

**Informationen zur Umwelt und für Naturreisende auf Kreta:**  
Information about the Environment and for travellers in Crete:**Shinaria Beach - a popular snorkelling and diving area**An article from our members *Maria Eleftheria & Diana P. Bailey*

On the South coast of Crete, about 6 miles east of *Plakias*, is an idyllic, small Bay with a sandy beach. *Shinaria Beach* is very well signed from the village *Lefkogia*. A holey asphalt road leads over the hills, which is attended by an open water channel on the left. When the road turns down to the coast, a ruin of a hotel is conspicuous situated on the right site (see fig. **right**, photo taken through a hole in a rock). To the sea, almost opposite, is in the midst of a pasture an impressive rock formation (see fig. **left**) with a hole of about 10ft diameter.



If the land around the rock is not grazed by animals, the striking eye-catcher is freely accessible. The chained dogs are only guarding the ramp to an agricultural estate a few hundred meters further, whose entrance gate is decorated with beaded goat skulls.

The approx 1000ft long bay with the massive Tavern "Libyan Sea", behind which the about 400 metre-high Mount *Timeos Stavros* rises (see fig. left) won a charm for me only at second glance.

Directly on the beach, the inappropriate concrete building in the back, the real beauty of *Shinaria Beach* opens up. It is up to the light. The mountains along the coast are emerging in bluish shadows and emit completely unreal. And to this the sea with its colours ...

Since the Bay is a favourite dive site and here are Groupers, Scorpion fish, Goatfish, Parrotfish and even the Precious coral *Corallium rubrum* (for details about the Precious coral see Wikipedia at : [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Corallium\\_rubrum](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Corallium_rubrum) ) to see, I watched the underwater world with snorkel and fins.

When you left the beach near pollution with plastic and canned garbage behind, it is actually very nice and in addition to rich fish stocks I discovered even shipwreck parts of a fishing boat.

As a complement to the bathing pleasure I recommend a little exploring of the surrounding. Beyond *Le-fkogia* in front of the beautiful old church (see fig. left) with its well-kept cemetery, the road forks. If you follow it uphill you reach after approx 200 yards an old wash house (see fig. Right) with a source (a inscription dates to the year 1886)



It is a longer walk to the little chapel on the Hill (see left) which is rewarded with a fantastic view (see fig. re.)



If you want go higher, the above mentioned mountain of *Timeos Stavros* offers a walk in the immediate vicinity. Also his peak is decorated with a small chapel. The view of the surroundings of Plakias, to Mountain of Ida (the highest mountain of Crete) and the White Mountains from here is really impressive. In clear, even the island of Gavdos is to see in the distance

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Translated by Michael Bloechinger-Daeumling NR: **Touren / Exkursionen:** [Art.-Nr. 2.922; Zitat-Nr. 7.856] impr. eik.amp 11/2010

