



The churches and the ravine of Kato Hora

Option One

(recommended for walking as far as Kato Hora)

Your **first walk**, in order to cover the historical landscape of Mylopotamos, entails going down to the district of **Kato Hora**, with its Venetian castle and fantastic view and romantic sunset. We recommend you come to this point on foot to enjoy the architecture of the houses and arches as well as the gardens full of bougainvilleas in the houses along the narrow lanes.

Signs guide you to the asphalt road on the left and, after 400 m, to the right, down to the gully. After 1.4 km, after passing another district of Mylopotamos, **Piso Pigadi**, you reach Kato Hora, the prettiest village district in the whole of Kythera. It still retains the island's traditional colours and **typical architecture**. The houses built within the castle and those around it share the same homogenous features. Due to the lack of space, they have two storeys and do not communicate internally but via an external staircase that terminates in a terrace supported by an arch beneath which was the ground floor entrance, that was also used as an ad hoc storage space for agricultural produce and tools. The ground floor spaces were low, stone-built **arches** with the characteristic **corner fireplace**. Note the innovative **chimneys**, designed to withstand the force

of the powerful winds, as well as the stone **flower-boxes**, standing on stone supports called *fourousia*. These were usually placed under the windows and their origin is Venetian.

In the small square you can also see the old **English School**, built in 1825 with funds donated by Mylopotamiots. Behind it is a little road that leads to the castle. Imposing and dominating, just like his city, the **Lion of Saint Mark** of the Serene Republic of Venice still keeps a lookout over the visitors' entrance. Visitors are impressed with the expansive view from the walls over the gorge towards the permanently stormy west, which is still wild, precipitous and forested.

The castle of **Kato Hora** (Lower Hora) was built by the Venetians to protect the inhabitants from pirate raids and also so that they could oversee the stormy west coastline. It's said that 50 refugee families from Crete and Cyprus who lived in the castle in 1545, supplied the essential army in order to guard it. It grew especially after the destruction of the castle-city of Agios Dimitrios (Paleochora) by Barbarossa in 1537 and after the conquest of Monemvasia by the Turks in 1540, when the inhabitants who were saved fled there for protection. The presently empty, but wonderfully restored, houses of Kato Hora and the narrow lanes