



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

## The **Chaenospilios Cave** at Kamaraki (II) News of a new inspection

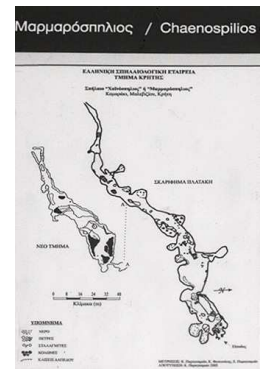
An article from our member *Maria Eleftheria*, Agios Nektarios / South Crete.



With NLUK info leaflet No. 066-05/E (see at: [[http://www.kreta-umweltforum.de/Merkblaetter\\_en/066-05E.pdf](http://www.kreta-umweltforum.de/Merkblaetter_en/066-05E.pdf)]), H. Eikamp reported about a first exploration of this cave. Now, almost 4 years later, I would like to add actual information's and pictures to this.

You can reach the cave of **Chaenospilios**; also called Marmarospilios due to their large number of different stalagmite formations, via the route from **Iraklion** to **Anogia**. Between **Astiraki** and **Gonies** follow right the signposted junction to **Kamaraki**. Cross the tiny mountain village on the main road to the village exit where the now well navigable gravel road leads to a spacious parking lot in front of the cave. The expansion of the access path suggests that a similar "show cave" was planned here, as it is already implemented in the Sfendoni cave at **Zoniana** (therefore see our leaflet No. 010-04/E at: [[http://www.kreta-umweltforum.de/Merkblaetter\\_en/010-04E.pdf](http://www.kreta-umweltforum.de/Merkblaetter_en/010-04E.pdf)]). This serious intervention in the underground world was spared until now to the cave Chainospilios.

An information panel at the entrance shows a sketch of the cave-course (fig. right). The **Chaenospilios** is situated 550 metres above sea level. She was formed by an underground river and is one of the most important caves on Crete regarding facilities with stalactites and stalagmites in many forms and with heights of over 6 m. A description and mapping of the main hall with a length of more than 200 meter was created by *E. Platakis* during the years 1970-71. Another access to a cave of 120 m length in the rear third of the main hall towards South was discovered in a later stage. In this cave so far, contrary to the main hall, no archaeological findings have been made but it also has a nice "Stalagmite decor".



Before we turn to the **Chaenospilios**, I would like to betray you what burrows behind the small hole which lies about 10 m left from the main entrance (see fig. left). After 2 m, crawled on all fours, pens here a 20 metres deep "besides cave" with a small, approx. 3 m high Hall, which also has limestone formations (see fig. on 2<sup>nd</sup> page). In the rear blackening can be found on the walls suggesting a previous fire-place. Several potsherds are nearby.



Most likely this course offered refuge to persecutees over the centuries, as well as next door cave **Chaenospilios**. Left on the slope is another, larger opening (see above right). The cave is only about 6 m deep and less worth compared to the other two.



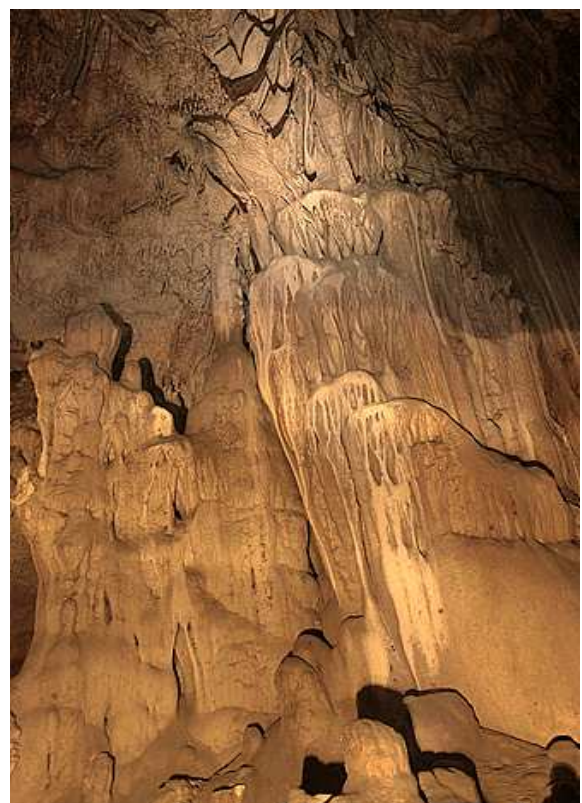
At the narrow entrance to the Chaenospilios (see left), the iron lattice gate has been taken off his hinges and put aside. Before you go now to discover, here some necessary information's, so it will be a pleasant experience: The River is dried up, but it is still very moist and therefore slippery in the cave. Take absolutely sturdy shoes. With sandals otherwise you sink in the mud at the back. During winter an inspection is generally unadvisable because there are source intakes and side corridors quickly can fill up with water. The cave is very deep, winding and dark. You need a good sense of direction and several light sources. Go only in company. Look only with eyes (not with your with hands) and be mindful. Keep in mind that the formation of only a few centimetres of a dripstone needs many decades and leave no rubbish, so for those who come after you the fascination and beauty of the place is preserved.

From the entrance the way leads on your right about 1.80 m steeply down to a small plateau, where you turn right into a side aisle, and left (see fig. left, page 3, first row) to the big main hall with its many impressive limestone formations (see fig. right, page 3 first row). At the back there are pure rock formations. The soil here is very humid and clay like, it holds

the shoes with squishing sound, and is extremely slippery.



Take your time to reflexion, listen to the sounds of the water drops; discover roots which fumble through the ceiling and connect the stalactites; Stalagmites growing to the ceiling and now form an underground "Palace".





And perhaps you can see it: the "starry sky" (from water drops) deep inside the Earth.



Translated by Michael Bloechinger-Daeumling

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