

**Informationen zur Umwelt und für Naturreisende auf Kreta:**
Information about the Environment and for travellers in Crete:**Hiking through the mills gorge at the end of Kotsifou-Canyon
from Plakias to Mirthios, Prefecture Rethymno, South Crete**An article from our member *Maria Eleftheria*, Agios Nektarios / South CreteRelating to these topic see also some of our other info leaflets on our website: No. [056-04/E - Koutsifou-Canyon](#);
No. [317-09/E - Hiking to the "Gorge of Mills"](#); and No. [318-09/E - Hiking on the South coast of Crete](#).

This trip, for which you should schedule 2-3hours, leads along the bank of the stream *Kotsifos*, which arises in the fertile plain of *Agios Ioannis*, and is fed on its way downhill from multiple sources (picture right) from the mountains, and finally flows into the sea at *Plakias*. In this water-rich area the power of the constantly flowing water was used earlier by three in the Venetian style built Mills.

Starting point for the hike is well signposted Youth Hostel (see: ["the most southerly hostel in Europe"](#) and fig. below left) north of *Plakias*. From there, follow the path in northern direction until you contact a small crossroads where you branch to the left and therefore must cross the creek (fig. below right). However, to get to the first mill you must observe the right stream banks and then return the way because at the ruin the banks with its dense vegetation makes it very difficult to cross the water. Only the front part of the rather impressive water inlet remains of the mill, on which lower end are two outlets (fig. right 1st row on next page) to see. The middle section and the adjacent buildings are collapsed (fig. left 1st row on next page, the village of Mirthios is at the top of the mountain).





Before you cross the graceful old arch bridge (fig. left below) on your way to the next mill, you can visit the small rock Chapel (fig. right below) on this side of the creek. The Chapel is reached after about 200 meters. From here you have a good view towards mill and sea.

The tremendous wall of the second water mill, already seen from afar through the green of the trees is located just behind the bridge. The mill as the associated buildings is in relatively good shape (fig. below left 2nd Series). This mill reveals some interesting features.



From the top is to see how the gutter of intake where the water was channelled, ends in brick inlet bay (fig. right), from where the water flowed down to the mill wheel.



The remains of the corroded mill wheel lie in a vault under the mill (fig below left). Despite the strong sintering the water outlet at the rear end is still to see. It is good to realize here that no waterwheel with horizontal axis, but a lying waterwheel with vertical axis was used, which enabled a direct power transmission to the also horizontal mounted millstone in the above areas (fig. below right). Unfortunately the wooden connection no longer exists, from the grindstone itself I found only fragments (fig. left).



When you follow the further track of the former gutter, you will see that the water was led in another, less high gutter pipe (fig. below left), which had its outlet in a smaller vault within the underlying building.



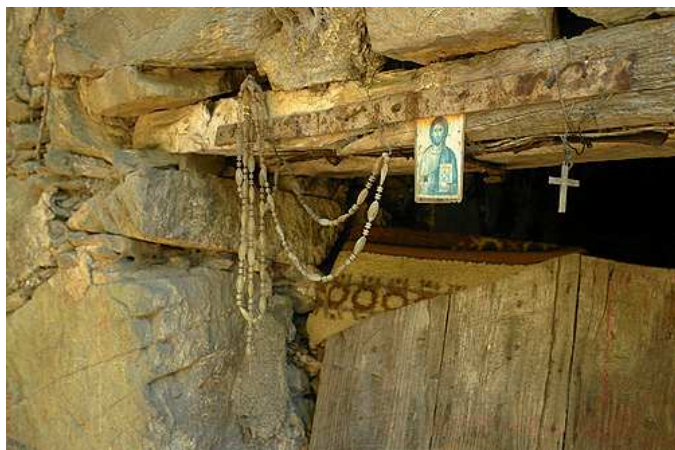
The about 3 metre long, brick archway leads to a circa 2 sq m large opening, from which a narrow tunnel bounds out. This tunnel (fig. page 3 right) which only can be explored on all fours, is inhabited by bats and ends after about 10 meters outside.

The whole structure of the installation suggests that this mill had a dual function. At the top the grain was milled through waterpower while at the bottom the "disused" water found another use for washing wool or cleaning hand-woven fabrics. The necessary devices made of wood were installed apparently over the opening (fig. left below) and are now rotted.



After visiting the mill you have the choice to walk on via a small path leading serpentine-like in the mountain village of *Mirthios*, and to take a rest there in a tavern with views over the Bay or to take the same way back directly to *Plakias*.

For completeness, the third mill should be mentioned which is a lot higher in the Gorge. It is to be reached over a path from the road between *Mirthios* – *Re-thymno*. Obviously the more accessible spaces are still temporarily used by someone (figure below). Mostly is the building certainly overgrown and offers little place of interest as well as the neighbouring Chapel *Panagia Kera*.



© Pictures: *Maria Eleftheria* (taken on 08/21/2009)

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Promotional: Welcome to the "Bergischen (Rhein)Land"



Crest of the family Eikamp

[Gerhard von Eikamp (1294-1326) and Heinrich von Eikamp (1303), knight in Eikamp]. The name "Eikamp" is derived from "eynkamp" which means "fenced ground": forest and/or willow.

The crest painting was done on reference by *Dagmar Harmsen* (Berlin)

Literature: Gerd Müller: *Odenthal - Geschichte einer bergischen Gemeinde*, Kierdorf Remscheid, 2. Auflage 1987. This book also contains a „directory of inhabitants“ of the earlier, free village Eikamp, from beginning until today a

urban district of the municipal Odenthal. Traditional care operates the resident "Theatre and May Club Eikamp eV" s. u.: [<http://www.theater-und-maiverein.com/>]; the Hotel "Eikamper Höhe" has its own homepage; there see at [<http://www.hotelonline.de/hotels/hotel-eikamperhoehe-in-odenthal.htm>].

