

**Informationen zur Umwelt und für Naturreisende auf Kreta:**
Information about the Environment and for travellers in Crete:**Apolihnos – a (almost) abandoned mountain village in Mid Crete**
[Traditional rural structure and architecture with historic-cultural background]

Starting point to your final destination is the sign (see fig.) at coordination point N 35.071 78°, E 24.889 75°, Altitude 203 m. The detailed directions to the starting point can be found within our leaflet No. 332-10: Dugout at Roufas (Mid Crete) at: [http://www.kreta-umweltforum.de/Merkblaetter_en/332-10E.pdf]

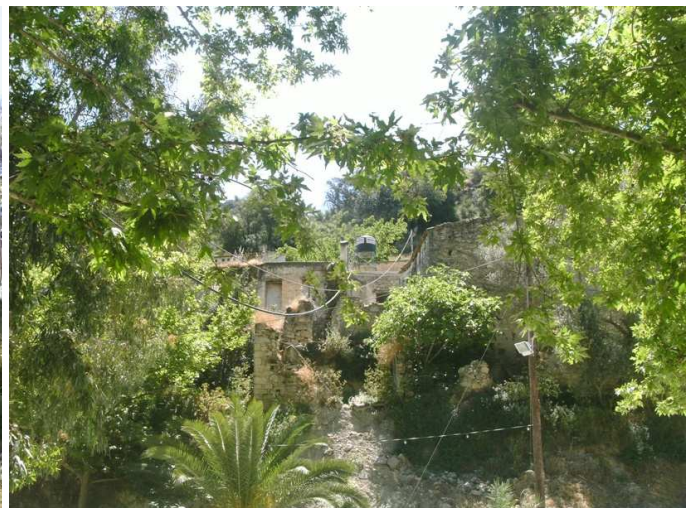
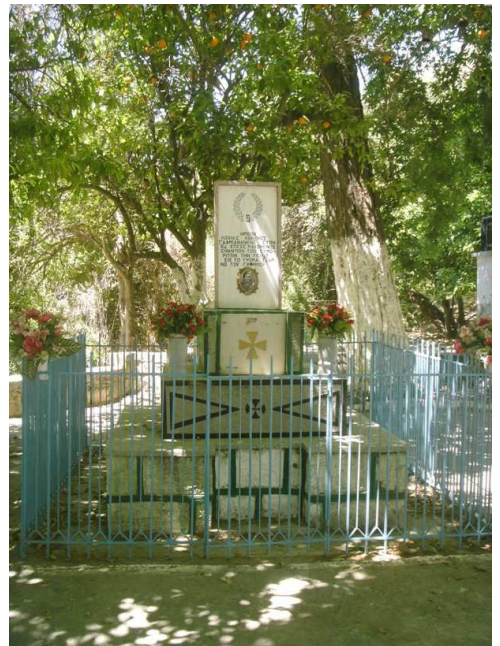


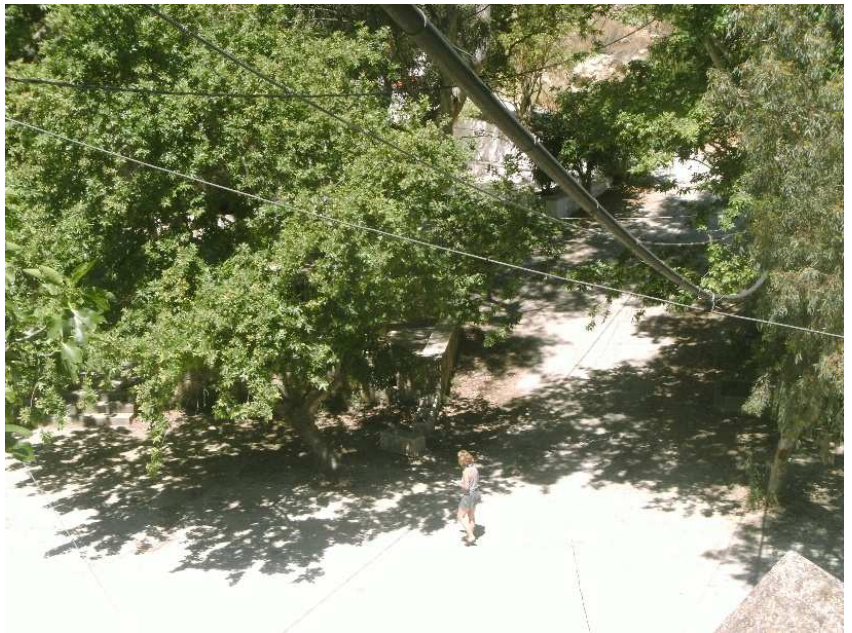
At the aforementioned sign turn left towards *Apolihnos*; it's about 1 mile to the destination (to a small parking lot [Coordination: N 35.079 69°, E 24.888 56°, altitude 193m]). Seen from the direction is left of the parking lot the creek "Vrelianos" (see fig.) also on the left is a church, where a spring system (see fig.) gives plenty of water. It is identified as pure drinking water and apparently used by the residents of the surrounding area (several families filled their water cans while we have been there)



The Church (see fig. next page, upper row) is sacred to the Holy Georgios and open for visitors. In the range of Church and spring is also a war memorial (1949; see fig. next page, middle row, right).

Right of the car park (on the hill side), jut the natural stone walls of a formerly probably completely abandoned village surrounded by lush greenery (see fig. next page). A walk through the village shows that individual houses are renovated and made habitable again, although "not a soul" was shown at our presence in the village itself. Most of the place is still very ruined and in many places nature seems to take possession of the old walls again (see fig. next page).





Here further impressions from the inner of the village.



We eminently notice a lintel (probably the oldest House), which show the date 3. August 1218 (see fig. next page). In these old villages of Crete reveals a cultural-historical background.



The traditional village buildings are of plainly shape, appear simply, sometimes poor and let often think of a provisional arrangement. Constant threat and forced destitution left visible traces in the village construction. Unprocessed natural stone served as main material due to not just lush wood reserves of the island. In the past, the buildings remained outside often unplastered, the houses, in terms of colour, did not stand off from their surrounding area. In addition, this accented their provisional and poor character. The traditional village buildings of Crete are single room houses where people not only slept and eaten, the most important pets such as donkey and goat were held here, a loom had its place as well as sometimes a wine press. If this single room houses should exceed a certain size, they partly were expanded in L- or U-shape or statically consolidated by arches, so-called "kamara". Four niches, in every corner of the house, have been created this way. They conduce different functions, as cooking or sleeping corner or repository for crop products. This so-called "kamarospita", the most common type of rural house in Crete, were usually



single-floored, 30-50 square metres in size and only inside plastered. Most common form of the roof is the terrace roof, an ancient tradition that traced to Minoan Crete. And contemporary visitors from Venetian time report that "Houses in Crete are high and built of solid stone. All the roofs are completely plane just like beautiful parquet is, and you can go for a walk on the roofs as on the road". The terrace roof, a construction made of wood and various layers of earth, require constant maintenance, after a few years, the Earth must be completely renewed. So it is not surprising that you often find a collapsed roof on the villages with old, abandoned houses (see fig.), they are the most sensitive point of traditional house constructions in Crete.

Remark:

Apolihnos on Crete maps can be found in the spelling of *Apolichnos* and/or *Apolixnos*.