well as the Wineries Akrothea, Archontaki vineyards of Poulos, winemakers who advertise the uniqueness of Greek wines and increase local economy’s capacity with their extensive export activities.

Many wine and raki – tsipouro makers are active producers across the grounds of Paeonia.



Traditional Folk Bronze sounds of Goumenissa

The explosive and «bronze» sound, the Balkan imprint music, the fast pace and high skills made them the famous as «Chalkina Goumenissas», reputed inside and outside Greek borders counting numerous collaborations with Greek and foreign musicians, numerous participations in albums and special concerts. Trumpets, trombones, clarinets and drums are the main instruments played by musicians. The appearance of the particular musical color featuring «Chalkina of Goumenissa» is situated along the early 20th century in the West Macedonia region and the Balkans. The musicianship of Goumenissa passes from generation to generation and gradually has been created a strong tradition of brilliant musicians in the region.

The widespread recognition of the unique bronze sound combined with the talent of the musicians, boosted their reputation so the «bronze» travels to America, Australia and almost throughout whole Europe with concerts followed by great success.

The way musicians play various traditional pieces and songs is special, peculiar and intense melody touches the soul of listeners causing euphoria and melancholy at the same time as a result of this “crazy” rhythm. It is noteworthy that many of the musicians are self-taught and regularly participate in traditional celebrations, weddings and events preserving their traditional character and identity.





Daily Excursions

Axios river

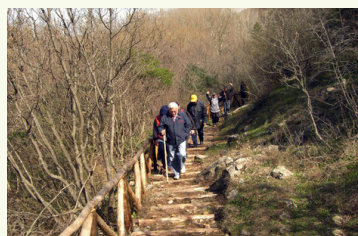
The beautiful walking path from the old water reservoir in St. Panteleimonas to Mikrodasos along the bank of the river Axios offers guests an outstanding tour next to the river that Homer glorified.

In a 12 km route the visitor has the opportunity to enjoy the natural beauty of the landscape and cheerful walks accompanied by the unique sounds of nature.

Across the area live important populations of birds such as herons, different types of swallows, while more than 200 species find refuge near Axios.

Poplars, willows and other trees compose an idyllic picture of the landscape and offer shade to hikers. For the construction of the path were used wood and stone in order for the creation of resting areas for the visitors. The hiking trail is

medium - difficulty and is suitable for family walks, jogging and cycling.



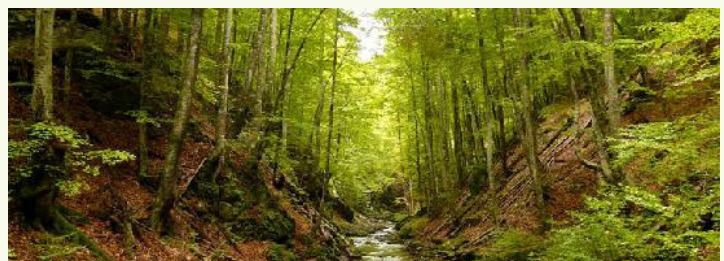
Mount Paiko

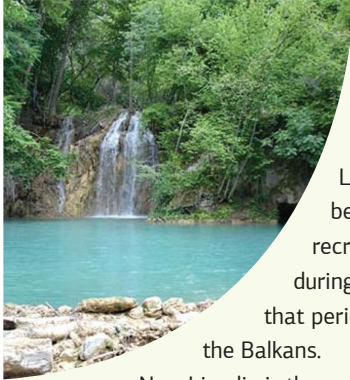
Enchanting during the whole year and under all weather conditions Mount Paiko is ideal for excursions and hiking tours, while in the “green villages” visitors will find traditional cafes and residences, fresh water from natural springs and tasty unique flavors. The highest peak of Mount Paiko is Gola – Tsuka with an altitude



of 1,650 meters, while the most famous is the Skra peak (1,097 m.), where the historical victorious battle of the Greek forces against the Bulgarian Army took place in 1918. In Paiko is located the largest chestnut tree forest throughout the country and thanks to the ideal climatic conditions prevailing in the area and the purified water of the sources, the chestnuts produced have a particularly sweet taste. In Mount Paiko scientists have counted over 57 different species of butterflies and 2,500 species of plants, while the main characteristic of the mountain's fauna is the wild boar. The slopes of the mountain are rich in various types of mushrooms and the visitor will enjoy walks under chestnut trees, beech, pine-trees, oaks, willows and poplars. Throughout the year flowing rivers and streams of the mountain are Stravopotamos, Mavropotamou in Griva, Xeropotamos, the Grand River and the streams of Megalo Rema and Kryo Rema. Anglers and amateur fishermen can practice their skills in some of these streams. Water from the springs of the mountain is drinking and Paiko is ideal for tourists keen in alternative activities and wildlife.

For more information about hiking and climbing trails on Mount Paiko contact the Mountaineering and Hiking Club in Goumenissa (OSPEG) phone 6936 905 266.





Livadia

Livadia is an earthly paradise in altitude of 1.200 m. with beautiful landscapes and organized places and forests for recreation. The mountainous Vlach-originated village of Paeonia during Interwar numbered about 5,500 inhabitants and it was at that period an important commercial center of Northern Greece and the Balkans.

Now Livadia is the perfect destination for mountain lovers for its unspoiled natural beauty. The thick snow in winter is a strong incentive for Winter sports fans, while the green picture combined with cool summer synthesizes the most appropriate place for a variety of leisure activities and relaxation.

Many visitors and people with Vlach origin across N. Greece visit the village for significant Greek Orthodox festivals such as the Holy Apostles Peter and Paul (Soumketrou) and Holy Mary (Stamaria), while folklore dancing groups and cultural associations from all over

Greece participate, honoring the festive with their respectful presence.

The celebration of snow and the Festival of Potato, produced in the fertile plateau are prime opportunities for the visitor to enjoy snowy landscape in combination with local food served at the traditional guesthouse and the small wooden chalet.



Metallio Lake

On the site «Megalo rema» (Great Stream) Mount Paiko is the artificial Metallio (Mine) Lake of Ax-ioupolis.

The lake has a length of 2 km and a depth of 35 meters and offers the chance for fishing and relaxation along the shore.

Access is through forest roads.



Skra Waterfalls

A magical corner of Mount Paiko are the waterfalls of Skra. About 2 km. away from the homonymous village, some small and some longer waterfalls flowing rapidly and causing a pleasant background music, is a real surprise for unsuspected visitors. A few minutes of walking and come into your sight the Blue Lake.



Blue Lake



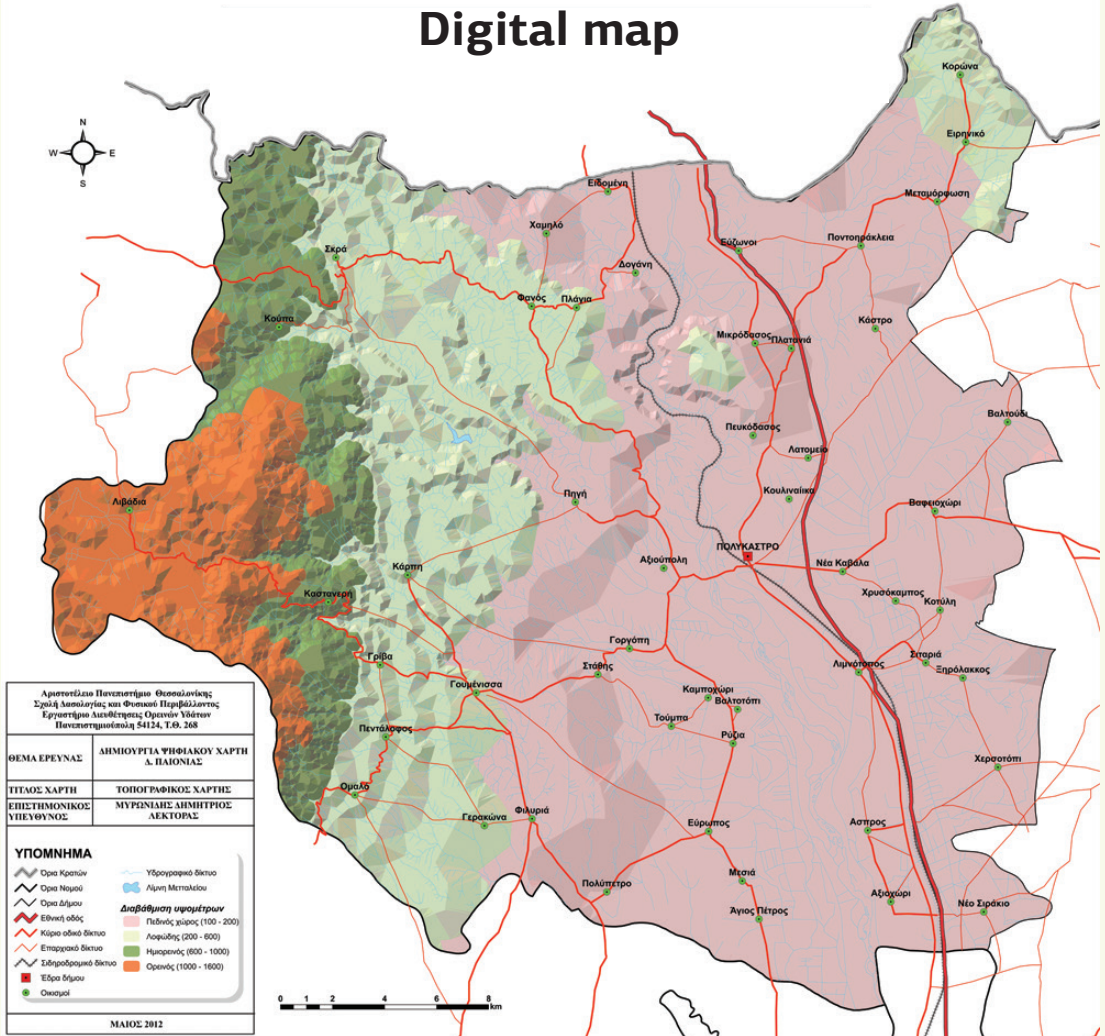
The beautiful scenery, the view of the waterfalls and emerald waters create a feast colorful sensation for the visitor. The blue-green color of the water due to fossilized in the bottom of the lake is really fascinating. Across this pleasant and joyful path you may encounter tables and benches of the Goumenissa Forest Agency.

Evropos swimming pool

A stunning oasis in the valley of Axios is the modern swimming pool of Evropos. In an area of 15 acres the pool is the imaginary place for summer activities and body or soul refreshment. During the period June - August, lifeguards and special trainers offer free seminars of swimming for youth people of the region while the rest of the day the pool is open to the public.



Digital map



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