



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

Monastery Kaliviani (almost like a village) **Dung beetle (*Sisyphus schaefferi*)**



The Monastery complex **Kaliviani** is located at the Messara Plateau (South Crete), close to the main road from **Mires** to **Timbaki** (about 2 miles away from **Mires**). The complex is very roomily and acts like a village. The monastery is dedicated to many social tasks and accommodates besides an hospital and an retirement home also an orphanage and a seminary for girls. In Monastery own workshops for weave and other handi-crafts where also is taught (Needlework School), for the country characteristic goods are made which you also can buy or visit a small exhibition. Worth for more than just a intermediate stop, the remarkably well maintained facility represent itself special in the spring by a large variety of plants. **Pictures:** U. Kluge (2004)

When passing the entrance portal large Palm trees, oleander bushes in white and pink or hibiscus trees left and right of the road form magnificent scenery against the many buildings. Besides the frescoes of the Chapel especially the facade of the main church with its ornaments and icons is worth to see. The history of today's nunnery goes back to the 15th Century. Monasteries have always played an important role in the history of Crete. They were not only centre of religious and social life, but also places where the doctrine, the art, science and not least the ideal of freedom have been cultivated. Monastery Kaliviani exemplary follows this tradition.



The fig. show besides the entrance portal (top), the right side wing of the main church (left) and the clock tower (right)



Dung beetle (*Sisyphus schaefferi*)

Very early the Dung beetle of genus scarabaeus has aroused the curiosity of the people by forming manure pills and their transport. The beetle forms balls from dung which he often rolls inches to bury it in favourable soil (manure balls can not dry underground). There are this herbivorous pills used to own diet, and breeding pills to the egg laying. The scarab lays its egg in the sphere which then is home and food for its children. Males and females share the work at the installation of underground tunnel systems and fill in the larval food here. Dung beetles (also called ball-roller) play an important role in nature with this by eliminating many animal excrements.

Scarabaeus sacer as well as *Sisyphus schaefferi* attract special attention in the Mediterranean. The tireless ball rolling of the small beetle (dark coloured and 2-3 cm in size) must have remind his namesake the Greek SISYPHUS who is condemned in the TATAROS to roll a stone up a mountain. Just below the peak the stone slips away, rolls back to the valley and SISYPHUS has to start over.

The Scarab, of which Plutarch thought, there were only males, was appointed as a symbol of self-perpetuating creativity that gives birth from darkness to light. Like the beetle form his balls and roll them to his, the scarab accepts the Sun in the West and rolls it across through the underworld to the East, where the Sun rises again in the morning.

Replicas of the scarab (in stone or faience), with inscriptions and symbols were and will worn as charm and jewel and shall support spirit and creativity (in addition to the function as mojo); they are symbol of being.



At least together they take care of the offspring and live at this time in “Monogamy”

