



Informationen zur Umwelt und für Naturreisende auf Kreta:
Information about the Environment and for travellers in Crete:

Monastery Vidianis (with Museum of Natural History)

New grave find (with animals as burial object) in the Lassithi



You reach the Monastery Vidianis in the Lassithi plateau over the northern entrance at Pinakiano by driving here right in a westerly direction to Kato Metohi.

The history of the monastery is short, but more interesting than the buildings on site. It was built in 1854 and was probably built on the foundations of an older church; the ruins of this can still be seen. In 1968 a Church Bell from the year 1620 was found in a cave niche next to the monastery, which probably came from the previous Church and today is to see in the historical Museum of Heraklion. The Islamic religion forbade bells. 1867 despite freedom of religion destroyed by the Turks and then restored, the monastery played an important role as a resistance cell during World War II. The Abbot *Dorotheos Tsagarakis* was executed for collaboration with the Allied forces of the World War II. Since the 1960s the monastery fall into disrepair; in the 1990s its restoration began. Today, the monastery is managed by a monk, who was previously working as an actor and guide (also in Berlin/Germany) for 14 year and his decision to live as a monk comments as follow: "Never other than working, making career, run after money, there over I lost my soul. Now I find it here".



The images show (from left to right): lateral view of the Church, ruins of the old church and the courtyard.

Pictures: U. Kluge (05/2005)



"Connected" to the monastery is also a small natural history museum, which contains mainly recent animal products from the region of Dikti. In plastic-looking graphs (diorama) "Life picture of nature" are presented in an appealing way and informative. Even the Diorama with a glacial pygmy hippo, whose fossil bones have been found in the sediment of river flowing through the Lassithi Hauga (*Xavya*) is not missing; see image right. A visit is therefore highly recommended.

Pictures: U. Kluge / H. Eikamp (05/2005)



With reference to the leaflet No. 004-04/E: "Hiking through the Lassithi-Plateau", Page 2: Description and images of a 2003 discovered bone cave (with human skulls) from the time of the Neolithic in Agios Haralambos it is possible to report on a further archaeological find at Kaminaki. It is a grave found with animal adjuncts. The plot is located 200 metres outside the village of Kaminaki (towards Magoulas, not far from Dikteo Andro), left of the street. Grave adjuncts of animals are known since the early history; they were usually buried in hollows of the corridor area (drómos) to the actual tomb. In the present case farm animals (poultry, rabbits, sheep, goat, cattle, pig and donkeys) were buried. Also the skull of pets (dog and cat) could be determined. Since the excavations are currently incomplete, nothing scientific can be said about the temporal arrangement at the present time; the same applies to the archaeological importance of detection in particular in terms of the "settlement of the Lassithi plateau" and its cultural-historical development.



Figure left shows the excavation site of the Tomb (below the corrugated sheet); the drómos with its stone plate cover is to see in the foreground of the image. Centre image: view into the drómos below the stone plate cover. The image on the right shows the faunal "bones pile" from the excavation of grave goods (at the left image in the background below the tree). **Pictures: H. Eikamp**



The entire excavation area gives the impression of an "emergency excavation" (but no reason is visible), and the bones thrown together "carelessly" to a bunch point (unfortunately) to a very "unprofessional" work of the archaeologist. Missing "search channels", although the continued environment show many shards in and on the ground (see figure), also point to a quick excavation. Incomprehensible in the light of the value of such sites (even on Crete) and it seems questionable whether scientific statements are possible under these excavation methods!

Translated by Michael Bloechinger-Daeumling

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A tip for good, traditional food in the Lassithi plateau. **Our recommendation:** grilled Lamb with Lassithi potatoes



MILOS café restaurant in the Lassithi plateau (left: Street view; right: the family Anna Ergasaki) stands for the good quality of products (from own production) with loving service.