

The true story behind the legend

Kyra Frosyni (Euphrosyne Vasileiou) was a woman from Ioannina, married to a merchant. She lived during the rule of Ali Pasha of Ioannina, a figure known for both his harshness and political acumen.

The event is dated around **1800–1801** (although in oral tradition it is often chronologically shifted).

Ali Pasha ordered the arrest of Frosyni along with other women — according to sources, **17 or 18 in total**.

The reasons for their punishment remain unclear and are intertwined with elements of myth.

Some accounts suggest that Frosyni had a relationship with **Mukhtar Pasha**, Ali's son. Other versions refer to intrigues within the harem and jealousy. A political motive is also considered possible, as an act intended to discipline or intimidate the local population.

The women were imprisoned and later drowned in **Lake Pamvotis** (the lake of Ioannina), during the night.

According to oral tradition, among them is also mentioned Frosyni's wet nurse, Chrysi, who is said to have chosen to share the same fate.

There is no fully documented historical record of the event. However, references do exist, and the figure of Frosyni has been largely shaped through oral tradition, songs, laments, literature, and visual arts.

Over time, Frosyni has been associated with the notion of female dignity, as well as with injustice and violence.

Today, her story is often included in discussions concerning the position of women, the exercise of power, and the ways in which historical memory is formed and transmitted.