



Informationen zur Umwelt und für Naturreisende auf Kreta:
Information about the Environment and for travellers in Crete:

**Excursion to the Pervolakia-Canyon
and Monastery Kapsa / Southeast Crete**



Canyon and Monastery are close to each other and easy to be reached at the South coast road *Ierapetra – Sitia* [Ιεράπετρας - Σητείας]. Short after the town *Analipsi* [Ανάληψη] turn right towards *Kalo Nero* [Καλό Νερό] (2.5 miles). On this route (right the Libyan sea) are in the left towering rock formations numerous Karst caves and grottos to see, of which many have enormous proportions. Large breakdowns in the steep face often expose karst caves, so the calcite formations in their interior can be seen very well from the road. After *Kalo Nero* is still 1.2 miles to the Canyon and the monastery (and 3.1 miles to Goydouras [Γούδουρας], a developing tourist village).

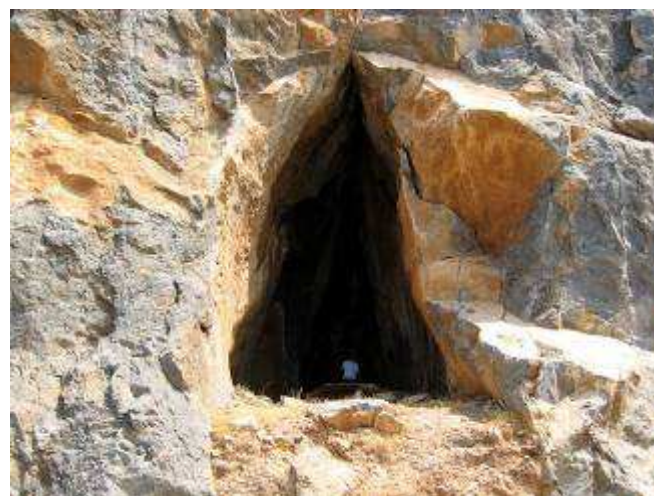
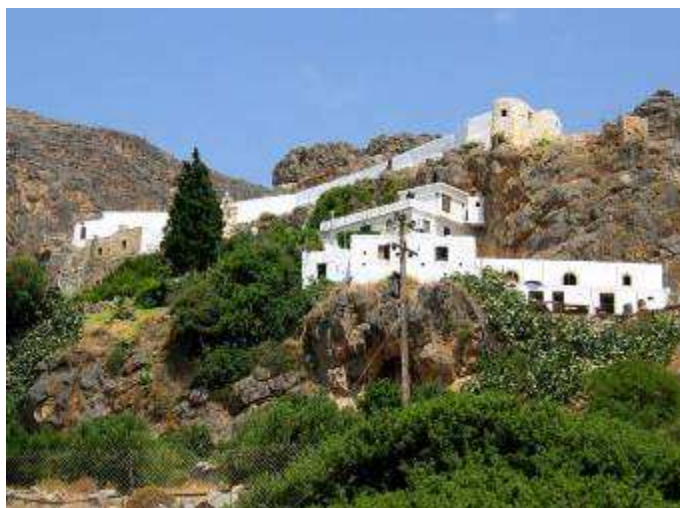
The entry point to the Canyon is available from the road, there where the stream from the Canyon in the Libyan sea. On its shores, a small pine forest, which provides a shady parking place is located right of the road. The Canyon is 2.2 miles long and with little experience in 1-2 hours easy to take. Geologically conspicuous are the numerous karst phenomena in form of stream dwindling and grotto formations. Botanically provides the canyon, next to the Eastern Mediterranean shrub formations (Phrygana), many endemic plants of the island, for example *Ebenus cretica* ([leaflet No. 009-04/E](#)) and *Ricotia cretica* (see picture below).



Picture above left is showing a view into the canyon seen from the entrance; Middle picture from the canyon towards the exit and right the so called „Elephant rock“ ("a Elephant¹ push a rock from the hill, to block the canyon exit ") at the canyon exit (right side). Picture right shows *Ricotia cretica*, a 15 - 25 cm high, annual plant, which is often to be seen within the canyon. It's endemic at Crete, mainly occurring in the mountain- and Middle mountain zone. Few blossoms, petals 10 - 20 mm, sheet ropes 30 - 50 mm.

¹ Elephants are ascertained fossil in Crete from the ice age!

Monastery Kapsa is located, like a swallow's nest, on a high cliff right of the canyon. The "penetralia" of the Church is located in a cave, while the rest nave juts. The unorthodox monk GERONTOYANNIS ("old John") is buried here, the locals revered him as "saint". His skull is to be kept in a small silver shrine; in any case a hole in the lid gives a free look at a skull cap. GERONTOYANNIS shall have spent the last years of his life in prayer in a cave above the Church. According to locals, the cave reminds of a skull (probably because of their "duplicate" entrance); two hollows in the floor inside the cave be held as knee impressions of the saint, who should have kneeling here constantly praying. The monastery dates from 15th Century and became (after its destruction by the Turks) rebuilt in its present form in the second half of the 19th Century. Today a monk and a nun (?) are living in the monastery (2004). Official opening hours: daily from 9 am 12 pm and from 15 to 7 pm. (if the knock for admittance is heard!).



The picture above left shows the Monastery Kapsa, the picture right the "Prayers cave" of GERONTOYANNIS; below left a karst rock with grottos close to the beach; and right a large cave.

Photos: U.Kluge (27.04.2004)

Translated by Michael Bloechinger-Daeumling

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