

Enhancing of

# Acronauplia Castle



## PLAN LEGEND

1. Roman castle
2. Frankish castle
3. Frankish interval wall and tower
4. East wall
5. Traversa 'Gambello'
6. Castello di Torre
7. 'Grimani' bastion
8. Palamidi
9. Lower town

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## THE CASTLE OF ACRONAULPIA

The first organized settlement in Acronauplia dates to the end of the 4<sup>th</sup> century B.C. In the early Byzantine years, Nafplio remains a small city.

### Frankish Occupation (1210/12-1389)

The citadel during this period is under the rule of De la Roche, De Brienne and D' Enghien. Since the conquest of the castle by the crusader Villehardouin, Acronauplia is separated in two parts by an internal- partition wall.

### 1st Venetian Occupation (1389-1540)

The east part of Acronauplia is the first to be fortified with the construction of the Castello di Torre while at the same time the east wall is reshaped with the addition of scarp revetments and buttresses, the sealing of the Gate and the construction of a new entrance-gate in the south end. In the midst of the Frankish castle, Traversa Gambello is constructed, a fortifying complex of bastions and gates.

### 1st Ottoman Occupation (1540-1686)

Nafplio becomes the seat of the Turkish governor of Peloponnese. The Ottoman traveler Evliya Çelebi who visited the town in 1668 delivers that within the fortress of Acronauplia existed lots of modest houses and a big mosque, "Fethiye Camii", on the top of the hill, originally a Christian church dedicated to Saint Andreas.



*The Kapodistria's hospital area in the early 20th century. Photo of the German Archaeological Institute.*

### 2nd Venetian Occupation (1686-1715)

Nafplio, as Napoli di Romania, becomes the capital of Peloponnese (Regno di Morea) and the Venetians proceed hectically to fortifying the rock of Palamidi. As a result, the castle of Acronauplia is downgraded and with an edict of the Venetians in 1686 its use is restricted to purely military purpose. The east part of the castle and the Land Gate of the Lower Town are reinforced with the building of a new

bastion, named after the General Proveditore of the Peloponnese Grimani. The same year, the Gunpowder Shed is built west of the internal wall.

### 2nd Ottoman Occupation (1715-1822)

The years of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Ottoman occupation was harsh time for the town. Nevertheless, some remarkable buildings date back to that period: the *Mosque of Aga Passa* ("Vouleftiko"- the Parliament of later years), *Medresses* (later "Leonardo's Prison"), the Catholic Church ("Frankish church" / "Frangoklissia") still existing today, fountains, etc.

### Modern Years

Following the conquest of Palamidi by the army of Kolokotronis, at the end of 1822, Nafplio is liberated from the Ottomans. At the same time a large operation is launched to clear the fortress of Acronauplia from the heaps of rubble. The scattered houses are repaired and accommodate the Guard while on the east wall the first Military Hospital and the chapel of Saints Anargiroi are built.

## THE PROJECT

The project "Enhancing of the Acronauplia castle in Nafplion, municipality of Nafplion, Prefecture of Argolis" was incorporated in the Operational Programme "Western Greece - Peloponnese - Ionian Islands 2007-2013" with a budget of 677.000,00 € (Priority Axis 08 - Sustainable Development and Quality of Life in Peloponnese) and was implemented by the method of direct labor originally by the 25<sup>th</sup> Ephorate of Byzantine Antiquities (31-3-2011 to 28-10-2014) and then by the Ephorate of Antiquities of Argolis (29-10-2014 to 30-09-2016).

The works done are described next, beginning from the east to the west:

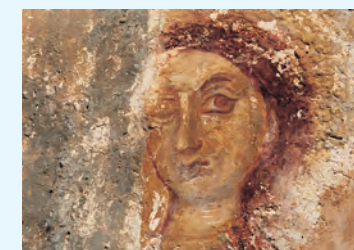
- Cleared from soil and revealed was the staircase leading upwards and the terrace of the tower-gate Toron.
- Cleared from soil and revealed was the interior of the two Byzantine towers of the east wall (North and middle)
- Restoration of the lintel, stone-work and the brick dentil course, also there was inside the closed east gate.
- Formation of the broader space inside the castle between the east and the south gates of the Frankish castle support of the carriage road and staircase construction.
- The terrace was made in waterproof as well as repairing of the southern rectangular part of the ground plan of Kapodistrian's building (hospital).
- Creation of an open-air theatre with a seating capacity of 250, as an outdoor space for local events in the area of the military hospital.
- At the fortified complex "Gambello" were revealed parts of the original paved floor vaulted passage.



*The tower in the Frankish linear wall.*

- Restoration of the Gunpowder shed roof and the revealing of the perimetrically paved floor.
- The Frankish interval wall between the Frankish and the Roman castle was revealed, also cleaning, joint filling and supplemental works were done to the stone-work.
- The Frankish tower was revealed, the additions from mid 20th century were removed also consolidation and supplementing of the stone-work both the square ground plan and the later-made stone buttress, (scarp) which reinforce the outside castle.
- The remains of the church complex of St. Theodore were revealed and works of consolidation of the wall with joint-filling, supplement of the stone-work and construction of the top uppermost part were done.

More over, five information signs were designed, made and placed. Placement of electrical installation with security lighting in the east and south gate as well as the Frankish internal wall. Litter bins were designed and made for the archaeological site and trees were planted.



*Angel Mural from the vault of the passage of the eastern gate.*

With these works done to this extent the degraded area of Acronauplia became an archaeological place with free access to the public and full placement among the public areas (roads, open spaces e.t.c.) of the peninsula.



*The area of "Hospital" and theater after the works.*



*The ruins of the church of St. Theodore, 11<sup>th</sup> c.*