

THE FORMATION OF THE PHYSIOGNOMY OF THE CITY OF BYRON. THE OPINION OF RESIDENTS AND VISITORS.

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Abstract

The present paper refers to the physiognomy of the city and is a study carried out by the Department of Economics and Sustainable Development of Harokopio University. The aim is to investigate the factors that contribute to the formation of this physiognomy and the opinion of residents and visitors on the issues in question. As a case study, the city of Byron of the Region Attica is chosen.

In order to answer the main questions of the work and to investigate the main factors that shape the physiognomy of the city of Byron a survey was carried out aimed at the residents of and visitors to the city. For the needs of the research, a questionnaire was created which included ten (10) closed-type structured response questions, was anonymous and distributed to 167 people. The research was carried out in the months of October and November 2023. The questionnaire was addressed exclusively to adults, aged 18 to 65.

The paper concludes with interesting conclusions and proposals. An important conclusion is that in order to protect the special physiognomy of the city of Byron strategies related to the more general protection of all issues related to its sustainable development should be implemented. It is proposed that both the local government, as well as the businesses of all service and production branches, work towards the protection and highlighting of the special character of the city Byron.

Key words: *Physiognomy of the city, sustainable development, the city of Byron.*

Introduction

The physiognomy of a city is a complex web of characteristics that shape its identity. Each city carries on its shoulder the history, culture, architectural heritage, customs, traditions, and important personalities that have contributed to the richness of the community. In this context, this paper undertakes the objective of unfolding and exploring the character of Byron by examining its history, the culture it is steeped in, the architectural heritage it hosts, and the customs, traditions, and important personalities that have marked it. Initially, these elements will be examined based on literature and historical research. Then, through a questionnaire, we will seek the views of Byron's residents and visitors, exploring how far these personal expressions coincide with our research findings. In this way, we will offer a full and broad picture of the physiognomy of this special region, enhancing our understanding and appreciation of Byron.

The physiognomy of Greek cities faces the challenges of globalization and European integration, asking how it can maintain its specificity. Cities are looking for new ways to shape their collective consciousness and culture, while adapting to the changes brought about by globalization. European integration opens up new perspectives and provides opportunities to preserve and enhance the specificity of cities (*Stefanou, Mitoula, 2003*).

1. Geographical definition

Byron is bordered to the east by the top of Mount Hymettus, to the west by the Municipality of Athens, to the north by the Municipality of Kaisariani and to the south by the Municipality of Hymettus. On 7 May 1933, the ancient settlement of Byronas was detached from the Municipality of Athens, emerging as an independent community under the jurisdiction of Attica and Boeotia. This community was maintained until the first months of 1934. In modern terms, the boundaries of Byron are defined by Iliados and Ariti Streets to the west relating to Athens, Formionos, Amaseia and Dominikos Theotokopoulos Streets to the north relating to Kaisariani, and Dikaiarchos, Sevdikiou and Evangelistria Streets to the south relating to the Municipality of Ymittos. The total area of the municipality extends to 9,204 square kilometres, accommodating a population of 61,308 inhabitants according to the 2011 census. Byron functions as a suburban area of Athens, constituting a municipality, and Kareas is one of its neighbourhoods.

<https://el.wikipedia.org/wiki/%CE%92%CF%8D%CF%81%CF%89%CE%BD%CE%B1%CF%82>

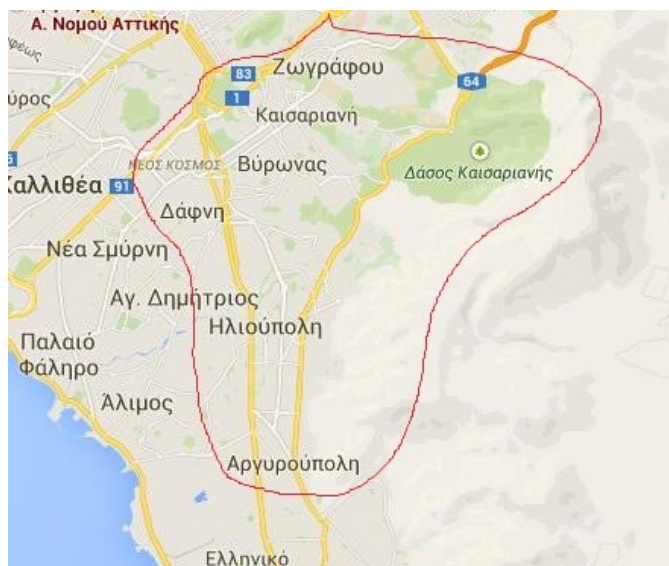


Figure 1: Geographical definition of the Municipality of Byron

2. Geophysical determination

Byron is a city with a rich cultural and historical background, located in the region of Attica in Greece. Its geographical location is important, as it is surrounded by various natural features. To the northeast of Byron lies the mountainous massif of Ymittos, giving an idyllic panoramic view of the area. The geographical landscape of Byron has shaped its cultural and social identity, offering an environment where tradition meets modern life. The archaeological sites and historical monuments in Byron reflect the rich history of the area. The architecture of the buildings, the traditional neighbourhoods and the general atmosphere of the city are unique features that attract visitors and residents alike. In terms of climate, the area of Byron experiences Mediterranean weather conditions, with temperature variations influenced by the sea and the surrounding mountainous landscape. Overall, Byron represents a combination of culture, nature and history, creating a unique environment for life and culture.

<https://el.wikipedia.org/wiki/%CE%92%CF%8D%CF%81%CF%89%CE%BD%CE%B1%CF%82>

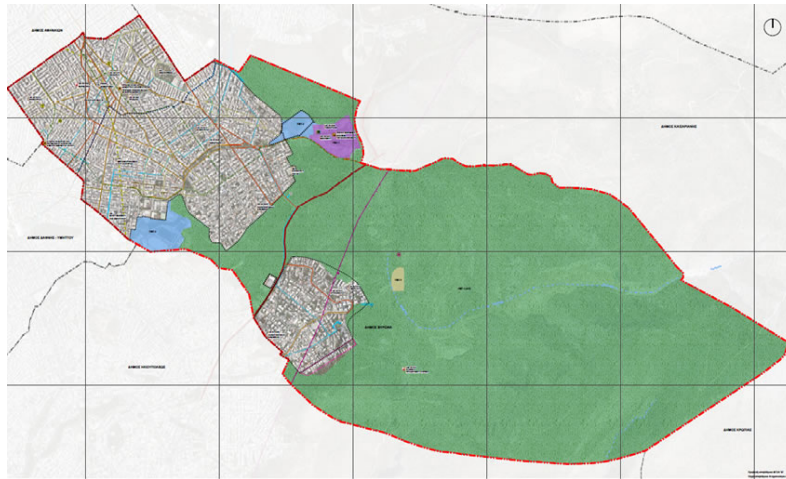


Figure 2: Geophysical map of Byron

3. History

Name of Byron

Byron, a city with a rich historical past, was founded at the beginning of the 20th century. On May 7, 1933, the ancient settlement of Byron was detached from the Municipality of Athens and became a separate community under the prefecture of Attica and Boeotia. The town was named after the poet Lord Byron (George Gordon Byron), one of the most important poets of the 19th century, known for his love of Greece and his enthusiasm for the struggle of the Greek Revolution of 1821. The choice of the name "Byron" for the town was made in an important historical context, when it was one hundred years since the death of Lord Byron in Messolonghi in 1824. In addition, the 'pro-refugee activity of the poet' was an important motive for the renaming, as recorded on a commemorative plaque placed in April 1923. Initially, the new "Byron Settlement" was part of the Municipality of Athens, until 1934, when an independent administration was acquired. This fact highlights the historical significance of the new name and is an important event for the community of Byron.

Ancient history

Athens, one of Europe's oldest cities, boasts a history spanning over 3,000 years. It emerged as a dominant force in Ancient Greece during the first millennium BCE, leaving a lasting legacy on Western civilization. Despite facing periods of decline, particularly during the middle Ages and Byzantine era, Athens experienced revival during the Crusades and later became the capital of Greece in the 19th century. Solon's reforms in the 6th century BCE marked a significant turning point, establishing democracy and shaping Athens' political and economic landscape. Despite internal challenges, Athens thrived economically and militarily, eventually becoming a symbol of democracy in the ancient world. This era was crucial not only for Athens but also for its rival, Sparta, which competed for dominance in ancient Greece. <https://www.athenshappytrain.com/el/athens-sightseeing/history-of-athens>

The Classical Age

At the end of the 6th century BC, before the rise of Athens on the Greek scene, Sparta was the leading city of the Greeks. Athens, sensing the threat from the Persian Empire, sent troops to the Greek Ionian cities in 499 BC to reinforce them, preventing two Persian invasions of mainland Greece. The Athenians managed to resist the Persians, notably at Marathon in 490 BC and at Thermopylae in 480 BC, when the Spartans refused to provide significant assistance. These victories shifted the balance of Greek hegemony from Sparta to Athens,

which developed the Delos Alliance and launched civilization with great figures such as Sophocles, Plato, and Aristotle. The Peloponnesian Wars, the overthrow of democracy, and the confrontation with Sparta marked the outcome of Athenian domination. The Roman Empire, with Alexander the Great and its expansion, ended the independence of Athens and completed the cycle of ancient Greek history. The area of Byron, although not a separate settlement at the time, probably contributed to the economy and culture of the wider Athens area. <https://www.athenshappytrain.com/el/athens-sightseeing/history-of-athens>



Figure 3: Ancient Athens

Byzantine History

After 529 CE, Athens came under Byzantine control, leading to the conversion of key buildings into churches. Despite setbacks from Arab and Slavic raids in the 7th and 8th centuries, Athens experienced a resurgence under Byzantine rule around the 9th century. The city enjoyed prosperity during the Komnenian dynasty in the 11th-12th centuries, becoming a commercial hub. However, it faced challenges including Turkish attacks and Venetian conquest in 1204, remaining under foreign rule until the 19th century. Throughout the Byzantine period, Athens and its surroundings adapted to the prevailing political, cultural, and religious norms. <https://www.athenshappytrain.com/el/athens-sightseeing/history-of-athens>



Figure 4: Byzantine History

Turkocracy

The history of Athens was shaped through several centuries and various conquests. After the Ottoman conquest in 1458, the city suffered destruction and looting, while the Parthenon was converted into a mosque. Attempts by the Ottoman authorities to turn Athens into a provincial capital failed, and its population declined, making it a mere village. Warfare and destruction in the 17th century, as well as sieges and looting in the 18th, caused severe damage to ancient

monuments, including the Parthenon. Lord Elgin's era resulted in the loss of many antiquities that were brought to England. In the 19th century, the Greeks took over the city during the Greek Revolution, but the Ottomans retook it in 1826. Finally, in 1833, Athens was chosen as the capital of the newly established Greece, turning a nearly abandoned settlement in Plaka into a focal point of the city's rebirth. <https://sciencearchives.wordpress.com/2015/01/18/>

Modern era

In 1832, Prince Otto of Bavaria became King of Greece, and moved the capital from Nafplio to Athens, choosing it for its historical traditions despite its small size. Athens, with a population of about 5,000 people, underwent a detailed archaeological survey and topographical map. The construction of new public buildings, such as the University of Athens (1837) and the Old Royal Palace (now the Hellenic Parliament Building) (1843), highlighted a new era of cultural renaissance. Important projects such as the National Garden (1840), the Library (1842), the Academy (1885), the Zappeion Palace (1878), the Old Parliament Building (1858), the New Royal Palace (now the Presidential Palace) (1897) and the Athens City Hall (1874) are part of the rich heritage of this era. In 1921, Athens experienced a significant increase in population with the arrival of refugees from the war in Asia Minor. New neighborhoods, such as Nea Smyrni and Nea Ionia, were created to accommodate the new residents, giving the city a new dynamic and multicultural breath of life. <https://sciencearchives.wordpress.com/2015/01/18/>



Figure 5: Modern Athens

Establishment of the settlement of Byron

From the late 1922, the first refugee settlement in Byron began, intended to accommodate refugees arriving from Asia Minor. Despite being designated as reforestable land, it was chosen for settlement, with construction starting in December 1922. The settlement plan was devised by civil engineers G. Souli and N. Ragkavi. Despite difficulties and clashes with local inhabitants, the area developed, with timber and brick production becoming significant parts of the economy. The initial settlement formed a small, temporary community, reflecting the period's dynamism. Conflicts with native inhabitants were a significant part of its history, with labor and social issues at stake during its construction.

<https://dimoskaipoliteia.gr/2020/10/22/>

As a refugee settlement, Byron combines the history of refugee hospitality with the complexity of social interactions shaping the urban landscape. Its founding period saw urban growth, with new housing construction and basic infrastructure development. Initially populated by laborers seeking work in the nearby Athens area, Byron gradually evolved into a bustling and dynamic municipality, contributing to the economic and cultural life of the

region. Its development continued with the establishment of new residences, businesses, and infrastructure. Today, Byron is a modern municipality offering a wide range of services, cultural events, and green spaces while preserving its historical heritage.

<https://mikrasiatesvyronas.wordpress.com/>

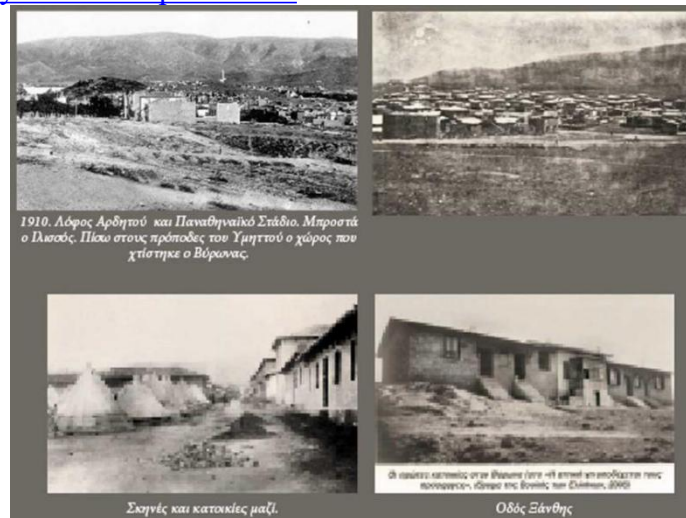


Figure 6: The foundation of the settlement

4. Culture of the city

The customs and traditions

Traditions, customs and traditions represent the culture and history of a society. Morals are the invisible rules that determine our behaviour, while customs are the actions that express these rules. When customs are passed down from generation to generation, they create traditions. In Greek society, mores, customs and traditions are rooted mainly in antiquity and Byzantium. They are often linked to the Christian religion and the household economy, influencing everyday life and family structure. Although modern lifestyles have influenced some customs, they still exist and some are revived for tourism and entertainment purposes. (Abeliotis, Apostolopoulos, etc., 2010) An example is the tradition of 'Tzamala' in Byron. This ancient ritual, rooted in the belief in the power of fire against evil, is revived every year with large tree trunks, feasting and tables full of tsipouro and bean soup.

<https://www.sansimera.gr/articles/751>



Figure 7: Custom of "Jamala"

The custom of Agios Ioannis, also known as Kleidonas, is a popular custom that has its roots in antiquity. The term "Kledonas" comes from the ancient Greek word "Kledon," which means "prognosticating sound. During the feast of Agios Ioannis, single girls gather in a village house. One of them goes to the well to fetch water without speaking to anyone during her return. At the house, the water is placed in an earthenware container, and each girl drops a personal object into it. The container is covered with red cloth, tied up, and prayed to St. John. During the night, it is believed that the girls see their future husband in their dreams. At the same time, in the village square, a large bonfire is lit where people enjoy music, dancing and traditional events, believing that the fire brings catharsis and is a deterrent from evil. In Byron, every year this interesting custom is revived, with fires, music, dances and the participation of the local community and municipal bodies. <https://www.dimosbyrona.gr/article.php?id=6720>



Figure 8: The custom of "Cledona"

The "Koulouma" is an outdoor celebration observed nationwide on Clean Monday, with its origins traced to either Athenian tradition or the Byzantine period. In Constantinople, it was held in the Greek settlement of Tataoulos. The term's Latin root, Cumulus, meaning abundance, suggests its festive nature. Participants enjoy fasting foods like tarama, seafood, olives, and halva, accompanied by street music and dancing. In the Municipality of Byron, an annual celebration in Koutalas features music, games, and traditional dishes like bean soup and laganas. These customs, passed down through generations, continue to celebrate cultural diversity and bridge the modern world with its history. <https://www.iefimerida.gr/news/192859/ti-ennioyme-legontas-koyloyma>

Cultural activities

In the Municipality of Byron, a diverse array of festivals enriches the cultural landscape, including a longstanding children's and youth festival featuring performances, music, and theatrical productions, as well as a beer festival in collaboration with the Athens Beer Festival. Additionally, a yearly inter-municipal cultural festival showcases ancient dramas, contemporary concerts, and traditional bands. The Rock Wave Festival further adds to the musical diversity. National anniversaries like October 28th and March 25th are commemorated with solemn ceremonies, including church services, flag-raising ceremonies, and wreath-laying events, culminating in a speech by the mayor, fostering a sense of national pride and unity among residents. <https://elculture.gr/tag/festibal-dhmou-burona/>

In 2012, Byron Municipality commemorated the 90th anniversary of the Asia Minor Catastrophe in partnership with the Union of Asia Minor Residents. The event included a screening of "What Really Happened in Smyrna" and a speech by history professor Michalis Varlas titled "When Oblivion Knocks on Your Door – 90 Years of Refugeedom." Attendees

enjoyed traditional dances, songs, and excerpts from works by Dido Sotiriou. Mayor Nikos Hardalias stressed the importance of preserving national and local memory. Additionally, Byron annually hosts festivals at three churches - Saint Lazarus, Ascension, and Holy Trinity - with religious ceremonies and fairs featuring traditional dances and activities, reflecting a blend of religious and social elements.

<https://www.liberal.gr/arthro/201904/glossari/p/paniguri2.html>

Cultural centres

The Cultural Centre of Byron, founded in 1979, is a centre of activities that promotes culture and contributes to creative expression. With the main characteristic of developing contemporary initiatives, the Centre organises events such as Byron Cultural Neighbourhoods, Winter Events (poetry nights, cinema, theatre) and anniversary events. It cooperates with cultural institutions and promotes cultural causes at local and international level. It encourages civic initiatives and organises children's events and festivals and provides workshops for adults and children, covering a variety of fields such as painting, theatre, music, photography and crafts. In this way, the Cultural Centre of Byron contributes to the cultural empowerment and education of the local community.

<https://www.dimosbyrona.gr/article.php?cat=179#>

The Cinema Club of Byron, established in 2016, aims to promote cultural engagement within the Municipality by screening films that address contemporary societal themes. Beyond simply showcasing movies, the club endeavors to foster a community passionate about cinema and improve the cinema hall experience. By organizing activities and events, it aims to encourage greater involvement and support from film enthusiasts. This initiative blends educational and recreational aspects of cinema, providing the local community with diverse cultural experiences while promoting social cohesion.

<https://www.dimosbyrona.gr/article.php?id=6883>

5. Architectural heritage

Bust of Metropolitan Chrysostomos

The bust of Metropolitan Chrysostomos (aka Aris Voultzos), who served as Metropolitan of Nea Smyrna from 1974 to 1986, is highlighted in Byron as an important part of the local heritage. Created by the sculptor Nikos Perantinos, this bust, placed in 1990, is a monument that highlights the religious and historical significance of the person who did important social work in the area. <https://glypto.wordpress.com/category>



Figure 9: Bust of Metropolitan Chrysostomos

1st and 2nd Primary School of Agia Triada

The 1st and 2nd Primary School of Agia Triada was characterized as a monument by the Council of Modern Monuments due to its significant historical value. The building, a model of the refugee schools that are an intermediate category between the neoclassical schools of the beginning of the 20th century and the modern school building movement that started in 1929. Its listing as a monument was confirmed by publication in the Official Gazette (29/27-1-2009), highlighting its importance as part of the cultural heritage.

<https://www.dimosbyrona.gr/article.php?id=2313>

Holy Cross Monastery of Saint John the Baptist

The Holy Crusader Monastery of St. John the Baptist in Kareia, Attica is located in the forest of Kareia, near the ancient quarries of Kara. It was founded between the 11th and 12th centuries and was built on an ancient temple of Apollo of the 4th century BC. The old catholicon is cruciform with a tombstone of the early Christian era. The doctor-philosopher Peter Papastamatis was a monk there in the 17th century, and during his monastic curia, he was named Parthenios Monk. In 1673 he renovated the Holy Monastery of Asomaton (Petraki). In 1796, the monastery was abandoned and became a part of the Petraki Monastery. In 1971, after two centuries of abandonment, it was re-established by a sisterhood of women.

<https://www.monastiria.gr/iera-moni-timiou-prodromou-kareia>



Figure 10: Holy Crusader Monastery of Saint John the Baptist, Kareias

Bust of Kostas Karagiorgis

The bronze bust of Kostas Karagiorgis, doctor, journalist and leading member of the Resistance is located in Tapitourgiou Square in Byron, Attica. The work, placed on a tall marble pedestal with a step, is characterized by a Doric style and an absence of detail in clothing and anatomy, focusing attention on Karagiorgis' form, gaze and age. On the front of the pedestal is his identity and the title "HEAD OF THESSALIAN RESISTANCE", while the signature of the sculptor Laspa Themistocles is on the back of the bust. The work captures Karagiorgis' determination with his tight lips and wide-open eyes looking out over the horizon.

<https://memories.vironas.gr/2011/03>

Monument to the National Resistance

The monument commemorates the heroic struggles of the Resistance during the period 1941-1949 and aims to keep alive the memory of the heroes and their sacrifices. The work, created by sculptor Yannis Aspra, was installed on the initiative of the previous municipal authority under Mayor N. Rogakos and completed under the current municipal authority, with the

former mayor Nikos Chardalias describing it as a "minimal token of honour" to the freedom fighters. The monument, in addition to honouring the warriors, is considered a timeless memory that preserves the historical tradition of the people.

<https://www.rizospastis.gr/story.do?id=2245369>

Labour Monument

The "Monument of Labour", created by the sculptor Kostas Kluvatos, was originally installed in the square of Byron in 1956. During the dictatorship, the monument was dismantled, but years later the three bronze statues were discovered and re-installed in the square. However, the aesthetic effect is far from the original work of Kluvatos, due to its dismantling and re-installation during the dictatorship period.

<https://glypto.wordpress.com/2012/04/18>, <https://memories.vironas.gr/2011/04>



Figure 11: Labour Monument (Statues)

Statue Archbishop Chrysostomos

The statue Archbishop Chrysostomos is a sculpture created in 1970 and located in Byron, Attica. The sculptor who signed the work is Nicholas. The statue represents Archbishop Chrysostomos and is an honorary recognition of the spiritual leader. The creation of the Archbishop Chrysostomos statue may be one of the artist's iconic works, as it represents a religious and historical figure with significant symbolic importance.

<https://memories.vironas.gr/2011/01>

Statue of Lord Byron

On Sunday 19 November 2023, at 10:30, the unveiling of the statue took place at Peace Square (formerly Marianna) in Byron, under the responsibility of the Municipal Enterprise and under the auspices of the Municipality of Byron. This sculpture is a tribute to Lord Byron, romantic poet and philhellene, on the occasion of the completion of a century since the renaming of the former "Refugee Settlement of Pagrati" to "Byron Settlement".

<https://xpress-news.gr/2023/11/17/25595/>

The old Town Hall

The old Town Hall of the Municipality of Byron, which will soon host the History Museum, is an emblematic building of the city. It was built in 1923-24 as a polyclinic of the Red Cross for the treatment of refugees who had difficulties due to epidemics. The building, located on Evangeliki School and Chrysostomou Smyrna Streets, represented the transition and evolution

from the refugee quarters to the modern urban landscape of the area. Two-storey with a balcony and a sloping four-pitched roof, it functioned as a health care centre under the direction of the chief physician Nikolaos Fragiadis, a refugee who offered voluntary services to address the health problems of the time. This initiative reflects the humanitarian offer and solidarity during the difficult period of refugee flows.

<https://mnimesvyrona.gr/points-of-interest/palio-dimarheio/>



Figure 12: Old Town Hall of Byron

Metropolitan Church of the Holy Trinity of Byron and the church of Saint Lazarus

The Metropolitan Church of the Holy Trinity in Byron, designed by architect Athanasios I. Demiris in the mid-1920s, stands as a significant Orthodox spiritual center. Initially serving as a vital hub for refugees from Asia Minor, it eventually became the parish church. Despite completion in 1932, the dedication ceremony was delayed due to various challenges, including administrative and political issues during World War II. Throughout the Occupation, the church provided sanctuary and support to Byron's residents, culminating in its consecration in 1957 by Bishop Alexios of Evripou.

<https://mnimesvyrona.gr/points-of-interest/agia-triada/agia-triada/>



Figure 13: Metropolitan Church of the Holy Trinity of Byron



Figure 14: Church of Saint Lazarus

6. Personalities

Isadora and Raymond Duncan

Isadora Duncan, born in San Francisco in 1877, revolutionized modern dance as one of its most influential pioneers. Despite briefly teaching ballet, she rejected its constraints, favoring a more natural approach to movement. Duncan gained acclaim in Europe, particularly in Russia, where she was warmly received. Her life was marked by personal tragedies, including the loss of her children and the suicide of her partner Sergei Esenin. Nevertheless, she continued to express the resilience of the human spirit through her work. In 1903, she visited Greece for the first time, where she built a house in Byron, modeled after Agamemnon's palace in Mycenae. Although she faced disappointments, such as the state of her home in Byron, her legacy endures as a significant influence on the history of dance.

<https://www.duncandancecenter.org>

Helen Glycatzi - Arveler

Helen Glycatzi - Arveler was a Greek historian and archaeologist, born in Athens on 29 August 1926. She was the daughter of Nikos Glycatzis and Kalliroi Psaltidis. Her father was a merchant from Asia Minor, while her mother came from a wealthy family in Prusa, Asia Minor. She studied at the 4th Gymnasium of Athens and at the Department of History-Archaeology of the University of Athens. During the Occupation, she joined the National Patriotic Youth Organization (EPON) and served as a student leader of the Pangrati. After graduating from the university, she worked as a French language tutor in Queen Frederica's circle and then as a researcher at the Centre for Asia Minor Studies. Her contributions to the field of history and archaeology were significant, and her work focused on Asia Minor history.

<https://el.wikipedia.org/wiki/>



Figure 15: Helen Glycatzi - Arveler

Lord Byron

Lord Byron, or George Gordon Byron, 6th Baron Byron, was a 19th-century English aristocrat, poet and politician who left a strong imprint on literature and history. He was born on 22 January 1788 and died on 19 April 1824. Lord Byron is considered one of the most important figures of Romanticism and one of the greatest British poets. His works, such as the long poems "Don Juan" and "The Pilgrimage of Child Harold," have won wide acclaim and remain popular to this day. Lord Byron was also known for his dissent and his turbulent life. He led a volatile financial and love life and traveled to many parts of Europe, particularly Italy, where he lived for several years. In his later years, Byron took a keen interest in revolutionary efforts in Italy and Greece. He died in Messolonghi, Greece, fighting alongside the Greek revolutionaries, at the age of just 36. His personality and contribution to culture make Lord Byron an extremely important figure in literary history.

<https://el.wikipedia.org/wiki/>

Metropolitan Chrysostomos of Smyrna

Chrysostomos Kalafatis (1867-1922) was an extremely important man in Modern Greek history, who has left his imprint as a saint of the Orthodox Church and an ethnomartyr. Born in Triglia, Bithynia, he studied at the Theological School of Halki and was ordained deacon in the Patriarchate of Constantinople. Kalafatis served as Grand Protosyngelos and later as Metropolitan of Drama. During the Macedonian Struggle, he confronted Bulgarian violence and promoted Greek presence and resistance. In Drama, he developed extensive social and charitable work. In 1910, he took over as Metropolitan of Smyrna, where he continued to defend the interests of the Greek Orthodox Community. Even there, he laid the foundations for social services such as schools, hospitals and asylums. During the Smyrna Disaster of 1922, Chrysostomos Kalafatis was martyrically sacrificed, continuing to serve the principles and values he believed in. His path reflects a life dedicated to faith, country and humanity.

<https://el.orthodoxwiki.org/>

7. Physiognomy capacitors

Carpet factory

Carpet weaving in Asia Minor began as a Muslim-dominated industry but transformed after 1860 due to increased demand from Europe and America. Christian populations also became involved, especially after refugees brought weaving techniques to Greece in 1922. In Byron, refugees from Sparta Pissidias established a workshop, contributing to Greece's post-war carpet industry success. Today, part of the area, known as "Steki," belongs to the Municipality of Byron, reflecting carpet weaving's importance as a tradition and economic driver in the community. <https://mnimesvyrona.gr/points-of-interest/tapitourgeio/>

Isadora and Raymond Duncan School of Dance

The Isadora and Raymond Duncan School of Dance, established in 1939, is a vital cultural hub in Byron Municipality. Initially seized by the Greek State but later returned to the Duncan heirs, it was renovated in 1978 into a modern dance school through efforts by Margot Fontaine and Vasos Kanello. Supported by the Municipality of Byron and various mayors, it evolved into a significant cultural center. Today, known as the "Isadora and Raymond Duncan Dance Study Centre," it offers diverse cultural events and dance workshops, remaining a cornerstone for dance and culture enthusiasts in Byron. (Kokolias, 2012)

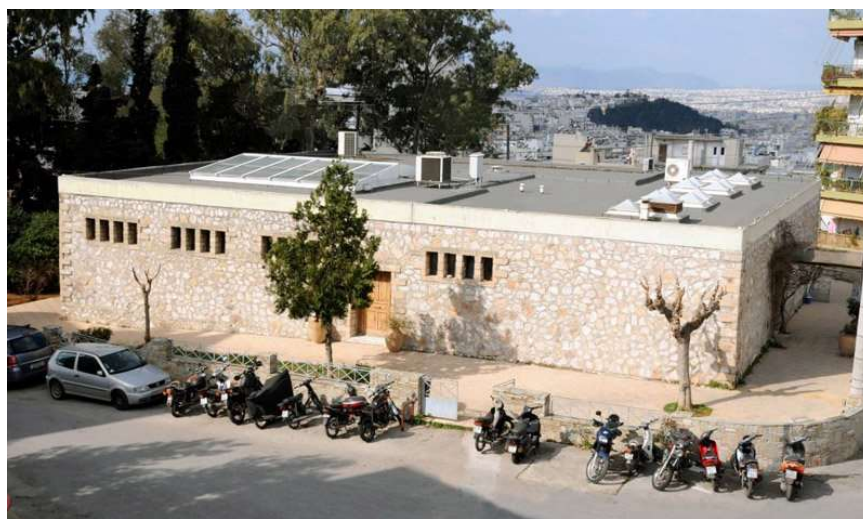


Figure 16: I. & R. Duncan Dance Centre, Byron-Athens

Melina Mercouri Vrahon Theatre

After the dictatorship (1967-1974), the Rock Theatre idea emerged, transforming Kopanas Erganis quarries into an open-air venue named "Melina Mercouri Vrahon Theatre," honoring Athena, the goddess of art. Director Minos Volanakis and actor Yannis Voglis pioneered the project, aiming to convert three quarries into theatres. The Byron quarry was the first, completed in 1981 after a year and a half of work. It quickly became a cultural hub, hosting various events. In 1995, a smaller theatre named "Anna Synodinou" was added, enhancing its appeal to local artists and theatre enthusiasts, enriching the area's cultural scene (Kokolias, 2012).



Figure 17: Melina Mercouri Vrahon Theatre

Bust of Lord Byron

The bust of Lord Byron, created in April 2004, highlights the historical and cultural importance of this exceptional personality for the district of Byron. Lord Byron, born in 1788, was one of the most important figures of the Greek Revolutionary War of 1821. In addition to his outstanding military prowess, Byron also distinguished himself as a poet, dedicating his life to the defense of freedom and idealistic values.

Byron's patronage of the district reflects the continuity of his spirit, as the city of Byron, founded 80 years ago, finds in him its symbolic patron. The bust is both a celebration of the founding of the town and a way to honour the legacy of Lord Byron, who made a significant contribution to shaping the identity and character of the district. Through this imposing symbol, Byron continues to remain alive and active in the consciousness of the community, expressing greatness and values that have inspired the residents of the area over time.

<https://memories.vironas.gr/2011/04>



Figure 18: Bust of Lord Byron

8. Surrounding area of the city

The Municipality of Byron represents an interesting combination of urban and natural landscape, as it is located in the shadow of Mount Hymettus, offering large areas of woodland and pastures. The area presents a considerable geographical diversity, with Ymittos occupying 57% of the total area of the municipality. Despite the presence of the forest area, human activity has had a significant impact on the natural environment, while the effects of encroachment and natural disasters have taken their toll on the semi-mountainous area.

Hymettos is a key element of the natural environment, and its importance is even greater because of its inclusion in the Hymettos Protection Zone B. With heights of up to 1026 metres and an area of 20 km, it is an impressive mountain range, covering large areas of pine forest, mainly of loblolly pine, as well as other trees and shrubs. Despite encroachment and natural pressures, the forest plays a fundamental role in maintaining air quality and in decontaminating the atmosphere.

While the area faces challenges due to human activity, such as fire risks during the summer months, protecting the natural environment remains a priority. The rare convergence of nature and urban life makes the Municipality of Byron a unique place with a rich environmental character. <http://oceanis.lib.puas.gr/xmlui/bitstream/handle/123456789/3384>

The area is distinguished for its rich natural environment, with large areas of green spaces and the presence of Mount Hymettus being an important element of the landscape. In addition, the area is fully covered by technical networks and has a key position in the region, reinforcing its strategic importance. The urban structure is organized, with autonomous neighborhoods that function in a coordinated manner, creating an overall balanced environment. <https://www.dimosbyrona.gr/cats.php?cat=181#>



Figure 19: View of Byron from the mountain of Hymettus

9. Institutional framework for the protection of the city

The national law regarding the cultural environment is influenced by three parallel sources: the Constitution, International Conventions, and EU Law. Each of these contributes to forming the legal framework governing the management and protection of the cultural environment, combining national, international, and EU aspects to ensure the most comprehensive and effective protection of cultural heritage.

a. Article 24 of the Constitution provides special protection to the cultural environment. According to the case law of the Supreme Administrative Court (SAC), it grants "increased protection of the cultural environment, i.e., monuments and other elements that constitute the historical, artistic, technological, and overall cultural heritage of the country." The

Constitution (Article 24, paragraphs 1 and 6) establishes the obligation of the State and the right of everyone to protect the natural and cultural environment.

b. The UNESCO Convention "Concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage" defines "cultural heritage" as monuments, groups of buildings, and landscapes of outstanding universal value from a historical, artistic, or anthropological perspective.

c. The Council of Europe's Convention "On the Protection of the Architectural Heritage of Europe" adopts a definition for "architectural heritage" that includes sites related to the UNESCO Convention.

d. EU policies play a significant role in shaping the thinking on cultural heritage preservation, despite culture not being a common European policy. The Maastricht Treaty (Article 128) and later the Lisbon Treaty (Articles 167 and 107, paragraph 3d) addressed the gaps in the founding treaties by focusing on cultural issues. Various programs, initiatives, and funding sources aim to safeguard Europe's cultural identity. (Vladou& Koudouni, 2016)

Brief description of the current General Urban Plan

The General Urban Plan (GUP) for Byron Municipality, approved in 1990, aimed to cater to a population of 63,000 residents by creating eleven urban planning units (U.P.). It outlined land use regulations, including the establishment of a central urban area serving as a local hub for various municipal functions. Additionally, it proposed the development of educational facilities in the Ymittos region outside the GUP boundaries, particularly in the Zoodochos Pigi district and the former quarries area, known as ELKO-ERGANI. These plans also included the revitalization of the former quarry area to create recreational, sporting, and cultural facilities as part of the broader Athens Regulatory Plan. Amendments to the plan were made in 1996, with the publication of the relevant maps in the Government Gazette.

<https://www.patt.gov.gr/wp-content/uploads/2021/12/>

The main institutional land use and protection regimes in Byron Municipality are determined by the current General Urban Plan (GUP). The primary protection zones in the municipality's non-plan area include:

- Zone A - Absolute protection of nature and monuments, and Zone B - Regional protection zone for Mount Hymettus, as defined by the Presidential Decree of 14-6-11 (Government Gazette 187D/16-6-11).
- Forested and afforested areas.
- NATURA 2000 Biotope - Hymettus - Kaisariani Aesthetic Forest - Vouliagmeni Lake (GR 3000006), classified as Special Conservation Zones (SCZ).
- NATURA 2000 Biotope - Mount Hymettus (GR 3000015), classified as Special Protection Zones (SPZ).
- Kaisariani Aesthetic Forest, designated as a Landscape of Outstanding Natural Beauty with code AT 2011023 (Presidential Decree 91/22-1-74, Government Gazette 31A/6-2-74).
- Hymettus Wildlife Refuge (Ministerial Decision 38070/1972/6-5-76, Government Gazette 683B/24-5-76).
- Declared archaeological sites subject to building control.

<https://www.patt.gov.gr/wp-content/uploads/2021/12/>

Protected Ecosystems – Landscapes

Mount Hymettus, protected by Law 1650/86, has two main zones:

- Zone A: Includes forests, old quarries, military camps, shooting ranges, and monasteries.

- Zone B: Designated for agriculture, education, outdoor activities, and cultural and sports facilities like those in the Ergani complex. The mountain's landscape features natural formations like gorges and cliffs, ancient quarries, and geological sites, making it popular among hikers.

<https://www.patt.gov.gr/wp-content/uploads/2021/12/>

Common areas

Common areas defined by the approved urban plan include spaces for pedestrian and vehicular movement, such as roads, streets with light traffic, sidewalks, pedestrian-only paths, bike lanes, squares, parks, green areas, and playgrounds.

In squares and sidewalks, limited catering and recreational activities are allowed, as long as they are specified by the urban plan and zoning regulations. Underground parking spaces (car parks) may be constructed in common areas, taking into account the preservation of any existing vegetation. However, in green areas and parks, underground parking construction is limited to specific areas and solely for the benefit of users. Additionally, recycling corners are permitted in these areas, provided they do not occupy more than 15% of the common space.

<https://www.patt.gov.gr/wp-content/uploads/2021/12/>

10. The economy of the municipality of Byron

Economy

Byron's economy is a blend of tradition and modernity, reflecting its multicultural essence. Historically, the settlement of refugees gave rise to essential stores like grocers and bakeries, alongside skilled artisans like tailors. Over time, cafes and specialty shops emerged, preserving tradition while adapting to new trends. Today, Byron boasts a diverse economy, featuring clothing stores, taverns, and cafes catering to locals and visitors alike. The presence of banks and services like Hellenic Post highlights the area's economic dynamism and cultural richness. (Kokolias, 2012)

Municipal Economy Management in Byron Municipality

The Department of Financial Services of Byron Municipality consists of various departments, each of which plays a specific role in managing the municipality's financial and administrative affairs. The Treasury Department is responsible for managing revenues and expenditures, while the Municipal Cemetery oversees the operation and maintenance of the cemetery. The Municipal Revenue Department deals with licensing and tax record checks, while the Accounting Office prepares budgets and financial statements and manages the municipality's resources.

Additionally, the Procurement and Payroll Departments, as well as the Personnel Insurance Department, undertake significant responsibilities such as managing material and supply procurement and executing payroll duties, respectively. The integrated operation of these departments contributes to the smooth management of the financial aspects of Byron Municipality, ensuring effective governance and operation.

<http://okeanis.lib.puas.gr/xmlui/bitstream/handle/123456789/3384>,

<http://www.dimosbyrona.gr/article.php?id=7969>

11. EU-funded projects in the municipality

The "Modernization of the Citizen Service Centers" project in Greece aims to upgrade Citizen Service Centers (CSCs) under the National Recovery and Resilience Plan "Greece 2.0". It focuses on enhancing CSCs through modern technologies for digital case processing, making

services accessible to all citizens, including those with special needs and limited digital skills. The project has three main components:

1. Renovation of CCC Building Infrastructure: This involves improving CCC interiors and exteriors, including wall renovation, installing new equipment, replacing lighting fixtures, and updating wiring.
2. Supply of PCs, Printers, and Tablets: The project plans to provide computer equipment to support the gov.gr wallet application, enabling citizens to access electronic documents conveniently.
3. Modernization of IT Infrastructures: This includes supplying computer equipment and a visitor management system for 200 high-traffic CSCs. These measures aim to enhance efficiency and facilitate citizens' access to digital services, promoting inclusivity and interaction with groups with special needs. <https://www.dimosbyrona.gr/article.php?id=11772>

The Municipality of Byron is enhancing road safety in the city with various interventions:

1. Building Access Crossings for Schools: Improving pedestrian safety around school areas to promote walking.
2. Upgrading Asphalt Pavements: Using colored materials to alert drivers near crosswalks, and applying photocatalytic protection to reduce slipperiness.
3. Creating Disabled Crossings: Constructing accessible crossings with handrails or bollards for people with disabilities.

These measures adhere to EU regulations and aim to create a safe and inclusive urban environment. The project's total cost is approximately EUR 1.61 million.

<https://www.dimosbyrona.gr/uplds/16027>

The Municipality of Byron collaborates with the Ministry of Education to run the Lifelong Learning Centre (LLLC). It offers free educational programs funded by the EU and national resources, aiming to promote lifelong learning among adults. The programs cover seven thematic modules, addressing various educational needs and local demands. Since 2014, 31 programs have been implemented, focusing on enhancing learning attitudes, adapting to socio-economic demands, and improving skills for the job market. Participants receive official Certificates of Attendance upon completion, fostering continuous learning and adult development. <https://www.dimosbyrona.gr/article.php?cat=45>

Sustainable Urban Mobility Plan

The Municipality is preparing a Sustainable Urban Mobility Plan (SUMP) following EU guidelines. A Consultant has adapted these guidelines for Greece. The latest edition, effective since October 2019, outlines a structured process with 4 phases, 12 steps, and 32 activities, ensuring compliance through 5 milestones.

The SUMP are strategies that aim to effectively address transport problems in urban areas. The policies and measures set out in each SUMP are intended to apply to all modes and means of transport, including public and private, passenger and freight, motorized and non-motorized. They focus on travel and parking and represent a strategy to address transport problems based on existing practices and legal frameworks in the Member States. In summary, the SUMPs seek to improve urban mobility and address transport challenges, taking into account the specificities of each region.

https://vyronas.sump.gr/vima_ergou/svak/

12. Research

A questionnaire focusing on the physiognomy of Byron was recently given to a sample of 167 people. The selected sample includes people of various ages, revealing a variety of views on

how they perceive and experience the district's physiognomy. With this first look at the data, interesting dimensions and aspects of the public's perception of Byron emerge.

In the question concerning the flora of the district, an interesting and significant variation in the preferences of the participants was observed, as almost 84% of the sample supported water chestnut trees; on the other hand, the percentage of alternatives such as pine, lemon, and mulberry trees was lower.

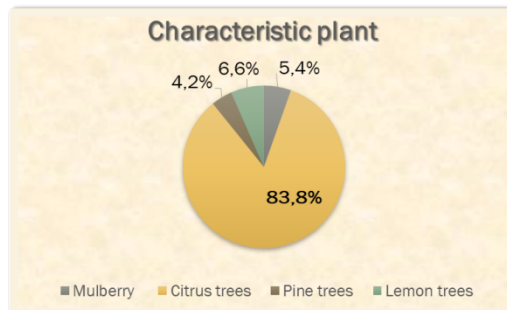


Figure 20: Characteristic plant

In the analysis of the characteristics of the city of Byron, it was recorded that the Vrahon Theatre stood out as the preferred monument by the participants, garnering the highest percentage of participation. It is also interesting to note that the Tapestry followed in preference, possibly playing an important role in the historical style of the area. In contrast, other features, although beautiful and important, were recorded with lower participation rates; the prevalence of this particular monument probably reflects the strong importance it has acquired in the local community, reinforcing the cultural and social identity of the area.

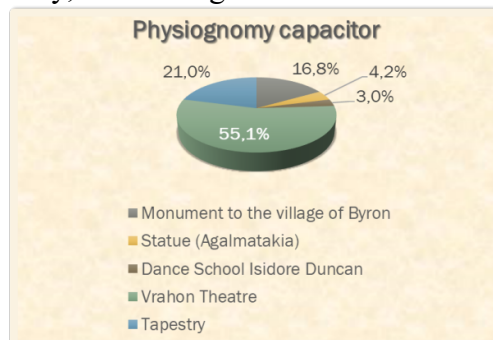


Figure 21: Physiognomy capacitor

Smyrna's soutzoukakakia emerged as the clear favorite among participants, with 76.6% selecting them. This reflects a strong cultural tie to Asia Minor roots, offering a culinary journey into the city's history and heritage. The popularity of soutzoukakakia highlights the residents' commitment to preserving ancestral traditions and culinary practices, serving as both a beloved dish and a symbolic connection to the region's past.

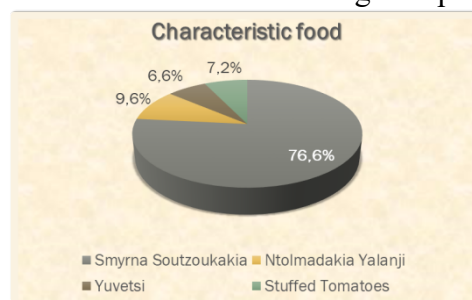


Figure 22: Characteristic food

The city of Byron is emerging as a multicultural and polyphonic community, as its sound confirms the diversity of cultural influences that make up the musical landscape of the region. The predominance of Asia Minor music with an impressive 84.1% reflects not only the popularity but also the emotional connection of the residents to the roots and history of the Asia Minor populations. Then, the sounds of the Romelian, Pontian and Cretan musical traditions, besides presenting the variety of taste preferences, highlight the cultural diversity of the community.

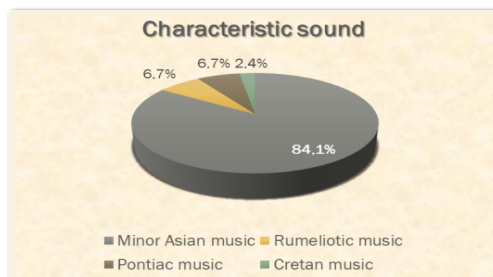


Figure 23: Characteristic sound

The festivals hosted at the Vrahon Theatre are emerging as the signature event of the city of Byron, recording an impressive 97% participation rate. This remarkable percentage is a clear indicator of the invaluable value and the absolute preference that citizens and visitors have for this beautiful location.



Figure 24: Characteristic event

Lord Byron emerged as the most prominent figure among residents of Byron, capturing 58.1% of the vote, showcasing the area's rich history and heritage associated with his name. Additionally, personalities like Eleni Glykatzis-Arveler, Isidora Duncan, and Metropolitan Chrysostomos Smyrna received considerable recognition, highlighting their significant contributions to art, choreography, and religion, respectively, and the cultural enrichment of the region.

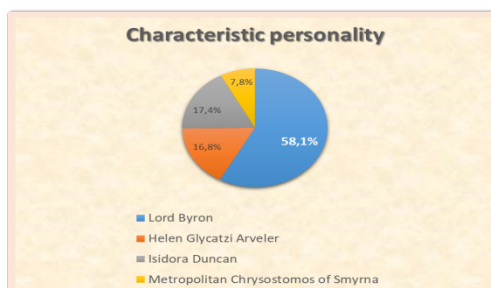


Figure 25: Characteristic personality

The harmonized distribution of EU-funded projects in the district clearly demonstrates a balanced approach to the development of the area. The project to modernize the CCP, which stands out only slightly from the rest, demonstrates the importance attached to improving the

infrastructure and services for residents. At the same time, the even distribution of funded projects highlights the importance of diversity in development efforts, as each project contributes to the progress and well-being of the community to a different degree and in a different way.

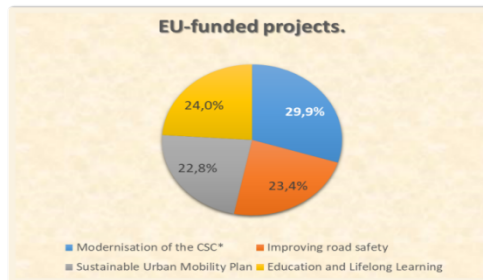


Figure 26: EU-funded projects

Residents' responses to the question about the most negative feature of the town highlight key concerns. Limited parking (38.5%) and poor cleanliness (32.8%) stand out as significant issues, emphasizing the need for better infrastructure and environmental management. Equally concerning are references to incorrect urban planning and anarchic building, underscoring the importance of consistent and effective urban development practices. Overall, residents' recognition of these problems emphasizes the urgent need for solutions and improvements in the town's infrastructure and environmental management.

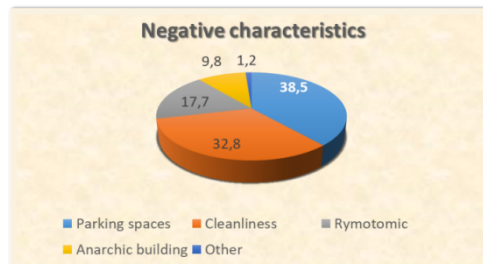


Figure 27: Negative characteristics of Byron

The positive characteristics of the city, as revealed by the responses, are interesting and reflect the diversity and rich identity of the Byron area. First of all, the location, which takes the first place with 35.8%, proves that the close proximity to the city center and the Ymittos mountain is a privileged characteristic. This geographical advantage combines urban life with the natural beauty of the mountain, offering an ideal living environment.

The "neighbourhood" culture follows with 30.2%, highlighting the importance of a sense of community and a safe environment. Maintaining the characteristics of the traditional neighborhood provides a context where residents feel connected and safe. The high percentage of responses referring to the area's cultural centers, historical heritage and greenery is also significant. Overall, these positive elements demonstrate not only residents' enjoyment of the Byron lifestyle, but also the diversity that their area offers them.

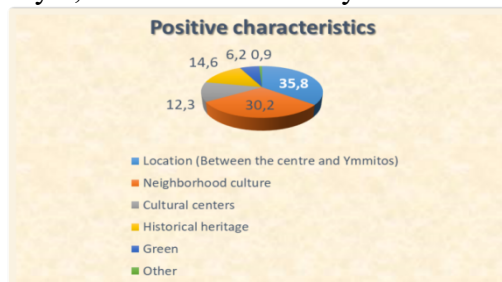


Chart 28: Positive characteristics of Byron

Conclusions

The city emerges as a concept from the principles of human habitation, constituting a space that gathers citizens and organizes a specific value set of acting subjects. Over time, the city evolves, transforms and reshapes itself, moving through constant changes and modifications. This dynamic creates new places that often express the history and culture of the community. Historic towns, while retaining parts of their culture, face the risk of degradation and alteration of their character. The awareness that future generations live and work in the same places creates a continuous sequence of new experiences, leading to an understanding and preservation of the character of each place and its physiognomy. Cities, as architectural symbols, reflect the continuous synthesis of past and present, making their physiognomy unique and invaluable (Stefanou, 2001).

The results obtained from the questions of the questionnaire strongly reflect the physiognomy of the Municipality of Byron, confirming their agreement with the bibliographical data we discovered on a historical, cultural and traditional level. The extensive research carried out highlights the continuity of traditions and the deepening of the history of the Municipality, while the results referring to the cultural richness and physiognomy condensers confirm the multicultural nature of the area. The findings on historical monuments and cultural centres are also important, reinforcing the view that the Municipality of Byron retains a distinctive character and represents a rich cultural heritage. Based on the findings, a fascinating integration of the historical context with contemporary reality is evident, highlighting the Municipality of Byron as a vibrant community that respects and continues its rich heritage.

Byron district in Athens combines urban convenience with natural beauty, nestled near Mount Hymettus. Its multicultural character, shaped by refugees, enriches its vibrant community. With a military base at Koutalas and diverse social activities, Byron boasts rich infrastructure. Cultural landmarks like the Rock Theatre and influences from Asia Minor enhance its historical and cultural significance.

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