



ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITE OF GITANA THESSALY



PRYTANEION (BUILDING A)

Information: 32nd Ephorate of Prehistoric and Classical Antiquities
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Admission and opening hours: Tuesday to Sunday 8.00 - 15.00
The archaeological site is closed on Mondays, bank holidays and on 30 April.

The visitors' building houses a poster exhibition and is accessible to disabled people.

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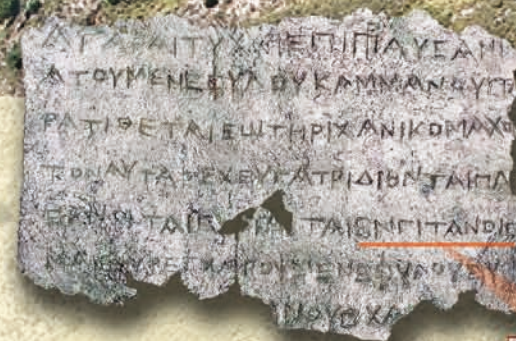




Head of terracotta figurine



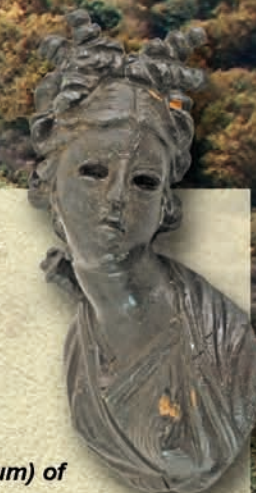
Silver coin of the Koinon of the Epirotes



Inscription on a bronze sheet with the name of the city



Animal-shaped clay vessel



Bronze decorative part (fulcrum) of symposium couch

The archaeological site of Gitana extends over an area of 287,000m², and covers the SW slope of the gypsum mountain of Vrysella, at the confluence of the Kalpakiotikos stream with the river Kalamas (ancient Thyamis).

The existence of a city named Gitana is evidenced by the literary tradition (Livius, Polybius), but mainly by inscriptions on clay sealings and stone. Identification of the ancient city's name is verified by the inscription ΓΙΤΑΝΑ on a clay sealing, one of the 3,000 revealed during the excavation of a large public building ("Building A"), identified with the city's Prytaneion-Archives, as well as by an inscription on a bronze sheet from the city's "Small Temple". The contemporary name of the site is Goumani.

Gitana was political centre and the seat of the Koinon (League) of the Thesprotians, from its establishment in 336/330 BC to its occupation by the Romans in 167 BC. Chronologically speaking, it was the second capital of Thesprotia, after Elea.

The settlement is surrounded by a strong polygonal wall on all sides, with a total perimeter of 2,500 metres, including the precipice on the East. The wall is reinforced with towers and retrenchments. The fortification extends to the top of the hill, ending up in a strong semi-circular tower. Access to the ancient settlement was ensured by means of three main gates and three smaller gateways. The main entrance was located approximately midway along the NW side of the fort. A strong polygonal bailey, starting at the NW edge of the fortification and extending up to Kalamas, reinforces the defence of the western fortification and protects the theatre area on the north.

The partition wall, with a length of 315 metres, divides the ancient settlement into two (eastern and western) residential sectors. The western part of the settlement, inside the partition wall, constituting also the part subject to the value enhancement project, covers a total surface area of 50,000m².

Based on the available archaeological data, the most important buildings excavated to date were located in this part of the settlement. The area to the East of the partition wall has yet to be surveyed. However, the existence of buildings and building complexes is apparent.

The Gitana settlement is built according to an organised urban plan, the so called Hippodamion system, based on a grid with parallel roads, 4-6m wide, that are vertically traversed by 2-3m wide roads. In-between the roads, building insulae are defined, on many of which building complexes, both public and private, are visible.

The agora of the settlement is located on an extensive flat, NE of the partition wall. It is shaped as an open square and enclosed on the north by a stoa, while its southern side is delimited by a slab-paved road and a shop complex. Next to the stoa, a building has been discovered, which most probably operated as a place of worship.



Vessel lid with relief decoration



At the beginning of a central road axis, a small temple was excavated, including an antetemple, a cella and a slab-paved parvis, at the end of which a public building was revealed, identified as the city's Prytaneion-Archives. The building was structured around a central, open-air court with symposium areas sporting mosaic floors, as well as workshop and storage areas, where clay pithoi were recovered, in their original locations.

The theatre of Gitana, with a capacity of about 4,000-5,000 spectators, was discovered at a location outside the fortification and the settlement, near the river Kalamas. The theatre was used both for theatrical performances and political meetings of the Koinon of the Thesprotians. The excavation work carried out twenty years ago, revealed a part of the koilon, formed on the rocky slope, the orchestra and part of the stage construction. Extremely rare and impressive is the fact that a large number of seats bear, on their front side, engraved inscriptions of names of prominent citizens (Menedamos, Charopidas, Alexandros, Pausanias, Timodamos, Antinous, Kefalos, Dokimos, Nikomachos, Nikostratos etc.).

The value enhancement works carried out in the framework of the 3rd Community Support Framework, from October 2003 until May 2009: included installation of public utility networks, construction of a visitors' building, formation of a visitors' guided tour path through the main ancient axes, preservation of the mosaic floors of the Prytaneion and construction of protection shelters, as well as drainage works in the area of the ancient theatre.