

Akronafplia Through the Ages

The hill of Akronafplia is the oldest part of the city of Nafplion, first capital of Greece. In fact, this was the original city of Nafplion. Inhabited since the Neolithic Age, dating back to the 3rd century BC, the fortress was built to protect the settlement at its western end. However, parts of the walls that have been found amongst the ruins date back to Mycenaean times. In the 7th century the town was taken over by Argos and used as its harbor. The Roman occupation saw a decline of the settlement until 279 AD when Akronafplia was rebuilt and began to develop again under the flourishing Byzantine Empire. Later, its walls were modified by the Franks and governed by a line of feudal lords. During this time, the Franks split the fortress into the Frankish and Greek sections. In 1388 the city was ceded to the Venetians who in the 15th century extended the fortress to the east adding the Castel di Toro Bastion exhibiting premium military architecture of the time.

When the cannon was invented, the bastion proved useless, for the fortress was at the mercy of whoever ruled the castle of Palamidis above it. The Venetians in turn, reinforced their walls with five cannons known as the “Five Brothers.”

When the Turks conquered the area, they repaired parts of the fortification. Today, only the ruins of the Greek, Roman and Byzantine extensions remain. From 1936 to 1956, the fortress was used as a political prison, until in the 1960s the Greek government chose the spot for the development of the Xenia Hotels.