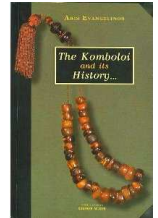



Information about the Environment and for travellers in Crete:

The Komboloi – toy of Greek men

Recommended reading: The Komboloi and Its History [Paperback],
 Aris Evangelinos, Verlag: Komboloi Museum (1998). ISBN-10: 9608627117.



In Greek small chains from beads, which are lined up on leather or synthetic threads are called **Komboloi** or **Koboloi** (Greek *Κομπολόι*, pl. *Κο(μ)βολογία* Κομπολόγια, to *kombos* κόμπος „knots“). Depending upon execution the beads consist of wood, plastic, metal, glass or amber, in addition, of minerals such as turquoise.



The Komboloi is a personal subject of the Greek gentleman equipment. It serves as finger game, pastime, occasional also as mediations relief. Every now and then specimens are regarded also as lucky charm. The luck symbolism is derived from the knot by which the small chain is held together. This is an old luck symbol.

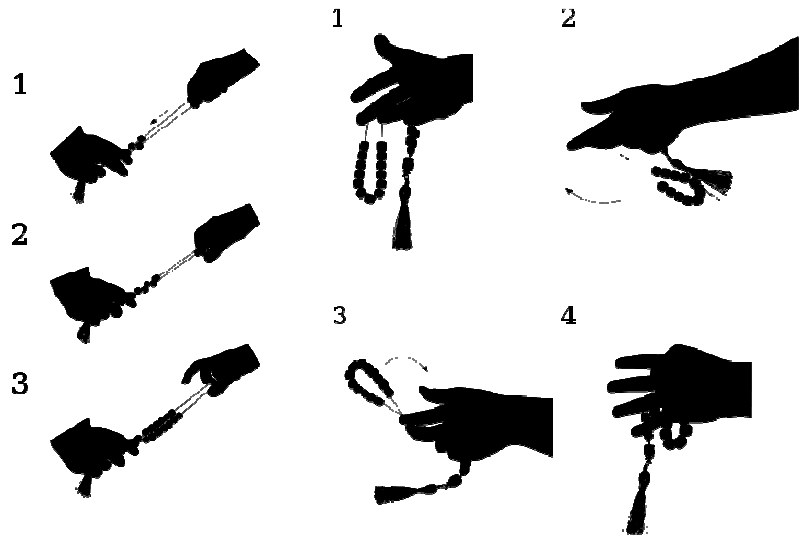
The Komboloi originally originates from India or China (Mala); from there it arrived into the Arab world, where it became in the Islam the prayer chain (Tasbih). The holy Dominicus introduced it into the Christian world, from which later the rosary developed (therefore see also at: [<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rosary>])

In Greece the Komboloi does not have any religious interpretation. Although the *Kombológia* is apostrophized sometimes as „orthodox rosary“, this designation fits better on the so-called prayer cords of the orthodox, Greek named *Komboskini*. However these contain no beads, but are simple cords with an appropriate number of knots. Contrary to the Islamic prayer chains the Komboloi has another tradition, which is probably due from the time of the Turk occupation. Playing with a Komboloi probably was demonstratively as pastime, or pure provocation opposite the Turks, and thus applied as courage proof.



There are many ways, on how you can play with the Komboloi. In Nafplio, a port at the Argoli gulf on the Peloponnes, Aris Evangelinos operates a small Komboloi museum [<http://www.komboloi.gr/>], where prayer chains and their profane forms from the traditions of the Hindus, Buddhists, Muslims, Catholics and naturally also the Greeks and other orthodox ones have been collected and issued.

There are multiplicities of video contributions in the Internet for the handling of a Komboloi also, among other at: [<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eH8yiMphCvA>].



To play with a Komboloi relaxed and drives out the time, not only with *arakliki*, the pleasant inaction. The defaults for the chaplet are minimal thereby. Thus also the number of the beads themselves is not fixed, must it must be oddly only.

Each Greece traveler will probably have seen men, playing around with his Komboloi, as it would give a price to win. And who dared then to inquire, what does this portent, has probably often found a new acquaintance.

Because the Greeks do not play simply in such a way with the Komboloi, no, they use it, in order to divert themselves in pure pastime from problems and everyday life concerns, whatever kind always. And if a Greek has a problem, he then wants to talk about it. If necessary also with a just won acquaintance, best in the next Kafenio.

The picture is showing a Komboloi (handmade off branch fractions) which we found in the area of Anogia at Crete and cherish since as lucky charm.

