

Information about the Environment and for travellers in Crete:

The ancient town Lyctos (Lytos) by Kastelli / North Crete, was one of the most influential antique city states of Crete

Lyctos or Lyttos (old-Greek Λύκτος, Modern Greek Λύττος) is the name of an antique city on Crete. Today also a close convenient village carries the names. It belongs to the municipality Kastelli. The excavations accomplished so far (at present the excavations cease again) provided only few remains up to now.

One reaches the ancient Lyctos via the village Lyttos towards Kastamonitsa. Approximately 2 miles behind Lyttos a runway branch off on the right (see fig.), which leads after another 600 m to the excavation place (coordinates: N 35° 190,458, E 25° 358,819). Roughly on half distance one passes (right) the church of **Agio Georgios** (see fig. below left) and on the mountains crest by the excavation place the Byzantine church **Timios Stavros** (see fig. below right); unfortunately both are locked



Lyttos earlier sphere of influence extended from the north to the south coast and referred even the Lassithi Plateau also. Its port was Chersonisos. In Hellenistic time Lyttos was a particularly martial city state and was in constant feud with Knossos and Gorty. In the year 220 BC it went into a campaign against Ierapytna, another powerful city state, on the place of the today's Ierapetra, and left the own city defenseless. Knossos took advantage of this opportunity and destroyed Lyttos down to the ground. However it was developed again later and offered embittered resistance to the Romans.

For further information on this see: „Kreta in römischer Zeit“(German only): [www.plekos.uni-muenchen.de/2011/r-bechert.pdf], „Neue Inschriften aus dem kaiserzeitlichen Lyttos“ (German only): [http://archiv.ub.uni-heidelberg.de/propylaeumdok/volltexte/2008/124/pdf/Chaniotis_neue_Inschriften_1992.pdf] and at our web pages: „Roman Wall“ by Lyttos: [http://www.kreta-umweltforum.de/Merkblaetter_en/227-07E.pdf].
With the conquest of Crete by the Romans Lyttos was again destroyed by troops under the consul Quintus Caecilius Metellus Creticus (therefore see at: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Quintus_Caecilius_Metellus_Creticus)

The Egyptian Pharaoh Amenophis III. mentioned the place in his index of city names as Likata, commercial place of the Keftiu (Cretans). In sources of the linear script B the place emerges as Lu-ki-to. In Homers Ilias the city is mentioned for the first time as Lyctos. In antique time Lyctos was considered as Dorian establishment and/or colony Sparta's, which however contradicts the Egyptian index of city names, because the Dorian's only immigrated to Crete approximately 1200 BC, based on newer research possibly only starting from approximately 1000 BC. The location on a mountain crest however is typical for town foundations of the Dorian's. In the first pre-Christian millennium Lyctos ascended to one of the most influential city states on Crete until classical time.

In the Greek mythology Lyctos took a central role in the myth of the Olympic Zeus. Based on Hesiod's Theogony was Lyctos the place, at which Rhea on her escape of her husband Cronus bore her third son Zeus and burrowed him within a cave of the Dikti Mountains; therefore see in addition at: [http://www.kreta-umweltforum.de/Merkblaetter_en/035-04E.pdf] based on Polybius and Pausanias Lykaion in Arcadia was the place of birth, and Zeus was brought to Crete by Rheas mother Gaia and then hidden in the Ida mountains at Lyctos and drawn up by Amalthea.

The excavation place does give nothing much at present, see following pictures.

