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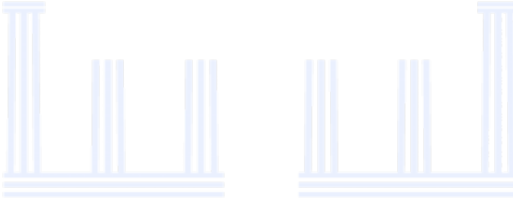


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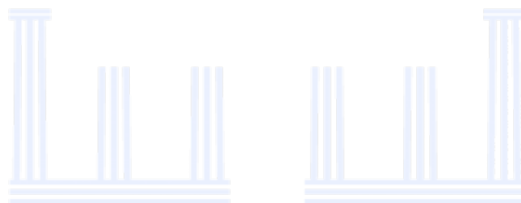
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vol. 3

Habbo G. Lolling at Melitaia

The Antiquities of an Ancient City through the Lens of Two 1882 Notebooks

Robin Rønnlund



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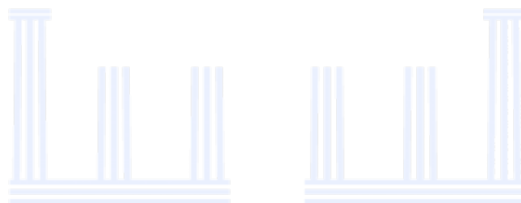
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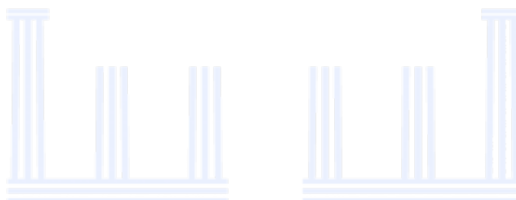


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The antiquities of an ancient city through the lens of two 1882 notebooks

2024



Habbo G. Lolling at Melitaia:

The antiquities of an ancient city through the lens of two 1882 notebooks*

Robin Rönnlund

Wenner-Gren fellow

Department of Historical Studies, University of Gothenburg

robin.ronnlund@gu.se

ORCID: 0000-0001-8305-9259

Abstract:

The Greek-Finnish collaborative field-project, the *Melitaia Archaeological Programme*, began in 2022 to examine the ancient Thessalian city of Melitaia. The programme is the first endeavour to systematically document the entirety of the ancient site, but does not represent the first endeavour to outline its antiquities. Already in 1882, the German scholar and epigraphist Habbo Gerhard Lolling visited the location and made a remarkably detailed plan of its visible architectural remains. Lolling's account was never published and remained forgotten among his notebooks after his untimely death in 1894. In this article, the site of ancient Melitaia is presented through a combination of Lolling's notes and a recent LiDAR survey, providing a rare glimpse of the state of the archaeological site both in the present and in the years immediately after the incorporation of Thessaly into the Kingdom of Greece.

Keywords: Archival studies, epigraphy, fortifications, inscriptions, LiDAR, Melitaia, Thessaly

* I would like to thank the Ephorate of Antiquities of Fthiotida and Evrytania and the Finnish Institute at Athens and especially ephor Efi Karantzali and site directors Konstantina Psarogianni and Petra Pakkanen for embarking on the systematic study of ancient Melitaia, a city that truly merits its place in Thessalian archaeology. I also thank Lambros Stavrogiannis for his perseverance over the years and for providing me with illustrations places and artefacts, and the anonymous reviewer of this article for their positive response and useful comments. Finally, this work could not have been done without a generous research grant by the Wenner-Gren Foundations, Stockholm.

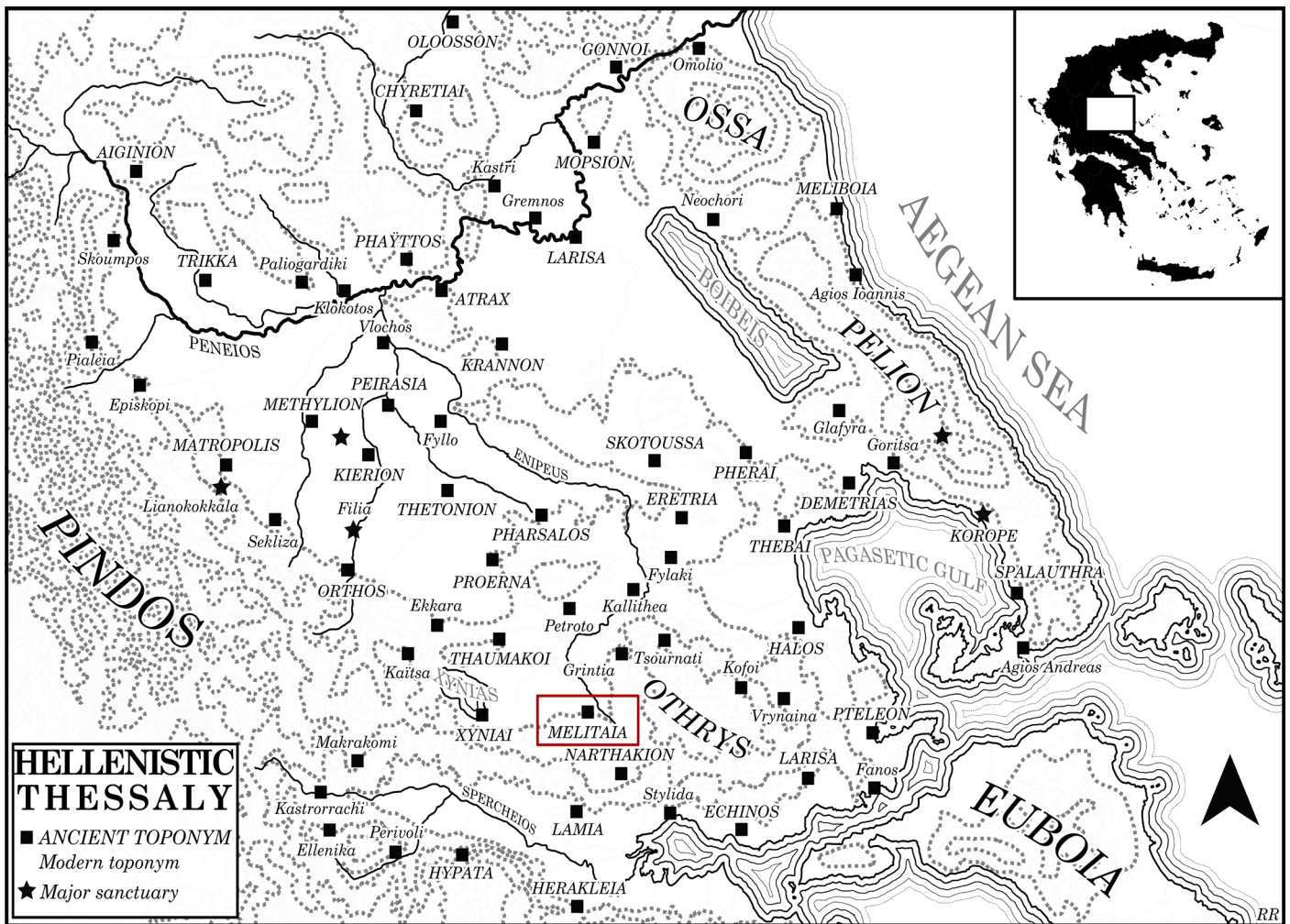


Fig. 1: Melitaia within Hellenistic Thessaly. Map by the author.

Ancient Melitaia

Located in the southeastern corner of the Domokos plateau in southern Thessaly (Fig. 1), the *polis* of Melitaia belonged to the area of ancient Achaia Phthiotis.¹ The Phthiotic Achaians were *perioikoi* or semi-subjects to the Thessalians of Thessaly proper (also known as tetradic Thessaly),² and included several *po-leis* from the eastern end of the Pindos range all across mount Othrys with its slopes to the Pagasetic gulf. The *polis* of the Melitaians was arguably the most important in the ancient region, and the urban site is certainly the largest in Achaia Phthiotis, followed by those of Larisa Kremaste³ and Halos at the coast.⁴

As outlined by Friedrich Stählin,⁵ the site of Melitaia is located on a long slope on the western

Othrys range (Fig. 2). The highest point of the settled area, the *akropolis*, is at the southernmost point of the fortified enceinte, separated from the main hill-land beyond it by a narrow saddle. The intramural area consists of a series of plateaux, formerly used for the cultivation of cereals but now increasingly overgrown. A cross-wall or *diateichisma* divided the city into an upper (*ano*) and lower (*kato*) area, the exact function of which remains unknown. Remains of structures and buildings are visible in the ground all over the site, and several chance discoveries of inscriptions, architectural members and sculpture have been reported from the area.⁶

Historically, little archaeological work has been conducted at the site prior to the 2020s. Limited excavations were carried out on the *akropolis* by the (then) local archaeological authorities in Thebes in 1972,⁷ and some rescue ex-

1 Decourt et al. 2004, 686–687.

2 Haagsma et al. 2019; Aston 2024, 42–43.

3 Stählin 1924, 182–184.

4 Reinders 1988.

5 Stählin 1924, 162–164.

6 Among many examples, see Pandos 1989, 157; Dakoronia 2005, 378; Kyparissi-Apostolika 2011, 309.

7 Ioannidou 1972; Stavrogiannis 2018.

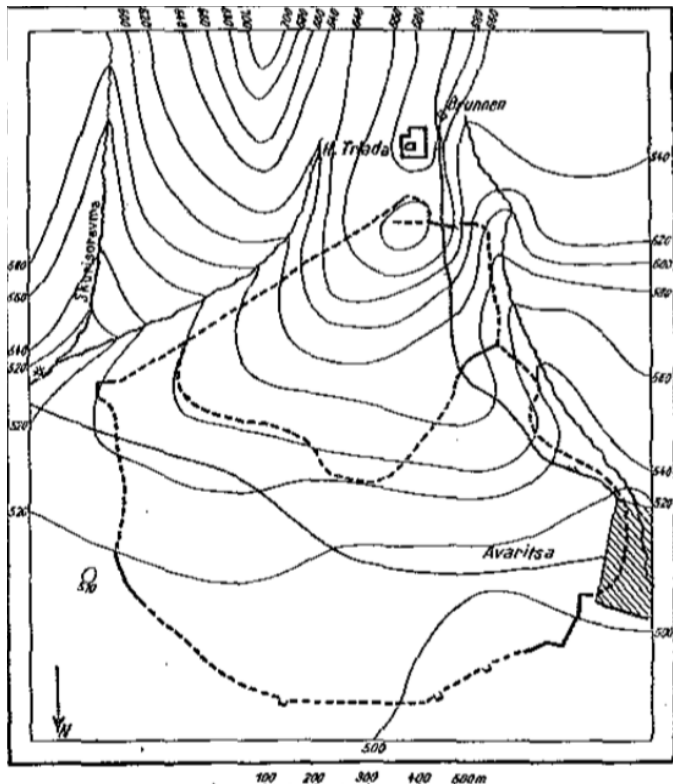


Fig. 2: Map-sketch of ancient Melitaia by Friedrich Stählin (1924, 162). Note the direction of north. Map in the public domain.

cavations have since also been conducted within the ancient city by the former 14th Ephorate of Prehistoric and Classical antiquities.⁸ Immediately outside of the city walls, a Roman-era complex of buildings were excavated in 1992 and 1998 by the Ephorate, but the final results are yet to be published.⁹ The construction of a house within the village of Melitaia in 1993 led to the discovery and subsequent excavation of a small temple *in antis* of the Thessalian goddess Artemis Ennodia.¹⁰ The remains are still preserved within the basement of one of the private houses in the village. A survey of the architectural remains at the site was reportedly conducted by an Italian team led by Floriana Cantarelli in the 1990s–2000s, but its results remain still to be published.¹¹

The archaeological site of ancient Melitaia is the subject of an ongoing Greek–Finnish col-

laborative field-project since 2022, the *Melitaia Archaeological Project* (MelAP),¹² focussing on documenting and excavating the extant remains. So far, excavations in the *akropolis* area have yielded a wealth of finds of several distinct historical periods, showing that the area was inhabited for most of the course of antiquity. The ancient fortification walls, which have been covered by considerable vegetation in the last century, are also being revealed, showing their remarkable degree of preservation. In parallel, geophysical surveys in the *kato* and *anapolis* area have yielded promising results, with indications of a regular street grid and wide streets. The work is very much in progress, and the results are yet to be processed for final publication.

The site of ancient Melitaia at Avaritsa in the 19th century

At the northwestern corner of the ancient city site is the modern village of Melitaia, re-named in 1915 from the original Avaritsa, a name of Slavic origin. The village can be traced to the Middle Ages, and was probably established for the same reason as the ancient city; the location is rich in springs and has ample access to arable land and pastures. Immediately south of the ancient site is the small monastery of Agia Triada, probably built in the 17th century, but reinstalled after years of abandonment in c. 1830.¹³

12 MelAP is a collaboration between the Ephorate of Antiquities of Fthiotida and Evrytania and the Finnish Institute at Athens, directed by Konstantina Psarogianni and Petra Pakkanen. The programme is planned to run in 2022–2026, and includes excavation, field walk, geophysical, architectural and topographical survey, as well as environmental studies.

13 Ussing 1847a, 306: “[Den venlige Munk] fortalte mig, at dette Kloster i lang Tid havde været forladt; for 15 Aar siden var det blevet nyt opbygget efter fattig Leilighed, og han havde været den første Munk, der havde taget Bolig deri; selv nu talte det kun tvende Munke, thi det var et fattigt Kloster.” (The friendly monk told me that this monastery had been abandoned for a long time. It had been reconstructed after a fashion some 15 years ago, and he had been the first monk to settle in it. Now it counted but two monks, as it was a poor monastery.)

8 Dakoronia 1997, 195–196; 2004.

9 Papakonstantinou *et al.* 1996, 310–312; Charami 1997; Stavrogiannis 2015, 92.

10 Dakoronia 1998; Stavrogiannis 2020.

11 The second volume of the project (the first being Cantarelli *et al.* 2008), was reportedly in press in 2009 (according to Cantarelli 2009, 1188 note 3), but has not been published yet.



Fig. 3: Habbo Gerhard Lolling c. 1881. Photograph in the birthday album of F. Wieseler, Athens, 19 October 1881. Photograph in the public domain.

Unlike the neighbouring valley of Spercheios and the important regional capital of Lamia, the Domokos plateau did not become part of the new Greek state after the War of Independence. The border between the Kingdom of Greece and the Ottoman Empire ran in the hill-lands south of Avaritsa/Melitaia, with an Ottoman border post (*kazarma*) at the Palaiokastro of Divri, only 5 km south of the village. Few Western scholars travelled the area in this period, and the first to really consider the remains worth a visit was the Danish historian and philologist Johan Louis Ussing, who came to Avaritsa on 22 June 1846. By the discovery of an arbitration inscription used as the altar table in the monastery church, Ussing was the first to identify the ancient city at Avaritsa as that of ancient Melitaia,¹⁴ which had previously been

thought as being at Kislar/Kallithea.¹⁵

After Ussing's visit, few scholars came again to the location before 1881, when the area was annexed by the Kingdom of Greece through the Conference of Constantinople. Following the annexation, a handful of archaeologists and epigraphists passed through the area. Apart from Lolling (in 1882, see below), we may note the French epigraphist Paul Monceaux (also in 1882), and the German scholar Friedrich Stählin (in 1912). Generally, the site did not attract attention, and until this day, the only available plan of the remains are found in Stählin's 1924 volume (Fig. 2).

Much of the site of Melitaia as well as the pastures to the south of the village continued after the liberation to be the property of the monastery of Agia Triada until 1933, when it was to be auctioned off. A society formed by concerned Melitaians—the *Christian Brotherhood of Melitaia* (Χριστιανική Ἀδερφότητα Μελιταίας)—managed to buy the estate, and still owns a substantial part of the archaeological site. The monastery, which used to be run by monks, is now a nunnery with a single nun living on the premises.

Habbo G. Lolling, his travels, notebooks and their information on ancient Melitaia

Habbo Gerhard Lolling (Fig. 3) was born 23 November 1848 in Tergast in East Friesland, then in the Kingdom of Hanover. He was educated at the University of Göttingen, and received there his doctorate in Classical Philology and Archaeology in 1871. That year, he relocated to Athens to work as a tutor, and later found work with the German Archaeological Institute as its librarian. It is apparent from the testimonia of Lolling's friends and colleagues that he was well-regarded in the Athenian community.¹⁶ He seems to have been driven by an ardent scholarly curiosity, and it is possible that this sentiment even made him commit some misdemeanours.¹⁷ Ambition, however, appears not to

15 Martin Leake 1835, 469–470.

16 Wolters 1894.

17 It is possible that Lolling entered the basement

14 Ussing 1847a, 305–307; 1847b, 2–9 No. 2 (= IG IX,2 205).

have been one of his vices, as he sent most of his squeezes to Wilhelm Dittenberger instead of publishing them himself.¹⁸ This does not mean that he did not publish; the *Inscriptiones Graecae* series contains several hundred inscriptions which were first noted and published by Lolling, often as relatively short notices in the *Athenische Mitteilungen*.

Lolling only published a fraction of all the information he collected during his innumerable trips throughout Greece in the 1870s and 1880s. His papers contain innumerable plan-sketches of sites he visited, depicted in astounding detail. Several sites which have yet never been published with a plan can be noted among the notebooks and loose sheets of paper, providing opportunity for the study of locations which often have suffered from considerable destruction since the time of Lolling's visit. Christian Habicht noted at a 1994 conference commemorating the centenary of Lolling's death that the wealth of archaeological information found in the notebooks and loose leaves preserved in Lolling's *Nachlass* has yet not been fully appreciated,¹⁹ something that still remains true some 30 years later.

As far as can be discerned from preserved records and publications, Lolling made at least

three trips to Thessaly in the 1880s,²⁰ which he later summarised in a longer article.²¹ His preserved notebooks contain highly precise information regarding his movements in the landscape. Each location visited is marked with a time stamp, and he often makes references to compass angles as well as the topographical heights of certain locations. The journeys were made on horseback, often through difficult and poorly known terrain.

The first journey was in March–April 1882,²² not even a full year after the annexation of the region. Arriving in Volos, Lolling visited the Pilio peninsula, travelled on to Farsala (ancient Pharsalos) to visit the ancient sites at Kislar (Kastro Kallithea) and Gynaikokastro (ancient Proerna), continuing on to Larisa. There he recorded a very large number of inscriptions, and also managed to visit Tyrnavos, before he had to return to Volos and Athens as his mother was ill.²³

The second trip was in the late autumn and winter the same year, when he embarked on a truly ambitious journey through the region, taking him through much of both tetradic Thessaly and some of the perioecic areas (Fig. 4). During this journey, Lolling did not only keep a diary,²⁴ but also a sketchbook, in which he made several plans of sites as well as sketches of views and vistas.²⁵

The third trip was less extensive, and only took place during less than two weeks in the spring of 1884 as part of his trip across the whole Greek mainland. The diary—which is not at all as detailed as the previous ones and in a very poor hand—begins on Euboea, and records how Lolling rode from Lamia on 14 May over Domokos (ancient Thaumakoi) on to Farsala

of the Daskaleion in Larisa without permission to copy a recently discovered dedication to Ennodia Astike. This is recorded in an 1892 complaint by the Ephor of Larisa to the General Ephorate in Athens, see Batziou 2021, 180. The document does not state the name of the “German archaeologist” who copied the inscription and then proceeded to publish it, but as Lolling indeed was the one to first publish the inscription (Lolling 1886, 450 No. 1), it is probably him that the report refers to. The inscription was later re-published by Otto Kern as the *IG IX,2 575*. When the break-in had happened is difficult to say. As Lolling published the inscription in 1886, it must probably have been found in or prior to this year, and since he visited Larisa in May 1884, it is conceivable that it was then that he copied the text. However, there is no reference to it in Lolling's notebooks (*Lolling 1; Lolling 3*), nor of the other inscription published in the same bulletin (*IG IX,2 640*), and the complaint by the Ephor states that the inscription was only found in 1886 (which might be a mistake). It is consequently possible that Lolling conducted another journey to Thessaly in 1886, of which there are no preserved notes.

18 Habicht 2007a, 298.

19 Habicht 2007a, *idem*.

20 Habicht 2007a only notes the two first. As mentioned in note 16, there might have been yet another later trip around 1886, but I have found no reference to it. Larfeld 1889, 512 claims that Lolling transcribed inscriptions in Larisa already in the summer of 1881, but whether this is a mistake for 1882 is impossible to say.

21 Lolling 1889.

22 Recorded in *Lolling 1*, titled “*Reise durch Ostthessalien vom 7. März – 14. April 1882*”.

23 Wolters 1894, XIV.

24 *Lolling 2*, titled “*II Reise in Thessalien, vom 18. Okt. bis 19. Dec. 1882*”.

25 *Lolling 3*, titled “*Lolling. Thessalien 1882*”.

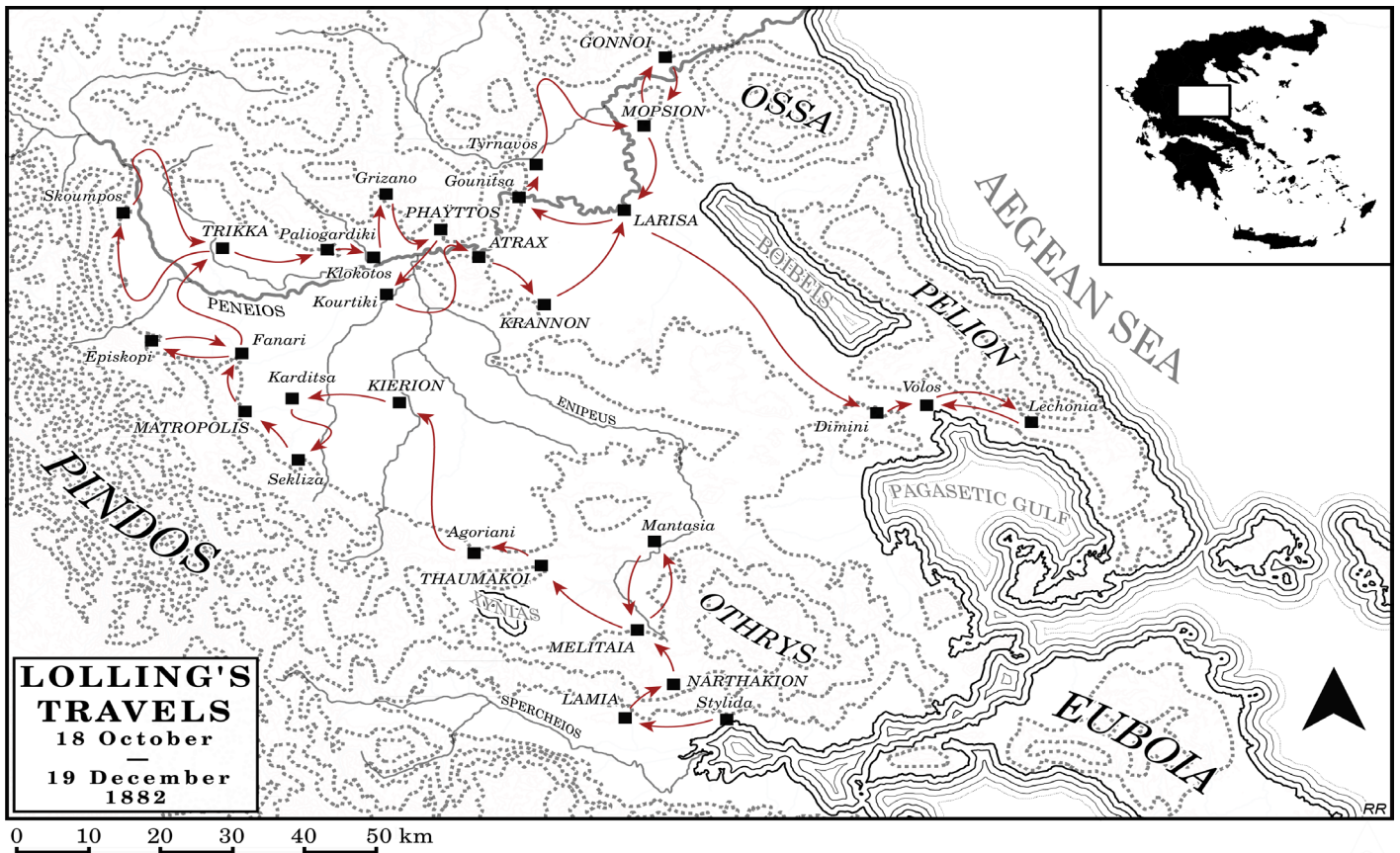


Fig. 4: Lolling's route during his second Thessalian journey 1882. Map by the author.

and Larisa, where he stayed for only four hours before continuing to Volos. From here, he made a longer excursion all over the Pilio peninsula, before returning to Volos to go again to Larisa. From Larisa he made many trips to the surrounding region, visiting Agia, mount Ossa, and the sites around lake Karla, before going west on 26 May. He visited Zarkos (ancient Phayttos) with its surroundings, continued to Trikala and Kalampaka to finally leave the region, entering the mountains of Epirus at the end of May.

It is not certain whether Lolling ever visited Thessaly again. He took on other projects in the 1880s, including editing the first Bäder guide book for the country and cataloguing the inscriptions in the Epigraphical Museum in Athens. He died at the age of 45 on February 22 1894 in Athens, after his health had declined from several years of overwork.

The bulk of Lolling's notebooks are kept in the archives of the German Archaeological Institute in Athens, and has recently been digitised and made available to the public under a Creative

Commons license. As far as I have been able to discern, very little of the material has ever been referenced or discussed in subsequent research.

The information on the site of Melitaia in the *Reisenotizen Thessalien 1882 (Lolling 2)*

Regarding the site of ancient Melitaia, the small notebook for the second Thessalian journey contains only some limited information that has not previously appeared elsewhere. However, it provides context to the drawings of the site which have not featured in any published study (found in *Lolling 3*, see below), and also the find-spots of the inscriptions seen by Lolling. A transcript of the relevant text is included in *Appendix 1*.

Lolling arrived by steamship to Thessaly on 22 October at 17:30 to Stylida, one of the ports of Lamia. He stayed at the suitably named Ξενοδοχείον τῶν Ξένων ("Hotel of the foreigners") in the latter city before beginning his Thes-



Fig. 5: Spoliated relief in the monastic church of Agia Triada, Melitaia. Photograph by Lambros Stavrogiannis.

salian journey by travelling to Limogardi, the site of ancient Narthakion,²⁶ on the slopes of mount Othrys. Recording several inscriptions in the area, as well as the remains of Narthakion and the fortification at the Palaiokastro of Divri,²⁷ Lolling reached the monastery of Agia Triada at Avaritsa at noon on 25 October.²⁸ The monastery, where Lolling appears to have been quartered, was at the time inhabited by a handful of monks (see above). The abbot (*igoumenos*) Arsenios showed Lolling a funerary inscription over a door, as well as a drawing of a fragmentary inscription from the chapel ruin of Agios Georgios, 1.2 km southeast of the monastery. The same year, the French historian Paul Monceaux had visited the area and also made drawings of these inscriptions, which he published in 1883.²⁹ Lolling also noted a funerary relief

walled into the outside of the monastic church (Fig. 5).³⁰

Lolling spent the afternoon of 25 October and most of the 26 documenting the ancient remains at the site (see below). On the second day, he noted the ruins of an extramural structure just outside what he thought to be the northeastern gate of the city. Among the blocks scattered around the ruined building was a large stone, 0.30 m deep, 0.62 m high, and 1.53 m wide,³¹ bearing an inscription by one Amyndros son of Machaon, informing the reader that this individual had paid ten talents (of silver)³² to the *polis* for the repair of the city walls and the gate.³³ Lolling never published this remarkable inscription, probably as the aforementioned Monceaux had beaten him to it. The stone has since disappeared, but Lolling's notes, however, provide an important clue as to their whereabouts at the time. Monceaux's publication of the inscription claims that the inscribed stone was found at what he thought to be the gate of the city:

“A l'extrémité orientale de l'ancienne enceinte de Mélitée, à environ 150 mètres du coude formé par le ruisseau, deux assises de pierre se coupent à angle droit. On voit encore çà et là quelques blocs qui faisaient partie de l'enceinte. Sur l'un d'eux est gravée l'inscription. Tout à côté est resté debout le montant d'une porte. C'est évidemment la porte en question.”³⁴

Lolling's notes (as well as his topographic sketch, see below), however, clearly show that the structure described by Monceaux was not

26 Lolling's plan of the site of Narthakion was probably the first to be made. Fifty years later, the French archaeologist Yves Béquignon mapped the site in company with a surveyor, and published a plan of the fortifications in his monograph on the Valley of Spercheios, see Béquignon 1937, 286–291. See also Decourt *et al.* 2004, 687.

27 This site was also surveyed by Béquignon (1937, 284–286, Fig. 8) and later too by Niek Bosch (1982, 99–105 162) in the 1980s.

28 In his notebook, Lolling often confused Avaritsa (Αβαρίτσα) with Antinitsa (Αντίνιτσα), a monastery with adjacent hilltop fortification some 7 km southwest of the former, see Béquignon 1937, 82–83.

29 Monceaux 1883; 1887.

30 This is still at the same location.

31 Lolling clearly made a mistake in his notebook, as the length of the block is marked as 0.53 m, but the actual sketch of the stone shows that this measurement is impossible. Monceaux (1883, 41) and Kern (*IG IX,2* 208) give the length as 1.50 m, which supports this.

32 Corresponding to c. 250 kg.

33 Maier 1959, 136–138. Maier saw the Amyndros of the inscription as identical with Amyndros, king of the Athamanian tribe in the Pindos range, an identification which lacks supportive evidence.

34 Monceaux 1883, 42. Translation: “At the eastern end of the ancient enceinte of Melitaia, some 150 m from the river bend, there are two pieces of walls that intersect at a right angle. Scattered building blocks can still be seen, formerly belonging to the enceinte. On one of these is the inscription. Close to it, a door-jamb remains standing. This is obviously the gate in question.”

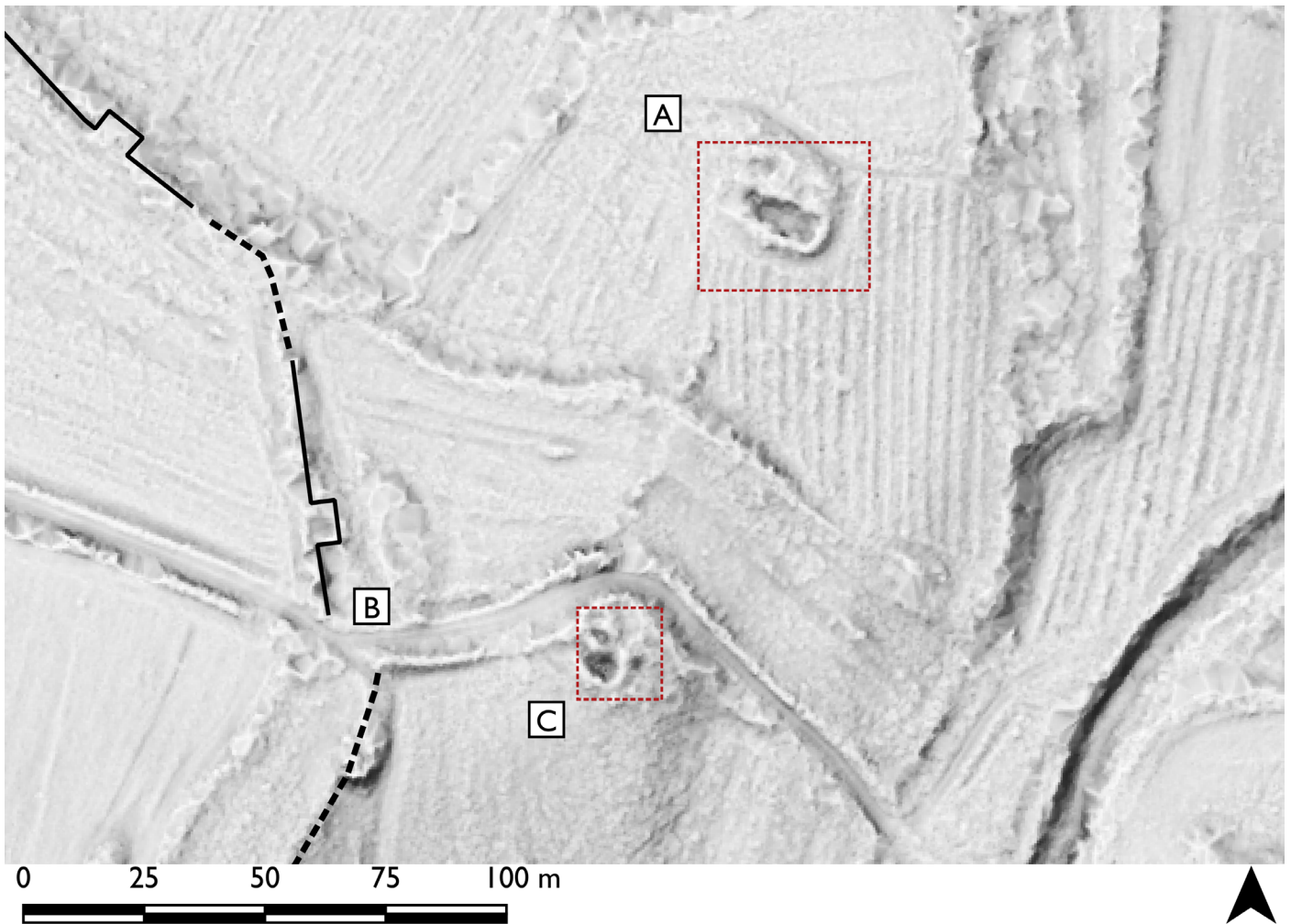


Fig. 6: LiDAR-derived slope-relief model of the area of the northeastern corner of the fortified enceinte at Melitaia (marked in black). A: Lolling's "suburban building". B: Probable location of Eastern Gate. C: Possible funerary monument. Plan by the author.

that of a gate in the fortifications, but the ruins of some sub- or peri-urban building ("*Überresten eines vorstädtischen Baus*"). The remains of this building are preserved today, and can be found at the same location described by Lolling. The remains are within a fruit-tree plantation and are covered by dense shrubs, but the recent LiDAR-scan of the area conducted by the Greek-Finnish archaeological project shows the building in detail (A in Fig. 6). The actual position of the gate—contrary to Monceaux's interpre-

tation—is about 100 m to the southwest (B in Fig. 6). The inscription was apparently still at the location in 1899 when Otto Kern visited Thessaly for the *IG*, but has since not been noted.

A final inscription was noted by Lolling immediately northwest of the site and of the village of Avaritsa, at the ruined chapel of Agios Ioannis. Here, on the far side of the mill stream (*Mühlbach*), Lolling noted a near-cubical inscribed block with a bead-band decoration (*Perlschnur*). The inscription was probably not easy to read, as Lolling writes that he made a squeeze of it.³⁵ The chapel has since been reconstructed, using many spoliated blocks (Fig. 7).

From this point, Lolling spent the remaining days at Avaritsa visiting sites in the region, before



Fig. 7: The present-day chapel of Agios Ioannis, reconstructed in 1959. Photograph by Lambros Stavrogiannis.

³⁵ I have not been able to relocate this squeeze. Prof. Klaus Hallof has informed me that it is not kept in the archives of the *IG* in Berlin, which only has two squeezes from the Agios Georgios site, neither made by Lolling.

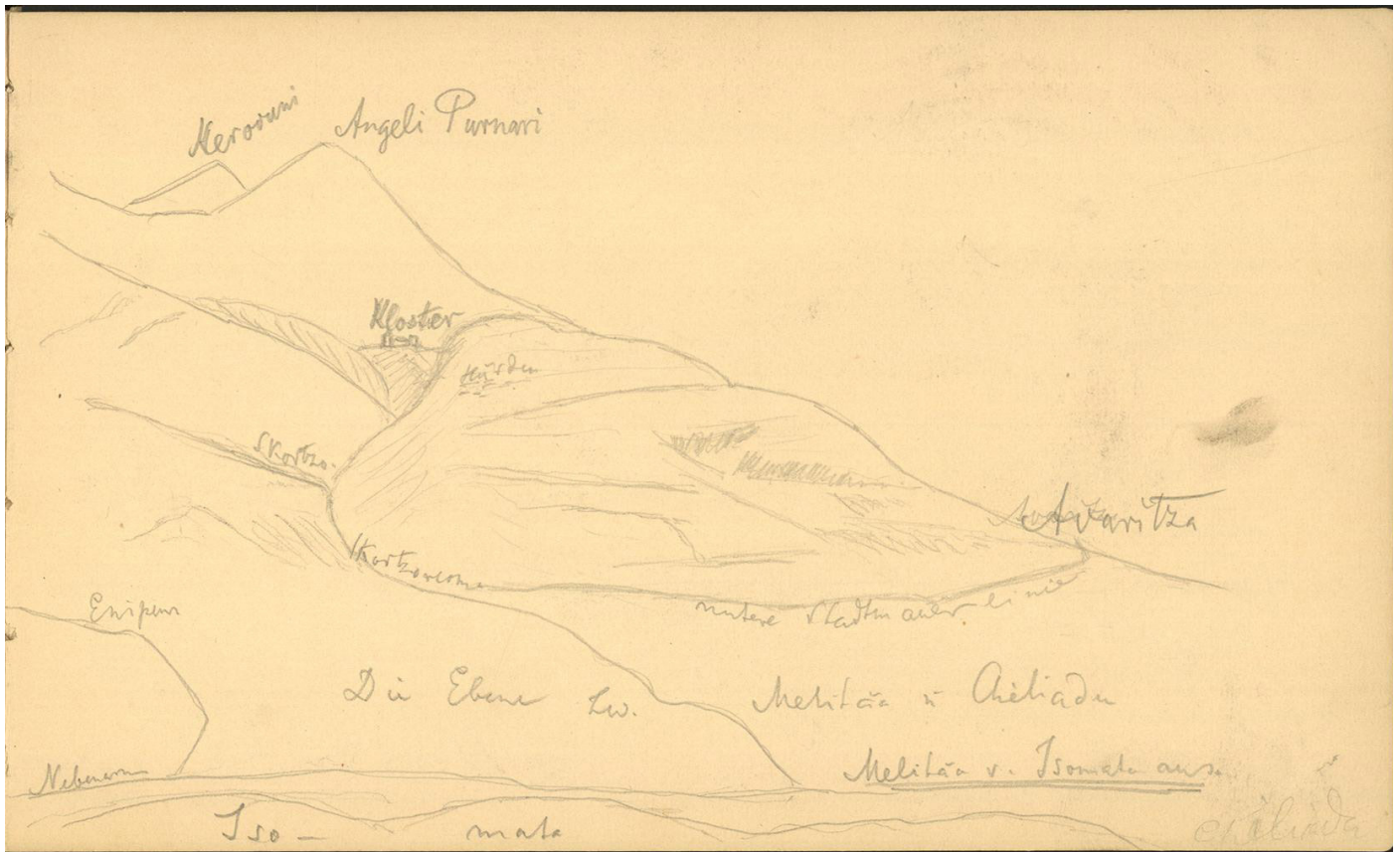


Fig. 8: Vue-sketch of Melitaia towards southwest. *Lolling 3*, page 7. Unpublished notebook kept in the archive of the German Archaeological Institute, Athens. D-DAI-ATH-Archiv-Lolling-00066. CC BY-NC-ND 3.0.

continuing his travel towards Domokos. Judging from his notebooks, he never visited Avaritsa again.

The Skizzenbuch Thessalien 1882

Lolling's sketchbook (*Lolling 3*) of the 1882 journey through Thessaly is surely the most remarkable document of the two note-books. Consisting of 94 pages, it contains sketches of vistas and plans of sites, some of which quite detailed. The sketchbook has several sketches of Melitaia with environs (Fig. 8), as well as three detailed plans of the visible architecture at the site, as drawn by Lolling on 25–26 October (Fig. 9; Fig. 11; Fig. 13).

The plans also contain detailed information regarding the dimensions of the preserved fortifications. As elsewhere among Lolling's papers, measurements are made in number of (Lolling's) strides (c. 0.7 m) or in (Lolling's) feet. For the sake of legibility, I provide re-tracings of Lolling's original plans to be compared with the fainter originals (Fig. 10; Fig. 12; Fig. 14).

The first sketch provides an overview of what is now commonly referred to as the *akropolis* and *ano polis* of the site (Fig. 9; Fig. 10). The excavations by the local archaeological authorities in the early 1970s and the recent cleaning works by the Municipality of Domokos and the Ephorate revealed more of the fortifications in the area of the *akropolis* (left of the note "715 m"), and their present state show that Lolling's sketch was fairly accurate. The ruined chapel ("Kapel-lenruine") north and below this location is at present unlocated. The sketch shows that a line of fortifications surrounded the whole upper plateau which constitutes the *ano polis*, with towers and possible jogs in the wall trace. Most of these are currently invisible due to erosion and overgrowth, but the single tower and adjacent jog marked "b" in Lolling's plan has recently been cleared of vegetation by the *MelAP* team. The jog-like feature in the eastern slope area (just right of the location marked "dogs" ("Hünden")), is in a particularly overgrown area, but the filtered 2022 LiDAR results clearly shows it at the same location as in the plan.



Fig. 9: The *ano polis* and *akropolis* of ancient Melitaia, as drawn in *Lolling 3*, 14. Note the direction of north. Unpublished notebook kept in the archive of the German Archaeological Institute, Athens. D-DAI-ATH-Archiv-Lolling-00066. CC BY-NC-ND 3.0.

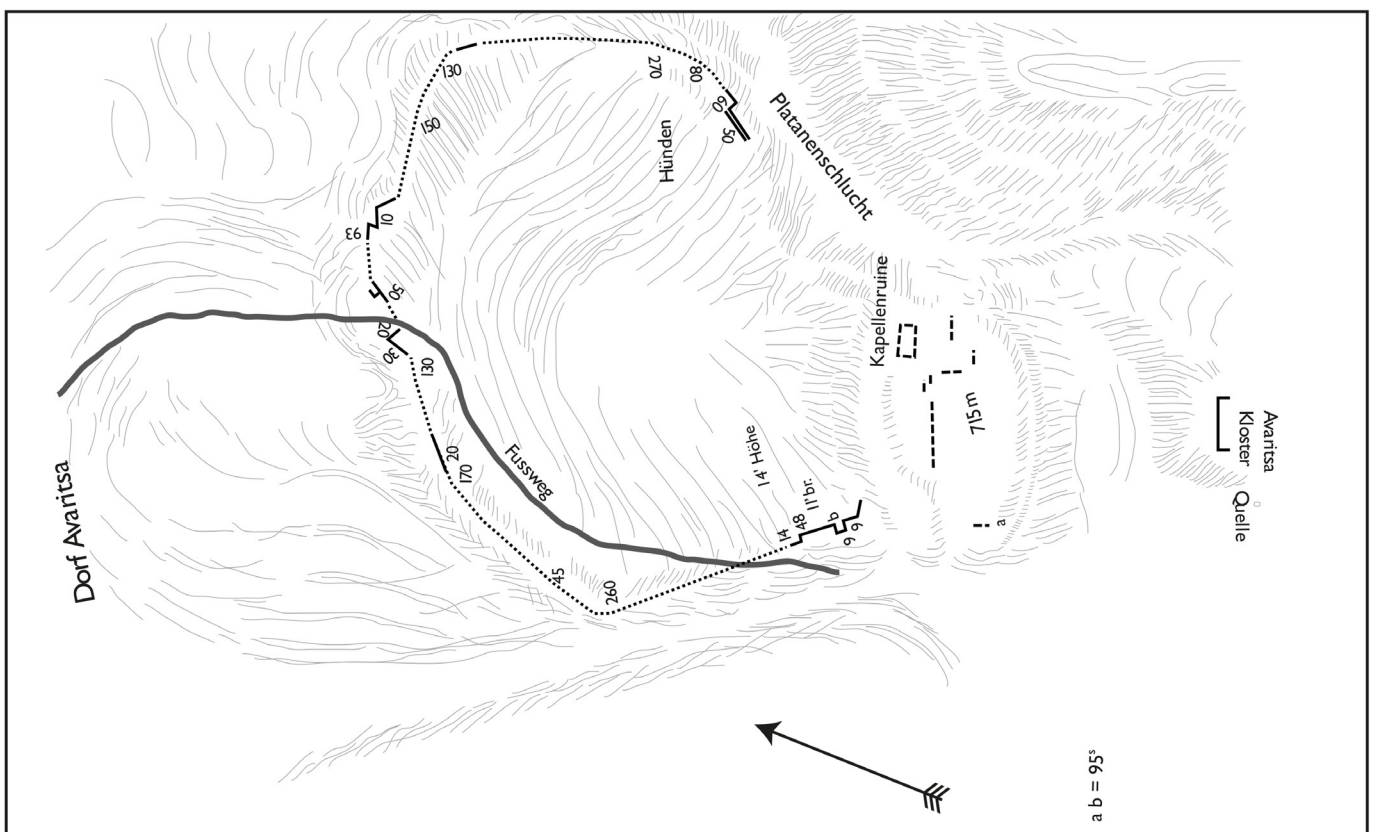


Fig. 10: Traced re-drawing of *Lolling 3*, page 14 (Fig. 9). Note the direction of north.

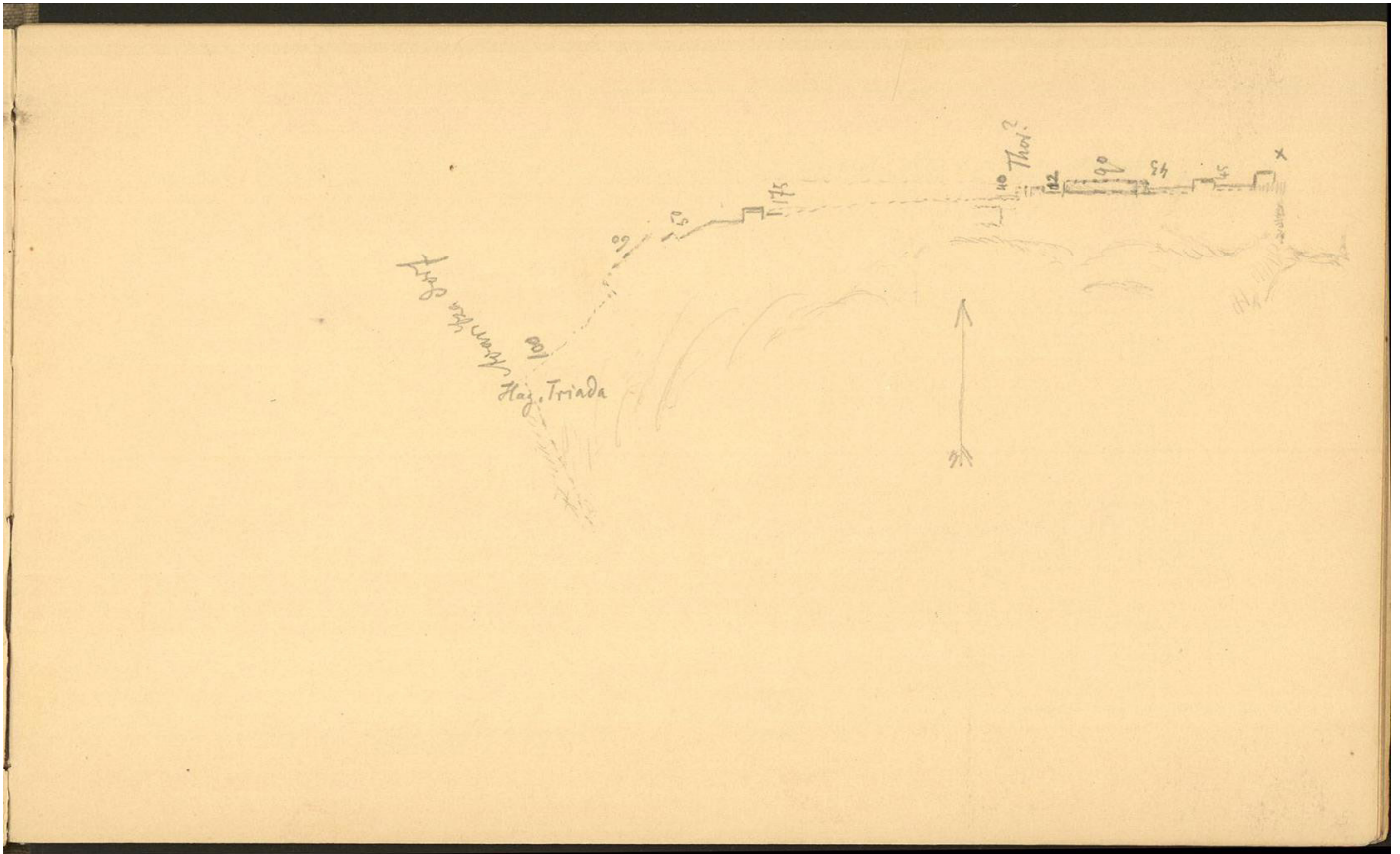


Fig. 11: The northwestern part of the fortifications of the *kato polis* of Melitaia, as drawn in *Lolling 3*, 16. Unpublished notebook kept in the archive of the German Archaeological Institute, Athens. D-DAI-ATH-Archiv-Lolling-00066. CC BY-NC-ND 3.0.

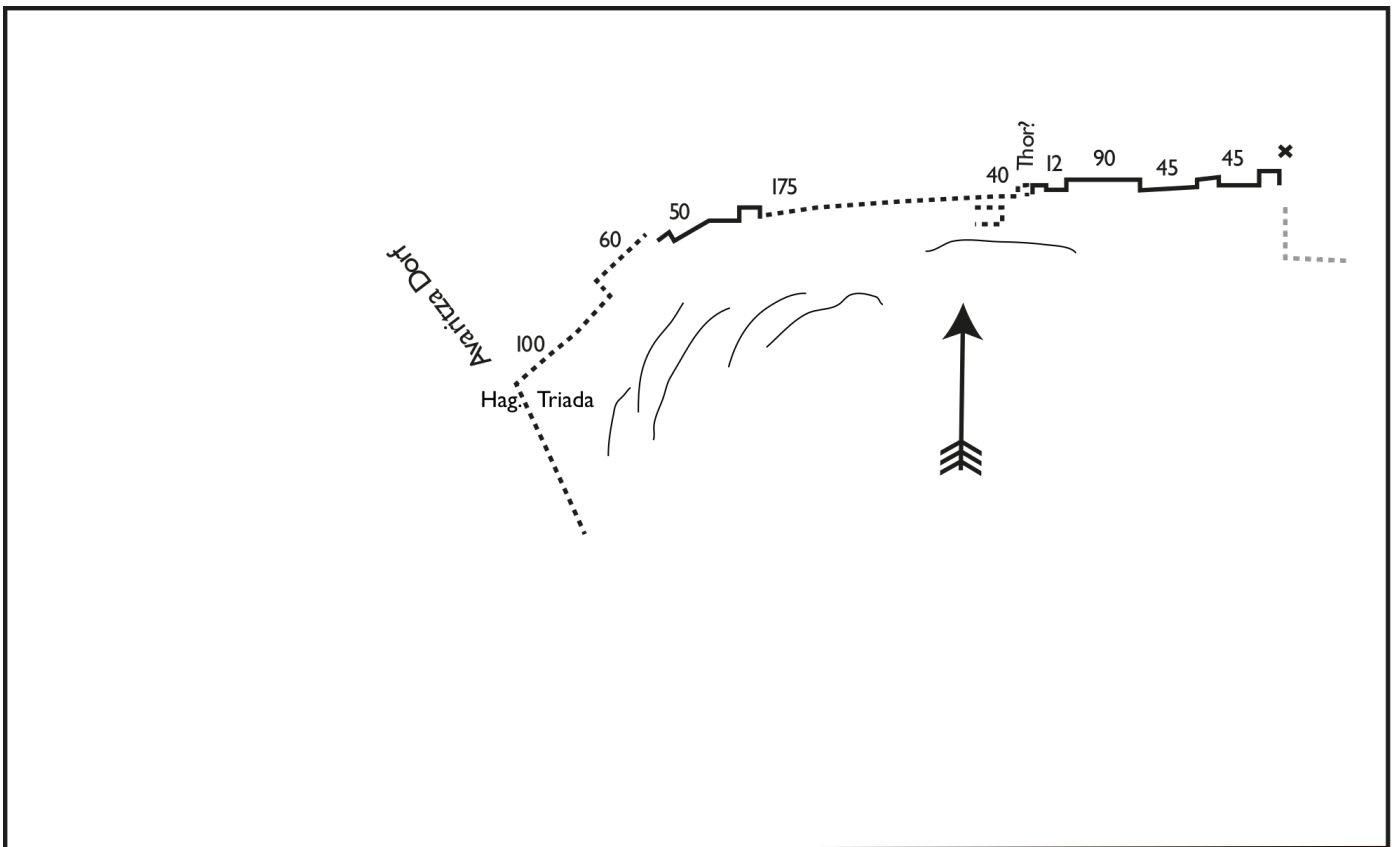


Fig. 12: Traced re-drawing of *Lolling 3*, page 16 (Fig. 11).

Pages 16–17 of the sketchbook contains a co-joined outline of the fortifications of the kato polis at the foot of the slope (Fig. 11; Fig. 12; Fig. 13; Fig. 14), with several towers and curtain walls marked with lengths and other dimensions. The features drawn in the two sheets are joined by an X, which shows where the line of the fortification is continued on the next or previous page. The level of detail far exceeds the plan-sketch by Friedrich Stählin published almost 40 years later (Fig. 2), showing Lolling’s zeal in mapping the ancient remains.

The ancient fortification walls as seen by Lolling are today nearly completely covered in dense trees and shrubs, but the outlines of some of the towers can be discerned in the LiDAR image (B in Fig. 6). Lolling’s identification of the location of the gate is probably correct, as inferred by the results of the 2022 geophysical prospection of the area immediately within the position, which revealed a probable road leading up to it. At present, the location of the gate is marked by a small shrine (*ikonisma*) to Agios Efraim (Fig. 15), with a row of stones belonging to the wall visible in the dirt track surface immediately to its south. The LiDAR image indicates that the gate was of an overlapping or tangential type, which is typical for gates at such positions in Hellenistic cities of Thessaly.³⁶

³⁶ See for example Vaiopoulou *et al.* 2023, 66 (Thessalian Vlochos); Rönnlund 2023, 104 (Orthos); Blum 1992, 170 (Thessalian Eretria).



Fig. 15: The location of the supposed eastern gate of ancient Melitaia in 2022, as seen from the inside towards northeast. The *ikonisma* of Agios Efraim to the left. The outer face of the fortification wall can be seen as a line in the ground between the hedges. Photograph by the author.

The suburban building where the inscription was found (“*Ruine mit Inschr.*”, see above) is also marked at its correct location northeast of the gate. The small structure marked by Lolling as being immediately outside the gate location is still visible today (C in Fig. 6), if severely damaged by looting. The area immediately outside of the fortification wall marked *Ruinenfeld* (“field with ruins”) was the area excavated in 1992 and 1998 by the ephorate (see above), and yielded the remains of what is possibly a Roman-period villa.

GIS-ing Lolling’s sketches and the first results of the new LiDAR survey

Even if very detailed in their execution, Lolling’s sketches naturally lack the precision of modern GPS-derived cartography. However, I argue that by combining them with modern topographical data, Lolling’s plans can be rectified, producing plans of architectural features which might be presently destroyed or unavailable for recording. The sketches also help explaining the data acquired through the recent LiDAR survey of the ancient city as conducted within the ongoing archaeological field project. The ancient city presents a palimpsest of historical land-use, and it is sometimes difficult to immediately understand whether a terrace, depression or bank represent an ancient feature or not.

A closer examination of Lolling’s sketches overall shows that his step length was approximately 0.75 m,³⁷ indicating that he was taking wide strides while measuring ancient remains. Converting his strides to metric units and harmonising each measured segment of the drawings so that distances are equally comparable, one arrives at new drawings without the sketch-derived distortions of the original. In the case of the drawing of the *ano polis* and *akropolis* areas of ancient Melitaia, this presents few problems, as they are made on one single sheet (Fig. 16).

³⁷ This was ascertained by comparing Lolling’s measurements to known distances, for example between the recently revealed towers on the *akropolis* of Melitaia.



Fig. 16: Pre-rectified schematic drawing of upper fortifications at Melitaia after Lolling's sketch. Measurements are in Lolling's "steps" (c. 0.75 m) with converted metric units. Drawing by the author.

As Lolling clearly made his sketches by following the outlines of the wall trace, the angles between each measured section are naturally not identical to that of the actual remains, but again distorted. By combining the rectified aerial photographs of c. 1943³⁸ with a present-day Digital Terrain Model (DTM),³⁹ it is possible to overcome this challenge. The DTM consists of the ground-points of the LiDAR-derived Digital Surface Model (DSM), allowing for the mapping of the natural ground surface below the dense foliage of shrubs and trees. Georeferencing the schematic drawing (Fig. 16) in a GIS software, using the aforementioned two datasets as base-maps, one arrives at a surprisingly accurate image of the *ano polis* fortifications at Melitaia (Fig. 17). The *ano polis* fortifications as drawn by Lolling correspond remarkably well with their actual layout, suggesting that Lolling was using a compass to acquire bearings for his measurements.⁴⁰

The combined Lolling sketch-Digital Terrain Model shows that the whole *ano polis* of ancient Melitaia was apparently separately fortified, something which cannot at present be discerned on-site, as dense vegetation covers large sections of the area. It is clear that the location of the present-day monastery of Agia Triada (A in Fig. 17) was well outside of the ancient fortifications, which might support the identification of the remains underneath the monastic church as that of a peri-urban temple.⁴¹ The springs adjacent to the monastery continue to be important to the locals, with a modern pipeline connecting it with the village (B in Fig. 17). The DTM shows both the 1972/2022 excavation trenches on the *akropolis* (C in Fig. 17) as well as what is probably robber trenches for the extraction of stones from the ancient fortifications. The digital recordings of the exposed fortifications⁴² combined with the DTM show that the southernmost part of the *akropolis* area was rectangular in shape, forming a small *akra*, as has been observed at other sites in Thessaly and beyond.⁴³

The section of walls and towers seen by Lolling just northwest of the *akropolis* (D in Fig. 17) were completely covered in vegetation and turf until 2021, when they were re-exposed by the cleaning endeavours of the Municipality of Domokos and the Ephorate. The continuation of this line of fortifications was fragmentarily discernible in Lolling's time, and completely overgrown at present, but the sketch and the DTM suggests that it continued in a wide bend toward north (at E in Fig. 17). Here should also be the junction of the *ano polis* walls with those of the *kato polis*, which remains conjectural at present. Small segments of the fortifications were re-exposed by the MelAP members in 2023, showing that it contained towers (Fig. 18; at F in Fig. 17). Lolling only noted very fragmentary remains in the continuing section of the fortification as this continued to turn towards east, and it was only east of the old dirt-track leading to the monastery that he again traced more substantial parts of walls and towers (at G in Fig. 17). Here and further to the south, the

38 Available from the Geographical Service of the Hellenic Armed Forces (ΓΥΣ), probably produced by the Luftwaffe.

39 Produced by Geomatics SA, Greece.

40 That Lolling employed a compass is supported by several entries in his notebooks, which contain referenc-

es to compass directions by degrees.

41 Cantarelli *et al.* 2008, 135-136.

42 Conducted by Therese Emanuelsson-Paulson.

43 Rönnlund 2018, 37-38.

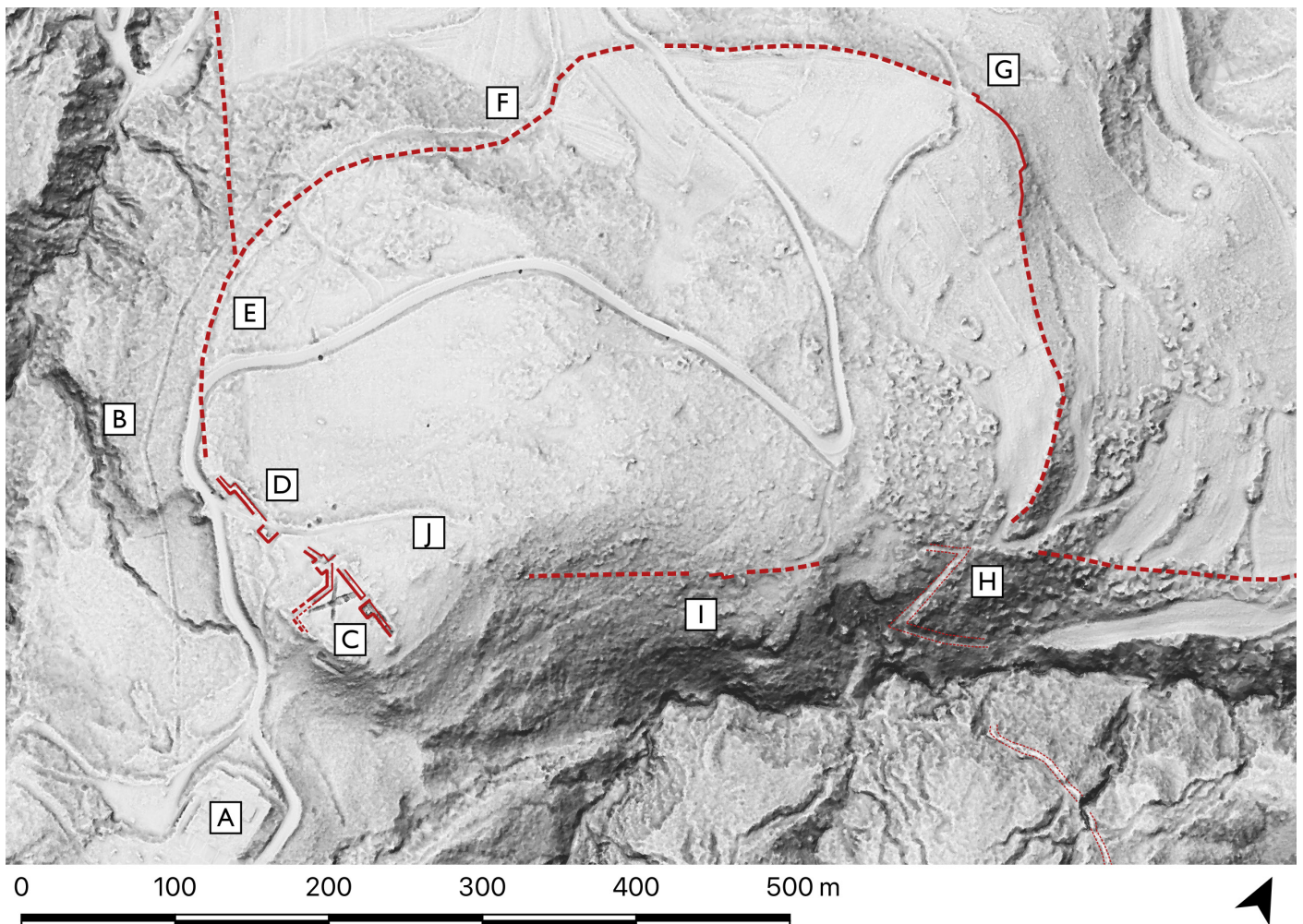


Fig. 17: LiDAR-derived terrain relief model (filtered) of the *akropolis* and *kato polis* of ancient Melitaia. A: The monastery of Agia Triada. B: Modern pipeline leading from springs to the village. C: The excavation area on the *akropolis*. D: Recently revealed fortifications. E: Approximate extent of fortifications. F: Area with recently exposed fortifications. G: Location where early modern footpath crossed the line of fortifications. H: Terraced road leading up to possible gate location? I: Fragmentary section of fortification wall. J: Approximate location of Lolling's "ruined chapel".

terrain is quite steep and presently covered in dense vegetation, but the distinctly terraced profile of the slope indicates substantial supportive walls containing the soil. At the easternmost point of the *ano polis* area (at H in Fig. 17), the DTM shows a terraced road leading up from the ravine of the Skortsoremma stream. A corresponding road is also visible on the far side of the ravine, probably the same as the former. It is probable that there was a gate allowing for access to the *ano polis* from the pasture-lands in the hills east of the city. The terrain becomes completely impassable further up the slope, but the DTM shows the aforementioned small "jog" in the wall at a location above the ravine (at I in Fig. 17). The exact course of the wall here, and whether it contained any walls, is at present impossible to say. Finally, the DTM also shows a sizeable mound-like feature on the *akropolis* (at J in Fig. 17) which might correspond to Lolling's ruined chapel.

Reproducing the above outlined workflow using Lolling's sketches of the fortifications of the *kato polis* area (Fig. 11; Fig. 12; Fig. 13; Fig. 14) requires the combination of the two sheets into one unscaled schematic sketch (Fig. 19; Fig. 20). It is clear that the long distance measured by Lolling amplified the typical distortion of the remains, which becomes clear when the distances of and between features are rectified (Fig. 20). Despite Lolling using a compass for bearings, the shorter distances between each unit give a gradually growing distortion as one progresses from west to east, which is obvious in the combined drawing.

At present, the fortifications of the *kato polis* of ancient Melitaia are covered in a long hedge (visible in Fig. 21, top), which runs from the area of the modern cemetery all the way to the *ikonisma* of Agios Efraim (see above). The trees and shrubs are extremely dense,



Fig. 18: Recently unearthed tower with adjacent fortification wall in the ano polis defences at Melitaia (at F in Fig. 17). Photograph by Lambros Stavrogiannis.

making it impossible to discern any ancient remains found here, a situation which appears to have been the same in the 1940s, judging from the 1943 aerial photographs of the area. The modern asphalt road Melitaia-Chiliadou also runs on a bank immediately inside of the wall, further barring the observation of any ancient architecture. Lolling's sketch shows, however, that in his time, there were extensive remains

of fortifications along especially the central and eastern parts of the whole northern end of the settlement. Seventeen towers can be seen in the sketch, showing that (similar to many other cities in Thessaly) the lower fortifications of ancient Melitaia were extensive.

Using the DTM, Lolling's sketch can with relative ease be rectified, showing what is probably still intact underneath the present-day hedge-line (Fig. 21, bottom). Several of the towers are visible in the DTM, indicating that they are still preserved underneath the canopy of the hedge. Lolling's identification of at least two (possibly three) gates, one at north and one in the east, appear to occupy central locations in the fortification line. The MelAP team in collaboration with the Municipality of Domokos plans to clear segments of the hedge to re-locate the hidden fortifications as seen by Lolling.

Combining the results of the analysis of Lolling's three sheets, a near-complete sketch of the fortifications of ancient Melitaia can be

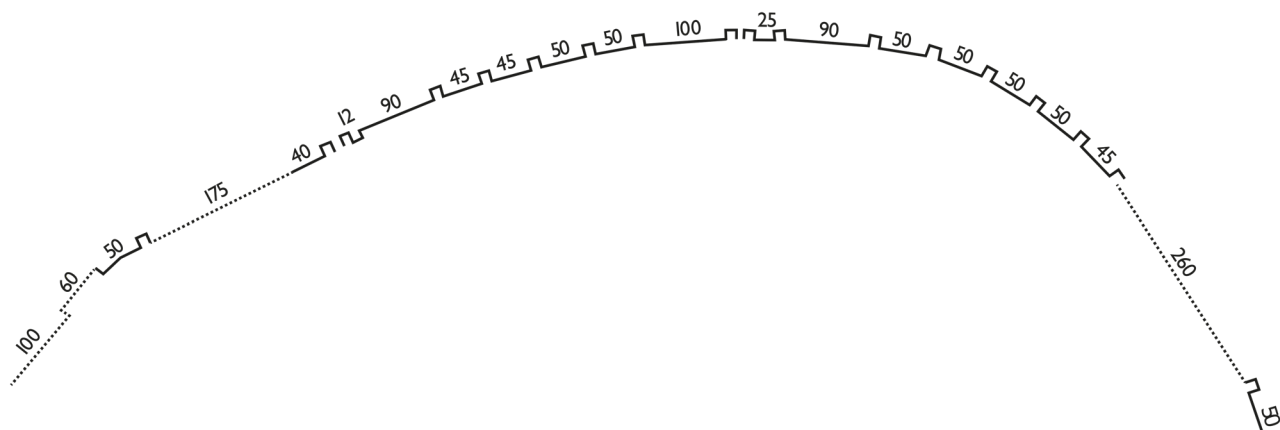


Fig. 19: Joined schematic drawing of the *kato polis* fortifications at Melitaia after Lolling's sketches. Measurements are in Lolling's "steps" (c. 0.75 m). Drawing by the author.

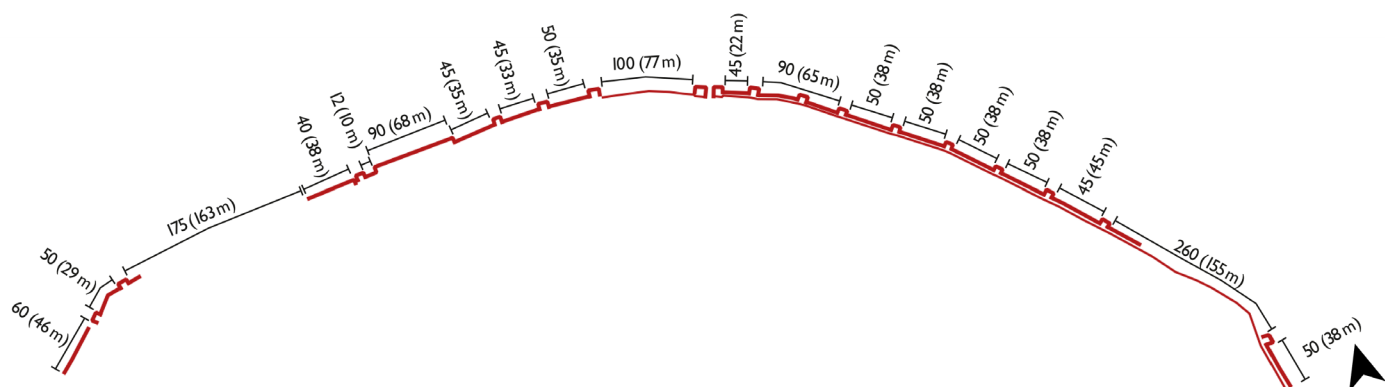


Fig. 20: Rectified schematic sketch (based on Fig. 19) of fortifications according to Lolling (Lolling 3). Drawing by the author.



Fig. 21: *Kato polis* fortifications at Melitaia. Top: Aerial orthographic photomosaic of fortification line area. Middle: DTM-derived topographical relief model of same area. Bottom: Aerial photograph with superimposed and rectified drawing of fortifications derived from Lolling (*Lolling 3*) and DTM. Plans by the author.

produced (Fig. 22). This shows that the previously available plan-sketch of the site by Stählin (see above and Fig. 2), was correct in its overall outline, with a total intramural space of c. 70 hectares and over 4 km of fortifications. The ancient city thus places itself among one of the larger urban settlements in Thessaly in the Hellenistic period.⁴⁴

Among the more notable features in this new map, we may note the area of the *akropolis* (at A in Fig. 22) where the 1972 and 2022-on-

44 For comparison with other large cities (as calculated from satellite photographs), the inhabited area of ancient Pharsalos was c. 70 hectares (total intramural area c. 100 hectare); ancient Kierion, c. 40 hectares; ancient Krannon, c. 50 hectares; ancient New Halos, c. 47 hectares; Paliogardiki, c. 55 hectares.

going excavations have been carried out, and the terrace of the monastery of Agia Triada to its south (at B in Fig. 22). The temple of Ennodia is positioned outside of the reconstructed wall trace (at C in Fig. 22), between the fortification walls and the stream delimiting the western end of the urban slope. Three possible gates (D-F in Fig. 22) are visible in the *kato polis* fortifications, as are at least 19 rectangular towers of varying sizes. The extra-mural “suburban” building noted by Lolling is located on a low ridge outside the easternmost gate, indicating that it was built next to a road leading out of the settlement. The excavation trenches of the 1992/1998 excavations by the Ephorate, corresponding to the “*Ruinenfeld*” in Lolling’s plan-sketch (Fig. 13 & Fig. 14), are well-visible in the DTM (at H in Fig. 22).

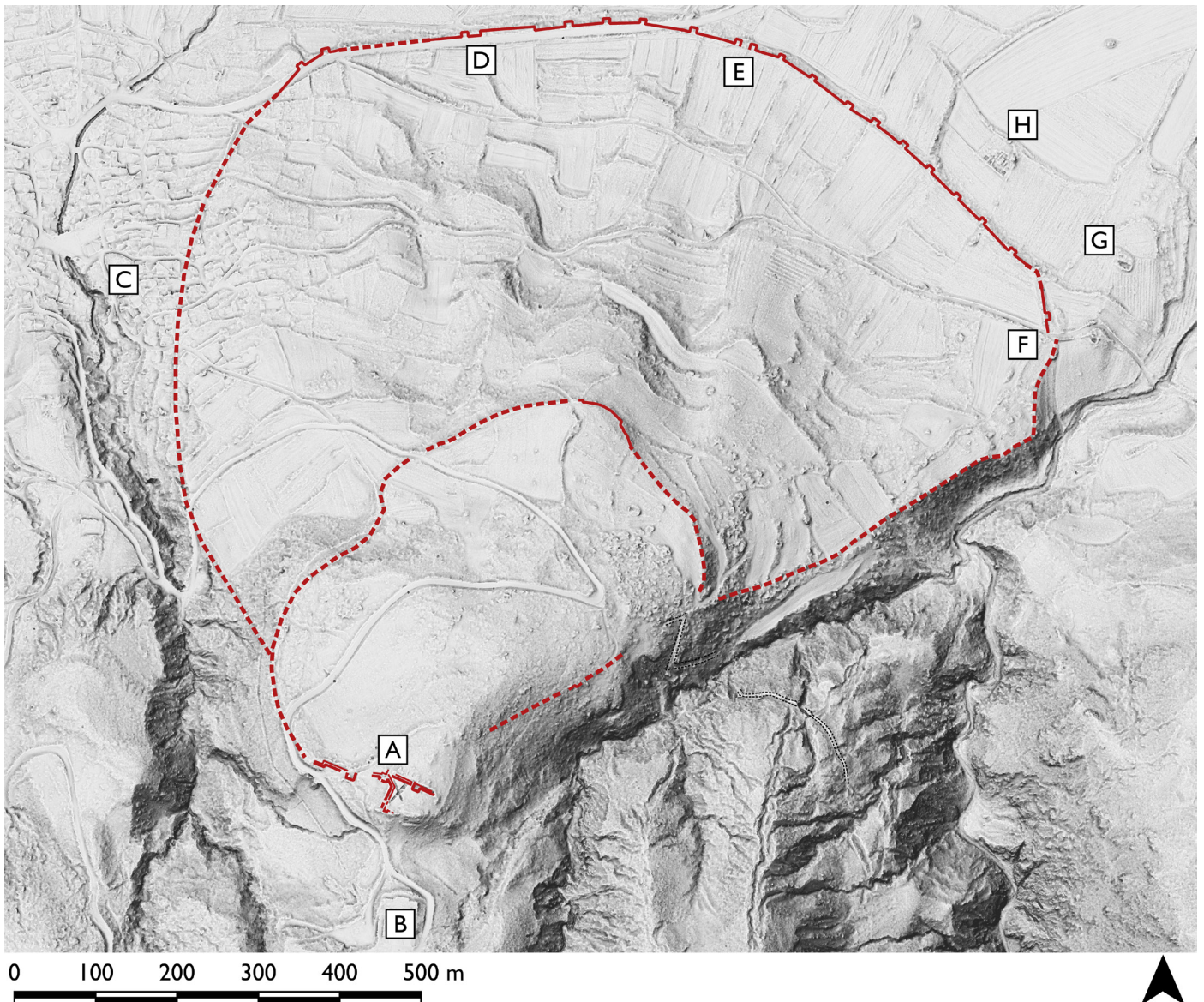


Fig. 22: Plan of the reconstructed Hellenistic fortifications at Melitaia (in red), superimposed on LiDAR-derived DTM, after Lolling (*Lolling 3*), recent excavations, and aerial photographs. A: Excavated area on *akropolis*. B: Monastery of Agia Triada. C: Location of temple of Ennodia. D: Possible gate. E: Northern gate. F: Eastern gate. G: Extra-urban building. H: Partially excavated agricultural complex. Map by the author.

Conclusions

The results of the study show the great prospects in digital processing of the plan-sketches preserved in Lolling's substantial body of field-notes, of which there are many more beyond that of Melitaia.⁴⁵ Many of the sites visited by Lolling have since been covered in dense vegetation due to changing grazing practises, or have sadly been destroyed by modern infrastructural developments. His plan-sketches consequently present a rare window on the

19th century landscape, and should not be dismissed as imprecise or lacking in detail.⁴⁶

The use of historical aerial photographs and LiDAR makes it clear that much of this work can be made on a remote basis, but the need to experience the physical landscape is still necessary in order to understand how Lolling perceived it. DTMs and other similar models are just digital representations of topography, and not topography itself.

45 It is my estimation that the total number of plan-sketches in Lolling's preserved notebooks exceeds 300 sites.

46 Examples of the scholarly use of Lolling's notes are few, but we should note Goette 2007.

Lolling's Thessalian material is of great interest to the scholar, especially as the inland parts are still relatively understudied compared to the coastal sites. The main obstacle for the material's inclusion in the more main-stream scholarly canon is definitively Lolling's difficult *Kurrentschrift*, often jotted down on horse- or donkeyback, which requires lengthy and arduous work to be deciphered. The effort, however, is definitively worth it, as it gives access to a wealth of information on sites and antiquities otherwise lost or forgotten.

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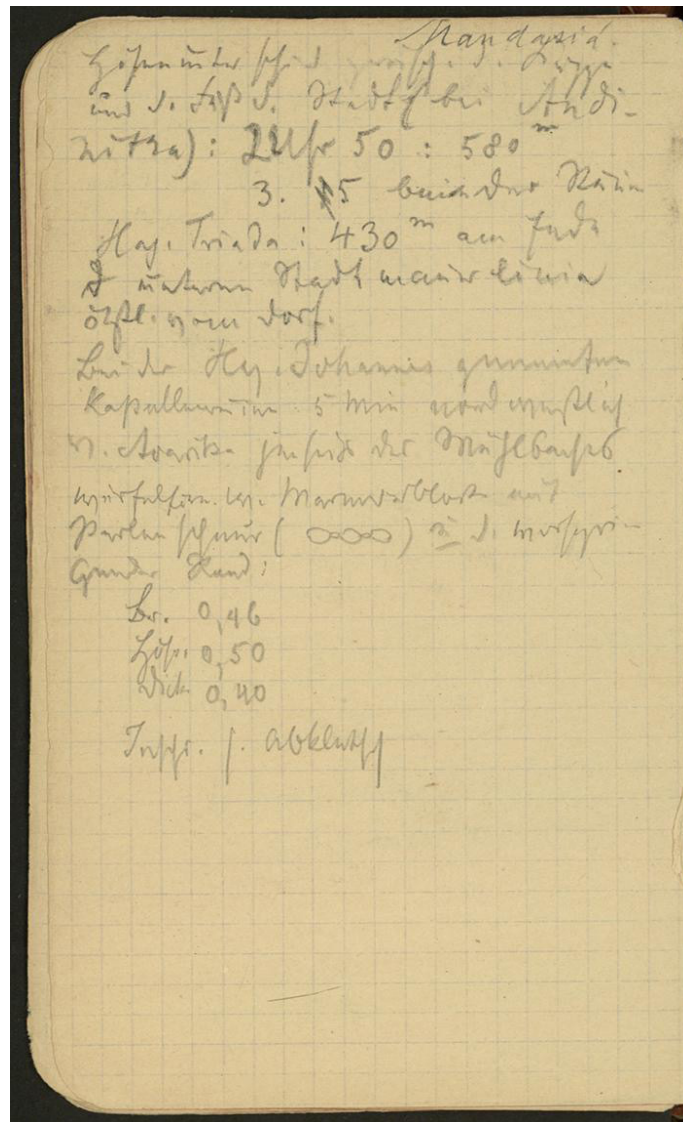


Fig. 25: Page 14 from Lolling's 1882 notebook (Lolling 2). Unpublished notebook kept in the archive of the German Archaeological Institute, Athens. D-DAI-ATH-Archiv-Lolling-00035. CC BY-NC-ND 3.0.

The transcription of Lolling's diary poses several problems. Not only is language highly abbreviated, it is also written in the field employing the now obsolete *Kurrentschrift* in hastily scribbled form.⁴⁷ The relevant pages in the notebook are only three in number (12–14), and mainly concern details regarding topography and inscriptions (Fig. 23; Fig. 24; Fig. 25).

⁴⁷ I wish to acknowledge the help provided to me by Dr Anna Blomley of the University of Oxford and Prof. Klaus Hallof of the Berlin-Brandenburgische Akademie der Wissenschaften in deciphering this fascinating document.

<p>p. 12 (Fig. 23)</p> <p>12.8 beginnt d(er) sanfte gewundene Abstieg nach d(er) Kloster Ἀνδ Η(α)g(ia) Triada bei Andinitza⁴⁸ [= Avaritsa]. Dort 12.30. 610 m. Über einer Seitenthür d(es) Kloster Hofes eine große Platte, die als Deckstein eines Grabmals gedient zu haben scheint. Auf d(en) Architravleisten⁴⁹</p> <p>ΜΕΛΙΤΑ ΔΑΜΟΦΕΙΔΗΣ</p> <p>An d(er) N(or)dmauer d(er) Kirche ein rohes Relief eingemauert.</p> <p>sitzend?⁵⁰</p>	<p>[continuing the record for October 25 1882]</p> <p>12:08 the gentle, winding descent begins towards the monastery Agia Triada at Antinitza [= Avaritsa]. There at 12:30. 610 m.a.s.l. Above a side-door of the cloister is a large slab which seems to have served as the cover stone for a funerary monument. On the bar of the architrave</p> <p>ΜΕΛΙΤΑ ΔΑΜΟΦΕΙΔΗΣ</p> <p>In the north wall of the church is a rough(-looking) relief walled in.</p> <p>seated?</p>
<p>p. 13 (Fig. 24)</p> <p>Von d(er) oberhalb d(es) Klosters geleg(ene) Kirchenruine Hag(ios) Georgios⁵¹ stammt ein Inschr(ift)fr(a)gm(ent) von dem mir nur eine Abschrift d(es) Abtes Arsenios vorliegt</p> <p>ΤΡΑΤΙΩ D(er) Stein ist nicht ΙΚΩΙΑ mehr vorhanden⁵²</p> <p>26. Okt(ober) In Avaritsa Fortsetzung d(es) Plans Donnerstag. von Melitaia.</p> <p>In d(er) Richt(un)g N(ord) + 70 vom Tal v(on) Avar(itsa) etwa 5 Min. von d(em) Fuß d(er) Höhe in d(er) Richt(un)g nach Χελιαδοῦ od(er) Χιλιαδοῦ⁵³ entfernt liegt in den aus groß(en) grauen Bauquadern bestehenden Überresten eines vorstädtischen Baus, in dessen Nähe sich noch zahl(reiche) quaderähnliche zerstreut finden, ein von den übrigen Quadern sonst nicht verschiedener, welcher auf der geglätteten mittl(erem) Theile einer Breitseite in großen Buchst(aben) folg(ende) Inschrift trägt⁵⁴:</p> <p>ΑΜΥΝΑΝΔΡΟΣ ΜΑΧΑΕΙΟΣΤΑ ΠΟΛΙΕΔΩΚΕΕ ΝΤΑΝΠΥΛΑΝΚ ΑΙΕΝΤΑΤΕΙΧ ΗΑΡΓΥΡΙΟΥΤ ΑΛΑΝΤΑΔΕΚΑ</p>	<p>A fragment of an inscription comes from the church ruin of Agios Georgios, which is located above the monastery, of which I only have a copy by the Abbot Arsenios</p> <p>ΤΡΑΤΙΩ The stone is no ΙΚΩΙΑ onger available.</p> <p>26 October In Avaritsa, continuation Thursday. of the plan of Melitaia.</p> <p>In the direction North +70° from the valley of Avaritsa, some 5 min. from the foot of the hill in the direction which conducts towards Cheliadou or Chiliadou, are the extensive remains of a suburban building in large, grey ashlar blocks. In its proximity are also several cuboid (blocks) scattered, one of which not different from the others (but) which on the polished mid-part carries the following inscription in large letters:</p> <p>ΑΜΥΝΑΝΔΡΟΣ ΜΑΧΑΕΙΟΣΤΑ ΠΟΛΙΕΔΩΚΕΕ ΝΤΑΝΠΥΛΑΝΚ ΑΙΕΝΤΑΤΕΙΧ ΗΑΡΓΥΡΙΟΥΤ ΑΛΑΝΤΑΔΕΚΑ</p>

48 Antinitza (Αντίνιτσα), which Lolling mistakes for Avaritsa, is a monastery c. 7 km southwest of Melitaia, destroyed by the Wehrmacht during WWII.

49 Monceaux 1883, 43–44 No. 2; *IG IX,2* 210. The stone has since disappeared, possibly during the post-WWII renovations of the monastery.

50 This alludes to the left figure in the relief, which is depicted as a small drawing.

51 The Agios Georgios location is 1.2 km southeast of the monastery (367112, 4320782), and has produced a remarkable wealth of inscriptions. There is no ruined chapel at the site at present, only a small *ikonisma*, but the area has remains of several ancient structures possibly related to an

ancient sanctuary, see Cantarelli *et al.* 2008, 189–192; 301–349.

52 This is clearly the same inscription as published by Monceaux 1883, 44 No. 3 (*IG IX,2* 211). However, the text differs from the latter, who has [Σ]τράτιππο[ς] | Νικονίδου. Otto Kern in the *IG* reconstructs line two as Νικ(ω)νίδου(?), which would not be necessary judging from Lolling's text. There is no information regarding the size of the fragment. If Lolling's copy is correct, I see [Σ]τράτιω[ν] vel sim. as more probable. The stone has since disappeared.

53 Chiliadou (Χιλιαδοῦ), in 1915 renamed Fyliadona (Φυλιαδώννα), is a village c. 3 km northeast of Melitaia.

54 Monceaux 1883, 41–43 No. 1; *IG IX,2* 208. Otto Kern (in the *IG*) has the *omicron* on line 2 written out as a *thau*.

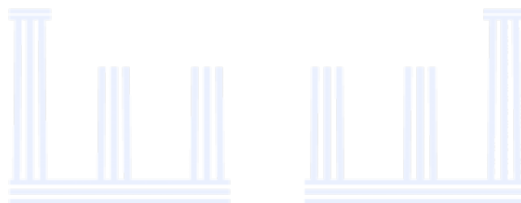
<p>p. 14 (Fig. 25)</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><i>Mandasia</i>⁵⁵</p> <p>Höhenunterschied zwisch(en) d(er) Kuppe und d(em) Fuß d(er) Stadt (bei Andinitsa [sic.]): 2 Uhr 50: 580 m 3 ± 5 beim der Ruine Hagia Triada: 430 m am Ende d(er) unteren Stadtmauerlinie östl(ich) vom Dorf.</p> <p>Bei der Hag(ios) Johannis⁵⁶ genannten Kapellenruine 5 Min(uten) nordwestlich von v(on) Avaritsa jenseits des Mühlbaches würfelförm(iger) w(eißer) Marmorblock mit Perlschnur (🌀) u(nter) d(em) vorspringenden Rand: Br(eite) 0.46 Höhe 0.50 Dicke 0.40 Inschr(ift) h(at) Abklatsch⁵⁷</p>	<p style="text-align: right;"><i>Mandasia</i></p> <p>Difference in altitude between the hilltop and the foot of the city (at Andinitsa [sic.]): 2 hours 50 (minutes): 580 m. 2 (hours) 5 (minutes) at the ruin Agia Triada: 430 m at the end of the line of the lower city wall east of the village.</p> <p>At the chapel ruin known as Agios Ioannis, 5 minutes northwest of Avaritsa, across the mill stream, dice-shaped white marble block with bead-shaped (🌀) under the protruding edge:</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Width: 0.46 (m.) Height: 0.50 (m.) Depth: 0.40 (m.) The inscription has a squeeze</p>
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55 Mantasia (Μαντασιά) is a village 8 km north of Avaritsa/Melitaia. Lolling visited a fortification 1 km north of this village on 27 October (the following day), and the note is possible referring to a tip he received about the site.

56 Agios Ioannis is a small chapel, rebuilt around the mid-20th century (Fig. 7), situated as Lolling describes it at the northwestern corner of the village, at the side of

the road leading from Palamas. The present-day structure contains many spoliated blocks (*pers. comm.* Lambros Stavrogiannis).

57 I have failed to locate this squeeze. Lolling did not publish any of the inscriptions from Melitaia, probably as Monceaux beat him to it, and it is possible that this one was too illegible to allow for any publication.



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