

**Information about the Environment and for travellers in Crete:**

## "Automatic" doors already 2000 years ago. **DOORS** on Crete "Donkey parking area"

Already 2000 year ago the alexandrine HERON evolved "automatic" doors. HERON lived around 60 A.D. in Alexandria, one of the biggest metropolises of the antique. As mathematician and a physicist he was primarily concerned with geometry and mechanics, technology and pneumatics. While his mathematical rudiments like the *Heron` formula* for the computation of triangle surfaces still apply today, his ideas for mechanical apparatuses are partially buried in oblivion.

Heron`s "automatic" doors opened, if believers inflame the sacrificial fire at the temple entrance. This must have astounded the humans of the antique: The Gods accepted the victim and opened their gates. Nobody probably suspected that behind and/or under the doors was a solid mass of technology: The sacrificial fire heated a filled with air cavity below it. The air thereupon expands and pressed water upward over a pipe into a tub. This was connected by a system of ropes and guide rollers with the axles of the doors. The more water flowed into the tub, the heavier it become and thereby pull the doors up. If the fire went out, the air became colder and shrunk up. Thus the water was sucked back and the tank became easier. A counterweight then tightened the doors again.

From the Minoan time the palaces excavated on Crete prove that also in former times doors already had not only architectural meaning; the doors possessed bronze hinge and metal locks. Always facing the morning sun, bathrooms and bedders were connected by "sliding doors" - or separated!

There are innumerable publications to the topic "doors and humans" just as the multiplicity of doors and humans themselves. The behaviour of humans can doors open or close, depending on the way of viewing at things humans are inside or outside the door.

Hereafter some impressions (in pictures) about doors (and people) on Crete; (therefore see also at [www.skyline.de/foto\\_tueren.html](http://www.skyline.de/foto_tueren.html)):



The illustrations show (from left to right): Impressions of doors, in Gonia 1983 and - 20 years later, in the year 2003; besides 2 further doors, seen in Dilakos and Ag. Ioannis (2005). They are witnesses of their time and document the eventful history of the island



### "Donkey parking area"

Patently the stacked grey animals are located in the sun, while the drovers wait for customers in the shade of the trees. This picture of a "donkey parking lot" on Crete (from GEO magazine 1/1978, S. 26) is not to be found anymore (nearly 30 years later). This traditional means of transport for island investigation for foreigner was in the meantime replaced by taxis (and Pick-Ups). But there are still island paths, which only a donkey can master, in particular in the interior and the mountain villages. Crete, the "cradle of the occident" has changed. Even if its history in the lonely mountain villages "went to bed", the testimonials of the former culture on Crete are still omnipresent; in the farming way of life the donkey on Crete has not yet retired

**Pictures: (3) H. Eikamp (2003/2005)**