

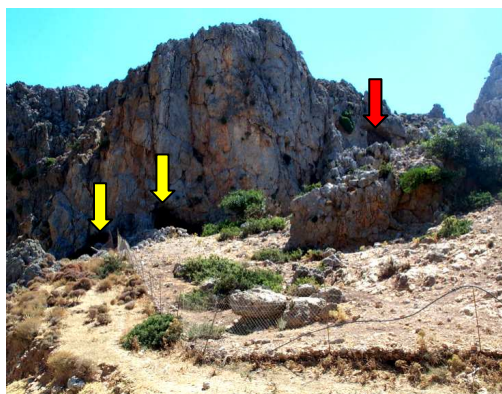


**Information about the Environment and for travellers in Crete:**

**"Cult"-Cave at Xerókambos / Southeast Crete**  
**Pseudo scorpions in Crete's caves**



With reference to the info leaflet No. 008-04/E of the **CRETE EnvironmentInfo** and the directions of a jeep route from Zakros to Xerokambos, contained in it, one takes for reaching the "cult" cave the "reverse way"-, i.e. one drives the runway from Xerokambos towards Zakros. From the local exit sign Xerokambos it's about 2 miles until bordered goats area (at the mountain-slope) is to be seen within a right curve on the left side.



Within this enclosed goat's area lie, at the transition of the slope to the steep mountain range, 2 karst caves and a 3<sup>rd</sup> (seen from the runway), left outside of the fence. The on somewhat higher (about. 10 m) lying level (within the fence) 2<sup>nd</sup> cave is used as goat shelter (with stone verge). The "cult"-cave is in about the fourfold distance (of the distance between the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> cave) further on the right of it (located about 30 m higher than the two first karst caves), approx. 10 m underneath the dome-shaped mountain top (see fig.). The ascent to the cave is problem-free; an "old path" shows the correct way.

**Yellow arrows = karst cave 1 and 2 (goats shelter); red arrow = "Cult"-cave**

If the cave is a real "Cult"-cave, is at present scientifically not yet occupied, however some factors speak for this supposition. The situation of the cave comes very close to the on Crete known "Mountain temples", connected with the fact that the former cave entrance is "locked" by a very old stonewall (with "front door" and old wooden summer). A marked-out "forecourt" could be a further indication. The inside of the about 9 x 6 m large main cave shows (beside the "culture soil") signs of "human use" in the form of "treatment of rocks" and signs of wear marks, like e.g. sheer run places. In addition there are old soot traces in the cave niches of the side panels. Although aforementioned (and further) indications refer to a use as "cult"-cave, no secured statement about the purpose and the meaning of the cave can be made at present without an exact (still pending) scientific investigation; nevertheless a visit of this worth seeing cave is worthwhile.



The pictures show: left - the cave entrance and right from inside. The centre picture shows a basin (Ø ca. 40 cm) within the cave, which was worked out of the rock

## Pseudo scorpions in Crete's caves

Pseudo scorpions of Crete caves were studied and described in recent time by *Hans Henderickx*. Pseudo scorpions belong into the order of the chelicerates (Subphylum Chelicerata) and at the same time into the class of the Arachnids (class Arachnida). There are about 3.000 kinds well-known world-wide; about 100 kinds live also in Europe. They occur in nearly all habitats and their body length reaches from two to seven millimeters. Like nearly all Arachnids, also the pseudo scorpions live of other, smaller arthropods. Their figure reminds of the real scorpions especially the pedipalps equipped with shears, which are provided with remarkable sensory hairs. For most kinds the venom glands end in the shears.

Differently than the scorpions they however have no divided abdomen. This sits directly at the front body, without an abdomen shaft, like it occurs e.g. with the spiders. The chelicera of the pseudo scorpions is binominal and forms small shears, a characteristic, which they divide with the solifuges. Spinnerets frequently end in this. Although pseudo scorpions are outwardly quite similar to the genuine scorpions, they are not near related to these. Their next relatives are obviously the solifuges. For reproduction the oviposition (after the mating) takes place particularly in a "spun" breed sack at the genital opening; the female carries the eggs themselves and nourishes it over a secretion of the ovaries. After slipping the nymphs are freely living, the animals are adult after three skinnings. For the skinning the pseudo scorpions spin their own skinning chambers. The following illustrations (by H. HENDERICKX) show three kinds of pseudo scorpions from of Crete caves



The pictures show (from left to right.): *Lasiochernes cretonatus* Henderickx, 1998 – it was noticed in March 1997 in the Souré-Cave on Crete. *Neobisium schawalleri* Henderickx, 2000 – this "Moss scorpion" was discovered (also in March 1997) within the Doxa-Cave on Crete and *Larca bosselaersi* Henderickx, 2002 – this Pseudo scorpion originates from the Milatos-Cave (therefore see also our leaflet No. 025-04/E), where it was found in May 2001.

**Pictures:** (5280, 5285, 5296/26.07.2005) H. Eikamp / (5109, 5124/26.07.2005) K. Eckl



The southeast of Crete (see Map / header) is a by the wind controlled, very meager mountain landscape. Those meagerly vegetated slopes are often "decorated" with wind shaped erratic blocks (see fig.) and the build cisterns (e.g. like the one on the road Ziros - Zakros) are frequently provided with "protection couple" (see fig.). In this very thinly settled, lonely acting width of the Ambelos Mountains the climate (strong wind also in the summer of often extreme heat) determines the everyday life of humans!