2.5 Epirus – Greece

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2.5.1 Cultural wine routes in Epirus: dialogue and development routes

2.5.1.1 Introduction: the cultural contents of tourism

The cultures of Europe are interwoven and have influenced one another. The awareness of the specific cultural identity of each country can lead to the awareness of the European cultural identity and its common heritage and foster mutual comprehension. Moreover an efficient cooperation taking into account the protection and the appropriate exploitation of Europe's cultural variety and its shared characteristics certainly constitutes the basic factor underlying the discovery and the understanding of the contemporary European reality, a major lever at its turn for the improvement of the economic and social cohesion and employment. Cultural Tourism as other forms of alternative tourism converges towards a unique direction. The period running from 1990, which saw the European Year of Tourism, until today, witnesses a steadily growing interest regarding the cultural contents of tourism (UNESCO, 1987; COCOSSIS / NIJKAMP, 1995; BOISSEVAIN, 1996; IGOUNENDES, 1996; PAULOPoulos, 1999) Henceforth, through the adoption of appropriate measures, (reinforcement e.g. initiatives for the definition of new cultural routes of tourism), the E.U. aims to gain a better knowledge of the cultural and agricultural traditions of the Regions as to their successful development, stressing at the same time the importance of an efficient organization and a qualitative outcome of cultural tourism. The term efficient organization refers to the insertion of tourism in the community, cultural, development, environmental, etc. policies and the improvement of the cooperation coordination between enterprises, the public bodies and the local administration authorities. The deriving benefits can be of great importance (protection of the cultural heritage, employment in the cultural sector, economic development, holding of the population, increase of the citizens' educational and living standards, advertising and international recognition and so on...). In other countries the support actions for the development of tourism with a cultural content have already been taken.

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2.5.1.2 Towards the cultural routes of wine in Greece

In Greece, although there has been much talk about the importance and the updating of the tourist product aiming at an efficient and qualitative management, tourism with a cultural content\(^1\) is still a quite new concept. Generally the main form of alternative tourism, dispensing once more scarce positive results, was achieved through ecotourism (VAFIADIS / KONTOGIANNIS / PAPAKONSTANTINIDIS, 1992; IGOUNENIDIS, 1996). Nonetheless, more recently, tourism with a cultural and especially ecological content is developing at a brisk pace (AVGERINOU, 1995, 104-111). In any case the tendency towards the cultural touristms encouraged by the agricultural and regional policy of the country, the interest of the public itself, the development instances and the Administration by means of the existing financing resources (Community Funds and National Sources). Furthermore a discussion is under way which suggests a tourist development linked to the paths of civilization, respecting the cultural identity of the endogenous population, and related to the concept of sustainability.

Before presenting the tracing of the cultural Routes of wine in Epirus, it is useful to stress the fact that a region’s cultural heritage isn’t only gauged by the high cultural achievements of the past and the present. The way of life, the culture of every day life, the wine and bread, the pre-industrial technology, the traditional gastronomy and cuisine make up the determinate features of each place’s cultural identity.

To know these features has an important impact on the awareness of the necessity of their maintenance and leads to the awareness of a common European tradition and cultural experience. History shows that the European routes\(^2\) on which proliferated e.g. wine, oil, and other food products were essentially routes which carried cultural goods, ideas, techniques, religions, world theories and on its crossroads we can suppose that ancient civilizations met (LOGOTHETIS, 1975). At the same time, these were goods which through their social circulation wrote their own biography (KOPYTOFF, 1986, 64-91; APPADURAI, 1986, 3-63), inevitably defined by history and the cultural tradition from their country of origin. Seferis said that if you decomposed Greece, you would be left with a vintage (DETIENNE, 1993), an olive and a ship.

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\(^1\) For an anthropological approach of tourism and the theoretical discussion which is prompted on the subject of the made up substance of the cultural offered „product“ or its „authentic“ existence and the importance which the cultural construction of authenticity or the made up attraction acquire for the tourist himself (GALANI / MOUTAFI, 1995, 28-39; COHEN, 1988, 317-378).

\(^2\) Wine consumption regards the whole of Europe. We find of course differentiated consumption and cultural behaviors between North and South. In the north, e.g. wine is drunk in great quantities and preferred with a high degree of spirit content. It isn’t accessible to all, at least until the 18th century, but there is a high consumption rate. This last fact presupposes the existence of an important commerce from the south through sea and other water ways. Succeeding to the apparition of new manners which distinguished the social and cultural behavior of the powerful and secured the conservation of the hierarchical and social distances (as the quality was based on the age of the wine, e.g. the refined taste, production of Champaign, the way of serving and drinking etc.), wine in the north of Europe, for a long period, became the luxury of the poor. As regards the production though, it covers the whole of the Mediterranean countries and an area which expanded consistently to the north through a big artery starting from Liguria and ending in Crimea. Outside Europe, vintage and wine followed the Europeans in their long travels and later on after much insistence it was imbedded in Mexico, Chili, Peru, and along the Atlantic between the old and the new world. (ANAGNOSTAKIS, 2000, 252-265 where we find the charts of the itineraries from the 15th to the 17th century). An insistent refusal was encountered by the Islam although there was a certain diffusion of wine but under the conditions of the illegal traveler. (BRAUDEL, 1995, 244-250).
According to Maytvejevich Bredrag in his „Mediterranean Survey“, we are talking about the products which since their long historical itinerary nourish the spirit (MATVEJEVICH, 1998). More in particular, referring to the vintage and grape, he notes that the leaves, the vines and the clusters which are represented repeatedly on Greek, barbarian, Christian and pagan monuments, on Roman sculptures, in the art of the Middle Ages and on Byzantine tombstone sculpture, on altars, on temples, Christian icons and the kneeling desks are encountered in the adoration and laudatory writings of the Scriptures.

2.5.1.3 The mountainous region of Epirus

The mountain regions in Greece cover more than 42% of the total state. Actually Greece is the first mountainous country in the EE. Although the mountain areas of Greece are abundant in various resources, as these concentrate the most of the natural resources (64% of the forests, 51% of the pastureland, 18% of the agrarian land), only 9% of the population lives in the mountainous regions and 37% of them are over than the 65 years old (inventory 1991). Specifically in Epirus the 90% of its territory is mountainous (Fig. 1). The geo-morphological character of Epirus created special conditions which affect the pursuit of human activities and specific cultural characteristics. Nevertheless, looking at the history of the policy for the development of the agricultural and moreover of the mountainous regions in Greece, it became obvious that the mountainous and inferior areas did not constitute a separate subject of specialized national development policy, that had been planned specifically for them and according to their special problems and to their endogenous dynamic. Actually the perspective of viable development in mountainous areas was reinforced in the last decade which put emphasis on the endogenous power of the mountainous world, on the activation of this power as well as on the creation of an attitude towards continuous development. Epirus has the internal dynamic to materialize this type of development. Therefore the cultural tourism that is based on the history and the culture of the place, and on the respect of the local cultural identity could contribute to this.
2.5.1.4 From the tourist wine routes to the cultural routes

The tracing of cultural wine routes can constitute one of the most relevant actions in Epirus for the exploitation of its culture and for the viable development of its region (Komilis, 1995, 77-80; Kokkonis, 1995, 21-27). Until now, in Epirus, in Greece and elsewhere\(^3\), a form of „wine tourism” has been developed which is mainly centered on the visits of vintages, wine distilleries, the visitor’s tasting of delectable wine products and the local cuisine. In most cases, an attempt has been made to develop wine routes exhibiting the local cultural characteristics whereas simultaneously this results in the development of ecotourism. The combination of these activities and other features with the acquaintance of wine offer the possibility to develop other tourist packages like e.g. gastronomy and wine, architecture and wine (in regions with a rich architectural heritage), sport and wine, celebrations and wine, etc. As an example one could mention the Italian Wine tourism Association (Movimento del Turismo del Vino) founded in 1993, consisting of almost 600 wine fabricants, restaurant owners, journalists and members of the Mass Media, which has promoted the above-mentioned combined logic, achieving promising results in the implementation areas.

In Greece, until now there are many vintages open to the visitor in Santorini, Rhodes, Crete, Attic, and of course in Epirus. In 1997 was founded the Union „Greek cities of Wine” which comprehend Naousa, Tirnavos, Sitia, Ioannina, Atalanti, Acharnes, Spata, Aigio, Makropoulo, Agrostoli, Rhode, Heraklion in Crete. Have also been developed in Macedonia (fig. 3) in the Peloponese, and have been programmed for the Attica area. In addition it could be noted that the Wine roads of Macedonia been renamed the „Wine routes of the North of Greece” and include with this enlargement Epirus.

\(^{3}\) Several organizations have been founded aiming to the creation of Nets and Associations for the reinforcement of the relation between wine and tourism, e.g.:
- AREV (Assembly DAS Regions Europeas Vitcolas)
- European Council on wine regions,
- RECEVIN (European wine producing town network ),
- Multimedia net Dionysus of European wine producing areas,
The Victorian Counsel of Wine Tourism in Australia, etc.
The tourist wine routes in relation to the vintage and the wine distilleries can be transformed into cultural tourist routes if the object „vintage-wine“ is considered as being part of a vaster historical and cultural procedure. The „cultural itinerary“ differs from the classical sightseeing tour in the sense that it challenges the visitor to follow a mental route in space and time intertwining and inserting the diverse features in the context of the main theme, of wine in our case. After following this procedure, he gets a better grasp of the historical background and the actual living conditions and becomes acquainted to the cultural identity of the host place. The route, e.g. of Epirotic wine should guide the visitor towards the discovery of the local economic, social and cultural reality, introduce him to the understanding of the topics but also of the interior, invisible, cultural activities leading to the conservation of one or another technical wine fabrication procedure, which formed a special economic behavior or the particular way of drinking in Epirus. To illustrate the latter, I will give an example. It is e.g. well known that in the early Epirotic wine tradition which still holds today, especially in the family production (area of Zitsa), the demi-sec taste predominated. This taste could be considered the final product of an accumulated experience in step with the productive and cultural commitments of the Epirotic country and landscape. The organization of the time of the community followed the traditional rhythms of the seasonal cycles and the languid rhythms of the Orient. The sweet taste of the epirotic wine obliges it to be drunk slowly, with magnitude, at the occasion of the regular private and public celebrations, at weddings and at the welcome dinners for the hosts, in compliance with the slow and as well almost saddening sounds of the Epirotic music with its slow, weighty culturally dance step echoing the more general rhythms of traditional life (fig. 4). Another example is retrieved from the people’s insistence to keep following a pre-industrial, economic and social way of life, a life conception expressed through the production and the distribution procedure of wine and tsipouro.

Women from Zitsa

![Women from Zitsa](Fig. 4)

On the one hand the insistence of a home-made wine production can be interpreted as a retarded, not modern phase of its economy (fig. 5).

Remaining closed to the pre-industrial way of production and consumption

![Remaining closed to the pre-industrial way of production and consumption](Fig. 5)
A different approach on the other hand which locates the item „wine“ in its social and cultural context would lead to the discovery that the people attach a great importance to their economic position and the local social action of „drinking“. The self-sufficiency e.g. which secures them the home-made wine production allow them to make small or big expenses for prestige and by this means to safeguard the identity of the landlord in the Community and in a wider circle of landowners. „Noikokoiris“, the landlord, is the one who can correspond among others spontaneously and with largesse to the established ritual practices of offer and treat, challenged at the occasion of the harvest and tsipouro celebration, to the generous treat and the symposiums of men in the village pub. Other social and festive wine and tsipouro (the Greek version of the Italian grappa) celebrations play an important role in gender identity (PAPATAXIARCHIS, 1990, 338-339; GEFOU-MADIANOU, 1992, 108-136; SCHOLIERS, 2001, 3-22), individual and collective identity (fig. 6).

The above examples convey to illustrate that the cultural tourist wine routes must give the visitor the possibility to discover and understand which importance and value have or acquire the customs, the value and the significance of things in a given community.

### 2.5.1.5 The vintage and wine in Epirus

Today, the main wine producing areas in Epirus are situated in the region of Zitsa and Metsovo. These were places where the mountainous wine and vintage tradition continued after succeeding to the plains coastline version. The saved monuments of adoration of Dionysus e.g. in Ambrakia, Bournoto and the actual Albania and elsewhere, the historical references to the development of the vintage occupation in the region of Nikopolis in the Roman period, reinforce the standpoint that the Route of Dionysos crossed the coastline territories. The first Byzantine church architectural findings and other related sources witness the expansion of the productivity in the same space whereas at the same time they stress the habits, the relationships, the resistance as well as the cultural syncretism of the ancient and the Christian world apparent as much on the level of the every-day life as on the cultural level (EPIRUS, 1997, 98, 174-181, 142, 152, 139, 142).

I am not in the position to ascertain when and how the vintage zone was transferred and founded in the mountainous zone and especially in Zitsa. More generally, the studies of the agricultural economy, society and civilisation of Epirus (LAIQI-THOMADAKI, 1987) will not find rich and interesting information until after the 12th century AC and especially the 13th. Therefore we can presuppose that the travels of Dionysus in Greece were rather scarce due to ecological conditions. As a result, local varieties were inclined to design their own special productive, wine distillery and cultural itineraries, worth to be traced on their own.

From the advent of the period of the Ottoman occupation, the vintage area seems installed in the mountainous inland, while the vintage occupation sector gradually receded due to the pressures and the changes brought about by the prevailing landowning relationships in the
plains and the rest of the Countryside (ANTONIADOU-BIBIKOU, 1979). The mountainous area of Epirus seems able to produce the amounts which cover the family and the home-made production needs, the demand of the enlarged Epirotic country and perhaps to contribute at a small scale to the export. Beyond the area of Zitsa, history and collective memory refer to the vintages of the area of Konitsa, Pogoniani, Argyrokastro, Premeti, Delvino, Zagori (Aristi), Grammenochoria, and Arta. Especially in the area of Zitsa prevails the image of a rich and diverse grape and wine production (THESPROTOU / PSALIDA, 1964; GEORGiadis, 1889; PAPASTAVROU, 1896, KOSMA, 1998). I am not entitled to give numbers nor refer to the production techniques neither to detail the character of the Epirotic variety „debina“ which secured the appellation of controlled origin of the Zitsa wine or other varieties like „Votsiki“ or „Bekari“, „Vlahikou“, which prevail in other areas (GEORGIADIS, 1889, LABMERT-GOAS, 1993, 223-236). I will nevertheless make an attempt though to travel in mind and spirit to the natural and cultural environment of the traditional community of the 19th century which could be part of the cultural tourist Epirotic wine route.

2.5.1.6 The tracing of the main cultural itineraries of epirotic wine

The choice of this specific historical period was dictated a) by the fact that there were enough written and oral sources on the economic community and the wine cultures in order to facilitate the research and the historical documentation on the cultural route and b) by the ascertainmnet that the cultural past of this period determines in many ways the present. I will confine myself to wine culture and refer as an example to the symbolic rhetoric which circumscribes the labeling of many Epirotic wines, like „Kira Frosini“, „Lord Byron“, „Poem“, names which at least are references and reminders of the cultural history and the past of this period. Making use of the historical research and the oral testimonies as the memory of the people, we are suggesting the tracing of two main cultural itineraries following the itinerary in the period of the 18th and 19th century of the then used continental roadnet of Epirus. The final tracing will certainly be the product of an exhaustive interdisciplinary research and of the cooperation with the cultural, local and development bodies.

One itinerary has as an ultimate destination the area of Zitsa and its extension until Delvinaki, Argyrokastro, Albany and therefrom Europe (MAKRIS / PAPAGEORGIOU, 1990, 134-234). The other itinerary concerns Metsovo and its roads towards Thessaly, Macedonia (Map 7)
On these two cultural routes, the visitor is challenged to follow “in spirit” the merchants and caravan travelers, to notice the pathways and the many stone-made bridges (MANTA, 1987), the landscape, the cultivation, the land partition. He should as well be informed for the hostels, namely for the places of the communication and interaction, the places of the „kiratzides“ of their food and wine (MAKRIS / PAPAGEORGIOU, 1990, 99-123). He is invited to make a halt after a small detour to the principal holy places, monasteries, churches, especially those which were transformed in monastic wine centres. The development of special conditions in the agricultural production paired to other equally determinant features elevated the monasteries and the churches to powerful land proprietors in Zitsa (Prophet Elias), in Metsovo (Saint Nicholas), in Monastery of Molivoskepastos, etc. Actually the vintages and the wines mostly belonged to the monasteries. A parallel cultural route could be a monastic wine unit (Fig. 8).
A parallel cultural route could be a monastic wine unit

2.5.1.7 The cultural itinerary of Zitsa: detecting „The travelers route”

As a departure point the town of Ioannina, the city of myths, culture and education, of industrial production and commerce, one can walk, go on horse or donkey back, travel by bike or take the old road to Zitsa, taken by Ali Pasha and his eminent European visitors when he encountered them in his nearby serail of Zitsa, the road taken by merchants, travelers of those times, especially those who developed a certain type of poetic voyage. In short, we may note that Zitsa became known for its wine, its monastery and its natural beauty which so much inspired the poet „Lord Byron“ who dedicated many verses of his poem „Child Harold“ to Zitsa. His poetical discourse and the references to the country of his fellow-traveler J.C. Hobhouse about the country and the Community of Zitsa, caught the interest of many travelers of the 19th century who integrated in their travels the passage by Zitsa, the Monastery of Prophet Elias, the „Theogefiro“ (meaning the Bridge of God) and the „waterfalls“ (KOSMAS, 1998, 33-50). Zitsa, beyond its wine distilleries and the vintages, its monastery, is repudiated for its educational tradition, for its rich cultural tradition which is dynamically expressed in the songs of the women, the hospitality, the local cuisine and the superb natural environment. This cultural itinerary would be call: „The travelers route“ (Fig. 9).
2.5.1.8 The cultural itinerary of Metsovo: detecting the Vlach mountain communities

The cultural itinerary of Metsovo incises its own local history and reveals an aspect of the cultural identity of the Vlach communities (fig. 10).
It will transcribe the economic and community characteristics which classed Metsovo among the most bestowed mountainous towns based on the commercialization of the mountainous production, on trading and transport. It will show its mountainous handicraft tradition and sensibility expressed through the weaving tradition (Fig. 11), woodcarving and religious and popular architecture (SKAFIDA, 1952, 62-82, ROKOU, 1985).

Metsobitissa with her traditional costume

Fig. 11

It will show in the end the continuity which comes forth from the contemporary cultural production, the endogenous dynamic which succeeds in implementing a viable development by means of various types of alternative tourism, based on the positive exploitation of the natural and cultural heritage.

2.5.1.9 Conclusions: cultural tourism and the mountainous development

Having „Wine and the vintage“ as its cultural reference point, combined to the various incentives offered by the country itself but also to the interventions, activities and initiatives which will be inserted in the whole of the cultural adventure either in Zitsa or in Metsovo, the cultural route will finally recommend the historical transformed units, the historical „continuum“ in time and space. These historical „continuums“ go beyond the State administrative boundaries and limits and witness the common cultural experiences and their actions which naturally connect this cultural route to other areas of Europe. The above-mentioned suggestions for the outlining of the cultural wine routes with a touristical content, aim to improve the knowledge of the local cultural past of Epirus and its local development. It is also worth mentioning that the main contributors working on the tracing and the realization of the above aims are a) scientists and specialists who will trace the routes following defined general and particular criteria regarding the historical facts, they define the conceptual contents of the past and the present which certify the identity of the cultural route in time and space and enliven the cultural past cautiously inserting the contemporary uses in the suggested cultural route as well as the Policies, Administrative regional and local authorities, enterprises, Mass Media.

The geomorphologic and anthropological-geographic characteristics of Epirus, its demography, its infrastructure, the occupation levels of its population classify this region among the most disadvantaged regions of Greece and the EU. I refer to the pro capita GNP of the Region of Epirus which corresponds to the lowest position of the average pro capita GNP of the rest of the country. It amounted to 64.3 % of the average pro capita GNP of the country in
1994 occupying the last position for the 13 Regions of Greece. Epirus, with a correspondent pro capita GNP of 43.8% of the E.U (1996), is the poorest Region of the E.U. The presentation of the geomorphologic, anthropological -geographic and the description of the actual situation and the political development of mountainous areas is made by K. Pappas in the article contained in the present volume. The reasons for this slow development are principally attributed to geographical-environmental factors, the resulting problem of isolation and demographic factors. Nevertheless, recent studies and evaluations about mountainous communities and their civilizations show that geographical-environmental factors don’t necessarily constitute the determinant features of economic and cultural backwardness neither are they the unique cause of an abnormal insertion in the development procedures and the modernization.

It isn’t our present scope to present the features of a prosperous economic and cultural history of Epirus during its long historical odyssey, but this doesn’t prevent us from remembering that this same rough, stony and infertile country elaborated new ways for a subtle adaptation to mountain life related to the question of its survival and its development and molded its specific cultural identity. The constituent features of this identity are effectively composed by the adaptation skills to ecological parameters, the people’s faculty to move, the logic of coexistence with all the different ethnic groups which share the enlarged space. The rupture and the exclusion so thus known by the mountainous population during the 20th century, should be considered as the inevitable consequence of an assimilation procedure and not only as the result of the lack of productive resources due to geographical-environmental parameters. It is relevant to stress that today these same features constitute the pillars on which the cultural identity of the Epirotic world has been built. They also constitute the features for the solving of the crisis and the creation of alternative development policies differing from the ones who had initially been foreseen (BURGEL, 1987; DAMIANAKOS / ZAKOPOULOU / KASIMIS / NITSIAKOS, 1997; BADA, 2003). During the last decade, we notice e.g. the apparition of an endogenous local survival dynamic. This dynamic has been reinforced by several programs (e.g. Leader I, II, Complete agricultural space development, Local initiatives, etc.) which serve local needs, give specific incentives to the mountainous zones and are mainly based on the exploitation of the endogenous human resources. As a result, the desertification tendency in some areas has receded, ecological tourism has become a new trend, and relevant cultural activities have been planned. Moreover, the inhabitants of these communities note that the new economic activity of alternative tourism, as a complementary activity, would guarantee their mountainous development and could give a great number of benefits such as employment of people in cultural activities, holding of the population, increase of the living and educational standards, international recognition and so on, as long as new ways evolve for the management of the cultural capital and the environment in general (COMMISSION OF THE EUROPEAN COMMUNITIES (CEC ), 1992).

Nevertheless, the above-mentioned encouraging tendencies aren’t sufficient on their own to „canalize” the normal integration of the mountainous natural and cultural environment. They although give us the frame in which the development should take place, giving incentives to the regional or agricultural policies concerning the path to follow. As a consequence, the reinforcement and the exploitation of the local Communities themselves, the respect of the cultural physiognomy of the area and the correct use of the mountainous cultural and natural heritage constitute the required conditions for the perspective of a sustainable development of the mountainous areas. This perspective is inherent to cultural tourism which as a cultural and economic procedure must compromise with the possibilities, the limits and the cultural affinities of the mountainous people themselves. Cultural tourism is for the time being limited for all the prosperity the region has to offer in this sector. The monuments of the antiquity, the Byzantine, post-Byzantine and more recent monuments, monasteries, bridges, traditional architecture, the lively expression of a popular tradition constitute the most important field for the
development of the cultural routes mainly based on the culture of wine. Up to now, the development perspectives of their itineraries encourage the increasing tendencies of inland tourists who are attracted by a kind of „soft“ tourism. It should be stressed, exemplary, that the activities related to soft forms of tourism, especially in the Prefecture of Ioannina, are varied and quite developed (PAPPAS / DALLA / LOLIS at the present volume). The effort of numbering all the types of alternative forms of tourism is vain due to their varied and numerous expressions. One refers indicatively to the implementation of ecotourism, winter tourism, nature lovers and ecology, baths cures, mountaineering, adventure tourism, athletics, conference tourism which cover many areas and are implemented in Metsovo, Zagorohoria, Konitsa, Ioannina and at a lesser extent in Pogoniani) Their development in some areas could provide the possibility of a cooperation with other beautiful Prefectures so that the Prefecture of Ioannina would constitute the epicenter of a completed circle.

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2.5.2 The route of olive and wine through the European culture and into the paths of popular culture of Epirus, with the prospect of development

2.5.2.1 The region of Epirus

Epirus is one of the thirteen (13) geographic departments of the Greek dominion, placed in its north-western part. It consists of four prefectures: the prefecture of Ioannina, Thesprotia, Preveza and Arta and possesses a geographically strategic position in the Mediterranean. It is surrounded by the Ionian Islands, Sterea Hellas, Thessaly, Macedonia, Albania and Italy. It is the link between the two Greek seas, Ionian and Aegean, and at the same time the pillar on which continental Greece is supported. 74.27 % of its land is mountainous, 15.07 % is semi-mountainous and 10.66 % is lowland.

The region’s mountainous landscape is characterised by the mountain range of Pindos, which has a rugged terrain. However this particular natural environment is not isolated, barren and unapproachable but on the contrary is hospitable for man, who has demonstrated a long presence in the area, intense activation and also social, cultural and historical intervention.

Epirus’s typical Mediterranean mountainous region plays a distinct part in the economical history of Balkans, as it constitutes a traditional crossroad of nomadic, highland and local populations, of scholars and tradesmen, of pastoral pathways and road networks, especially of economic mentalities which blend exchange with self-sufficiency, voluntary transfer of wealth with the obligatory one, atomistic economy with social policy.

It is a historic place in which, during antiquity, various cities and sanctuaries were developed, such as Dodoni, Amvrakia and Nikopolis. Epirus also had a particular presence during Christian Byzantium, the acme of which had been Despotato of Epirus and managed to radiate in culture even under the five century Ottoman domination.

The population of Epirus, approximately 350,000 people, was not altered more than 12 - 15 % through various periods of the 20th century and its biggest part is rural. In the ’90s an intensive abandonment of the countryside is observed. At the time being the prefecture of Ioannina has 177,137 settled inhabitants, the prefecture of Arta 97,265, the prefecture of Preveza 69,743 and the prefecture of Thesprotia 52,587.

The average social income was one of the lowest during the Interwar period and it has been maintained at this level up to our days in comparison with the European countries: In 2001 Epirus was one of the regions of the EU that had the lowest per capita GNP. The composition of gross value of agricultural production shows the same resistance. It is characteristic that the Gross National Product (GNP) per capita from the primary sector is 20 % higher than the national GNP.

There is harmony between marginal productivity and occasional cost, which is justified by the fact that Epirus can be effective even if it’s poor. In the alternative cost of work, which is an element that constitutes economic expression, is latent a long-lasting behaviour of the people living in Epirus: movement, hiring,
additional work. The utilisation of animal or machine is a decision. Epirus's integration in the poorest regions of Europe can not be verified easily by the traditional composition of factors of production and it is also difficult to prove it’s differentiation from other Greek regions, when simultaneously mentalities that penetrate primitive and innovatory approaches of economic interpretation are verified.

Ioannina approaches the average picture of national economy with a high consumption of electricity, a prograde perception of the saving available and number of taxed people, taking into consideration the prefecture's income. The prefectures of Arta and Preveza have on economy that derives from cultivation, while the economy of Thesprotia is shaped by the income that brings forward the role of the prefecture as a frontier station between the marine section and the road net, due to its position in the Balkan area. The rural society presents its additionalities in economy and its mentalities are stable and effectively articulated in relation with everything that is not provided plentifully by the place.

Bearing in mind the principle that it is the knowledge of the local history that has the most important role in the promotion of objectives which have to do with the economic and political dimension, we will seek to mention (in frame of history, of description of the marked situation mainly though of development) certain elements, that concern:

a) the cultivation of the vine, the wine and the two wine producing areas of Epirus, Metsovo and Zitsa (see Konstantina Bada’s paper in the same volume),
b) the cultivation of olive placing emphasis on their cultivation in Epirus,
c) the tourism in Epirus in order to present afterwards the routes that we propose for the projection of the local culture and the promotion of tourism, on fundamental axes of routing the wine and the olive.

Brief data on the history of vine and wine

In its wild form, vine was part of man’s nourishment/nutrition for 7,500 years. The first vineyard’s cultivation for the production of wine began 6,000 years ago in the regions of Caucasus and Mesopotamia, while the first wine producers were the Hittites, the Sumerians, the Egyptians and the Greeks, particularly the Minoans, who got the vine from Egyptians approximately in 2,800 B.C. Another version claims that the cultivation of the vine was propagate by the Phoenicians to the Greeks approximately at the same era.

The God of wine was Dionysus or Bacchus, who inspired many myths and was worshipped through many feasts, like Great and Small Dionysian. The Greek wine trade spread through the entire Mediterranean, up to the Iberian Peninsula and the Black Sea. The Romans got familiar with the wine through the Greek settlers and the indigenous Etruscans, somewhere in the 8th century B.C. They improved the cultivating and wine industry techniques, dominating the market in this way until the end of antiquity. In the time after the collapse of Rome, viticulture passed a period of regression. Clergymen and monks contributed to the maintenance, rescue and distribution of viticulture and the wine industry during the Roman and the Byzantine period, but also during the period of Turkish domination.

The Greek viticulture, in the period of the Revolution of 1821, suffered almost absolute destruction, but afterwards, the cultivated areas were restored in short time; also their number was increased. By the middle of the 20th century a second disaster had befallen, owing to the epidemic of phylloxera, which affected Macedonia and Epirus, and to the turbulent historical incidents.

As for the modern Greek wine industry, the essential development of bottled wine in Greece is placed in the decade of ’60s, when the first investments in installations and mechanical equipment were made. These efforts became more intensive in the last fifteen years and brought about a spectacular improvement on the domestic bottled wines. At the same time the Agricultural Ministry defined the regions entitled to produce wine with name of origin.
The economy of viticulture – employment – existing infrastructure

The extents of vineyards in the Greek territory are in the order of 132,000 ha (records of data 1998). The rate of viticulture decreases in percentage 10 % annually.

By comparing the data available for the area of Greek vineyards with the corresponding countries, members of the EU, our country is placed among the last locations of the list, way behind countries like Spain, for example, (1,210,000 ha) and France (987,000 ha).

With regard to the geographic distribution of Greek land, (records of data 1996) the biggest number of vineyards are placed in Crete (293,485 m²) while Peloponnesus follows with 259,567 m², the region of Western Greece (195,804), Thessaly with 62,330 m², while Epirus is way behind with 7,000 m².

From the body of vineyards, the 45 % is held by wine vineyards; while in the rest of these expanses cultivate grapes that give table wine and raisin. The V.Q.P.R.D. varieties cover the average area of about 5,000 m² in Greece whereas in EU is 11,000 – 70,000 m² and the table wine varieties cover 4,000 m² in Greece and 7,000 – 35,000 m² in EU.

The varieties which are intended to table wine occupy approximately the 80 % of the total wine vineyards’ extent, marking a fall in the region of 13.4 % since 1988. At the same time an important fact is the amplification of the share of quality wine varieties, although it demonstrates respectively a fall in the region of 2.6 %. This fall is mainly due to the proportion of the subsidized uprooting, which the EU implemented, in order to cut down the production and the accumulated fodder. In Greece there are 180,000 vine cultivators (records of 1998) in a total of 668,766 people working for agriculture.

In European Union we find countries with a strong presence in the vine-wine branch, such as Portugal, France, Italy, Spain; even also northern countries like Germany and Austria are developing viticulture and wine but they can not compete with the countries mentioned above.

For the EU the vine-wine branch/section is really important as EU is the leading power globally since the EU countries achieve the 55 % of the global wine export (EU possesses 74.6 % of the global wine trade value in the market share where Italy possesses 26.3 %, France 24.4 %, Spain 13.1 % and Greece 0.9 %).

Besides the strength of the European wine production is characterized by the fact that 37.3 % of the wine produced corresponds to quality wines which come from specific vinicultural zones.

The fact that Greece possesses just a 0.9 % of the global wine market shows that the main problems have to be confronted at national level, so that the markets, to which the Greek wine products apply, will develop and expand.

Among others, the organization of informative exhibitions, that could attract the producers as well as the public, the support of the effort aiming at the creation of joint institutions of collaboration and of their expansion at national, regional and European level as well as the contact with other branches, like tourism, could assist in the deep exploration of the structural problems, which exist in the branch and eventually could help in its reinforcement.
The cultivation of vine in Epirus

In Epirus (see Konstantina Bada’s paper in the same volume) there are two main viticultural zones, in the region of Zitsa and Metsovo, in the prefecture of Ioannina, where in an area of approximately 7,000 m² vines are cultivated for the wine production (based on data of 1998). The wine produced by the Zitsa Corporation, the Glinavos wine factory in Zitsa and the Averof estates-Strofilia in Metsovo is of good quality, both OPAP wines and other and score a commercial success. Characteristically high is also the trend of domestic wine making.

Given the good quality of the produced wine and the stronger competition, the axes in which the branch should move are the modernization of the available units, having as motto the improvement of quality, and the evolution of strategic promotion of the products.

Metsovo

The political, economic and geographic significance of this town, which is situated on the saddle of Pindos, in combination with rich livestock-farming led the region of Metsovo to prosperity, with main characteristics being the flourishing of small industries and trade, factors that have contributed to the general intellectual and cultural development of the local societies. The wholesale dealers of Metsovo founded commercial firms on a wide geographic scale (Livorno, Vienna, Constantinople, Alexandria, Moscow, Venice, Odessa etc) and at the same time by using their wealth strengthened not only their homeland but also supported the national idea with some significant charities, an act that shows their patriotism. In the modern times a large amount of money was given infrastructures in order for the community to survive. Among them is the foundation of wine factories. The viticulture-vinification of this region is perceived years ago and is directly related to the monasteries placed there. One of them is the monastery of Saint Nikolas, which was particularly loved and taken care of a man who loved his country called Evangalos Averof-Tositsas. It is placed low, in the gully below Metsovo (on the way to Anilio). It is not known when it was built. The date that was found written on a corner-stone probably refers to a renovation. It had been very rich (a wooden barrel which contained 12,000 oacades (unit of weight) of wine). On the mountainside below the monastery there is an enormous vineyard.

It is a pretty big cluster of verandahs, cells, barns, cellars / basements and also has a „room” where the writer Evagelos Averof wrote many of his books and emphasized among other things the importance of viticulture for the development of the area, the economic and the cultural development.

Zitsa

The land morphology (low hilly formations, plateaus, flat inclines) and the mild climate that during summertime provides a protracted period of dryness (Ionian breeze effect) allow the growth of sensitive cultivations and mainly of viticulture. This is how the vine was developed in this area, from the historical point of view. There has been testimony to the flourish of viticulture since the 18th century. It is not by chance the fact that the monasteries are situated in this part of this wide area (south-southwest). The monastery Pateron, Pallouri, Panagias, Kalogria”, Saint-Lia, Zitsa’s position on a road axis that led to Albania and also served as contact between the neighbouring villages, led Zitsa to an economic development, which was assisted even more by the trade that was expanded by the inhabitants of Vlachia, Constantinople, Asia Minor, Egypt. The trade and culture evolution, phenomena interwoven with emigration and the Greeks living abroad, led the region to a great development owing to their contribution. A decline of the area followed in the modern years, because of the fact that viticulture went through a crisis (by reason of phulloxera) and
the people emigrated as the changes in the road-network detracted the important trade functions, that were achieved in the past.

Brief data on the history of the olive

The olive has been known to man since antiquity. Its appearance and cultivation go back to the prehistoric era. However nobody can testify for certain which way it spread.

De Candolle writes in his work „Origines de plantés cultivées (Bibliothèque scientifique internationale 222 - 227)”, that the olive has been known since 4,000 B.C and that its birthplace might be Syria, while Pellatier believes that its homeland is the Asia Minor coasts. From this place it spread through various Mediterranean countries.

The Greeks made its cultivation known to Sicily, south Italy and south France and later the Romans spread it through their empire.

During the time of the Byzantine Empire the olive was one of the cultivations in the Ionian region, though not the most important, as the cultivation of vine and cereals was prevalent.

In south Italy the land reclamation of the self-sown vegetation and the beginning of the landscape configuration of today, began with the systematic planting of olive trees by the Byzantine monks, who founded monasteries - more than 400 - on their way through the region during the Byzantine occupation (6th - 11th century). The work of the Byzantine monks contributed to the spreading of the olive over vast expanses, particularly in the coastal areas, as they were cultivated with patience.

The systematic cultivation in the Ionian Islands started at the end of 16th - beginning of the 17th century, when Venice became the greatest Mediterranean power. The cultivation of the olive passed from that place to Epirus after 1718, when the Venetians dominated Preveza, Parga, Vonitsa, Sagiada, which had been the most important cities on the Ionian coast.

Particularly in Preveza Venetians made double profit, as they replaced the oak-trees woods with olive plantations and also used the timber for the shipbuilding of the empire's new ships. A part of this olive plantation in Preveza is still preserved and it has been elevated to a historic monument so that it won’t vanish in the extension of the city.

The economy of olive plantation / cultivation – employment - existing infrastructure

Through the study of the economic and the social aspect of the modern oil-industry on Greek and also international level we can conclude the following:

The economic and export importance of olive oil is great both at an international and national level. Olive production all over the world forms nowadays a main employment for 25 million people and a partial for another 35. Consequently it occupies and provides 60 million people with income. From these 60 million 27 % live in European Mediterranean countries, 71 % in the countries of Southern Eastern Mediterranean and just 2 % in other non Mediterranean countries. However the production in each one of the groups of countries mentioned above is reversely proportional, as the first of them produce 76 % of the world production, the second ones only 20 % and the third 4 %, a fact that is owed to advanced methods and technologies that have been produced and are put to use in the first and marginal climatic conditions (insufficiency of rainfall, barren soil) that prevail in some of the countries of the second group.

Greece with an average annual production of olive oil of at least 350,000 t is the third oil-producing country in the world right after Spain and Italy and the second or even some times the first country in the world of olive oil export. This happens because Greece exports a total quantity of olive oil that reaches the 130,000 t annually and forms almost 40 % of the total production. Consequently Greece is one of the olive oil producing countries that have a strong export character, and even with the unfavorable conditions of distribution and trade of the product that are now in effect, eventually imports roughly 360 million € exchange annually of its export.
80% of Greek olive oil in the foreign wholesale trade and internal retailed trade is disposed of unbottled. 125,000 t are annually exported to big bottling companies abroad in unbottled form, while another 155,000 t are trafficked for internal consumption also in unbottled form and incognito. This affects the price formation by the producer, causes a loss of income and of employment opportunities and finally downgrades the product quality and the consumers’ health.

At international level we should seek after objectives that require collaborations and agreements between professional classes of various countries and of the institutions that shape this policy (DSE, EU). At national level, beyond the European objectives, we can seek after other more specific objectives, like the increase of the disposal of the Greek bottled olive oil in the interior, the progressive transformation of exports from unbottled to standardizing, the increase in productivity of the downgraded olive plantations and the additional improvement of quality.

The olive cultivation in Epirus

Olive cultivation of edible olives and oil making are found in the prefectures of Arta, Preveza, Thesprotia and cover a total expanse of about 235,000 m² based on Agriculture Direction’s data.

In the prefecture of Arta the main volume of olive culture is the edible variety of Amfissa or Arta that covers an expanse of about 50,000 m². The production usually fluctuates between 10,000 – 20,000 t. 70% of the production is disposed for table consumption and the rest of it is taken to the oil presses for oil making.

In the prefecture of Preveza the basic cultivation is that of the oil giving olive and it covers an expanse of about 70,000 m². The prevailing variety here is Lianilia of Corfu. There are 15,000 m² cultivated with olives since the Venetian dominion. The production fluctuates from 2,000 up to 7,500 t of oil annually. The cultivations for the edible olive production cover an area of 13,000 m²/acres. The main variety is the Amfissa olive and the production fluctuates from 2,000 – 5,000 t. 50% of the production is sold as edible olives while the rest of it is made into oil.

In the prefecture of Thesprotia the cultivation of olive meant for oil covers the biggest area of all the other cultivations. The cultivated varieties are the Local Mesokarpi and the Lianolia of Corfu. The annual production of oil fluctuates between 1,200 and 3,000 t. The cultivation of edible olives covers about 30,000 m² and the main cultivated variety is Boliana. 70% of the total quantity of olives is made into oil because of the lack of treatment and marketing in order to be sold as edible.

In the prefecture of Arta there are two cooperatives for edible olive treatment, each one of them has a capacity of 3,000 t. The largest quantity of edible olives is processed in factories out of the prefecture. In the prefecture there are seven (7) olive presses that suffice for the oil making of the olives that are inadequate for canning as well as the small quantities of olive varieties that are cultivated in the prefecture and can be made oil.

The canning olives of Arta and the olive oil of Preveza have been recognized as Products with Name of Origin and Geographic Clue, while the Boliana olive is in the stage of recognition.

In the prefecture of Preveza there are two factories for edible olive treatment that absorb the oil giving olives.
Tourism in Epirus

According to official data, that emanates from the Hellenic Organization of Tourism the average annual plenitude of the hotel lodgings in Ioannina during the years 1996 - 2000 is 44.0 %, in the prefecture of Arta is 55.2 %, in the prefecture of Thesprotia 47.5 %, in the prefecture of Preveza 39.8 % without important fluctuation from year to year. The total number of overnight stays of foreign and native tourists in hotel lodgings per month shows a progressive increase from year to year.

Most of the overnight stays are realized during the summertime, in the months of June, July, August and September. August has the first place in the overnight stays of tourists annually. The native tourists are those that mostly stay overnight in the hotel lodgings of Epirus and they consequently constitute the group-objective of hotel keepers, considering that the number of overnight stays made by native tourists increased considerably over the years.

According to data the tourism in Epirus with the exception of the prefecture of Parga, has not been developed to the extent it could have been; regardless of the appreciable resources and possibilities that the region of Epirus allocates for the development of every type of tourism. This is owed to the lack of relative infrastructure, (roads, water supply, sewerage etc), to the small projection of the region and to the lack of arrangement of the tourist areas.

Recently a tendency of increase of tourist infrastructure is observed in the beach of Preveza, in Syvota (situated in the prefecture of Thesprotia) and in the mountainous area of Pindos, that is supported by the motivation of Developmental Law 2601/98, by the Operational Program (P.E.P.) and by various Development Programs (LEADER, K.2328/91, K.950/97, K.1257/99, etc).

The region shows development possibilities in every kind of tourism, as it has appreciable beaches, that along with the Ionian Islands can constitute a single pole of tourist development (marine tourism), the mountainous zones and other special forms of tourism, mineral water springs (Kavasila and Amarantos in Konitsa).

Finally, with the formation of a reliable program and with the planning aiming at the tourist development of the region but also with the assistance of the financial instruments mentioned above, there are possibilities for development of winter tourism and agrotourism.

Criteria on the constitution of a proposal for the routes of olive and wine

The routes of olive and wine (cf. 2.5.1) constitutes a kind of cultural and tourist product, that exploits every pole of a region’s attraction (or an amount of regions), in order to attract visitors, contributing in this way to the economic and cultural development of the region. The visitor, by following specific routes, can taste the olives, the olive oil, and the regional wine in combination with dishes of local gastronomy while admiring the nature, as well as archaeological or other areas of cultural interest.

There are no other products, coming from our region, that are so closely related to each other as olives and olive oil are related to grapes and wine. These two precious products of Mediterranean land have marked our culture acquiring symbolic value since antiquity, when the oil in „panathinian amphora“ was the prize for winners in the Panathinian games and wine was used as a libation to the Gods and was gushing for days during the fests of Dionysia and Anthestiria. The value of these products was preserved throughout the Greek Christian tradition, accompanying the Holy worship by using oil at baptism and wine at wedding and Holy Communion.

Therefore olives and wine have a rich historical past in the Mediterranean and great importance of both economic and social level for the Mediterranean populations. Through the passage of the centuries, people were bound to
these products which are precious to the Mediterranean populations as a whole and so a really particular culture was created, part of the Mediterranean culture.

The love for olives, wine and also their history in the Mediterranean is one of the perspectives of the routes of wine and olive. Another perspective, more technocratic, is related to the international market trend. The representatives of the business world have ascertained that in the last years there is a dynamic and continuously increasing trend of preference for Mediterranean products, the Mediterranean diet and also the Mediterranean way of life, in all European, American and Japanese markets. This trend is supported by the attraction of the large international consuming public and by the elevation of olive and wine and the diachronic value of these products for the people through the paths of olive and wine culture and their history. The support of the market trend is a vehicle for the achievement of this object and also for the promotion of Mediterranean area as a tourist destination.

The main object of the project is the increase in the social and economic competitiveness of every region and widely of the European-Mediterranean economy.

By the knowledge of the olive and wine history, a European consumer and generally a tourist familiarizing himself with these goods and their usage, is introduced to the olive oil and wine and is given a motive to visit Mediterranean combining learning with vacations and with natural and health life and diet.

The routes of wine and olive describe in reality the transport of Mediterranean culture to other populations of the world by means of these two products. It also describes the reinforcement of the local Mediterranean economies and societies and of a big number of producers, tradesmen, businessmen and educational institutions by means of encouraging tourism and promoting the sales of the two most important Mediterranean products: wine and olives. It is the opening towards other countries through old but tried and tested ways, a message of hope and peaceful coexistence through the empowering and the support of the local economies as well as the Mediterranean economy.

Our objective, through the project and a synchronized approach, is the knowledge of the area through dynamic terms of culture, by placing the modern man with his needs above the monuments, the fossils and survival. We are interested in an alternative point of view of the local tradition, which is not identified with the past that is gone for good but is inherent or is chosen by the present and can acquire dynamic and value.

Integration of routes in the regional policy of the EU aiming the development of the mountainous areas

The European prospect for development is directly connected to the Regional Policy of EU, whose dynamics are expressed through the overwhelming effort to develop the mountainous areas and particularly the areas that show negative indications of development, such as the areas of the mountainous part of Epirus.

The future development of the region depends mostly on the efforts-actions carried out in order to support the economy of these areas and to retain and attract the human potential.

The most essential intervention, in order to bring together the regions and achieve the economic and social cohesion, is the financing resources of the EU for the period 2000 - 2006.

The developmental prospects of regional policy of the EU are materialized by the Structural Funds, the Cohesion Fund, the Community Initiatives and the Supportive Community Frame.

The exploitation of the opportunities given by the Community Initiatives INTERREG III, EQUAL, LEADER PLUS, can contribute to the support and development of countryside as well as the residents’ employment.

Moreover the new rural development policy, by means of the European Agricultural Guidance and Guarantee Fund for 2000 - 2006, will contribute to the development prospect of the mountainous regions. It is shaped by the reformatory character of the Agenda 2000, as a second program of the Common Rural Policy with the view of the essential convergence of the regions of countryside which comprise the 80 % of the European territory but mainly with
the view of the support of unfavorable regions that show slow development rhythms.

Perhaps the most essential prospect is provided by agro-tourism, which has to do with various tourist activities of a small scale, of familial or cooperative form, that are developed in rural areas by people that deal with agriculture. The main object of agro-tourism is to provide alternative solutions to the employment of the farmers and to raise their income. The regulation 1257/99 of EU provides the farmers with assistance for the realization of agro-tourist and agro-industrial investments. The program applies to the regions that have been characterized as mountainous and unfavorable, according to the Community Directive 75/268/EC.

2.5.2.2 Route: „Routes through the mainland nature and the works of popular culture”

The routes that we recommend are related to the familiarization and comprehension of the natural environment of Epirus and the progressive initiation of the visitor from the surface sense of the landscape, into the depth of the local society, into its culture and values.

With regard to the aesthetics of the landscape, the settlements, the bridges, the watermills, the monasteries, which were constructed and decorated by artisans-craftsmen, we can get at the discovery of the rural landscape, the „popular culture” within the bounds of search and conservation of the local cultural identity which can function as source of inspiration, as supply for an aesthetic upgrade and as fundamental factor of the regional development.

Recommended routes

A. Route through the villages of Mastorohoria of Konitsa

B. The routes of the water
   i) Route through the bridges of Aoos and Voidomatis rivers
   ii) Route through the watermills of the wider part of the region of Konitsa

C. Route throughout the monasteries along Kalama river

D. Route across the monasteries of Nikopoli and Preveza

The main characteristics of these routes is the elevation of the natural environment of Epirus whose principal elements are the stone and the rivers, that were bound to the people in a common course through the passage of centuries; the work of ordinary people, the „popular culture”. Also through architecture, craftsman’s work, carpentry, woodcarving, hagiography, painting, the life and the culture of these regions is presented, which shape their local particularity and can play a significant part in the collective memory as well as the present’s conscience and their development course towards the future of the land and European Union.

Criteria of selection of the routes

Even though Epirus is full of monuments, a fact that testifies to a rich historic and cultural past and could be presented in the bounds of the tourist exploitation of Epirus, our program’s objective has been the proposal of passages through which olive and wine are directly or indirectly made known, as these two products condense the history, the tradition and the economy of all the regions that participate in the pro, as well as the culture and the quotidain way of life of each region separately.

Originated in the routes of wine and olive we would like to offer an opportunity of getting know the hospitality, the local cuisine, the local products, the habits, the customs, the culture, the natural places, the monuments of each region, in the context of tourist and economic development; as each region has its own
physiognomy but at the same time is an integral part of the European cultural heritage.
These particular routes have been chosen with criteria based on historical facts which shaped the past and present of our country, on the particular physiognomy of the region, shaped throughout the cultural passage of time, on the fact that the culture of the past is kept alive and also on the fact that they have the essential characteristics needed in order to be included in the modern tourist practices.
The sector „human potential” of the region under consideration has also been approached through the researching and studying works. Since the strategy of Epirus's development, as this is originated by the Region, plans the support of activities related to the tourism, we have focused on areas where there is quite a lot of human potential for the development of the new activities.
Other criteria were the easy access of these passages as well as the potential of their entrance into the proposed network of an area which is already tourist developed, in order to ensure also the possibility of a visit to the rest of the areas.

A. Route through the villages of Mastorohoria of Konitsa
The today’s perception that considers mountainous as hostile to human and no productive comes in contradiction to the historical reality of Epirus, which is a mountainous region par excellence. For centuries this region has shown its potential as it has elected and promoted cultures such as the „popular culture” of the villages named Mastorohoria (villages of the craftsmen).
The Mastorohoria belong to the region of Konitsa. In order to comprehend the economic, social and cultural constitution of Konitsa, we have to mention some eco geographic facts.
The region of Konitsa has been shaped in four geographic regions:
a) the valley of the river Aoos,
b) the basin of Konitsa,
c) the alpine zone,
d) the valley of Sarantaporos.
Sarantaporos, which is a tributary of Aoos and comes from the north, shapes a valley between the mountains of Grammo and Smolika, at the foot of which the area of mastrohoria was formed. It is a group of about forty villages that are built on the right and the left side of Sarantaporos River till the foot of Grammo and don’t have a big distance between each other. The economic past of these villages was agricultural-veterinarian but because of the increase in population they faced economic problems and their residents were led to technical activities. Almost every village gave famous craftsmen working with stone, while some other villages led their residents to specialization and these villages had been historically identified with it.
The builders from Pyrsoianni, Vourbiani and other craftsmen-villages were organized in groups, as well as the woodcutters of Tournovo (Gorgopotamos) and later on the popular painters-hagiographers from Chionades and all of them were traveling everywhere, creating not only in the region of Epirus but also in many other regions of the Ottoman empire. So this corner of the region of Epirus is dotted with marks of the art of these craftsmen, of creations of popular architecture, things that have been made by people that studied in the „workshop of the people” and left behind a great and precious cultural deposit. Stone bridges mansions, taps, narrow streets in the villages, watermills, churches, monasteries, mosques are all buildings that give a special character to the area. These buildings have a remarkable diversity that can be seen as a result of the effect of distant or close centers, something that certifies the continuous exchange of cultural elements with other areas. This exchange is owed to the craftsmen.
We will start our way a bit outside of Konitsa because there we met some of the buildings created by the craftsmen and also because it is on the way to Mastorohoria. As we follow the paths that the craftsmen and their groups passed we meet monuments of popular architecture and culture. These monuments were built according to the infallible instinct of the craftsmen, who utilized the materials that the nature of the area offered.
The first stop is the entrance of the National Park of Vikos-Aoos, the Voidomatis river, where the single-arch bridge of Klidoniavitsa, built in the middle 19th century dominates. At the exit of the Aoos River from the valley to the plain, the visitor comes in view of the imposing single-arch bridge on his right. It is 40 m long and 20 m high and is the most characteristic building of the region. It was built by Zioga Frontzo, the craftsman from Pyrsogianni. A little higher from the bridge appears the ruined Moslem temple of Sultan Souleiman, built in the middle of 16th century. There is placed now, renovated, the old Turkish seminary, where today is accommodated the photo exhibition of the region of Konitsa, with images and information on every monument of the region. Ascending the paths of the upper part of Konitsa, we can see clearly the effect of popular architecture on the old Christian's and Muslim's mansions, as well as on the churches. The buildings that dominate are the imposing Muslim mansions of Hamco (mother of Ali Pasha of Ioannina) which dates back to 18th - 19th century, the mansion of Housein Sioco (1845) and the metropolitan temple of Saint Nikolaos (1842) which also has hagiographies and portable pictures, made by painters of Chionades.

As the visitor returns to the national road of Ioannina-Kozani, he has the opportunity to travel along the river of Sarantaporos. On the right side of the road, on a little hillock, is noticeable the monastery of Saint Nikanoras (1816). It is a one-room royal type with dome. The most characteristic settlement of Mastorohoria, Gannadio, is placed a few kilometers below. It is an excellent cross-section of the local architectural tradition, with homes made of stone, cobbled roads, taps and churches. The big mansion of the tradesman and benefactor of the region of Ksinos and the temple of Takiarhes (Archangels) / Brigadiers in the settlement's square, creates a big impression. Above this area one can visit Kastaneas village and admire the settlement's mansions. Northwest of Kastaneas is placed Pyrsogianni, which is the most famous village of Mastorohoria, seat of the Mastorohoria Municipality. At this place the visitor has the opportunity of walking in the uphill cobbled roads, of drinking water from the stone taps and resting under the square's plane-tree. In the square there is also a hospice. In Pyrsogianni is the church of Saint Nikolaos (1742), which is a characteristic specimen of a tree-aisle royal church. This walk can be continued to the village of Gorgopotamos, where from started on their way the famous „taliadori” (wood carvers) in order to decorate the icon screens of churches or the ceilings of mansions and the village of Chionades, a starting point of popular painters-hagiographers, who played the most important role in the configuration of the ecclesiastical and secular painting, from the 18th century to the beginning of the 20th century. An alternative way is the route through the bright green landscape (oak-tree zone). There the visitor can admire the simple and frugally, but not insignificant, creations of the popular culture, like stone benches (scales), dry stone walls, little stone bridges, watermills. The watermills and the bridges of the region are more extensively presented on the route of the water.

All the buildings mentioned above, big and small, simple and imposing, humble and impressive, are the remnants of a time that a culture was shaped. This culture marked not only this region but also other vicinal or even distant areas with protagonists the simple and illiterate stone craftsmen.

The exploitation of the environmental and cultural value of the region can be achieved through the tourist development of it, although the region nowadays presents little tourist business, because of its insufficient infrastructure.
B. The routes of water

The routes of water require a combination of walking and the use of car and are related to:

i) the elevation of the Epirus’s bridges of Aoos and Voidomatis rivers, as historical monuments and unique piece of work of the craftsmen that bound the people to nature and played an important role into time and space.

ii) the elevation of the importance of water in daily life of residents and the elevation of manufactures like watermills and natural laundries that utilize water. The proposed tour is done in the region of Mastorohoria, where a characteristic specimen of architectural particularity of the region and of the high level of the region’s craftsman is the great number of infrastructures for the exploitation of the aquatic potential of the rivers.

B.i. Route through the bridges of Aoos and Voidomatis rivers

The bridges are a human invention thanks to which people converse with the wild river. In this way is bridged the gap of nature wherever the river cuts the ground as a knife.

Epirus has been characterized as the region of rivers and bridges. Epirus’s craftsmen have flown arcs above the rivers and tied the river banks with remarkable technique, soft classic line and leisure.

In periods of intense rainfall, the mountainous villages suffered by the rivers, which got rough and drifted away whatever they met in their way. The bridges were created because of necessity, which is the cause for the creation of every popular manufacture. Every bridge has its unique identity, its particularity and its own size and forms its own number of arcs. The paving follows a curved line imitating the ups and downs of the arcs and is set with stone. So when the uphill is abrupt it shapes a landing with light bent.

The local craftsmen set up single-arched and poly-arched bridges, which are imposing pieces of work and achievements of the popular architecture. These bridges cause admiration and surprise because of their solidity, their technique and their irreproachable aesthetics.

Before the delivery of the bridge to the circulation, they painted in a crevice the image of a saint in order to protect it.

The most difficult part of a bridge’s construction was its foundation. The head craftsmen could achieve the foundation of bridges not only on solid soil but also on the mud.

The variety of Epirus’s bridges is large and this shows the inexhaustible imagination of the popular craftsmen.

Because of the regional peculiarity and their position, Epirus’s bridges were rescued safe till today.

The bridge of Zerma on the road from Konitsa to Kozani, is a proof of the technical perfection of the bridges of Epirus.

Some sightseers of the passed century (Henry Holland, Thomas Hughes, William Leake Pouqueville) as well as many Greek historians (I. Lambridis, Serafim Ksenopoulos, P. Aravantinos) are referred to the bridges of Epirus.

Our tour of the bridges is the same with the one that followed Zotos Molossos, while he was enumerating the bridges of Aoos and Voidomatis.

At the north-east area of Ioannina there are a lot and variourum bridges. First of all, the bridge of Konitsa at Aoos River: It owes its uniqueness to its enormous arc as well as to the landscape around it. Just before the entrance to the village Kipi of Zagori we meet the bridge of Plakas or of Kalogeros (Monk) which links the Voidomati’s river banks to the mountain Vikos. The same link is that of the bridges of Noutsou or Kokori, Misiou and Milou (Mill). Other bridges are at Mbagotikos River, named bridge of Pitsionis and the bridge of Vovousa at Aoos River. In Zagori there are also other bridges: the one of Kontodimou or Lazaridi, of Kamperaga, of Tsipiani. The bridge Klidoniaivista or Voidomati (nearby the village Klidonia) which is famous for the nice integration in the beautiful
landscape, is situated precisely at the point that ends the gorge of Vikos and starts the plain. The bridge of Kouvara stands between the villages Dolos and Topolitsa outside Konitsa. There are other bridges too at other rivers in Epirus but we focus only on the bridges of the rivers Aoos and Voidomatis, because of their connection to the tour of the villages of Mastorohoria (mentioned above) and the craftsmen that built these bridges.

We just mention the bridge Theogefiro at Kalama river, the bridge of Gikas at Pavla river (above the village Filiates) and the famous bridge of Arta, followed by the legend of the head craftsman's wife, who had been scarified in order the bridge to be founded. This legend symbolizes the superhuman efforts required for the manufacture of such a work and made the bridge of Arta known to the most countries of southern-eastern Europe. This bridge also appears in the Greek literature, music and folklore.

The bridges of Epirus played an important role in the economic and national life of the region in the later medieval and particularly in the modern years. The growth of the land trade and transports during the Ottoman domination but also the following years, is owed mainly to the bridges. The bridges ensured trade and transports, particularly during the winter, when the rivers became rapid and it was impossible to be crossed by men or animals.

**B. ii. Route through the watermills of the wider region of Konitsa**

Epirus is a mountainous region with a lot of rainfall and water and so it is a place that water was often used as a motive force.

In almost every village of the region of Konitsa, the aquatic resources were utilized by the residents and so created manufactures such as watermills. That's how the residents of the region have exploited the possibility that provides the usage of the water for the cover of the needs of the local society and economy. A characteristic example of watermill, whose history is related to socio-economic expressions of the life of the region's residents, is the watermill of Bourazani and is situated in the north-western part of the prefecture of Ioannina.

In the villages Mastorohoria of Konitsa are preserved appreciable examples of the pre-industrial hydromechanics which have been impressed on map and show one of the routes of the water in the region of Konitsa.

**C. Route throughout the monasteries along Kalamas River**

The route through the monasteries situated along the Kalamas River offers the visitor an opportunity to discover the monuments of the local culture as well as the sensational natural landscape.

Kalamas River is one of the most important river systems of Western Greece. At its Delta (in the prefecture of Thesprotia which is one of the most important wetlands lands of the country) the sweet river water joins the salty one of the sea. The flora compete the fauna in quantity and quality. In the coasts of Thesprotia predominates the olive-tree and forms a decisive element of the region. On the contrary the oak-tree predominates at the landscape of the hinterland.

The region around the sources of Kalama is a marginal region placed between the cultural units of Zagori, Pogoni, the villages of Kassi-diari and the wider region of Zitsa. As the river flows, incorporates to its landscape the regional vineyards and carries the culture of Pogoni.

Of particular importance are the monuments situated around the upper flow of the river, at the areas which administratively belong today to the Municipalities of Upper Kalama, Evri-menes, Zitsa and Molossi. The Byzantine and the post-Byzantine monuments of the area testify the development of the region. The regional Municipalities in collaboration with the 8th Revenue of Byzantine Antiquities have started an effort to record the monuments dated from the paleochristianic era to the 19th century in order these monuments to be included to the „tour of the monasteries“. The tour that we propose is part of the „Walk in Upper Kalama“, which is the title of the relative edition of the Service of the Ministry of Culture that is occupied with Byzantine Antiquities.
Our starting-point is the Paleochristianic Royal which is situated between Doliana and Kalpaki. The next stops are at the monastery Virgin Mary of Vela, the monastery of Sossinos in Parakalamos, the monastery of Holy Fathers near Lithino, the monastery of Prophet Elias in Zitsa, the monastery Virgin Mary of Paliouri. The last stop of the tour is at the monastery Metamorphosis of Klimatia.

These monasteries can be considered as stops on the untiring way of the river. Beyond the religious and architectural interest, the monasteries reveal some important aspects of the local culture, and in the past they carried out important social, economical and political functions.

The monasteries possessed big fortunes and have been poles of attraction and of demographic coiling. They carried out educational functions and at the same time they have been developed, especially those which were placed at important passages and travelers’, traders’ and pilgrims’ stations.

The royal paleochristianic

The cultural way of the upper flow of Kalama, starts next to its sources, below the hill of Prophet Ilia, in the plain of Kalpaki. There (at the location Nopagia of Saint George of Doliana) were revealed ruins of a Christian temple (of royal order and with mosaic floorings of exceptional art) by the (8th) Service of Byzantine Antiquities. It’s worthwhile to mention the representation of a river as a young man between the themes of the mosaics, as well as the presence of many aquatic birds and animals, like those which were living and still live at the river-banks of Kalamas, which flows in a little distance from the temple.

The monastery Virgin Mary of Vella

A few kilometers far from the Royal Paleochristianic, at the southern edge of the plain, on a low hill, is situated the famous monastery Virgin Mary of Vella. This monastery is the living recollection of the lost Byzantine Vella city, which was an important city and See since the 10th century. It is not known when was precisely founded the monastery. Architectural elements of the monastery’s catholic allow its dating in the middle-Byzantine years (10th - 12th cent.). The temple has been renovated several times. In its today’s form it is tri-aisle royal and has exceptional frescos painted by Anastasios and Ioannis in 1745. The rich monastery, which was a See till 1713, was a religious and intellectual center of the region. The Metropolite of Vella and Konitsa Spiridon Vlachos founded in 1911 the seminary whose operation elected the monastery into a major intellectual center of the region.

The monastery of Evanghelismos (Annunciation) of Sossinos

The monastery of Evanghelismos (Annunciation) of Sossinos is situated on a woody hill which dominates the entire plain of Kalpaki. Indirect testimonies of documents date the foundation of the monastery in the late Byzantine years. Its today’s form is dated in the end of the 16th century. The frescos of the temple are dated in 1838. However under these frescos is hidden the initial layer of painting, dated in 1602. Nothing but the catholic and the cistern is preserved from the previously famous monastery. In its cells, according to the local tradition, accommodated schools where distinguished personages of letters have studied.
The monastery of „Fathers” / „Holy Fathers”

After leaving behind the fertile plain of Kalpaki, the river Kalamas is poured in a narrow gorge which leads to Theogefiro (the bridge of God), a unique natural bridge. There are monks’ hermitages on the rocks around Theogefiro, where there is also a variety of fossilized threes. The little late-Byzantine temple of Saint-Nicolas is situated next to the river and “guards” the passage. According to the tradition the monastery of the Assumption of the Virgin (of the „Fathers”) was originally built on the site of the temple of Saint Nicolas and in the 16th century was transported to its present location, above the eastern river-bank. The only thing preserved from the monastery is the catholic which was built in 1590 and has appreciable frescos of the 17th century. During the Ottoman Domination the monastery acquired a considerable number of monastery dependencies in Principalities of the bordering on the Danube. These monastery dependencies offered wealth to the monastery and led to its appreciable cultural, artistic and economic blossom. The loss of the income and its generally bad management of the monastery dependencies led at the end of the 19th century to the decline of the monastery and finally to its abandonment at the beginning of the 20th century.

The monastery of the Prophet Elias in Zitsa

The monastery of the prophet Elias in Zitsa dominates the wooded hill above the village Zitsa. The catholic of the monastery, which is one-aisle vaulted temple, was built by a priest-monk Athanasios in 1655/6 and was painted with frescos at the same epoch. On the grounds of the monastery, apart from the catholic is also preserved the north-western cells’ wing, the cisterns and the belfry.

The monastery of Metamorphosis

The small monastery of Metamorphosis of the Savior is placed outside the village Klimatia which flourished in the 16th century. The monastery was founded by the priest-monk Ioassaf Philanthropinos who was Reverent Father and renovator of the monastery at the Island of Ioannina. The vaulted catholic of the monastery with a single-aisle is adorned with frescos of 1568, made by the famous painter Frankos Kontaris from Thebes.

The monastery of Paliouri

Another religious center of the area is the monastery of the Birth of Virgin Mary of Paliouri. The monastery was, according to the tradition, founded in 1688 - 1690 on the ruins of an older small temple which was built in the 14th century. The monastery suffered much destruction. In its today’s form, the catholic, a tri-aisle royal with dome, is probably a building of the ends of the 18th century and its frescos are dated in 1833, painted by hagiographers from Ioannina.

D. Route across the monasteries of Nikopolis and Preveza

The last recommended route is that of the monasteries of Preveza and Nikopolis and aims at the promotion of the religious and sight-seeing tourism, just like the previous route. It is also pointed out that these tours are related to the promotion of the routes of wine and olives; on the one hand because every monastery had its own vineyard and olive grove and on the other hand because the monks played an important role in the promotion, the distribution, the maintenance of the vine and olives cultivation which had been abounded in certain regions for years.

The clergymen and the monks, who needed the wine, among other, for liturgical aims, contri-
buted to the maintenance of the tradition of vinification of the former roman possessions. In the Byzantine time, the monks played an important role into the vine-growing and the wine industry as bigger and bigger cultivable areas devolved to the monasterial and the ecclesiastical fortune. So the monks had the comfort to build big and modern wine factories and to improve the productive techniques and the wine quality. Finally in the period of the Ottoman dominion the properties of the monasteries and the cultivation of vine and olives were in a regime of favor.

That's how the suggested tours are included in the wider frame of the European history and culture of the wine and olives. Via the ecclesiastic art which had been developed in various areas of Europe and the Mediterranean and forms a very important element of their cultural identity and their way through history, would also be interesting a proposal of mapping out a way which will elect these elements within the framework of the routes of wine and olives.

Roman and Byzantine Period - the prosperity of Nikopolis

The monuments of pre-Christian Nikopolis compose an important turning-point in the ecclesiastical art of the region of Preveza. Nikopolis was the first and biggest city founded by the Romans in Epirus. The great and decisively important Octavianus's victory at the naval battle in Aktio (on the 2nd of September of the 31 B.C.) against Marko Antonio and Cleopatra, Queen of Egypt, was perpetuated by the name of the city. The apostle Paul himself probably preached Christianity in Nikopolis around 63 B.C.

The monuments of Nikopolis - elements of ecclesiastical art

From the roman monuments of Nikopolis it's worthwhile to mention, epigrammatically:

a) the Apollo’s temple in Proastion whose holy is placed on an elevation
b) the grove, where the gymnasium and the stadium are found. There, Aktia games were taking place.
c) the great ground of the city's roman walls
d) the theater and the conservatoire
e) the imposing relic of the aqueduct
f) other buildings, as for example the baths

The fact that the prosperity of Nikopolis continued and probably strained during the paleochristianic period, results mainly from the excavated Christian monuments. In this area four paleochristianic royal have been found, a bishop palace, a villa etc. These monuments are indisputable witnesses of the city's historical and political course from the Roman to Byzantine Empire and from the pagan religion to Christianity.

Royal B or of Alkissona

The oldest Royal of Nikopolis, is the Royal B (or of Alkissona, who had been the high priest in Nikopolis (491-518)), which is situated in the middle of Ioustinianos's Nikopolis and it probably was the city’s metropolitan temple. It has appreciable frescos (on the arc is depicted a vessel with a vine-shoot placed between two peacocks) and elements of ecclesiastical sculpture. The excavations at the Royal continue still.
Epirus - Epirus

Royal A or of Doumetio

Probably the Royal of Doumetio can be dated more precisely in the end of the 3rd quarter of the 6th century. The sculptures and the frescos of the temple are some of the most important of the paleochristianic art. The arc of Diaconal of the Royal B (of Doumetio) is adorned by the coiled shoot of vine which grows into cantharis and it is surrounded by a wide frame, which is adorned by nine peacocks with their wings open, placed in arcs of equal number.

Bishop’s palace

The known as bishop’s palace adjoins westwards with the Royal of Doumetio.

Royal C

This royal was excavated in 1937 and is located next to the northern side of the walls of Nikopolis, but unfortunately was destroyed almost completely during the Second World War.

Royal D

The Royal D was found out of the walls of Nikopolis in its south and its excavation has not been completed. It is dated in the beginning of the 3rd quarter of the 6th century. There were found parapets with punched décor and frame with embossed helical shoot.

Villa

In a distance of roughly 500 m in the east of the Royal D, at the location of Ftelia, has been revealed a villa. The villa was probably built in the 5th century, after the pillage of Nikopolis by the Goths under Alaricho (395-396).

Holy monasteries of the prefecture of Preveza - monuments of art and culture

The monastery of Saint Apostles of Preveza

In a small distance from the city of Preveza is located the monastery of Saint Apostles, which is dated in the 18th century. The monastery is built on the eastern steep coast of the small peninsula which is located north-easter from Preveza, in the region Skafidaki, in a small distance from the village Saint Thomas. Today is saved the catholic of the monastery and minimal ruins of other buildings in the south-eastern side of the monastic group.

The monastery of Saint John the Baptist of Licouressis or monastery of Thanesa

The famous oracle, Necromandio, was built in the 3rd century B.C, on the top of a low hill which is located south-western of the village Messopotam and the conjunction of the river Acheron with its tributary Kokitos. The monastery of Saint John the Baptism was built on the ruins of Necromandio, unknown precisely when. During the revolutionary movement of Dionysios the Skylososofos (1611) it seems that the monastery of Saint John was destroyed, having the same end with other monasteries in the region. After the liberation of the 1913, the cells of the monastery had been devastated and collapsed.
The monastery and the Necromandio of Efyra have been nominated scheduled historical monuments.

The monastery of the Holy Trinity of Preveza

Very close to Preveza, in the region Skafidaki, is located the Monastery of the Holy Trinity, which was founded in 1744. It was innovated in 1879. That year was also built the belfry, as well as the stockyard around it. A more recent repair of the monastery was made in 1971.

The monastery of Saint Demetrious of Tourcopalouco

An important architectural monument of the wider region of Preveza is the Monastery of Saint Demetrius of Tourcopalouco, dated at the Byzantine period. The monastery is located in a 2.5 kilometers distant north-east from the village Tourcopalouco, on the right river-bank of Kokitos river. It was built around the 13th century. The cathedral, the altar, the ruins of the cells and the other auxiliary rooms are the only thing saved today by the monastery.

The monastery of the Archangels of Zalogo

On the flat top of the small mountain Zalogo is located the cathedral of the old monastery of Zalogo, dedicated to the Archangels, Michael and Gabriel. The monastery was founded in the 8th century, suffered big destructions during the Ottoman domination and it was abandoned after 1777. Afterwards the new monastery of Zalogo was built which was dedicated to Saint Demetrious. The today's temple, which was built in 1987, is a little royal without any hagiographies.

The monastery of Saint Pelagia of Kastrossykia

The Monastery of Saint Pelagia, dissolved today, is located below the village Kastrossykia and the new road which connects Preveza and Parga. It is not known the precise chronology of the monastery’s foundation. We however know the chronology of its two renovations: 1613 and 1795. A later renovation of the monastery seems to have been done in 1894. After this renovation it is probable that the monastery collapsed and in 1916 altered into a monastery dependency of the Monastery of Zalogo.

The monastery of Saint Demetrious of Zalogo

The monastery was founded in the 18th century, after 1777, by the abbot Dionysios of the monastery of the Archangels of Zalogo and the old one was abandoned. Then the monastery of the Archangels became a monastery dependency of the new monastery. The hagiographies of the temple were painted in 1816 by the hagiographers Ioannis and Christodoulos from Korytiani of Ioannina, according to the sign which is located on the lintel of the temple’s main part. The Turks did a lot of damage to the monastery. In 1930 the monastery collapsed and was renovated in 1956 by Stylianos who was the Metropolitan of Nikopolis and Preveza, according to a sign in the narthex. Today it is a convent and it has been also declared as scheduled historical monument.
The monastery of Lekatsa

The once rich monastery Lekatsa or Lekassa, dedicated to Virgin Mary, is located on the western, woody mountainside which separates Down Myrsini from Riza (old Riniassa). As Serafim Byzantios reports, the monastery was founded in 8th or 9th century: it was renovated in 1600, in 1774 and in 1870 and was named after its founder or one of its abbots. According to a tradition the temple of the monastery was built after 1775.

The monastery of Bounda

The monastery of Bounda or Pounda is located near the village Chochlia and at the foot of the mountain of Saint Helen. The date of its foundation is not known. The hagiographies were made in 1833, as we are informed by a sing found on the built icon screen of the catholic. After the Second World War the monastery was abandoned and depopulated. Unfortunately the old catholic collapsed and in its place, since 1989, was built a new big temple, to which has been incorporated the eastern side of the Holy Step and the built icon screen of the old temple. The monastery of Bounda became again in 1975 active nunnery and even if it is located in the prefecture of Preveza, belongs to the metropolis of Paramythisa, Filiates and Gyromeri.

The monastery Saint Barnabas of Louros

In a distance of almost 500 m from Louros, in the east, is preserved the catholic of the old and unknown monastery of Saint Barnabas. The monastery was founded in the year 1149 since the Birth of Christ (6657 since the foundation of the world). The monastery’s catholic was renovated in 1833.

The monastery of Kozyli

On the left side of the new road from Kastrossykia to Louros is located the monastery of Kozyli, dedicated to the Assumption of Virgin Mary. The monastery is today the only remnant of the mediaeval city and bishop, founded in 774. Today the only things preserved from the monastery of Kozyli, are the catholic and some ruins of the baptistery, at the south-western side of the catholic. There were made some rudimentary excavations in 1976. The monastery of Kozyli, which is surrounded by a beautiful landscape, has been characterized as scheduled historical monument.

The monastery Saint Paraskevi of Rizovouni

The temple of Saint Paraskevi is built at the western fringe of the village Rizovouni. The temple was built as a monastery’s catholic in 1025, became monastery dependency of the monastery Kastriou in 1835 and was renovated from pedestals in 1856 by Leontios, a priest-monk, the abbot of the monastery Kastriou. The monastery had been destroyed previously by the Ottomans.

The today’s little church is a small cruciform temple with dome, without any hagiographies or icon screen of a particular value.

The monastery Rogon

The catholic of the old monastery of the Assumption of the Virgin is preserved at the north-western flat part of the castle of Rogon. Today only the monastery’s catholic, its half destroyed stockyard and ruins from its cells are rescued.
The monastery Lithariou

In a 17 km distance from Preveza is located the monastery of the Apostles Peter and Paul or the monastery Lithariou, named by a miraculous Stone which was found in the region. The monastery was built on ruins of roman and paleochristianic buildings. In 1867 the monastery was repaired and also the Agiolitharo (Holy-Stone), on which stepped the apostle Paul, according to the tradition, and preached Christianity in 65 A.D. was fenced.

The monastery Avassou

In the region of the small Lakka Souliou is located an interesting monastery, dedicated to the Assumption of the Virgin. Only the catholic, the ruins of the cells and the ruins of a watermill of the monastery are preserved today. The Monastery Avassou has been characterized as scheduled historical monument.

The monastery of Saint George of Krania

We don’t have much of information for this monastery. Today only the catholic and the ruins of the cells are preserved. The temple was probably built in 1779. In 1850 - 1851 the monastery functioned as nunnery.

The monastery of Kastrio

On the small hill Kastri or Paliokastro which is placed in the south of the village Rizovouni are located the ruins of an unknown, ancient city. Probably in the 11th century was built a small Christian temple on the ruins of a pagan holy, at the north part of the citadel of Kastrio. On the ruins of this second temple was built the catholic of the monastery dedicated to the Assumption of the Virgin.

The monastery of Saint Paraskevi of Chalasmata, Papadates

In a small distance above the settlement Chalasmata of the village Papadates is located the Saint’s Paraskevi temple, which according to the tradition it was the catholic of an old monastery and maybe a monastery dependency of the monastery of Faneromeni. It is a small royal, with a single-aisle, a main temple and a Holy Step (without a narthex).

The monastery of Saint Elias of Heliovounio

The monastery was built in 1720 by Kallistos, a priest-monk and was renovated in 1852. The catholic of the monastery was ornamented since 1878 by hagiographies which have western iconographic effects. Nowadays the monastery is abandoned.

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