

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

## **Minoan necropolis at Maroulas / Sacrilege on cultural assets** **"Belle of the night" [Dragon fruit] (*Hylocereus undatus*)**

With reference to the info leaflets No.049-04/E and 125-05/E of the **CRETEEnvironmentInfo** is here information about another Minoan necropolis (near Maroulas); for description to the way to Maroulas see the leaflet No. 121-05/E.

The necropolis at Maroulas is not easy to find, because it is about 500 m outside of the village in the country and the way to there is not provided with the otherwise usual sign-postings. Best is to drive through the village Maroulas ("main street") and take the turn at the local exit (southwest) toward "development area". After about 300 m bifurcates the road; here take the right branch, which continues to lead to the development area. After about another 200 m a "stop" is announced (briefly before a cul-de-sac in the development area); left-sided the road is here a small valley, which is limited left-sided by a mountain-slope (opposite of the stopping point). The Minoan necropolis is located at the foot of the mountain-slope, whose entrance (like for nearly all necropolis on Crete) is eastward aligned. Up to the destination (from the stopping point, inclusive Valley crossing) then it's only about a 150 m walk.

The necropolis at Maroulas is small compared with the necropolis of "Lappa" or of Armeni, however it not is inferior to them in meaning. It was excavated in the year 2000. Nothing is to be experienced about the "success" of the excavation at present; same applies to the saved grave finds, whose scientific treatment is still pending. As like with many other necropolises of Crete, one found in Maroulas the "cemetery" to an antique settlement; however not yet the early Minoan settlement! According to the experiences of the archaeology this should be located in a closer periphery (of about 1.5 miles). Perhaps the building activities in the development area bring these to light, if they are not located "under" Maroulas!

Unfortunately the necropolis offers today (5 years after its discovery) a very sad picture. Not a bit of monument protection. It can be called "scandalously", the way of handling cultural heritage here without any responsibility. The entrances to the grave chambers are (besides arising vegetation) in many places full of rubbish or are used as stock pile for olive nets. The inside of the grave chambers serves probably as toilet and grave closing panels are used as "building material" for the border of a close goats field. Here the words fail to this sacrilege on cultural property.



Pictures show (from left to right): slope range of the necropolis; a large grave chamber and entrance to a grave chamber full of rubbish.



Photos show (from left to right): grave chambers filled with dross; a smaller, rectangular grave chamber and a view from a grave chamber (via the entrance) towards outside

### "Belle of the night" (*Hylocereus undatus*)

The plant belonging to the family of the *Cactaceae* is (apart from the collective name "belle of the night" for the species *Hylocereus* and *Selenicereus*) also known under the name dragonfruit. This flowering at night "pillar cactus" originally originates from the Caribbean (Haiti, Jamaica, Martinique); in former times it was probably cultivated on Crete because of its edible fruits (Pitahaya) - and is now partial escaped and still found in free nature (although very rare).



The climbing (where it has the possibility) Cactus has 3-winged, wavy rungs with corneous side edges; 2 to 5 short, sharp thorns are to each areola. The probably-smelling, jasmine-similarly smelling, bells-shaped blooms can become length of 35 cm. Those not prickly fruit is red and becomes large over 10 cm. Their inside consists of white, juicy, sweet measure, which contains innumerable small, black, partly hollow seeds. The highly esteemed fruit is eaten cooled with a spoon or the juice is enjoyed as beverage. Syrup, which is won from the complete fruit, serves for the colouring of pastry and sweets



The picture above left shows an approx 2 meter high, be in bloom cactus near to Kavousi/Northeast Crete; the picture above shows a cactus fruit (Pitahaya). This cactus blossomed in the night of the 27<sup>th</sup> to the 28<sup>th</sup> of July 2005; therefore see the alongside pictures: left the open blossom and right the closed blossom (midmorning of the 28<sup>th</sup> of July 2005)

At this point, the publisher says thanks to Mr. *Herbert Billensteiner* (Palm garden of the City of Frankfurt) for his identification help

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