

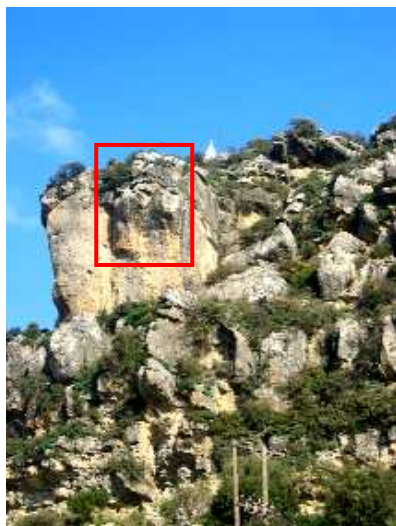


**Informationen zur Umwelt und für Naturreisende auf Kreta:**  
 Information about the Environment and for travellers in Crete:



## The Cave Church “of holy cross” in Kalamáfka Asclepius dominate the "Church Mountain" in shadowy existence

**Kalamáfka** is located about 15.5 miles south of **Agios Nikolaos** and is best reached over the North coast road (of **Agios Nikolaos** towards **Sitia**). In Istro (located after **Ammoudara** and **Vathi**) turn south towards **Prina**. The next bigger village after **Prina** than is **Kalamáfka** on the south-east edge of the Dikti Mountain.



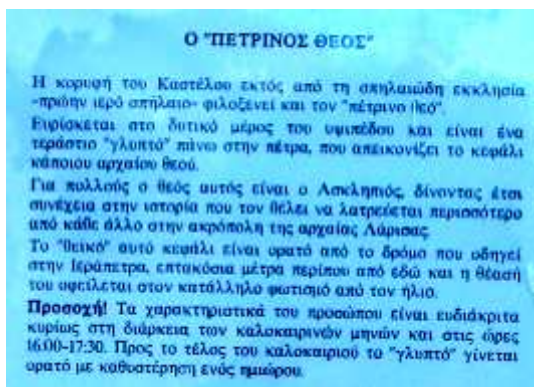
The Cave Church of **Kalamáfka** is located on a hill on the edge of the village (see fig.) 230 stairs lead uphill from the village centre to a plateau and the entrance of the church. She is located within a cave, to which a



few stairs lead down; whitewashed rocks illuminate the Church room in the cave (see fig.). From the plateau you have a wonderful view on the village **Kalamáfka** and the Dikti Mountains. The Holy Cross (see fig.) is on the north-eastern part of the plateau and is accessible via a "beaten path" (left of the Church entrance).



More (annotated) pictures of this sight: see photos at the end of the body. The mountain plateau was (according to the archaeological studies of *P. Faure*) used since the medium Minoan time (1700 BC) to the classical period (4<sup>th</sup> Century BC) and served in this time also as refuge (Cave).



The "Church Mountain" is by the way, according to an info panel (see fig.) also a visible "God seat". About 700 m after the village exit (on the main road towards Ierapetra) is a rock formation to be seen on the western part of the mountaintop, which should depict the head of the Greek deity **Asclepius** <sup>1)</sup> during the appropriate position of the Sun (see **red** mark at fig. 1). His "facial features" should be visible (in the influence of shadowing) especially during the summer months between 4 p.m. and 5 P.m.!



<sup>1)</sup> Asclepius (transliteration of the old-Greek Ἀσκληπιός, in Latin tradition as Aesculapius, in today's Greek Ασκληπιός) is in Greek mythology, the God of healing. In some books, the Greek God is identified with the person of the Egyptian polymath and doctors Imhotep as transmission in the Hellenistic world view. Asclepius is mostly figured as a bearded, serious man, with laurel, resting on a rod, wrapped by a snake (adder); see fig. (Louvre, Paris). This Asclepius rod became a symbol of Medicine (doctors).



The upper series shows a "look back" on the first 100 steps to the mountain plateau, from where you have a wonderful view of Kalamáfka and the Dikti mountains.

The middle series show the entrance to the Church on the rock plateau as well as access to the cave of outdoor and indoor. The two bottom pictures show the Bell Tower in the battlements of the mountain.

**Pictures:** *U. Kluge / H. Eikamp* (19.12.2006)

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