



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



## **Walking tour to the (archaeological ruins and) cisterns of Eleftherna:** A settlement site of Minoan's, Dorian's and Roman's.

The village of *Eleftherna* was inhabited from the Minoan period into the middle ages. It played an important role in the ancient and Byzantine period. It was used also by the Romans.

A visit to the widespread archaeological sites offers itself as a hike and takes about two hours. The main excavation point of *Katsivelos* as well as the "Acropolis" (remains of a Hellenistic tower on the narrow line of Mount *Pyrgi*) is easy to find; the Roman cistern (on the western slope of the *Pyrgi*) are however very hidden. Therefore you should accept the offers of local leaders who offer their services in the chapel of *Agia Irini* (during the tourist season). They indeed always take a shortcut ("over hedge and ditch"), but take you quickly "to the target" and are also characterized by their historical knowledge.

To reach *Eleftherna* from the northern road *Iraklion-Rethymno*, turn to South at *Stavromenos* towards *Arkadi*. After three-fourths of the route is left the branch to *Archéa Eléftherna*. Behind the village is left a gravel road into the valley and to the chapel of *Agia Irini*. It is located right of the road. The road ends short before the main excavation point of *Katsivelos* at the north-eastern slope of *Pyrgi*. From here a "trail" continues in the Valley to a bridge from the Hellenistic period. Upside the bridge are some Chamber tombs. From here a path leads back up to the ridge of the *Pyrgi* where the "Acropolis" is located. From here take the path on the western slope of the *Pyrgi* down in the valley (over at the necropolis of "Orthi Petra"), which leads to the two **cisterns** (200 metres below the remains of the tower). Through small holes, you can safely walk through the cisterns. The water reservoir took approx 10,000 cubic meter, where in their interior, supported by a few pillars, several trucks could be placed. The cisterns connected by "Overflows" (and connected to underground springs) sent their water through underground pipes through the "Acropolis"-hill down to the city (*Eleftherna/Katsivelos*).



View at the Venetian Byzantine Chapel of Agia Irini (left) and the main excavation point of Katsivelos (right). Besides the Hellenistic basis are here building remains of a Roman Villa (with well-preserved mosaics) and the basis of a three-aisled Basilica.

**Pictures:** U. Kluge (9/2004)



The figure on the left shows the two accesses to the first cistern complex; the figure right the left access seen from inside.  
**Pictures: H. Eikamp (9/2004)**



View into the cistern chambers: the single areas gain scales of approx. 40 x 20 m. In the vicinity of the entrance, the green colour of the pillars mark an algae growth through continuous moisture and twilight, under which the soft limestone suffers and loses "stability".  
**Fotos: H. Eikamp (9/2004)**

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