



# METAL PLACES

CULTURE CROSSROADS IN THE EASTERN MEDITERRANEAN

Community of **ASGATA** Cyprus  
South Aegean regional unit - Cyclades islands  
**SIPHNOS-SERIPHOS-KYTHNOS**  
Greece

Valorisation, protection and promotion  
of ancient mining and metallurgy heritage

Tourism development in ancient mining areas

Enhancement of the tourism product

## KYTHNOS

**Mining and metallurgy  
heritage and  
routes of metals**



Ephorate of  
Antiquities  
of Cyclades



University of Cyprus  
Archaeological Research Unit



<https://metalplaces.eu>



The project *Metal Places: Culture Crossroads in the Eastern Mediterranean* as part of the EU Interreg V-A Programme for Greece and Cyprus, in view of a cross-border approach and common implementation of “good practices” framework, promotes the cultural history of mining in areas of both countries where metallurgy and metalworking had been systematically developing since the 3rd millennium BC. In particular, this project aims at showcasing mining sites and metallurgical operations on the islands of the western Cyclades –Siphnos, Serifos, and Kythnos– and in Asgata, Cyprus via activities intended for both tourists and online distant visitors.

The implementation of this project includes the integration of ancient and more recent mining and metal-processing sites into a broad network of hiking tours (excl. organised archaeological sites) as well as the enhancement and upgrading of both signage infrastructure and information to visitors.

These subtle actions contribute to building a model of balanced and sustainable development by advancing alternative forms of tourism in areas of particular cultural and environmental interest.

## Stepping path in eastern Kythnos



# Kythnos

## Mining and metallurgy heritage

Kythnos is geologically part of the Attic-Cycladic crystalline-metamorphic mass along with Kea, Seriphos and Siphnos. Its geological structure consists of various -mainly metamorphic- rocks, bearing iron and copper ores. It is a predominantly metalliferous island whose nature is linked from prehistoric to the more recent times with the exploitation of minerals. This long-standing activity has left its mark on the landscape. The rural areas of the island are dotted with mining galleries and abandoned mining installations such as buildings, workers' houses and loading ladders, among others.

On the northeastern coastline of the island, in a hard-to-reach area with the characteristic toponym Skouries, the visible, massive piles of copper slag testify to the extensive and intensive smelting that was taking place during the 3rd millennium BC. The site was investigated by O. Filaniotou and S. MacGillivray who used radiocarbon-14 dating to determine its use in the Early Cycladic II period (2800-2300 BC). According to the lead isotope analyses carried out by N. H. Gale and Z. A. Stos-Gale, all copper produced in Skouries was extracted from local sources. Further south, near Agios Ioannis o Theologos, as well as to the southeast, on a hill called Stefani tou Geronymou, there have been identified remains of settlements probably associated with the site of Skouries and copper production activity.

Also of note are the results of surface surveys and metallurgical-geochemical analyses conducted throughout the island between 2000 and 2010 by G. Basiakos and O. Filaniotou. On northwestern Kythnos, prehistoric copper smelting sites were identified in Pounta, Sideris, Aspra Houses and Paliopyrgos and a prehistoric copper surface mining site was surveyed in Aspra Kelia. In addition, two small prehistoric facilities associated with copper smelting were identified on the southeastern coast, in the area of Naoussa and in Lefkes. The first is located at a short distance from Zogaki, where iron mines operated until 1940, with modern mining activity eradicating many traces of prehistoric use.

In recent years, field surveys have continued to yield new evidence on prehistoric metallurgy at the sites of Agios Ioannis Theologos and Agios Ioannis Eleimonas on the east coast of the island.

As regards the Classical and Roman periods, there are reports of mining activity in Milies near Dryopida and in the Katafyki cave. However, we should not fail to

mention the large number of iron slag found on the surface of the ancient town of Kythnos (Vryokastro), Kolona beach and around the chapel of Agios Loukas.

Modern mining activity began in 1873 and lasted until 1940. The once impressive installations are still visible in many parts of the island such as in Kakovolo, Zogaki, Lefkes, Dryopida, Milies, Panagia Kanala, and other locations.

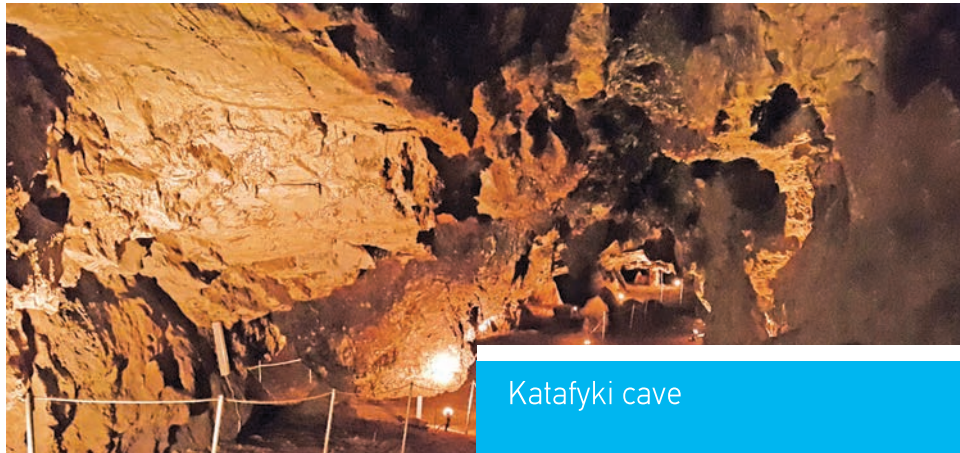
In the new Archaeological Museum of Kythnos in Chora, there is a special section highlighting the island's mining and metalworking heritage. Moreover, as part of the Metal Places project, an information station with further educational and audiovisual material has been installed in the area.

## Metal routes

The first route from Dryopida to Lefkes is found in the southeast of the island starting from Katafyki cave -or Georgiou Martinou cave- in Dryopida, where the iron mining galleries were active until 1939. The cave was used by the islanders as temporary refuge during the Frankish and Ottoman invasions. Although only a small part of the cave is accessible, visitors still find it fascinating.

After that, the route follows the car road to the chapel of Taxiarchis, where remains of an ancient tower have been found, and then continues through a dirt path to the administration buildings of the Serpieri company, which had been exploiting iron mining since the 19th century. The now abandoned premises, named by the locals as "Spitares" (meaning very large houses in Greek), still stand on the bare hills overlooking the bay in Lefkes, where the trail comes to an end. There, a prehistoric copper smelting site and a more recent iron unloading ladder are visible.

The route from Dryopida to Lefkes is not a challenging one taking about 55 minutes at a walking pace to complete.



Katafyki cave



## "Spitares"

The second hiking trail proposed on northwestern Kythnos, where there is no easy-to-cross pass, starts from Profitis Ilias, goes on through Aspra Kelia, Aspra Spitia and Kolona, and ends up at Agios Loukas. In the above locations, as well as along the route, prehistoric copper smelting facilities, ancient towers, settlements and Byzantine chapels have been identified. Visitors who are interested may contact the Archaeological Museum of Kythnos should they wish to visit them. On the other hand, Kolona beach -the island's most popular and exceptional beach where remains of iron slag have been found- can be easily accessed.

The galleries and shafts seen around the proposed routes should be carefully handled by hikers due to their dangerous nature and should not be entered as there is risk of collapse and accidents. It is also recommended that walkers do not remove slag or other articles as their removal and transport are prohibited.

## Kolona beach



# KYTHNOS island

