

One State, Many Worlds: Crete in the LM II-III A2 Early Period

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Organising Committee

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ABSTRACTS

The Arrival of ‘Mycenaeans’ in the Area of Khania: Legend and Archaeology

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The Shrine of Eileithyia at Inatos in LM II to IIIA2

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A shrine to the Goddess of childhood and motherhood at Inatos in South-Central Crete was excavated in 1962 by Nicholas Platon and Costis Davaras. Its finds are now under study for final publication by a team directed by Philip Betancourt. The shrine was founded at the end of the third millennium BC, and it lasted until the Roman era. The period from LM II to LM IIIA is one of the least known episodes in the shrine, but it marks an important transitional period in the type of ceremonies conducted in the cave. In addition to the gifts presented to the Goddess in late Middle Minoan and Late Minoan I, those who visited the shrine also participated in feasts within the sanctuary at this time. This practice was eliminated in LM II to LM III, and it was never renewed. This basic change in activities in the shrine is a significant historical transformation in the way that the cave was used. Objects offered to Eileithyia in LM II and LM IIIA in hopes for a healthy birth included both pottery and figurines of metal and clay. Among the pieces of pottery, the largest category consists of unpainted conical cups. Both full-sized cups and miniatures were left in the cave. Among the bronze figurines, one interesting example is a standing female figure wearing a long dress. Clay figurines from this period include female miniature sculptures painted with details in dark-firing slip. With no more feasting, the ceremonial deposit of votive objects and the burning of incense and other aromatics were the most important activities in seeking the assistance of the Goddess during LM II to IIIA, and they continued to be the norm in later times.

Many States, One World of Images? Some Thoughts on the Position of the Iconography of LM II-III A Crete in its Wider Aegean Context

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When studying arts and iconography of the Aegean Bronze Age, the Late Palatial period of Crete can be considered the most ‘problematic’ stage in the entire development, and this is due to numerous reasons: after the end of the Neopalatial period we are confronted with a dramatically reduced number of iconographic examples in a limited spectrum of artistic media, with a concentration at Knossos and often connected to chronological uncertainties. Additionally, by now, a problem arises for the first time in Crete: the issue of distinguishing between Minoan and Mycenaean iconographic elements. It is worth remembering that all these problems have to be discussed against the background of an unclear historical character of the periods LM II-III A. How are we to understand the nature of the arts in a period that is traditionally called ‘Mycenaean Crete’,

suggesting the dubious image of a static, continuous encounter of ‘indigenous Cretans’ and ‘foreign Mycenaeans’ during a period of more than 150 years? Did examples such as the iconography of the painted sarcophagus from Ayia Triada, seal images of the so-called ‘Goddess with snake-frame’ or the depiction of *agrimia* on a LM III larnax really constitute “a materialization of Mycenaean authority over the local population” (B. Burke 2005) or the outcome of “an artificially reanimated and constructed Minoan past” (J. Driessen and Ch. Langohr 2007)? Otherwise, are we really permitted to speak of a hybrid iconography belonging to a ‘Minoan-Mycenaean *koiné*’? And why then do we ignore any artistic object of ‘Mycenaean mainland character’ exported to Crete at that period?

In this paper, the problem of an adequate definition of the character of the iconography during the Late Palatial period of Crete will be approached as follows: after a short definition of the arts on the Early Mycenaean mainland, a survey of the artistic media of LM II-III A Crete will be presented. By comparing selected pictorial motifs, larger iconographic scenes and stylistic features, their relation to the Neopalatial Minoan tradition, to non-Neopalatial features and to (highly problematic) innovative ‘Mycenaean elements’ will be investigated. By means of this analysis, despite several divergences in pictorial themes and styles, a strong continuity of the Neopalatial Minoan tradition becomes apparent, namely in both: in the iconography of Late Palatial Crete as well as in the strongly ‘Minoanized’ iconography produced on the contemporary Early Mycenaean mainland where, at that time, hardly any basic innovations on the sector of iconography can be detected.

Down and Out in East Crete: Transformation and Change at Gournia and the Isthmus of Ierapetra from LM IB (late) to the End of the IIIA2 Period

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Relying on information from the recent University at Buffalo excavations at Gournia, as well as survey data, I present a history of the Isthmus of Ierapetra from the Late Minoan IB period through to the end of the IIIA2 period. It will be established that the Late Minoan IB period at Gournia, the major Neopalatial polity in the region, was far more complex than previously thought, as it witnessed significant episodes of town-wide rebuilding, destruction, urban contraction, and, ultimately, abandonment. Well before the end of the Late Minoan IB period, the central authority at Gournia was much diminished and several enterprising families had asserted themselves as major stakeholders in the town’s socio-political and economic life. Following a brief period of abandonment, perhaps corresponding to the Late Minoan II period elsewhere on the island, some individuals returned to Gournia in the Late Minoan IIIA1 period and constructed buildings, including the enigmatic House He, around the edges of the ruined Neopalatial settlement. Survey evidence suggests that the region was severely depopulated at this time with the few settlements of this period located inland, away from the coast, and, often, in elevated locations, reflecting a concern for defense and a settlement pattern more similar to that of the Early Minoan period than that of the Proto- and Neopalatial periods. At the same time, however, residents of the region were well-connected to the power politics of the broader Aegean, as they built and buried their dead in an “international” style, as witnessed by the construction of House He at Gournia and the appearance of chamber tombs throughout the region.

Crete in the LM II period. Material Entanglements, Shifting Identities and International Connections: Towards an ‘Open Society’?

Anna Lucia D’Agata & Luca Girella, Consiglio Nazionale delle Ricerche & Università Telematica Internazionale Uninettuno

The Late Minoan II-III A2 Linear B Archives at Knossos

Jan Driessen & Ophélie Mouthuy, Aegis, UCLouvain

After having been at the centre of dispute for half a century, the chronology of the Knossos tablets seems no longer a point of contention. This paper first examines whether this lack of interest is a reflection of the fact that all now acknowledge one or the other chronology or rather testifies to the acceptance of defeat and the realization that an unambiguous answer will never be possible. It next covers what we know about the archaeological contexts of the Knossos tablets and reconsiders their diachronic importance. An attempt is made to connect the different architectural phases of the palace with individual Linear B deposits and to detect changes in the ways administrative practices were carried out during the different moments.

An Epistemological Debate? Understanding the Formation of Local-Scale Group Identities in the Funerary Record of LM II-III A Knossos

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It has been more than 30 years since Anthony Snodgrass’ remark that ‘in Aegean Bronze Age archaeology too much has been believed too readily, and repeated in a series of secondary treatments to the point where it acquired the status of an axiom’. In my view, this statement describes well not only the early days of Aegean archaeology, but also the epistemological debate that has captivated scholarship since then on how best to explain ‘what happened’ on Crete from late Neopalatial to LM III A times. Are we historicising and over-simplifying the narrative of this crucial and complex period?

This paper has three main aims: 1) to present and discuss the nature of the epistemological debate, and how the history of Aegean archaeology and its continuing reliance on the terms ‘Minoan’ and ‘Mycenaean’ still affect the ways we interpret the archaeological record; 2) to review briefly the valuable critiques of the last 20 years, with particular reference to Knossos, and to explore alternative ways for approaching the observed changes (e.g. through networks of shifting group identities); 3) to (once more) revisit the funerary record of LM II-III A Knossos in order to discuss aspects of continuity and change. How useful are our current labels for understanding the collective identities that mattered most in the past? Instead of focusing on what is ‘Minoan’ and what is ‘Mycenaean’ in the archaeological record, I would like to focus on how material culture was used in the shaping of local-scale group identities at LM II-III A Knossos.

Kydonia in the LM II-III A Period

Birgitta P. Hallager, Aarhus

In the period after the LM IB destruction some of the homeless people decided to clear-out and re-occupy a few of the collapsed rooms in the LM I houses excavated in the Ayia Aikaterini Square at Khania. The rooms they choose to settle in had one thing in common: they were directly connected to open areas or old streets, which were immediately cleaned from building debris and reopened after the catastrophe. Daily life, social dynamics and external contacts in LM II and LM III A1 Khania as it is presenting itself through the ceramic material and other finds found at the site will be presented. Finally, the evidence for a Mycenaean ceramic influence in LM II will be scrutinized.

Greek-Swedish Excavations: The LM II and III A1 Periods

Erik Hallager, Aarhus

The Greek-Swedish Excavations (GSE) at Khania is one of the relatively few sites in Crete that has produced evidence for the LM II and LM III A1 periods. No new buildings of these periods were unearthed, but repairs and new walls were constructed in the reused parts of the LM I buildings and communication lines within the settlement were maintained. From the excavation there exists some evidence – consisting for a great part of architectural remains in terracotta – which indicates that the Minoan building tradition continued during these periods. The evidence of administrative documents is – as elsewhere in Crete – scarce, but a few sealings/nodules together with a continued use of Linear A does imply that the administrative control was still in the hands of the Minoans.

Cult in the Final Palatial Period at Knossos: The Fetish Shrine of the Religious Centre of the City and its Foundation. Historical Evidence from New Material

Athanasia Kanta, Hellenic Ministry of Culture and Sports

In a plot at the western Knossos village, a new Minoan shrine came to light. It was built over a Neopalatial cult building and was inserted in one of its rooms. The new shrine consists of two chambers and an antechamber. We have called this building the *Fetish Shrine* in analogy with the Little Palace Fetish Shrine discovered by Sir Arthur Evans. In the main chamber, there was a plastered bench or platform set against the wall. On it there were three natural stone concretions next to each other, obviously forming a triad. They had been set on this bench when the wall plaster was soft and the weight of one of them had made a depression on the plaster. This suggests that they were set on the bench when the building was constructed and plastered. In front of this bench was a monolithic pillar and offerings of vases on the floor. At the back of the middle concretion there was a figure-of-8 shield of a type present on the flat alabastra from the Knossos Palace Throne Room dating from LM II / III A1. The second chamber had a foundation deposit of a short bronze sword decorated with a golden griffin made in the black inlaid technique sometimes mistakenly called niello. The date of this sword is compatible with the date given to the concretion with the figure-of-8 shield.

In this paper the evidence provided by the new *Fetish Shrine* is compared with that of the Little Palace Fetish Shrine and with the situation at Knossos in the Final Palatial period which led to events changing the course of Cretan history.

Palaikastro and its Territory in LM II-III A1

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In seeking to understand the nature of society and economy on Crete in the LM II-III A1 period, it is hard to avoid the narrative of breakdown and aftermath. This is unsurprising given the widespread destructions across the island, the apparent abandonment of many sites, and the striking changes in material culture, particularly in the centre of the island. Palaikastro too suffers in the same LM IB horizon, with many houses burnt; the iconoclasm of the *kouros* adds further woe. However, all is not quite as it seems. First, the material culture at the site was already charting its own course in LM IB, exhibiting clear differences from central Cretan styles; any ceramic change between LM IB and LM II is arguably less dramatic than between LM IA and IB. Second, the site seems to see occupation along similar lines as before, with Neopalatial house plans largely respected, albeit rejigged (in contrast to Mochlos, for example). Why, then, might Palaikastro have been both already divergent in LM IB as well as subsequently also more resilient than other sites in east Crete in LM II? Part of the answer may lie in Palaikastro's apparent lack of relationship with Knossos. There is little in the Linear B documents from Knossos to suggest any dealings with east Crete; and Palaikastro is by now well recognized for its pronounced reluctance to take up the kylix and rounded cup (and presumably their associated drinking practices). How might this conscious turning away from Knossos have been beneficial, in the short-term at least?

It suggests that Palaikastro may have differed not only in its relations with Knossos, but also with other sites, both within its immediate territory and further afield. Here we will attempt to model these relations by 1) examining what we know of Palaikastro's local economy *vis a vis* other sites in its hinterland, across the LM I to LM II-III A1 transition, and 2) thinking about the location of the site within the new trade networks that emerged across the east Mediterranean in the late 15th and 14th centuries BC.

Coping with Cultural Transformation and Continuity in East Crete during LM II-III A2 Early: A Ceramic Perspective

Charlotte Langohr, Aegis, UC Louvain

Based on a diachronic typo-stylistic analysis of ceramic assemblages from different Eastern Cretan sites (from Sissi to Palaikastro), this paper explores the cultural processes at work within the various communities during the LM II-III A2 early period. The degree of regional connectivity and variation in pottery consumption is assessed, and aspects of change and continuity with regard to the end of the Neopalatial period considered. In particular, the existence of a common pottery tradition – a distinctive drinking set treated in the typical dipped decoration style –, shared by several East Cretan sites and very reminiscent of Neopalatial practices, is stressed. This paper also pays attention to the identification of more particular networks of interaction and this at the intra- and inter-regional level, examining specific connections with, or the absence/rejection of Knossian

and Central Cretan practices. Finally, the nature of the interactions with the Greek mainland is discussed through the analysis of the ceramic category of fine medium-sized vessels decorated with various abstract motifs. The schematization of painted decoration on Minoan ceramics has long been interpreted as an innovation, starting at LM II Knossos, inspired by the Mycenaean mainland where the stylization of naturalistic motifs is a distinctive marker of the repertoire as early as LH I-IIA. The origin and direction of these schematic styles are not in question but recent ceramic studies have illuminated the inception of this stylistic tradition in Crete, especially in LM IB Eastern Crete. The more precise definition and chronological characterisation of distinct regional processes in pottery consumption may eventually offer a better understanding of the wider context of the socio-political changes that occurred on the island during this thorny period, and in particular the relation with Mycenaean contemporary developments.

Architectural Continuity, Renovation, and Innovation in the Town and Palace of Knossos, LM IB-III A1

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Much has been made of the funerary practices of LM II-III A1 Knossos, and of its administrative practices. To deepen our understanding of the prehistoric elite occupation in the town and palace of Knossos after LM IB, we should look carefully at the architecture — new constructions (e.g. one of the SW Houses) as well as the adaptation of old (e.g. the South Front of the palace). This paper gathers the evidence for continuity and innovation after LM IB. Changes in construction methods e.g. a liberal use of gypsum at the expense of dressed limestone, are notable; however, their significance must be assessed, without following the mantra that change in LM II-III A1 Knossos is automatically an indication of ‘Mycenaean’. The influence of ‘Mycenaean’ on the funerary sphere is easier to argue than in the architecture of the town and palace of Knossos.

The paper will examine re-used/adapted and new buildings; the materials used (Can we find any new limestone ashlar masonry? Are any Mason’s Marks cut after LM I?); the function of certain areas; the use of wooden columns versus stone pillars (the Minoan Order, MM III-LM I, or LM II-III A/B?). It seems the changes that took place in the architectural sphere in LM II-III A1 may not have been radical, but were perhaps reductive, if that is a useful word to describe limited innovation, less apparent effort, if not skill, and a reliance on past methods, old materials and previous constructions.

Imports, Imitation, and Influence: The Complex Relationship between Pylos and Crete

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This study aims to clarify the relationship between Minoan Crete and Pylos during the period of LM II – LM III A2, which correlates approximately with LH IIB to LHIIIA2, by examining the evidence for Minoan imports found in the tombs around the Palace of Nestor. On Crete, this period is characterized by the regeneration of the palatial centers with overt mainland features, while at Pylos it witnessed the growth of the palatial economy and the expansion of the Pylian polity. The common argument that contact with Minoan Crete played a significant role in the rise of the Mycenaean palaces is especially relevant at Pylos where Minoan traits have been identified in the construction of the palace, the architecture of the tombs (tholos tombs), and the burials types (pithos burials). The nature, extent, and chronology of this contact, however, is far from clear. The tombs,

because of their long chronological span, their proximity to the palace, and their contents of valuable and mundane objects, are good indicators of contact and exchange over a long period of time. By comparing the location and densities of Minoan imports in the tombs to imports from other areas in Greece and the Mediterranean world, this study supports a more detailed model of the interaction between Pylos and the Minoan Crete and thus sheds light on contact with Crete and its role in the construction of Pylian identity. Although Minoan small finds were plentiful in the tombs, Minoan ceramics were scarce and were significantly out-numbered by imports, including imitations of Minoan wares, from other areas. The patterning of the ceramics by place of origin suggests that Minoan imports may have come via a complex web of trade networks rather than directly from Crete, thus complicating any role Cretans and their ideas may have had in shaping and creating Pylian society.

The Innocence of Facticity: ‘Mycenaean’ Knossos in its Aegean Context

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The archaeology of Final Palatial Crete has been dominated by the fact that the Linear B script was used at Knossos and later at Khania. Indeed, the script must have been developed at Knossos, effectively as a continuation of Linear A, repurposed to write the Greek language. Scholars have tended to see the changes at Final Palatial Knossos either as a passive fossil of a broader cultural change (i.e., the dominance of a mainland Greek-speaking elite) or as an active strategy on the part of the Knossian elite as part of a package of administrative and social changes. In this paper I attempt to reframe the debate, which in my view focus excessively on origins and intentionality at the expense of structure and practice. I argue that Knossian administration, while distinctive in a number of important respects, can be understood using methods developed to interpret the textual data from Pylos, as a highly networked system that operated through the agency of an entrepreneurial elite class. At Knossos this elite was highly heterogeneous and expressed itself in novel material forms, as was also the case in the contemporary Greek mainland. I suggest that the excessive focus on palatial power that characterizes the study of the Aegean Late Bronze Age can be mitigated through a refocusing of our attention to this elite (*sensu lato*) in their broad Aegean context.

The Palace of Nestor at Pylos and the Development of Its Masonry

Michael C. Nelson, Queens College, City University of New York

The palace at Pylos is one of the best-preserved Mycenaean palaces in all of Bronze Age Greece. Its floor plan is nearly complete; well-built walls and plaster floors clearly define interior rooms and the circulation within. Where walls are missing (and they are a few), regular gaps in the plaster floors outline their original footprints. When discovered in 1939 and then systematically excavated in the 1950s and 60s, many of the palace’s rooms still contained their original contents, which included brightly colored frescoes, pottery, sculpture, bronze tools, and Linear B-inscribed clay tablets. The 1966 seminal publication presented and analyzed only the architecture of the palace shortly before it was destroyed. However, archaeological investigations by the Minnesota Archaeological Researches in the Western Peloponnese (MARWP) – Pylos Project from 1990 –

1999 revealed a more extensive building history at Pylos than previously thought. Multiple phases of construction were found and recorded for the first time. For instance, the Main Building underwent at least two major remodeling projects and each succeeding phase was built in a different masonry style with a different floor plan. In general, the history of Mycenaean palaces, particularly their architectural form, is perplexing because they were relatively short-lived phenomena with no obvious and clearly defined development. Untangling the myriad remodelings, repairs, and additions at Pylos revealed an architectural sequence unlike any other palace. In its early phases (LH I – LH IIIA), the palace builders adopted building methods and design concepts from their island neighbor to the south, Crete, particularly with the use of cut stone masonry. The construction of ashlar and orthostate façades finds no mainland parallels and, at that time, the buildings at Pylos seem to be more Minoan in character than Mycenaean.

LM II-III A1 Aptera in the Knossian Sphere of Influence

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The site of Aptera, surrounded by fertile lands and commanding the entrance to the natural bay of Souda, has always provided the conditions necessary for the establishment of important settlements. The earliest mention of the toponym Aptera appears on an early 14th-century BC Linear B tablet from the Knossos palace: *a-pa-ta-wa/*Απταρφα*.

Aptera's excavated remains of the Late Minoan II period (c. 1450 – 1400 BC), were identified at the edge of the archaeological site, directly south of the new highway that connects Khania to Rethymno. They consist of a partially destroyed chamber tomb with two burial chambers instead of the usual one, a rare architectural form for this period. This early tomb of Aptera yielded approximately 100 clay vessels, mostly cups and a number of the characteristic example of the small two-handled LM II kylix, which closely parallel similar vessels from the Unexplored Mansion at Knossos. The influence of Knossos was probably still strong in the second half of the 15th century BC, in all aspects of artistic production, particularly pottery, which is characterized by a homogeneity and continuity of types and styles.

The Beginnings of Linear B and Literate Administration on the Greek Mainland

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This paper intends to discuss the beginnings of administrative literacy on the Greek Mainland by focusing on inscribed material dated before the Late Helladic III B period. It should be properly acknowledged from the outset that, despite the abundance of LH IIIB inscriptions from Mainland palatial centres in the Peloponnese (Mycenae, Tiryns, Pylos) or Central Greece (Thebes), material dating to the Late Helladic IIB-III A2 range is very limited, coming from Iklaina, Mycenae (Petsas House), Tiryns (Lower Town) and perhaps also Pylos, where two interesting groups of inscriptions (those documents assigned to Palaima's 'Class iv', as well as those retrieved from Room 6, the Pylian 'megaron') have also been argued to antedate the bulk of the material from that site. The patchiness of this material notwithstanding, any assessment of what appears to be the earliest appearance of writing and administration on the Greek Mainland invites a consideration of a number of vexing questions in methodology and interpretation. On the one hand, we need to

acknowledge the fragility of what I have chosen to term the ‘graphochronological fallacy’ (the underlying assumption that one might assess the relative chronology of palaeographic features by assessing their ‘distance’ from a fixed point in the development of the script). On the other hand, a number of intertwined desiderata refer to (1) the nature of this appearance and its interpretation as an invention or an adoption depending on the place of the emergence of the Linear B script and the administrative system it served, (2) the possible modes of transmission of such literacy that generated an unprecedented Minoan-Helladic political continuum, and (3) the relationship of this material to Cretan Linear B, represented by the Knossos and Khania material, as well as the painted Linear B inscriptions on transport stirrup jars produced on Crete. The last point necessitates at least some peripheral consideration of the problem of the date of the ‘Room of the Chariot Tablets’ as well as other deposits at Knossos, as well as the concept of a ‘Mainland koine’ and the basis for any distinction between ‘Cretan’ and ‘Mainland’ Linear B.

On the Dating of the Establishment and the Origin of the First Inhabitants of the Post-palatial Settlement at Kephali, Chondros (District of Viannos)

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The small Minoan settlement at Kephali, Chondros in the district of Viannos, excavated during the 1950s by N. Platon, has been quoted for a long time in the bibliography as a typical example of a post-palatial site, newly established beyond the limits of the neo-palatial towns. Its short life – reckoned by the excavator and other scholars as between 70 to 80 years, all within the 14th century BC – held out the opportunity for studying the provincial architecture and the ceramic typology and styles of that specific period in the southern central-east Crete.

However, detailed study of the architecture and pottery for the final publication of the site by the author showed that the settlement was established much earlier, probably during the LM II period, when a large building with impressive facades was built in the centre of the site. The Knossian– or under a strong Knossian influence – pottery of this early phase, and found in the “destruction layers” of this building, supports the hypothesis that the first inhabitants of the settlement were immigrants coming from Knossos. They had moved to the fertile plateau of Viannos, probably as a result of the new socio-political situation formed during this period in the metropolis.

This paper examines the above hypothesis, based on the LM II-III A1 pottery from the site.

The Changing Aspects of a Palatial Site: The LM IIIA Workshop Complex at Galatas and its Implications for Understanding LM II-III A Pediada

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At the beginning of the LM IIIA period, a large, solidly constructed building was erected in the south part of Galatiani Kefala, on the ruins of the north wing of the palace. The complex taphonomy of the area has disrupted the original form of the building and strongly disturbed the floor levels. The surviving sectors indicate that this was a sizeable complex of long spaces and one or two small rooms, which would have been used, among other things, for workshop activities.

In this paper we present the LM IIIA building excavated at Galatas and set out some thoughts on the sociopolitical context of the Pediada in LMII-LMIIIA, as it emerges from the data provided by the excavations and surveys in the area.

Mycenaeans at Mochlos, an Update

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Since the publication of ‘Mycenaeans at Mochlos? Exploring Culture and Identity in the Late Minoan IB to IIIA 1 Transition’ in 2002 in the Polish journal, *Aegean Archaeology* 6, there has been some confusion about the presence of Mycenaeans at Mochlos, when and even if they arrived at all. The article took an ambivalent stand on the subject, so muddying the waters. This paper is designed to set the record straight and argues that Mycenaeans were indeed responsible for the LM IB destruction of the Minoan settlement but did not reoccupy the site until the very beginning of the LM IIIA1 pottery phase while some LM II pottery was still in circulation, some 30 years after the destruction of the Minoan settlement. The delay between the LM IB destruction of the site, which resulted in the departure of the Minoans, and the Mycenaean reoccupation was due to an earthquake that occurred shortly after the LM IB destruction and left the Minoan town in ruins. During this period the site was abandoned.

The Mycenaean settlement that replaced the Minoan town was quite different in character. It was much smaller and poorer than the Minoan town that preceded it and showed evidence of a sharp hierarchical social structure quite unlike the heterarchical pattern of the earlier town. It also used a new method of burial in small chamber tombs that reflected its hierarchical organization.

The Cemetery of Armenoi (Rethymno) in the LM IIIA1-III A2 Early Period

Vicky Kolivaki & Yannis Tzedakis

The LM III period in northern Rethymnon is a phase characterized by intense mobility. After the destruction of the big Minoan centres, the power of Knossos weakened, while other smaller centres with particular character developed throughout Crete, but always under the control of the *te-re-ta* of the big Minoan centre. One of these is the city of Armenoi, probably to identify with *da-22-to* from the Linear B tablets of the palace of Knossos. During the LM IIIA1 a dynamic microcosm developed, represented by a settlement and a cemetery with so far 232 excavated tombs, magnificent in size and finds, which reveal the existence of a flourishing urban centre controlling the north-south axis of the island. Survey analysis has shown the presence of architectural remains during the LM IB. Forthcoming analyses carried out on hundreds of vessels and terracotta *larnakes* will show the local production and the existence of clay deposits located near the site. Likewise, the large quantity of copper and other semi-precious stones used for jewelry likely come from the north-south axis along with ivory items that link this part of the island with the Eastern Mediterranean. The excavations carried out at the settlement of Kastellos strengthen the data at our disposal. A local workshop for pottery and *larnakes* has flourished in this settlement, and it seems to demonstrate the existence of exchange network with other centres of Crete (Khania, Knossos, East Crete).

Pottery Production and Consumption at Ayios Vasileios during LH IIIA and the Cretan Connections

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Early LH IIIA2 central Laconia witnesses a significant transformation of its landscape with the construction of a palace at Ayios Vasileios that is inspired by Cretan prototypes and the remodeling of the early Mansion 1 at the Menelaion. At the same time the pottery production undergoes some changes. The most obvious is the proliferation of the plain conical cup which appears in construction fills and feasting deposits of the palace along with Mycenaean kylikes. These changes may reflect direct influences from Crete transformed to fit a new environment, or indeed they may relate with other processes in mainland Greece. If the first hypothesis is correct a question which arises is whether these changes in LH IIIA show the culmination of a process that has started in LH II -and earlier- or whether they constitute a new wave of influence perhaps linked to specific events or a particular regions in Crete.

These questions are considered in the light of a recent pottery study at Ayios Vasileios. Our presentation will focus on five distinct wares from the palace site that can be linked to Crete directly or indirectly, by showing specific elements of Minoan potting traditions: namely plain conical cups, a gritty Laconian ware, a micaceous cooking ware, Cretan Imports, and Kytheran imports. Reference to earlier material (LH I - LH II) will be made in order to highlight aspects of continuity/discontinuity/innovation. Taking into consideration other evidence of portable material culture and architecture, we provide new data relevant to the complex connections between Crete and Laconia/Ayios Vasileios during the 14th century BC.

The Use and Re-use of Gold Rings in Knossos after the LM IB Destructions

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In *Corridors of Power: A Social Network Analysis of the Minoan 'Replica Rings'* (2010), I analysed the patterns of sealing use of LM I “look-alike” gold rings. I argued that these patterns only made sense if the rings were used by persons belonging to the same network, holding equivalent rank or status. Their monumental rings with images of bull leaping, chariots and combat scenes were made at Knossos at least from late LM IA (confirmed by Knossian clay sealings found at Thera) and possibly into LM IB. The greater stylistic diversity of similar but smaller rings, sharing much the same imagery and used in much the same ways, suggest that those might well have been manufactured throughout LM IB.

After the LM IB destructions, most replica rings disappeared. Few impressions of earlier ‘look-alike’ rings were found in the later Knossos sealing deposits. Facilitated by the identification of more than 50 LM II-III ring impressions in CMS II.8/Arachne-online and N. Becker, *Die goldenen Siegelringe der Ägäischen Bronzezeit* (2018), this paper examines how gold rings were now being stamped, first in the Room of the Chariot Tablets, and then in the final destruction deposits. While no visible glyptic networks emerge, there are nonetheless hints that surviving replica rings were used, possibly intentionally, in an exceptional manner. Perhaps some residual importance was

attached to these rings or motifs rather than simply to the status of gold. Rings, including LM I replica rings, also disproportionately stamped the new Class XII combination nodules thought to have sealed boxes of tablets, which might suggest an elite bureaucratic role. Yet the fact remains that most rings performed exactly the same functions as any other seals, though not necessarily in exactly the same departments.

LM II-III A2 Knossos in Context

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For the study of LM II-III A2 Crete, Knossos has two particularly strong points. It has a well-documented, continuous and contextually diverse archaeological record through these periods, and it was clearly a dominant centre for much of the island during these periods. But for two additional reasons, it is also often considered almost in isolation. The first is the detail provided by the abundant Linear B documents, which provide a rich, diverse and different sort of evidence than is available for almost any other site on Crete in this period. The second is our traditional periodisation for prehistoric Crete, based on the rather broad chronological resolution of most of our archaeological materials, which encourages us to think in terms of relatively long and static periods (e.g. Protopalatial, Neopalatial, Third Palace, Post-palatial). In reality, these are based principally on large samples of material from specific major destruction horizons (MM IIB, LMIB), inhibiting our ability to recognise finer-scale and continuous transformations. In recent years, new excavations and strategic re-investigations and re-evaluations at a number of sites have allowed more detailed documentation of local developments, highlighting both regional variation, and a more nuanced appreciation of significant changes within the broad phases of Minoan history. For the LM II-III A2 period, the change in the language used for administrative documentation in the Linear B tablets traditionally invoked a model of massive population change, contributing to the isolation of this phase as distinct from the preceding Neopalatial period. As archaeologists generally move away from assuming major demographic replacements as primary and frequent causal processes (though biomolecular archaeology is now allowing us to identify such processes effectively), it is essential that we re-connect the LM II-III A2 phase with its predecessor. Doing so allows us to assess more effectively to what degree and in what ways this phase represents a significant departure from previous developments on Crete, or is a less exceptional component in a longer term sequence of major social, economic and political structural transformations.

The aims of this paper are three-fold. I will present new information on Knossos, synthesise this with earlier evidence and critically compare this emerging picture with previous understandings of the development of the community, particularly focusing on transformations from the late Neopalatial through LM III phases. Secondly, I will contextualise this within the increasingly complex picture of cultural developments across Crete during these phases. Third, I will consider this emerging picture comparatively within the southern Aegean, in the context of developing communities and polities of the Mycenaeanised world.

The Fateful Century: from the Destruction of Crete c. 1440 BC to the Destruction of Knossos c. 1350-1340 BC

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The devastating destruction of Crete at the end of LM IB c. 1440 BC was followed by approximately a century of intensive Mycenaean rule over west and central Crete exercised from the palace of Knossos.

The recent discovery that the linchpin of Minoan chronology, the cartouche on the scarab of Amenophis III found in an LM IIIA1 burial in Sellopoulo Tomb IV, refers to a Sed Festival, an event of renewal and rejuvenation traditionally celebrated in the pharaoh's 30th year, but in the case of Amenophis III repeated in his 34th and 37th years, provides critical new evidence for the date of the early IIIA2 destruction of the palace and surrounding area at Knossos. The nature, causes, and consequences of the two destructions are considered in turn.

Socio-political Disorder and a New Political Economy at Knossos

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In this paper I argue that the dichotomous approach to Aegean prehistory that is a legacy of the opposition between Evans and Wace and Blegen fundamentally misses the dynamics of what likely occurred between the end of the MBA and the early phases of the LBA in the Aegean. I will focus on the Neopalatial period before and after the eruption of Thera and before and after the widespread destructions of LM IB to assess the evidence for social turmoil in and around Knossos that resulted in the emergence of a new political order that continued down to the destruction of Knossos in LM IIIA1/2. This transition was marked by new codes of behavior within a cosmopolitan community that had broad connections throughout the Aegean and the Eastern Mediterranean. It resulted in the establishment of a new political economy with a different interest in economic output and political governance that forever changed Knossos and the rest of the Aegean world.

A View from the Far East: The Reoccupation of the Zakros Settlement after the LM IB Destruction

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The extensive destruction horizon documented in the Minoan Palace and the surrounding settlement of Kato Zakros is dated to the end of LM IB period, namely the mid-15th century BC, a period called Zakros V according to the system of relative chronology proposed by Lefteris Platon for Zakros.

The following period, Zakros VI, constitutes the subject of this contribution. It will be argued that on the basis of the stratigraphic and pottery evidence this period can be further subdivided in two sub-phases (Zakros VIa and VIb) dated to LM II/III A1 and LM III A2 respectively. During the last decades the excavators of other important east Cretan sites like Palaikastro and Mochlos defined an early reoccupation period which in terms of relative chronology correlates with LM II and/or LM III A1. The distinctive feature of this sub-phase is the limited presence of LM II pottery (imported from Knossos) along with some local pottery types. Now this period of early reoccupation is attested

also in the assemblages of Zakros.

Although changes in the nature and character of the settlement as well as its population size can be observed, it is possible to argue that the time span from the destruction at the end of LM IB to the reoccupation of the settlement in LM II was rather short. For Mochlos and based on radiocarbon dating this period is assumed to have stretched over 30-40 years. Zakros does not afford similar radiocarbon dating data. According to pottery evidence, it is possible to argue that the gap was similar or shorter.