

**Informationen zur Umwelt und für Naturreisende auf Kreta:**

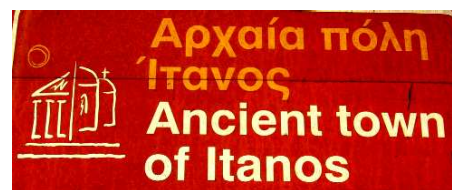
Information about the Environment and for travellers in Crete:

**Two ancient (Minoan) archaeological sites in the East of Crete****Part I: the ancient *Itanos* / Vai – “lost” in the mist of history**

**Directions:** To get to the archaeological site of *Itanos* (I) and "Roussolakos" / Palekastro (II), take the coast road from Sitia further east towards Paleokastro – Zakros. After approximately two-third of the distance (approx. 7.5 miles) is left the North leading branch towards Vai, the "famous Palm Beach" of the island (passing Monastery Tóplou, see leaflet No. 063-05/E). After approx. 3.7 miles follows right the junction towards Vai, which we don't follow, but drive straight forward for another 0.6 miles to get to the sea and the ancient town *Itanos*. The directions to "Roussolakos" / Palekastro will be given in part II in leaflet No. 103-05/E: "The ancient "Roussolakos" / Palekastro - again threatened by the demise!"

A visit to the archaeological sites is recommended for travellers in Crete's East; at much interest in archaeology it applies also for tourists in the area of Central Crete. A visit for the tourists from West of the island is only conditionally recommended (because of the relatively large distance). Both sites offer, compared to other Minoan settlement sites of the island, too little "archaeologically visible", what a journey (e.g. from the West with over 125 miles = approx. 3 hrs simple travel time) would justify.

The origins of the ancient town *Itanos*<sup>[1]</sup> at the North-eastern tip of Crete (Cape of Sídhros), I) can be retraced to prehistoric times. But the heyday of *Itanos* was the classical and Hellenistic period of antiquity. In the 3<sup>rd</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> Century BC *Itanos* was allied with Egypt, and a contract with Egypt from 70 BC has been found as well. In between, from 140 BC, *Itanos* was allied with Hierapytna (=Ierapetra, city on the South coast of the island) and together with this city probably ruler over all East Crete. *Itanos* was destroyed in 795 by the "big disaster" (an earthquake) but then rebuilt. The city decayed in the 15<sup>th</sup> Century after the inhabitants were driven out by pirate

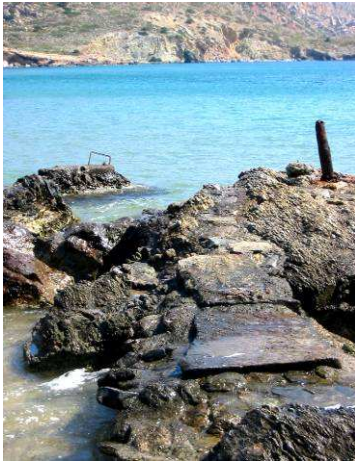


The ancient *Itanos* is still little explored and most of the installations are not excavated. However, the few ruins let guess which importance once the town had during the Minoan period. Among others the remains of a Byzantine Basilica were exposed in the context of rare archaeological excavation. Close to the historic site is, besides to smaller beach's, the Erimoupolis Beach, which is on the weekends frequented especially by locals. In contrast to the just a few miles South situated **Palm Beach of Vai**, it is touristically not developed.

<sup>[1]</sup> *Itanos* = *Erimoúpolis* ("desert town"), it was already mentioned by HERODOT (484 – 420 BC) in the 5<sup>th</sup> Century BC.



The illustrations show the excavation area, building remnants at a surf rock and a "water pipe" with water reservoirs

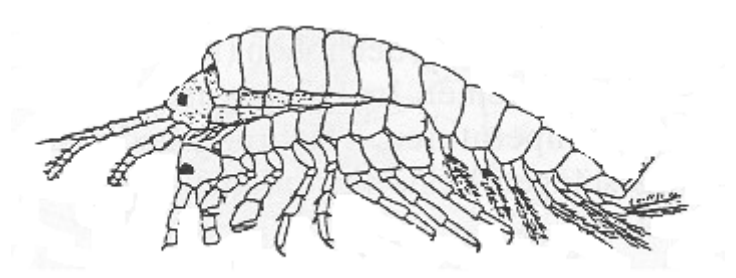


The illustrations show archaeological relics on İtanos Beach and a look at Erimoupolis Beach, where, as at its "big brother" in Vai, Palm trees grow. The existence of date palms in this area is attributed to the Phoenicians which once arrived here. According to transmission history, they threw away the cores of eat dates and created so the basis for the palm groves around Vai.

**“Fled Crayfish”** (Amphipode), Family **Hyperiidae** (parasitical fled crayfish)

The figures below shows float together “Fled crayfishes” (family Hyperiidae) on the beach of İtanos (North-east Crete). Belonging to the class of crustaceans (Crustacea) the amphipods are divided into 4 submissions. Approximately 7,900 species are described of the worldwide suspected 30,000 40,000 species. The up to 5 mm large crabs inhabit the most diverse types of waters: but in the sea lives well most of the world species. The here pictured amphipods live parasitical, they were detected even inside of jellyfish. The reason for this large combination of amphipods at İtanos Beach is unexplained. Fossil proven could only 4 species so far in single-individuals. The oldest document dates from the late Eocene age (50 – 34 Million year before today).

At this point the publisher thanks Mrs. *Dr. Ingrid Kröncke* (research institute Senckenberg, Dept. for Oceanography), Wilhelmshaven.



The drawing shows an exuvia (old skin) of a “Fled crayfish” for detail view of its shape (habits)

**Pictures:** (6) *U. Kluge* / (3) *H. Eikamp* (02.05.2005)

Further information about Amphipoda can be found at Wikipedia: <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Amphipoda>

