



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

The Venetian Fort "Kazarma" in Sitia

Sitia: "the bright focus" of the island



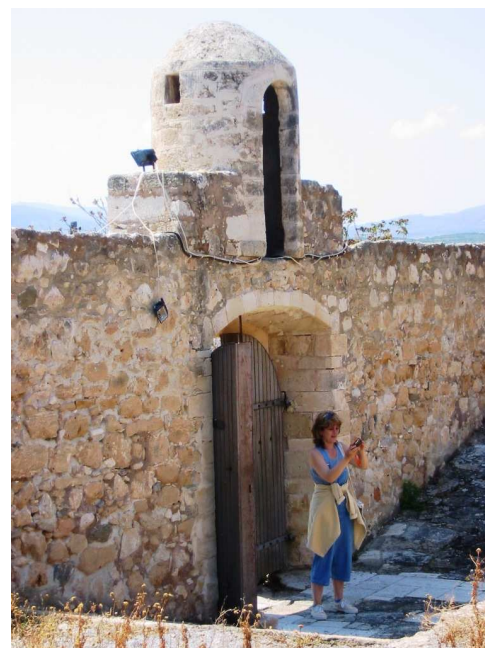
Although the area near Sitia was inhabited probably since Neolithic times, a first settlement goes back to about 1050 BC. The Minoans have left their mark here as the excavations of the Greek archaeologist *Tsipopoulou* of a great Minoan settlement in palace style in **Petras** show (1985). During the Greek time the ancient "**Itia**" was the port of **Praisos**. Conventions from the 3rd Century BC about the city called its inhabitants "Setianer". After Praisos was defeated by Ierapytna, Itia earned the position as the capital of the State of Praisos.

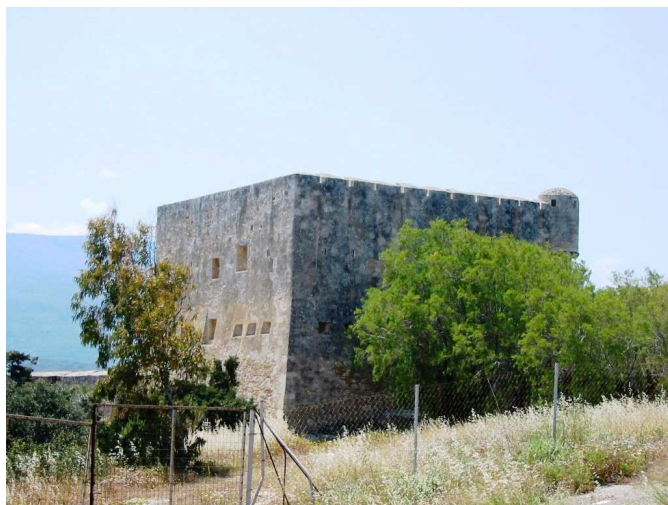
The place today Sitia is located, was already a city since the end of the Roman period. It was one of those cities which had fixed with a town wall by the Genoese in 1204. Very soon the city was defeated by the Venetians who further developed the city walls and fortified. During the Venetian rule the town was destroyed twice by earthquake. In 1539 the buccaneer and pirate Barbarossa conquered the city and levelled it to the ground including the city walls.



In 1648 when the Turks were at the gates of the city, the Venetians had carried most of the population to an other Castle, which had built on the steep hill Liopetra, about 6 miles west of Sitia. In 1653, after a three-year "siege", the Turks then conquered Sitia and turned it into a heap of ruins.

A castle in the eastern part of Sitia, at the highest point of the city (originally probably built by Crusaders, therefore see [<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Crusades>]), was destroyed by the Venetians in (1651) itself, so that it should fall into the hands of the Turks. The three-storey tower of the Castle still stands today, including its ramparts: Fort "Kazarma"; see subsequent images. Today the fortress conduces, amongst others, as open-air theatre.





The city was in the State of a "ruins heap" for almost two centuries, until the Turks built it up again in 1869. Despite the numerous destructions, Sitia managed not only to survive but to develop an intense cultural and spiritual activity. For example the poet Vitzentzos Kornaros is born here, who worked in Sitia in the middle of the 17th Century. He wrote *EROTOKRITOS*, an epic poem with 10,000 lines that was well known everywhere on Crete and is still very popular today. Many Cretan folk singers took some verses of this poem and sing on folk festivals.



Sitia (107 m ü. NN; 35° 12' N, 26° 6' O) the Venetians described as the "bright focus" of the island of Crete. Sitia is also the end point of the European Route 75. The city is (after Ierapetra and Agios Nikolaos) with just over 8,300 inhabitants (as of 2001) the third largest city in the Prefecture of Lassithi. In regards to *Diogenes Laertios* (220 AD) Sitia was the hometown of *Myson* (*Myson of Chen* [griech. Μύσων ὁ Χηνεύς]; also called Chenae; see at [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Myson_of_Chenaie]) one of the Seven Sages of Greek. The attractions in Sitia include, among others, the Archaeological Museum of Sitia and the Folklore Museum. More details on Sitia can be found at www.sitia.gr (in Greek/Engl.) and at: [<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sitia>].

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