

CASTLE OF AGIOS GEORGIOS

The medieval castle of Agios Georgios is situated near the village of Peratata, on a 320 m. high hill. The castle was built in the 13th century to fortify the island's old capital which was housed here until 1757 AD. The castle owes its name to the large church of Agios Georgios, which is situated in the region and is celebrated glamorously. The castle, along with the island, fell in succession into the hands of the Byzantines, the Franks, the Turks and the Venetians. On 24 December 1500, after a persistent battle with the Venetians, the Spanish and the people of Kefalonia, the castle was liberated from the Turks. The severe damage to the buildings led to a restoration supervised by the mechanic Tsimaras, which lasted for four years. Until the earthquake in 1636, the castle thrived and housed storage rooms, a hospital, barracks, private residencies and a prison in which the more liberal people of Kefalonia were kept, whom the current conquerors considered dangerous. The Castle's entire surface area is 16,000 square metres, and the walls are 600 m. long and 1,015 m. high. The three ramparts face Argostoli, the East and Peratata, respectively. The Castle also includes loopholes, observatories and cannon positions. Inside the Castle, one can admire the tower called "Old Fortress", as well as part of the walls, underground arches, the throne of the Venetian Lord and a catholic church, where the nobles of Kefalonia were buried.

CHURCH OF THEOTOKOS DOMATAS

The church of Theotokos (: Virgin Mary) is situated in the village of Domata, southeast of Argostoli. The coffin in which G. Sklavos transferred the relics of Patriarch Gregorios V to Odessus is kept here. In the church, there is a beautifully carved wooden icon stand.

DROGORATI CAVE

Drogorati cave stands a few kilometres outside the town of Sami. It is 45 metres in width, 21 metres in depth, and 9 metres in length. It consists of two parts. The upper part has collapsed and only huge stalactites of different colours remain. The second part is the cave proper (65 x 45 m), which is accessible to tourists and houses cultural events. It has extraordinary acoustics, thus its name: "Hall of Apotheosis". The officials are seated on the "Royal Balcony", which offers a spectacular view from the top of the cave. The musicians are seated on the opposite side at an especially tailored podium along the cavity of a rock. The cave can accommodate about 500 viewers. The regulated lighting in combination with the multi-coloured stalactites creates a picture of unique beauty.

IAKOVATIOS LIBRARY

Iakovatios Library is situated in Lixouri, housed in the beautiful mansion of Iakovati after whom it was named. The majority of the chambers' walls are beautifully decorated, depicting the family's previous glamour. Among the 20,000 volumes in the Library, there are 7,000 volumes from the valuable archives of the Iakovati family and 5,000 volumes which belonged to the Professor of Theology, Mr. Alivizatos. The most valuable book of the collection is "The Complete Works of Hippocrates", published in 1595. In a special chamber in the Library, one can admire a small collection of icons and other ecclesiastic heirlooms of the 10th and 15th century, the most

significant of which are the icons of "The Miracle at Hones" by Michael Damaskinos and "The Assembly of the Michaelmas" created by the monk Filotheos Skoufos.

KARAVOMILOS

The area of Karavomilos is situated northwest of Sami. After an investigation conducted by Yannis Petrohilos and, in 1963, from the Austrian scientists Zolt and Maurin, it was discovered that the waters, which one loses track of in Katavothres, flow into the village of Karavomilos by underground rivers every 15 days. Thus, a small salt-water lake has been created here. This unique phenomenon attracts many tourists to the area.

KATAVOTHRES

Katavothres, situated 3 km outside Argostoli in the area of Fanari, constitute a peculiar geological phenomenon. At first it was observed that the water from the sea went into the ground through holes and then it disappeared. After a thorough investigation, initially performed by Ioannis Petrohilos and in 1963 by the Austrian scientists Zolt and Maurin, it was discovered that the water, through underground rivers, flooded in the village of Karavomilos, in the east, 15 km away and in the spring Fridi at Agia Efyimia, after approximately 15 days. In this area, in the early 20th century, there was a hydroelectric factory and ice factory, for the exploitation of the underground water.

KORGIALENIO HISTORICAL AND FOLK MUSEUM

Korgialenio Historical and Folk Museum is situated in the center of Argostoli. It was established in 1966, in an area of 300 sq. m. The Museum exhibits the local costumes, furniture and embroidery of Kefalonia. Other exhibits includes heirlooms and other ecclesiastic items, pictures, paintings, maps, manuscripts, coins, jewels, silver and metal craftworks and much more. In a special chamber in the museum's basement, the Historical Archives of Kefalonia display historical manuscripts from the 16th-19th centuries, depicting several historical periods. The building also houses the Library of the same name.

KORGIALENIOS LIBRARY

The Korgialenios library is housed in the museum of the same name, in Argostoli. It was founded in 1924 with money donated from Marinos Korgialenios, after whom the library was named. Although it suffered from the earthquake of 1953, the library was restored. Today, it is open to the public. It holds 46,000 volumes and many significant cultural events take place here every year.

KOUNOPETRA

Kounopetra is situated 9 km south of Lixouri. The location's visitor comes across a very significant geological phenomenon. To be more specific, from the sea emerges a huge rock which, before the earthquake in 1953, used to move constantly and rhythmically. After the earthquake the rock's base was relocated and the rock stabilized to its current place. Tradition claims that English ships tied Kounopetra with thick ropes and chains and attempted unsuccessfully to remove it.

MONASTERY OF PANAGIA ATROU

The monastery of Panagia Atrou is situated a few kilometers from the port of Poros, on a green slope (500 m. in altitude). It is the oldest monastery on the island, as it was built before 1264 AD. The scenery is of unique beauty and the view is captivating.

THE ARCHAEOLOGICAL MUSEUM

In the chambers of the Archaeological Museum of Argostoli, one can admire findings during excavations on the island. Some of the exhibits are the findings from the Mycenaean Tumbs of Mazarakata and Metaxata, sculpts, pots from the prehistoric and the post-mycenean era, tombstones, coins, seals, small objects and copper weapons. The exhibits are dated back to geometric and the ancient era, the classical period, the hellenistic, the roman period and the byzantine era. The most significant of the exhibits are a bronze head of the 3rd century BC and the sign "Tripis Damatri Ke Kora " of the 6th - 7th century BC, dedicated to goddess Demetter and her daughter Persephone. The sign was found in the location of ancient Krani.

THE BEACON OF AGIOI THEODORI

The beacon is situated in Fanari, near Argostoli. It was built in 1820, styled after an English design. During an earthquake in 1953, it was at once destroyed , but it has been restored to its original state.

THE CASTLE OF ASSOS

The castle (Kastro) of Assos, the focal point of Assos's peninsula, was built by the Venetians in the late 16th century in order to protect the city from pirate raids. Today, one can still admire part of the walls and the arched entrance gate. In the Castle, one can see the ruins of the Venetian High Commissioner's house, the barracks and the church of Agios Markos. From here, the view of the sea and the lovely bay of Mirtos is so unique it attracts many tourists.

THE CAVE OF AGIOS GERASIMOS

The Cave of Agios Gerasimos, the island's patron saint, stands 3 km south of Argostoli. In its interior, there is a chapel with a guest use for the pilgrims who visit the Cave on the saint's feast day. According to tradition, the saint was born in Trikala of Korinthia and was a member of the famous Notaras family. He became a monk and spent 12 years in the Holy Land and five years in Zakynthos. In 1560, he took possession of the Cave and stayed there until he founded his monastery at the village Peratata.

THE CAVE OF MELISSANI

The cave of Melissani, outside Sami, is one of the most significant sights on the island. As the excavations of 1963 have shown, it has taken its name from the nymph Melissanthi. These excavations brought to light aspects of the nymph, a statuette, and an earthen tray with a depiction of Pan. In 1951, an ancient lamp, which is now on display in the Archaeological Museum of Argostoli, was also found there. The cave is 40 metres in width, 36 metres in height, and 3.5 metres in length. Inside, it is covered by water 20 to 30 meters in depth due to the collapse of a part of the roof. Small crafts carry visitors there to admire the spectacular sight of

the stalactites and the changing colours of the water. An artificial balcony offers an enchanting view from the top of the cave.

THE MONASTERY OF AGIOS GERASIMOS

Agios Gerasimos is the patron saint of the island. On its feast day, the monastery is swarming with pilgrims. According to tradition, he was born in Trikala of Korinthia and was a member of the famous Notaras family. He became a monk and spent twelve years in the Holy Land and five years in Zakynthos. He came to Kefalonia in 1560 and stayed in the cave of the same name, south of Argostoli. Later, he founded the monastery and took residence there until his death on 15 August, 1579. Two years later, on 20 October, 1581, his relics were placed inside the monastery. He was canonized in 1622. At the courtyard, there is a big plane tree and a well, which is said to have been dug by the saint himself. Inside, there is a trap-door where he is said to have spent the greater part of his life. On the 15th of August and the 20th of October, big festivals and processions take place. Many miracles are connected to the saint's relics and icon.

THE RUINS OF ANCIENT KRANI

The ruins of Ancient Krani are situated on the bank of the Lagoon of Koutavos, opposite Argostoli, in a green area with running waters. Excavations cast light upon ruins of buildings, walls and a doric temple dedicated to the goddess Demetra. These findings date back to the 7th and 6th century BC. Part of the area's findings are exhibited at the Archaeological Museum of Argostoli. Krani was one of the four most prominent towns on the island during the Mycenaean Era, as Thucydides and Herodotus have indicated.

THE RUINS OF ANCIENT SAMI

The town of Sami is built at the foot of the Agioi Fanendoï and Palaiokastro hills. Excavations have brought to light parts of the two citadels and the Cyclopean fortification walls of the ancient city which stood north of the present town. It had fortification walls with 22 entrances, was 3,400 acres in length, and 377.6 acres in area. The excavation site also includes parts of an ancient aqueduct, traces of an ancient theatre, buildings, a part of a Roman edifice known as "Rakospito", and three 3d century BC tombs. There are also numerous findings on display in the Archaeological Museum of Argostoli. Ancient Sami was a prosperous and powerful town. It was founded by Agaios, son of Arkadia's king Lykourgos. It had been settled since the Paleo-lithic times. During classical and Hellenistic times Sami flourished because of the growth of trade and the exploitation of mount Ainos's timber. Thucydides speaks of the four cities of Kefalonia of which Sami was one. The citadels were built during the Hellenistic period. Ruins of ancient Sami are also preserved in the contemporary town of Sami