



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



Monastery of Arkadi Symbol of Cretan resistance

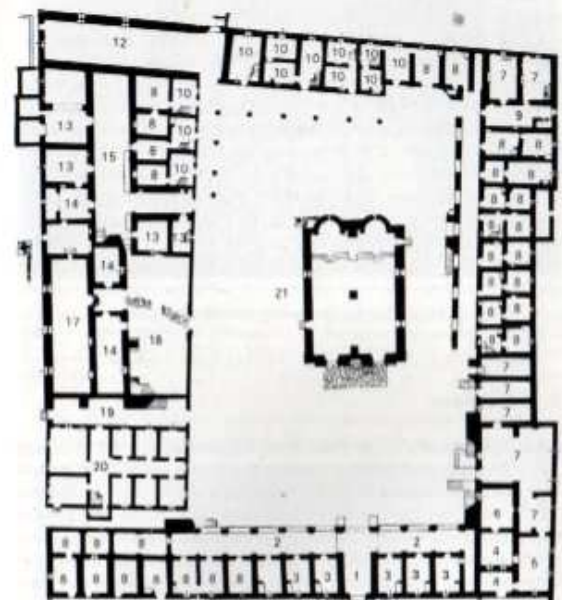
Monastery of Arkadi [Μονή Αρκαδίου] (14 miles southeast of **Rethymno** [Ρεθυμνο]) can be reached via the north coast road **Iraklio-Rethymno** when turning south at **Stavromenos** [Σταυρωμένος], following the well signed branch road towards **Arkadi** [Αρκάδι]. The monastery is situated on a plateau (approx. 500 m above MSL); the square building with its raw carved stones resembles on a barrier of a fortification. According to bibliographical references the monastery in its present form is over 400 years old. Opposite the entrance to the monastery, at the western end of the great (parking) place, a former windmill serves as charnel house, where skulls of the victims from the 9th November 1866 are kept; therefore see also our leaflet No. [033-04/E \(2nd Page\) Arkadi - icon of Cretan resistance.](#)

By lore it was build during the 5th Century by the Byzantine Emperor **Arcadius** (whereby which it also is named). It was renovated at the end of the 16th Century (1587). Today's aisled Church also comes from this period and is dedicated to the metamorphosis of Christ.

The monastery extends over 5,200 sqm. The Church is in the middle of the building complex, surrounded by the two-storey buildings: Cells of the monks, refectory, warehouses etc. (see **fig. site plan**)

If Cretans are already known for their indomitable desire for freedom, **Arkadi** is their icon. Outwardly rather inconspicuous today it's almost a "pilgrimage" with the character of "national shrine". On the 9th of November 1866, one of the worst tragedies of the Cretan struggle for freedom against the Turks took place here. Hundreds of trapped, including many women and children, committed suicide together behind the fortified monastery walls, to not fall in the hands of the attacking Turkish troops.

Site plan of ground floor of Monastery Arkadi



- | | |
|--------------------------|----------------------|
| 1. Westgate | 12. Arsenal |
| 2. Cloisters | 13. Cells |
| 3. Stockrooms | 14. Kitchen |
| 4. Cel for cheese making | 15. Cells |
| 5. Wine cellar | 16. Small refectory |
| 6. Olive oil cellar | 17. Refectory |
| 7. Main storage room | 18. Refectory yard |
| 8. Monks stock rooms | 19. Outside stairs |
| 9. Portal | 20. Guesthouse |
| 10. Monks cells | 21. Monastery church |
| 11. East gate | |





The **fig.** above are showing (from left to right): the left side next to the church with arsenal rooms, kitchen, refectory and monk cells: the front-view of the church in the inner yard and a view into a cloister, here left of the entrance.



The **fig.** above are showing: the inner side of the church with a view to the sanctuary and a Christi “tall“ icon (painted on wood, framed with gilded carvings). The fig right is showing the right side of the monastery next to the church. A small museum is located here.

Pictures: (1) H. Eikamp / (6) U. Kluge (20.12.2005)

The following pictures are showing two pages about Crete from “Cosmographica!”, colored woodcuts by Sebastian Muenster, Basel 1588. The size of the original is 31 x 21 cm (12.2 x 8.2 inch)

