

Information about the Environment and for travellers in Crete:

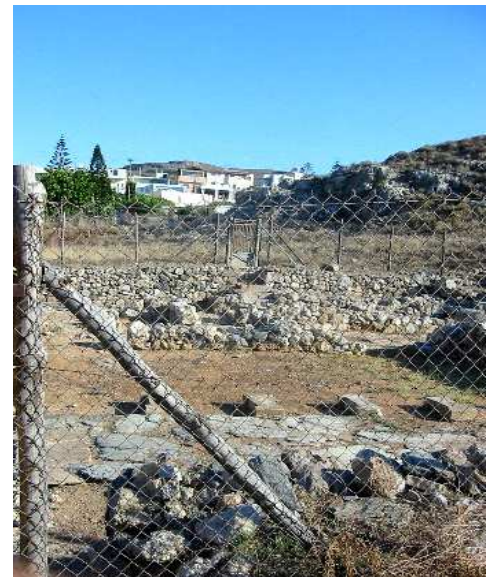
Villa of the Lillies & Sanctuary of Zeus Thenatas in Amnissos Antiquities 2 Excavation sites, which can be forgotten – even without seen

Preface: In references to our forums contribution within the forum “History of Crete / Archaeology” with the title: do not follow uninformed signposts “Archaeological site”, in the following 2 examples which are predestinated for this reference.

Within the village Amnissos Antiquities (between Gournes and Karteros) on the north coast of Crete, about 8 miles east of Iraklion, are one behind the other 2 signs to archaeological sites at the entrance to the village (on the Old Road when coming from Gournes): Villa of the Lillies and Sanctuary of Zeus Thenatas (see fig. below)



The first (and only) sign with the reference to the “Villa of the Lillies” is located right behind the village entrance sign (see fig. right) and leads to the right into a side-road towards the beach. We followed the about 300 m long road a couple of times back and forth before we discovered the remains of the Villa between houses, gardens and parking spaces. Enclosed and from no side accessible (unless you receive permission from an owner of a house to go through his garden or his yard up to the fence) are here the remnants (foundation walls) of the mansion - and testify “nothing”, except, that times ago a building stood here...! (see fig. below)



No difference to the reference to the 2nd archaeological site, which is located about 400 m onward, also at the end of a right bending off side-road. We searched a long time for “Zeus Thenatas”. Likewise after about 300 m towards the beach, following a path through a private ground, we arrived at an “unofficial” camping site where at its right border also the enclosed and un-signed excavation is. (see fig.)



One is common to both excavation places: they lie nearly untraceable “hidden” (which finally is probably good), and appear gone to rack / scruffy. Garbage is disposed over the fence into the excavation area at both sites (we had violent effort to find a perspective “without garbage” to find at least some extent optically presentable places to photograph); also the vegetation takes already possession of the area. It is a mystery to us, how they act here with cultural property, but then still refer with signs to it, words fail me. Perhaps we misunderstood it and the statement of a local applies here: “Every tourist location at Crete must have its own excavation site for its tourist” – perhaps it is regardless how it looks or if the visitor get information (at least with small information-boards) about what he/she sees / or should see. Well, we had seen enough for this day!

Note: Further examples of such “excavation places” (and outrage at the cultural property) can be find also in our leaflets No. 126-05/E and 206-07/E via our homepage, navigation column History of Crete / Archaeology.

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impr. eik.amp 05/2012

