



1. Kimoni fountain
2. Kara Musa Pasha Mosque - Arkeoloo Str.
3. Igumenou Gavriil (municipal Garden)
4. Fountain - Patriarkou Grigoriou Str.
5. Fountain - Prevelki Str.
6. Fountain - Karasolou Str.
- 7 & 8. Private Fountain - Petalerou Str.
9. Fountain - Nikitarou Fokid Str.
10. Hammam - Nikitarou Fokid Str.
11. Ottoman Water Reservoir - Merkellou Str.

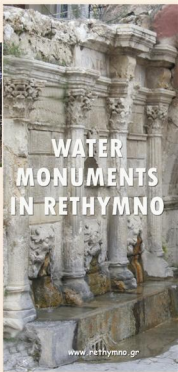
Water. This vital element is thought of by many cultures to be the origin of existence, the nourishing principle upon the birth and survival of mankind depends. The access to water has been one of the essential ingredients to any viable civilization, providing the key to agriculture, trade, transport, expansion and defense, besides of being a strong stimulation to technological progress.



Out of the city center, on the west side of the Veli Pasha Mosque (Merkellou Str.), we find the Ottoman Water Reservoir (11), built at the beginning of the Ottoman rule by the Sultan Ibrahim, the conqueror of Crete, and restored in 1893-93 by the Governor of Rethymno Nusret Bey Sermet Agazade, who assigned the works to the Christian Orthodox engineer, Michalis Savvakis. The water tank was reconstructed and the clay pipes replaced by iron ones. Currently, it is this very same water supplying structure that "gives life to Rethymno" (as its inscription says), for we should still be thankful to the Sultan Ibrahim.



WATER MONUMENTS IN RETHYMNO





Our walk starts at the **Elmendi fountain** (1), on the north side of the **Petychidi Sq.**

This extremely interesting fountain, the only Venetian water monument still existing in the town, was built in 1628 by the Venetian **Barbara Alvisi Elmendi**, as a part of a wider project of modernization of the water supplying system. It originally faced the **Piazza**, the center of all political, economical and social life of Venetian **Rethymno**, a big square that initiated the one of **San Marco** in the powerful metropolis.

The **Ottoman Period** of **Rethymno** starts with the signature of its surrender, on 13th November 1644, and lasts till the declaration of **Autonomy** of **Crete** in 1897. The whole city became "Islamized", the churches became mosques and the water supplying system was modernized and perfected. The **Elmendi Fountain** was covered by a dome that would be destroyed in modern times. On its front side, we can still see the **šimn**, the symbol of the **Ottoman Empire** during the 19th century: a minaret with **Islam's** half moon on its top.

Water plays an essential role in the **Islamic religion** and symbolism, and it is an indispensable element of the religious ritual, being used for the purifying ablutions before the praise. We should think that there was a **Sardinia** (special fountains for ablution) for each one of the eight mosques of the **Ottoman Rethymno**, but only one has survived, the one of **Kano Musa Pasha Mosque** (2), in the corner of **Arcadio** and **Victor Hugo** streets. The **Sardinia** would stand in the internal part of the fountain that we see out in the street, immediately right by the entrance door.



Based on the **Prophet's** words, by which the two greatest mercies are "water to the thirsty and knowledge for the ignorant", the financial donation for fountains, libraries and schools were considered among the highest expressions of charity and religious righteousness. Thus, a wealthy **Cretan-Ottoman** family took charge of the construction or restoration of many of the fountains in the 17th, on their marble inscription, almost identically in all of them, informs: "In old times this neighborhood did not have a fountain, and its people were desperate for water. **Enim Bey**, son of **Kleparade Yinnis Bey**, constructed this fountain for God's sake and the redemption of his soul. May the people who drink this water say the first verse of the **Gu'van** for him, so he'll be fulfilled of gifts in **Paradis**. Here comes the **Chronogram**: "Drink water from this beautiful fountain for the Love of God" 1288" (1643-64 A.D.).

These inscriptions are composed in **šimn**, the **Ottoman Turkish** language currently in disuse that was written down in **Arabic** script. **Chronograms** were a very popular intellectual riddle in the **Muslim** world, in which specific sentences compose a date playing with the numerical value of the letters.



We find the first fountain of our walk in the **Iyannou Gavril St.** (3), in the north-west corner of the **Ottoman Cemetery**, currently the **Municipal Garden**. This was the place where the **lepers** were confined, exiled near the cemetery out of the city walls. It was known as **Meşkinleriny**, the **Fountain of the Lepers**.



We reach the second fountain left walking through **Patriarkou Grigoriou St.**(4), and soon we'll arrive to the third one, lately moved into the **Provatikis Str.** (5) Getting up to the **Kanissou Str.** (6) we find a double faced fountain. It was a regular fountain on the side that faces the street, while the side under the arch would probably function as a **Sardinia**, supplying water to the **Revkita Mosque** in front on the other side of the arch.



Two very interesting private fountains can be found on **Paterlarou Street**. The first one stands on the number **XX**, and stands right by the main door, in a small chamber that used to be the society of a catholic church. The number **3** (7) (nowadays a small hotel) was the house of a wealthy **Ottoman** family. The beautiful fountain that survives in its courtyard would refresh and decorate the family's garden.

Walking through **Nikolaforou Feld St.** we first see on our left the front structure of another unidentified fountain (8), before reaching number **86**, where the best covered hammam (9) of the town can be observed, nowadays transformed into a music-hall restaurant.

Hammams are the public baths of the **Islamic** world, they usually have a triple structure, with three interconnected rooms of progressively higher temperatures.

Besides their hygienic and medical use, they originally meant to be used for ritual purification, but they became important gathering spots through history, where men and women (separately), would meet to exchange news and gossip, arrange marriages or decide important political issues.

