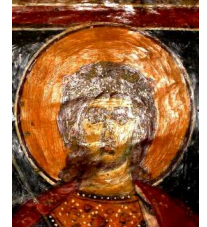


Information about the Environment and for travellers in Crete:

Monastery Gouverniotissa at Potamies / Prefecture Iraklion
Cretan tree frog (*Hyla arborea kretensis*)

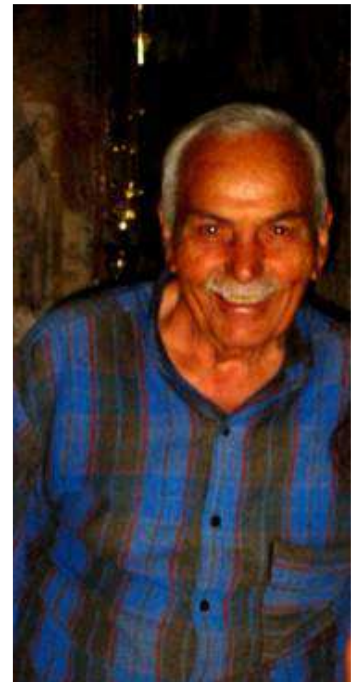


The Monastery is located about 22 miles away from Iraklion at a hillside above the village *Potamies*. The monastery complex is best reached when driving south from *Chersonisos* (from the “Old Road” Iraklion – Agios Nikolaos) towards the Lassithi Plateau. Short before the village Potamies is left a well signed and good drivable way (uphill) which leads after just a few hundred meters to the Monastery.

The date the Monastery was founded is unknown. It is for sure that it already exists in the 14th Century. It was considered as branch of the holy grave and its agricultural production was under the control of a monk of the holy places.

The monastery appreciably ruinous during the last decades. Beside the derelict remnants of the monk cells, baking-ovens and other buildings the small monastic church is still in a good condition. Renovation work begun in 2004 on the entire monastery plant, which was intensified in 2005. Therefore an inspection of the plant is not always possible.

**Μονή Παναγίας
Γκουβερνιώτισσας
Monastery of the
Panayia Gouverniotissa**



Picture left shows the monastic church in the courtyard of the Monastery. The picture right shows the Monastery administrator who guided through the site (before the start of the renovation). The administrator originating from Potamies was characterised particularly by his high specialized knowledge and no question seemed too much; he gave the impression, he would have implemented the wall paintings himself and explained every single brush line.

The most impressive at the church are the wall paintings from the 1st half of the 14th Century. It is said that the painter was in direct contact to the artist workshops in the capital of the Byzantine realm. The Pantocrator illustration which can be seen in the dome (Pantocrator = honour title the most blessing Lord, the risen Christ) is arousing awe; just as impressively as the figure of the holy Barbara with bright colours and shades at the west side of the church. The Catholicon (= main church of a monastery) is probably one of the most richly painted churches on Crete. A small screen selection for this is shown at the following page.



The figures are showing the Christ picture from the dome of the church tower (left) and further wall paintings.

Cretan tree frog (*Hyla arborea kretensis*)

The Cretan tree frog is a small tree frog, whose fingertips and tiptoes are disk-shaped widened. Its top side is usually light green; however it can discolor depending upon “mood” and temperature. A dark strip runs from the drum skin to the hip where it forms a loop. The hind legs are relatively long and the toes are connected with swimming skins. The tree frog reaches a body size of 3 - 4 cm. The females visit the spawn waters between April and June, usually only for one night, in order to put their small, whale-nut-large spawn lumps down, which swell in the water. During the day tree frogs sit on sun exposed places in shrubs, in order to sun themselves. The frogs usually night-actively but can be heard occasionally during the day. The males have a large sound bellow, by which the calls of the frogs are strengthened; in 50 cm distance still over 85 decibels were measured (to the comparison: a pneumatic hammer produces 90-110 decibels). As food serve beetles, spiders, hymenoptera and dipterous insects. From the tree frog (*Hyla arborea*) which is domestic on the European mainland, there are still 2 further kinds: *Hyla arborea molleri* (on the Iberian peninsula) and *Hyla arborea kretensis* on Crete. It is accepted that his spreading is on all Greek islands (including Cyprus). On Crete it is found everywhere, where water is, whether close to the sea or in the interior, here up to the central upland range. A larger occurrence is at the north coast of Crete in the “conservation area” Analipsi (approx. 20 km east Iraklion); therefore see also our leaflet No. 007-04/E of the Crete environmental info.



Male and female of the tree frog are equivalent in size; differences are only in the coloring of the throat. In Germany the tree frog is a protected kind after the FFH guideline (appendix IV).

Pictures: (7) U. Kluge / (1) H. Eikamp (2003)