

Paleokastro in Pylos

FRANKS, VENETIANS AND TURKS



This is a view copy. It shows the cover, table of contents and a few representative pages. For the complete publication, see www.historypicturesanddocuments.com

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VIEW OF PALEOKASTRO

Frankish crusaders built this castle, Paleokastro, in 1278. The castle is situated near modern Pylos, on the ruins of an ancient castle.

Greek history in pictures

Every volume in this series is designed for everyone who wishes to orient in short time on one or more aspects of Greek history, especially through visual sources. Our target groups are tourists, pupils of secondary schools, students, teachers and everyone else who is interested in short introductions in aspects of the fascinating history of the Greek people.

This series will present the history of Greece from prehistoric times to the present in small pictorial volumes. Every year some volumes will be published on the internet. See page 19 for available volumes, summer 2015. Contributions of anyone who is interested in the Greeks and their history are appreciated (see page 19).

The Bay of Pylos, history everywhere

Pylos is first mentioned in Homer's Iliad. The old king Nestor departed from his homeland Pylos to fight in the Trojan War. In Pylos he possessed a castle and nearby a palace (subject of another volume in this series).

During the Peloponnesian War (431-404 BC, also subject of a separate volume in this series) Athenians and Spartans fought against each other at sea and on land, with the decisive victory of the Athenians on Sphacteria.

Frankish crusaders built in 1278 Paleokastro, a castle near modern Pylos, on the ruins of an ancient castle, see next pages.

After the Turkish conquest of Paleokastro (1502, also subject of a separate volume in this series) the Turks built a new castle, Neokastro, near the southern entry of the bay (1573).

In 1827 the combined fleets of Great Britain, France, and Russia destroyed the Turkish-Egyptian fleet, a battle that consolidated the independence of Greece (also subject of a separate volume in this series).

Two years later the French built a little town on the bay's south shore. It became modern Pylos, now a popular tourist centre. The French named the town Navarino, but the inhabitants gave it later the old Greek name Pylos.



Views of the castle

AERIAL VIEW FROM THE SOUTH-WEST

Paleokastro consists of a large enclosure linked with another smaller one at the highest point. The smaller enclosure lies perhaps within the boundaries of the ancient acropolis and of the Frankish castle. Franks and Venetians were the most important inhabitants of the castle in medieval times. But for short periods Genoese and Spanish mercenary soldiers were also possessors of the castle. In the beginning of the 16th century the Turks conquered the castle.

PART OF THE FRANKISH CASTLE

Already in the time of Homer there should have been a castle or acropolis. During the Peloponnesian War (page 3) the Athenians conquered the castle to have a strong position in their fight against the Spartans.

But what you see now are medieval ruins of the top of a castle built after 1278 by the Frankish ruler Nicholas II de St. Omer (in the north of France today, close to the border of Belgium).



Photo: Kirsten van den Berg (2014)

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Views from the castle

VIEW OF THE SOUTH

The castle dominates not only the Bay of Pylos but also the sea. The photo shows the southern part of the castle, the northern part of the island Sphacteria and the entrance of the Bay of Pylos (Navarino). The bay is one of the safest anchorages in the Mediterranean.

NORTH-EAST VIEW

Looking to the north from the top of the castle you see Voidokilia Bay and on the right a part of the Gialova Lagoon (famous bird paradise).



Photo: Just Dalhuisen (2014)

TO READERS WHO WANT TO PARTICIPATE

If you live in Greece, visit Greece, or if you are particularly interested in the history of (a part of) Greece and you will delve thoroughly into the history of one or more monuments or subjects and write a volume in this series or contribute to, then you are invited to contact the editors of our series *Greek history in pictures*.

Each volume consists of 20 to 30 pages, one or two pictures on each page with comments. At the end a brief historical overview, to place the pictures in a historical context. Each author uses as much as possible own photographs and royalty free pictures.

GREEK HISTORY IN PICTURES

Every year new volumes will be published. Below we mention only volumes planned for 2015.

Prehistoric Greece

- Nestor's palace

Ancient Greece

- Delphi – meeting point of the Greeks
- Acropolis – creators and attackers
- Agora and Pnyx – democracy in Athens

Byzantine and Turkish empire

- Paleokastron in Pylos – Franks, Venetians and Turks
- Neokastro in Pylos – from Turkish castle to tourist attraction
- Mystras – centre of Byzantine culture

Early modern Greece

Modern Greece