



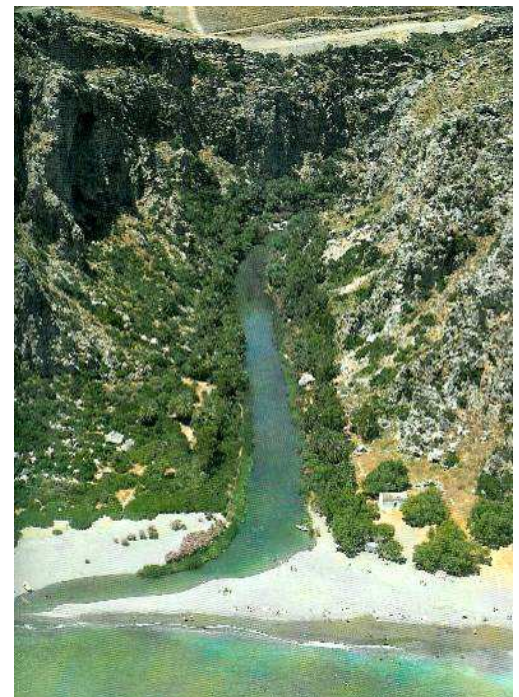
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Excursion to the **Kourtalíotiko-Gorge** and **Monastery Preveli**

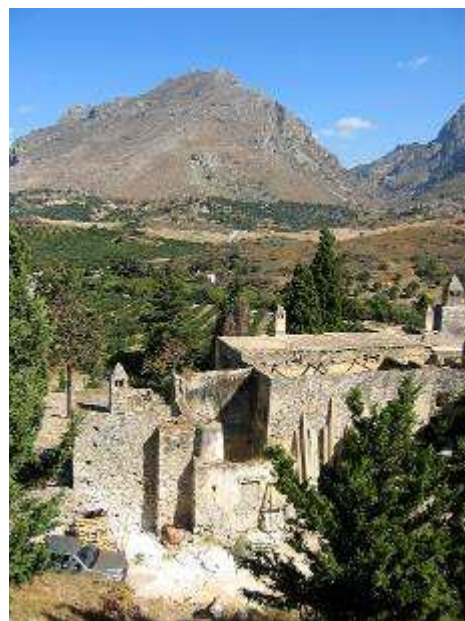
From *Rethymno* towards South (towards *Spili*) you turn off (approximately 4.3 miles) before *Spili* in the direction *Koxare* (*Plakias*). About 1.8 miles behind the village *Koxare* the road leads through the *Kourtalíotiko-Gorge*, where the river *Megaspótamos* arises, who flows into the Libyan sea at **Preveli**. His mouth area situates a beautiful sandy beach, which is accordingly frequented during the tourist season. The River Valley is densely covered with Palm trees, eucalyptus trees and oleanders: the sandy beach can be reached from the Preveli monastery on a gravel road to the East. Therefore turn left just before the "*Prodomos Preveli*" ruins while crossing the river over an old Venetian stone arch.

The *Kourtalíotiko-Gorge* is wild and romantic and very windy (the wind seems to be "caught" between the Gorge walls). Catty-corner a possibility of stopping (parking lot on the left with a good look in the deep canyon and the river Valley) Church "Kyriakis" is located right the road (further forward), which is hewn into the rock and is worth to see.



In addition to the mouth of *Megaspótamos* at Preveli (fig. above right), the lower picture row is showing views of the *Kourtalíotiko-Gorge*; (left) seen from the main road when coming from the village Frati and (middle) along the river. The fig right shows the Church "Kyriakis" within a Gorge rock right of the road. **Pictures:** H. Eikamp (2004)

Further on on the well signed road towards Monastery Preveli, which meanwhile has been complete asphalted, you first reach the ruins of Monastery “Kato Preveli”. The old monastery is located close to the river and was earlier named “Moni Méga Potámou” (“Monastery of the big river”). It is now abandoned and restored currently; a visit is therefore not possible!



Pictures from the currently under restoration Monastery Kato Preveli

Pictures: *U. Kluge* (2004)

From the "old monastery" the street leads further upwards right around the mountain to the "new monastery" Preveli, where a big parking lot is in front of its entrance and where you have a wonderful view of the coastal area. The monastery of Saint John the Evangelist is not one of the oldest monasteries of Crete. Only towards the end of the Venetian reign it made an appearance and experienced in the 18th and the 19th Century a large heyday.

The monastery is currently also renovated and an annex will be build (2004). Apart from the Church and the small Monastery museum complex (as compared to other monasteries of Crete) it offers little sightseeing; in this comparison it attract attention in another way; while the other monasteries of Crete are "entry-free", the visit to the monastery of Preveli costs **7 € per person**(although its written 2.50 € on the ticket). It creates an impression of "rip-off" of tourists, which is further enhanced in the light of the few (accessible) sights of the monastery.



Views of the Monastery Preveli: left, the renovated part with church, besides a old building row.

Pictures: *U. Kluge* (2004)