



**Information about the Environment and for travellers in Crete:**

**Mount Giouhtas: “the sleeping Zeus”**  
**Cretan orchid (*Ophrys cretica ssp. –ariadne*)**



Mount Juktas is reached if you drive from Iraklio in south direction (past Knossos) towards Arhanes. Than from Ano Arhanes towards Houdetsi and after 2 km you get to the turn-off (on the right of the street) up the hill.

The distance to the 811 meter high mountain is approx 4 km, the altitude difference about 400 meter. As a plain hike you need about 1 hour up to the peak (back and forth ~ 2 hours); but the way is also driveable with a normal car.

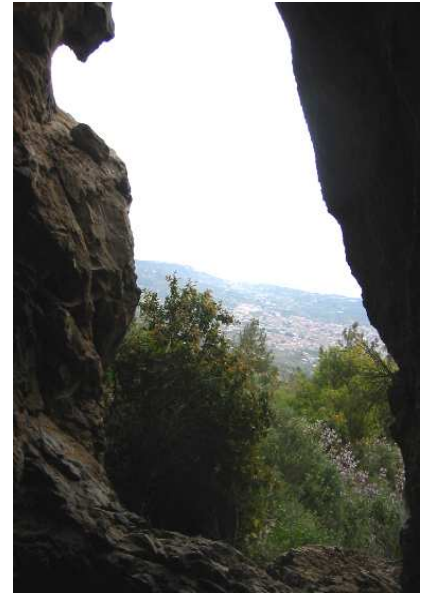


The upper row shows (from left to right): the mount in total (face of sleeping Zeus), the summit cross and the summit. The low row: view on the four-aisled chapel (from east) and the entrance (on the south side) as well as a view into the interior; the access to the aisle is seen on the right picture site.

Many testimonials of the Minoan culture were discovered in the area around Arhánēs. Thus one found, among others, was a temple at Anemospília, at the foot of the Juktas, in which human sacrifice should have taken place (see in addition the info leaflet No. 058-05/E of the Crete environmental info.). Further excavation places are at Vathípetrou, here a Minoan necropolis and a manor-house



On the crest of Mount Juktas (close to today's radio station) EVANS discovered a Minoan summit sanctuary. In the Cretan folk believe the silhouette of the mountain represents the face of the (sleeping) God Zeus. "On the tip of his nose" (the middle summit) is, beside the summit cross, the chapel *Afèndi Christoù Metamòrfosi* located. It is the designation of an annual church parade on the eve of the 6<sup>th</sup> of August, when the multi-day celebration of the "transfiguration of Jesus" is celebrated. The west wall of the Juktas drops at the church nearly vertical; from here you have a good view of the hilly vineyards and the outlines of the Psiloritis. To-



towards the south the Messara plateau with the Asterousia Mountains can be localized.

Picture left shows a view from the peak of Juktas in western direction; the picture right in eastern direction, here out of a small karst cave; Ano Arhanes is seen in the background. The small cave is located about 2.5 km below the peak, on the left of the berm in about 9 m height and easy to reach.

## Cretan orchid (*Ophrys cretica* ssp. *-ariadne*)

The genus *Ophrys* is a large group of orchids from the alliance *Orchis* the subtribe *Orchidinae* which includes 60 species. The botanical name is derived from the Greek "orphys" = eyebrow. The perennial, herbaceous plants have very colorful and remarkable leaves, where the lips look like insects (sexual deception to attract pollinators).

Additionally also scents of the female insects are copied, with the view to attract pollinators. This happens during the time, in which only the males, but the females are not yet active. Thus roughly about 10% of the respective population are dusted. However, since each plant produces up to 12.000 tiny seeds, this is not sufficient for the continuity. The geographic range concentrates mainly on the Mediterranean area (the Aegean). Cretan orchid (endemic) flowers from March to April. The bloom consists of two to eight blooms. The bracts are hardly longer than the ovary. The egg-shaped sepals are usually green coloured and appear red spotted. The hairy petals are pink-purple, sometimes also with a greenish impact. The lip is coloured black magenta. It grows on alkaline-rich, dry soils below a height of 1100 meters over NN.



**Pictures:** (3) U. Kluge / (7) H. Eikamp (01.05.2005)