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Jeep-tour to the Monastery Faneromenis / North-east Crete

Many “ravages of time” along the way

The Monastery is within reach from Sitia to the West over the main road towards Agios Nikolaos. After about 3.7 miles is a signed turn-off on the right (northwards, towards coast); around 1.8 miles later is a 2nd access, which meets about in the middle of the approximately 6 miles long route with the first access. On the first mile paved, the route transfers into a gravel track which is easy to navigate with a normal car during summer (applies to both lines). Several ancient remains of buildings line this road which leads after approximately 4.5 miles downhill in a Gorge to the coast. The Faneromenis Gorge ends here between pale-white limestone cliffs on a very beautiful shingle beach. Because of the strong waves it necessarily does not invite for swimming. Also here are ancient "traces of the past" to see (see figures). From here, the track leads on the "other side" of the gorge uphill along seaside; it's then approximately 1 mile to the monastery.

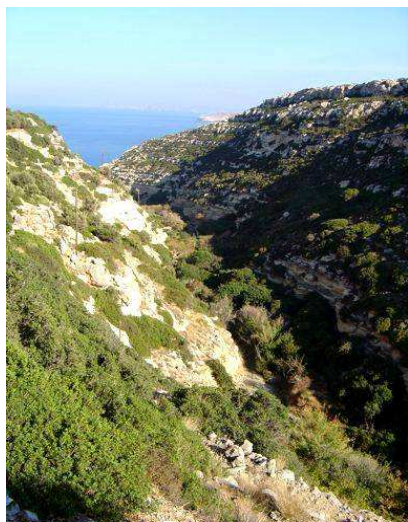


At the Canyon exit (right in the Bay) is a rock in the Sea (figure left) which was earlier probably connected to the mainland and where "traces of human activity" can be found at its plane "escarpment" (see details in view from the sea; fig. right). Here multiple circular pits in rocky soil (diameter 15-25 cm high) notably attract attention. They are on a rectangular "ground marker" (approx. 90 x 180 cm x 10 cm), which is cut into the floor rock surface. Their meaning and their purpose are currently unknown. But they are the most likely in direct relation to the underlying sea rock; he also shows "working marks" (see fig. middle). In particular a “door-like” looking niche strikes out; left of it is a “Bronze cased” stele and on the right juts the remain of a pipe out of the rock. Unfortunately this could not be studied; the always surge bathed rock is very difficult and only with appropriate equipment be reached.

Pictures: U. Kluge (9/2003)

The red marks show the circular and the rectangular "ground rock edits" (left, seen towards the sea; right, the same marks seen from the sea); the blue marks (centre picture) show the door-like looking niche on the isolated rock within the sea.

Monastery **Faneromenis** dates from the 15th Century and is build directly on the edge of the eponymous Canyon. The feast “Tis Panagias” (Mother of God / Assumption of Mary) is held here on the 15th of August. An ancient icon of the Virgin Mary was found in a small cave niche (beneath the Church), which was probably used for the naming. The very small but beautiful church is located (slightly lowered) in the middle of the monastery complex; the by fire (placed in 1829 by the Turks) fuliginous frescoes inside are dated to the year 1455. The monk cells left behind the Church border the courtyard of the complex. They have been renewed (based on brasses above the doors) between 1624 and 1679.



Detail view of a memorial plaque above the door of a monk cell (see yellow arrow / middle picture)



The upper picture row show a view into the canyon towards the sea from the courtyard edge of the monastery and monk cell building in the courtyard.

The middle picture row show the church from the higher courtyard, the sanctuary with icons and a detailed view of the frescoes where the damages by fire are recognisably.

The lower picture shows the cave niche, right outside beneath the church where the Mother of God icon is to see. From here a steep stairway leads on the side of the Gorge to a plateau, where probably the cemetery of the monastery is located; two old graves show that the last funeral took place in the 18th Century

Pictures: U. Kluge (7/2003)