

Central Gate of Rethymnon Fortress

18

35.3716568, 24.4722707



It is believed that the hill on which the Fortezza stands may have originally been an island connected to Crete by a narrow strip of land. Over time, the channel between them silted up, making the hill part of the mainland. The hill, known as Paleokastro ("Old Castle"), was likely the site of the acropolis of ancient Rithymna, which may have housed a Temple of Apollo and a Sanctuary of Artemis, although this has not yet been confirmed by archaeological evidence.

During the Second Byzantine Period (10th–13th centuries), a small walled settlement was established east of the Paleokastro hill. The Venetians later referred to this settlement as *Castrum Rethemi*, *Castel Vecchio*, or *Antico Castello*—all meaning "Old Castle."

In the early 13th century, Genoese pirate Enrico Pescatore, a rival of the Venetians who attempted to claim Crete for himself, seems to have repaired the Byzantine fortifications around the small town near the harbor. These fortifications, known as *Castrum Rethemi*, survived after the Venetian conquest of Crete in the 13th century. Unfortunately, none of those early fortifications remain today.

Overview

Purpose: Excursion	Type: Castle	Country: Greece
City: Rethymno	Zip code: 741 31	

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Greek Map