**Trifylia Province**

Of great interest in the section dedicated to the **Trifylia** province is the unit related to *Nestor's Palace*. Here few characteristic antiquities can be seen selected from the great number of ceramic and small-scale finds which were, until recently, displayed at the Chora Archaeological Museum.

The exhibition also features representative antiquities from the Mycenaean chamber tombs, which were organised in clusters and formed part of the cemeteries unearthed at *Kato Rouga* in *Chora* and at *Volimidia*. These cemeteries belonged to settlements under the influence of *Nestor's Palace*. From the rich Mycenaean tholos tombs at *Routsi* in *Myrsinochori* and *Ambelophyto* come the antiquities that are on display in the same section, while a single clay vessel comes from the half-destroyed Middle-Helladic tumulus which was excavated at *Pyrgos Trifylias*.

In mainland Trifylia the earliest traces of habitation were identified dating from the Final Neolithic period in Messenia, in the *Koufiero Cave*, from which characteristic fragmentary pottery from the period is exhibited.

From the great port of *Kyparissia*, which connected Messenia with the West in the Hellenistic and Roman times, are presented certain antiquities that come from limited rescue excavations. Among them there are coins from the ancient city. There is a restricted number of Early Christian and Byzantine exhibits from *Kyparissia*, in spite of the importance of the city during the early Christian centuries, and later, when it was transferred to the area of the *Castle* and was renamed *Arkadia*, due to the fact that many Arcadians moved there.

The extremely important archaeological site of *Peristeria* is within a small distance from *Kyparissia*. The monumental, gold-laden Mycenaean tholes tombs convey the existence of a powerful dynasty, which ruled in the region even before the peak of *Nestor's Palace*. The golden cup from *Peristeria* on display was one of the luxurious offerings in the royal tholos tombs. The medieval settlement of *Christianoupolis* flourished in the same area. There are impressive architectural sculptures from the church of the *Metamorphosi Sotiros* at *Christianoi*, a supreme example of a Byzantine church, one of the largest in Greece.

In *Kopanaki*, in the wide Soulima valley, which occupies the north-western part of Trifylia, the only known up today organized archaic farmhouse complex in Messenia, was unearthed. The remains of a walled citadel and a settlement of the Middle-Helladic period were discovered on top of the *Malthi Hill*, which overlooks the valley. The later construction of a megaron-like building at the centre of the citadel, as well as the foundation of two royal tholos tombs at its western foot, indicate that the settlement flourished during the Mycenaean era. Besides the wealth of utility pottery, unearthed in the excavations by the great Swedish archaeologist M.N.Valmin, a great number of stone and bone tools has also been found in *Malthi*; these are related to the daily life and activities of the prehistoric inhabitants of the citadel.

The Mycenaean tholos tombs discovered on the northernmost end of the valley at *Psari*and *Chalkia* suggest that other settlements flourished in the area during the same period.

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| **KALAMATA Province**  Antiquity and Byzantium in the shadow of Mount Tayghetos. |
| The antiquities from Thalames, Lefktro or Kardamyli mostly come from small rescue excavations or random collections, while the bronze votive offerings from the Sanctuary of Artemis Limnatis at Volymnos in Artemisia which were entrusted to the Ephorate by antiquity lovers who collected them are very important and representative.  The few exhibits from the Messenian Mani, Kastania, Langada, Thalames, Nomitsi, contrast with the great number of Byzantine churches in the mentioned settlements and in many others of the area.  Not many antiquities come from the Kalamata area, where the ancient Fares are located. On the other hand an extremely interesting unit is that of Akovitika, where excavations brought to light the archaic and classical sanctuary of Poseidon and the imposing remains of the two Proto-Helladic megarons.  The Byzantine and Frankish past of Kalamata is represented by exhibits found in the churches and the Castle of the city.  The northern area of the province is devoted to ancient Thouria, the early capital city of Messenia, before the ancient Messene was founded. Besides the majestic walls and the remains of public buildings dating from the classical times, the excavations brought to light two impressive Middle-Helladic burial tumuli at Kastroulia, an extensive burial site with Mycenaean chamber tombs at Ellinika and a royal Mycenaean tholos tomb an Antheia with a wealth of rare and valuable antiquities, many of which are on display in the room. |
| **Messenia Province**  The fertile hinterland of **Messenia** and the capital of the Messenian state. |
| The supreme archaeological site of the Messene province is the *ancient Messene*, the capital city of the free Messenian state, founded by Epaminondas in 396 BC. In the exhibition a few indicative antiquities are on display, such as the inscriptional herm of Armonikos and mainly a group of characteristic coins from a huge number of coins found during the excavation of the ancient city.  The totality of the excavated antiquities is preserved at the Messene Archaeological Museum. The Early Christian and Byzantine exhibits from *ancient Messene* document the continuity of life in the city - where the bishopric was placed from the 4th century until at least the 7th century -, while the city experienced a new period of flourishing in the 10th century, even if it had shrunk in size.  The antiquities come from the excavation of a cist grave discovered in *Arsinoi*, where one of the *ancient Messene* cemeteries was located. A random finding from nearby *Ellinoeklissia*, a headless marble trunk of male youth, which complements this section. The site is well known for the church of the *Zoodochos Pigi*, one of the most prominent Middle-Byzantine monuments in the Peloponnese.  The tholos tombs at *Diodia* and *Madena* and the tholos tomb of *Aristomenis* identify the limited Mycenaean presence in the area.  The extremely important inscription concerning the mystery rituals found enwalled in the *Konstantinoi* church comes from the ancient *Andania*area; a copy is on display.  Sections of the remarkable mosaic which adorned the floor of a Roman villa at *Desylla* are on display at the museum; the small bronze animal-form idols were votive offerings to an unknown sanctuary at *Mila*. |

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| **Pylia Province**  Tholos tombs and great castles in a unique landscape. |
| Antiquities from *ancient Koroni* are displayed in this section, i.e. today's *Petalidi*, from the sanctuary of *Apollo Kory(n)thos* at *Aghios Andreas*, *Logga*, and from the Mycenaean tholos tombs at *Platanovrysi*, *Chandrino*, *Koukounara*, *Kremmydia* and *Soulinary*.  The impressive late Roman mosaic floor from *Charakopio* in *Koroni* occupies a prominent place among them. The Early Christian items (sculptures, vases, coins) from *Koroni*, *Methoni*, *Petalidi*, *Achladochori*, *Logga*, complement and corroborate the testimonies provided by the remains of the basilicas, as well as the rock-hewn cemetery of *Saint Onouphrios*, near *Methoni*, concerning the existence of prosperous communities in the area.  A Latin inscription from *Koroni* and a coin hoard invoke the Frankish past of Pylia, while a limited number of exhibits, most notably a coin thesaurus from *Sphakteria*, document the Venetian rule in Pylia, with *Methoni* and *Koroni* as the most important centres.  The section of *Nichoria*, an important area, which belonged to the domain of Nestor during the peak of the Palace develops to the North. The section of *Nichoria* comprises three units. The first is dedicated to the rich offerings of the royal Mycenaean tholos tomb, the second to the settlement with the characteristic antiquities from the everyday life, while the third presents antiquities from the everyday life, while the third presents antiquities from the *Rizomylo*-*Karpofora* grave clusters, dating from the Mycenaean, Geometric and Classical times. Finally, coins and small artefacts from the early Christian and particularly from the Byzantine period are also featured in this section.  The western part of Pylia, with the gorgeous long beach and the turbulent historical past, is represented by the prehistoric antiquities of the *Voidokoilia Bay* and the offerings from the Mycenaean graves at *Tragana* and *Pyla*. The continuity of life in the area is revealed by the antiquities in the large Hellenistic cemetery at *Divari* in *Ghialova*, as well as the graves of athletes, from the same period, which were discovered in the burial tumulus at *Tsopani Rachi*. |





