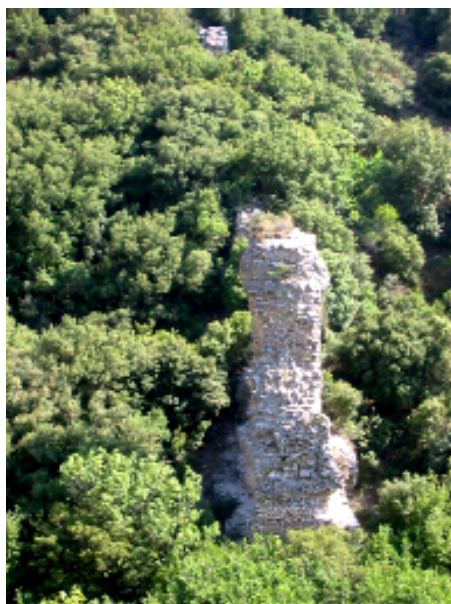



Information about the Environment and for travellers in Crete:
**Archaeological place in Limensa Chersonisos
(Roman and Byzantine relicts at the tourist village)**


Most visitors of Crete know the tourist place Chersonisos on the north coast, about 16 miles east of Iraklion on the National road, as a holiday resort with many hotels and touristic shops. However it was a significant centre of commerce during the ancient time. As archaeologists assume, in former times Chersonisos was the port of Lyttos (at Kastelli, Pediada) and the inhabitants coined/shaped their own coins with the head of Artemis on one and Apollo with a lyre on the other side. Chersonisos probably was place of a temple, to Vritomartis, which was sainted to the “sweet virgin”, a Minoan goddess, which was identified later as Artemis.



Even today numerous archaeological objects of interest are still present in and around Chersonisos from the Roman and Byzantine time; it was the place of the diocese during Byzantine time, which were created by the Apostle Titus. The water supply of the place came from the mountains (area Kastelli, Pediada); remainders of the former aqueduct (see fig.) are to be seen about 1.6 miles behind the village Potamies (direction Chersonisos) on the left of the road (within the valley range). If you take the first road left at the village entrance of Chersonisos (driving on the national route from Iraklion coming) towards the port (beach), you reach an (locked and enclosed) excavation place, which is called a “antique theatres” in some travel guides, what however probably does not correspond the reality. Shown is a wall of clay brick and sand-cement, about 70 cm broad and 3 m high as well as the foundations of the outside buildings, also column fragments are to be seen (see fig.). Details to this excavation place probably become reveal after the planned new excavations.



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If you go further to the port road, where you can see the old moles in the sea at the beach, a low, pyramid-shaped well from Roman time is in the pedestrian zone of the road. It is 2.5 m in the square and 75 cm high; all four sides are decorated with multicolored mosaics, which are particularly well received at one side (see fig.). The mosaic (with motives of fish, fishermen, birds and sea) originally comes from a yard of a building at the coast (of where was not to find out exactly) and originates based on its style from the 2nd to 3rd Century AD.

If you follow the port road westward to the port, you reach at the building of the harbour police the entrance of the former location of the Christian basilica from the first Byzantine time. It was located on the hill of the small peninsula Kastriou (from which you have a beautiful panorama on the coast of Chersonisos), close to and above the small church of St. Nikolas (see fig.). The excavation place takes nearly the entire surface of the hill and is worth seeing in particular the many, partly well received mosaic fragments; therefore see the following pictures.

Παλαιοχριστιανική Βασιλική
Early Christian Basilica



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Translated by Michael Bloechinger-Daeumling

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