



THE FORTRESS OF PALAMIDI

ARGOLIS

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The Fortress of Palamidi is situated at a height of 220 m. on the summit of the hill of this name east of the city of Nafplion. It was built between 1711 and 1715, and fell into Ottoman hands before its completion. Its founder was the Venetian Governor (Proveditore) Agostino Sagredo, and its engineers were Giancix and La Salle. The fortress was a significant work of fortification architecture which incorporated all the virtues and experience acquired in the field up to the 18th c. It was composed of a complex of bastions which had water reservoirs, munitions depots, food storage areas and frequently moats, machicolations, "murder holes", outer retaining walls, barracks, etc.

All the bastions were connected with one another by a wall to protect the fortress's defenders from enemy fire during their movement from one bastion to another. According to an inscription, the Bastion of San Girardo

(Agios Andreas) was the first to be built, followed by the others in a nearly radial fashion outward from it (depending on the terrain).

Visitors can admire this fortress's sturdy and well-preserved fortifications, the panoramic view over the city of Nafplion and its other fortifications such as the Bourtzi and Acronafplia, the wild beauty of the landscape where the steep rock ends in the sea of Arvanitia, and take an imaginary journey through Modern Greek history since the site is connected with many of its major figures.

Today, Palamidi operates as an organized archaeological site with a great many visitors. During the summer the municipality of Nafplion organizes evenings featuring classical music in the fortress – something truly unique for those who experience it.



THE BASTIONS

1. The Bastion of Epameinondas: One enters Palamidi today via its central gate in the Bastion of Epameinondas, directly following the parking area. The Ottomans called this bastion Seytan Tabya, i.e. “the Devil’s Bastion”, apparently fearing that this was the fortress’s most vulnerable point.

2. The Bastion of Miltiades: Proceeding along the paved road leading into the fortress, one encounters on the right the Bastion of Miltiades (Bastione or Baloardo Staccato - Bazirgan Tabya). It had a deep moat on its southern and eastern side, with access only from the west. This bastion was used as a prison for those serving life sentences.

3. The Bastion of Leonidas: North of the Bastion of Miltiades is the Bastion of Leonidas (Piatta Forma - Kur Tabya), located to the left on the paved road leading from the Bastion of Miltiades. Its purpose was to protect the city from the side of the plain below.

4. The Bastion of Agios Andreas (San Girardo - Disdar Tabya): One arrives at this bastion through an imposing gate (reached by a stone staircase) that opens on the north. Above the gate was a wall relief of the Lion of Venice, the symbol of Mark the Evangelist, patron saint of Venice, with an inscription praising the founder Sagredo. The chapel of Agios Andreas is at the rear of the central courtyard. This was a small church whose eastern half lay beneath the rock. The original church was dedicated to San Girardo, the patron saint of the Sagredo family. In the Greek War of Independence the fortress was taken on the feast day of Agios Andreas, and the Greeks dedicated the church in his memory. At the rear of the first arch near the church, a small entrance opens through a small passageway that lead to a quadrangular room, the so-called “Prison of Kolokotronis”. For this space, which was apparently a secondary gunpowder magazine, the name “Prison of Kolokotronis” prevailed in the early 20th c. after the abolition of the prison of Palamidi.

5. The Bastion of Robert (Mascio - Deniz Kapi): One may view this bastion, which resembled a tower, by ascending the staircase. It took its name from the French Philhellene Robert, who fell gallantly in battle fighting on the Acropolis of Athens.

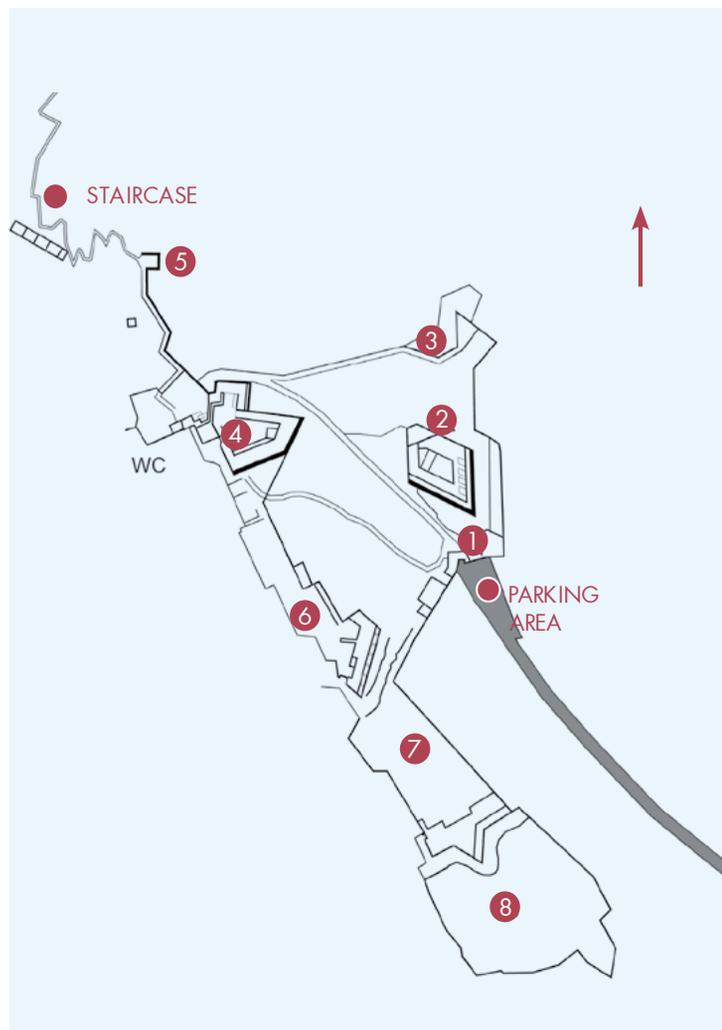
6. The Bastion of Fokionas (Mezzo Bastione - Tavil Tabya): This bastion lies south of the Bastion of Agios Andreas. At its southeastern point there is a gate leading to a steep and narrow staircase above the rocky shore of Arvanitia. Visitors can proceed southeast from this gate towards the Bastion of Themistocles.

7. The Bastion of Themistocles (Posto di San Agostino - Kara Tabya): This bastion is a large one; it is separated from the side of the Bastion of Fokionas by a substantial moat while from that of the Bastion of Achilles it is separated by a smaller moat and strengthened by a wall.

8. The Bastion of Achilles (Doppia Tegnalia - Yuruis Tabya): As its name makes clear, this was the most vulnerable bastion of all, both because it was situated at the most accessible point on Palamidi hill as well as because at some points its wall did not exceed 3 m. in height. The Ottomans named it Yuruis Tabya, because they entered the Fortress of Palamidi from here. And it was from this same point that Palamidi was taken by the Greeks on the night of November 29, 1822.

THE STAIRCASE

The staircase connecting the Fortress of Palamidi with the city of Nafplion and its fortifications was one of the first projects carried out on Palamidi hill (1690). It was originally vaulted, with openings in its roof at intervals to provide better ventilation. Today a large part of this staircase is preserved, though it is not accessible; access is provided by the reconstructed staircase dating to the era of King Othon, for which legend says it had 999 steps.





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