

Temples Fortress

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35.2031168, 25.1054791



The fortress sits atop the twin-peaked hill called Rocca, south of Profitis Elias. The hill also contains remnants of the acropolis of the ancient town Lykastos, mentioned by Homer in the Iliad. Its elevated position made the hill ideal for the construction of an impregnable fortress, as it provides commanding views of the surrounding area. Additionally, the hill had a natural freshwater source, which supplied the fort's fountain, Fountana.

When Byzantine general Nikephoros Phocas (later Emperor Nikephoros II Phocas) liberated Crete from Arab control in 961 AD, he established a fortress on Rocca, intending to move the city of Candia (modern-day Heraklion) there. While the fortress was constructed, the city of Candia was not relocated due to the strategic importance of its port, leaving the fortress of Temenos to stand alone, overseeing the region. The entire area eventually took the name "Temenos Province," a name still in use today.

In 1204, Genoese count and pirate Enrico Pescatore briefly took control of Crete and either built or repaired 15 fortresses to secure his hold over the island, one of which was the Fortress of Temenos.

When the Venetians occupied Crete in 1209, they strengthened the walls of Temenos and updated the fortress according to contemporary military technologies. The fort was described as oppidum fortissimum (a "powerful fortress") and was renamed Castello Temene. It was granted as a fief to the noble families of Coressi, Kornaros (Corner), and Querini. Over time, a small settlement, or bourg, developed around the fortress, inhabited by villeins (peasants tied to the feudal estates). This settlement eventually evolved into the present-day village of Profitis Elias.

Overview

Purpose: Excursion	Type: Castle	Country: Greece
City: Profitis Ilias	Zip code: 715 00	

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Greek Map