

Petras, Siteia
The Pre- and Proto-palatial cemetery in context

*Acts of a two-day conference held at the Danish Institute at
Athens, 14-15 February 2015*

Edited by
Metaxia Tsipopoulou



Monographs of the Danish Institute at Athens
Volume 21

*This volume is dedicated to all those individuals who participated over the years
in the excavation, conservation, study, site development and publication
of the results.*

*This lofty vision for Petras and its region was made possible by their hard work,
dedication and support.*

Petras, Siteia – The Pre- and Proto- palatial cemetery in context

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Front cover:

The Petras cemetery (photo M. Tsipopoulou) and Protopalatial silver signet ring from HT 9 (photo C. Papanikolopoulos)

Graphic design: Garifalia Kostopoulou and Metaxia Tsipopoulou

Back cover: Excavation of House Tomb 1, Room 6. Prof. S. Triantaphyllou (photo G. Kostopoulou).

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The conference participants gathered in the courtyard of the Danish Institute at Athens 15 February 2015

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Abbreviations

Archaeological periods

| | |
|-----|-------------------|
| EBA | Early Bronze Age |
| EH | Early Helladic |
| EM | Early Minoan |
| FN | Final Neolithic |
| LH | Late Helladic |
| LM | Late Minoan |
| LN | Late Neolithic |
| LBA | Late Bronze Age |
| MBA | Middle Bronze Age |
| MH | Middle Helladic |
| MM | Middle Minoan |
| MN | Middle Neolithic |

Petras Area

| | |
|------|-----------------|
| HT | House Tomb |
| R | Room |
| L | Lakkos |
| P | Petras |
| PTSK | Petras Cemetery |

| | |
|----------|--|
| PTSOU | Petras Rock Shelter |
| Σ-palace | Stratigraphical trenches of the palace |
| W | Wall |

Other

| | |
|--------|----------------------------------|
| A.S.L. | Above Sea Level |
| diam. | diameter |
| gr | gram |
| h | height |
| kg | kilogram |
| w | width |
| wt | weight |
| th | thickness |
| lt | liter |
| MMD | Mean Measure of Divergence |
| MNI | Minimum Number of Individuals |
| NISP | Number of Identifiable Specimens |
| SM | Archaeological Museum, Siteia |
| vol. | volume |

The form of the English language for the native speakers (British or American) was the author's choice. For the non-native speakers the American form was used.

Bibliographic Abbreviations

AAA – Archaïologika Analekta Athinon

ActaPalaeobot – Acta Palaiobotanica

AJA – American Journal of Archaeology

AJPA – American Journal of Physical Anthropology

AJS – American Journal of Sociology

AmJHumBiol – American Journal of Human Biology

AnnMathStat – Annals of Mathematical Statistics

AR – Archaeological Reports

Arachne – (on-line access to the CMS, with corrected information and enhanced illustrations) <http://arachne.uni-koeln.de/drupal/?q=de/node/access> date March 2016.

ArchDelt – Archaeologikon Deltion

ArchEph – Archaeologike Ephemeris

AS – O. Krzyszkowska, *Aegean seals: an introduction* (BICS Suppl. 85), London.

ASAtene – Annuario della Scuola Archeologica Italiana di Atene

BAR-IS – British Archaeological Reports, International Series

BCH – Bulletin se correspondance hellénique

BICS – Bulletin of the Institute of Classical Studies of the University of London

BSA – Annual of the British School at Athens

CHIC – J.-P. Olivier and L. Godart, *Corpus hieroglyphicarum inscriptionum Cretae* (Études Crétoises 31), Athens and Rome 1996.

CMS – Corpus der minoischen und mykenischen Siegel, Berlin 1964-2000, Mainz 2002-

CretChron – Kretika Chronika

EtCret – Études Crétoises

JAS – Journal of Archaeological Science

JMA – Journal of Mediterranean Archaeology

Kentro – Kentro: The Newsletter of the INSTAP Study Center for East Crete

MA – Monumenti Antichi

OJA – Oxford Journal of Archaeology

Prakt – Praktika tes en Athenais Archaeologikes Etaireias

SIMA – Studies in Mediterranean Archaeology

SMEA – Studi Micenei ed Egeo-Anatolici



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Mortuary practices, the ideology of death and social organization of the Siteia area: The Petras cemetery within its broader funerary landscape

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Abstract

Mortuary practices of the Pre- and Proto-palatial period in the broader Siteia area show a remarkable degree of diversity, even between sites that are only a few kilometers apart. Within this context, the emergence of Petras as an important center of habitation, which acquires palatial characteristics from the Protopalatial period onwards, poses several questions concerning the existence of an integrated political and/or cultural entity in the region. This paper focuses on the mortuary practices of the region, aiming at placing the cemetery of Petras within wider historical and geographical contexts, and defining its influence on other communities in the area.

Introduction

Petras was the main center of habitation in the area of the Siteia gulf during the entire Cretan prehistory.¹ This area includes the coastal plain of Siteia in the middle, the smaller coastal plains of Papadiokampos to the west and Hagia Photia to the east, as well as the narrow valley of the Stomios river, which runs between the mountains of Thrypti and Ziros, and connects Petras with its hinterland to the south (Fig. 1).² The relatively small size of the region, the clear geographic boundaries, the existence of an important center of habitation as early as the Prepalatial period, and the operation of an administrative monumental building in the Proto- and Neo-palatial periods, may all imply the existence of a political entity, with Petras being its center and exercising ideological, and to some degree political and eco-

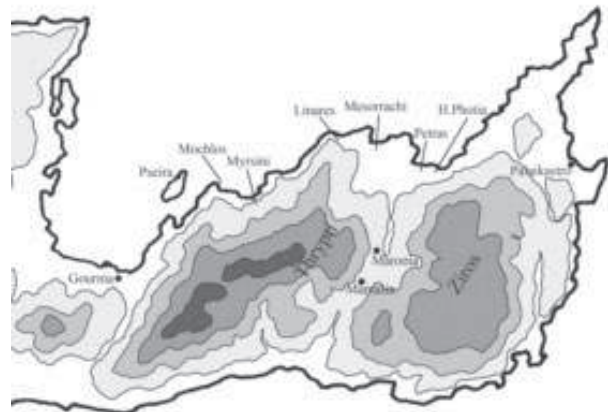


Fig. 1. Map of east Crete with sites mentioned in the text. Processed by Y. Papadatos.

nomie control.³ The evidence for this suggestion was, until now, based on finds from habitation sites and domestic contexts, whether at Petras itself or other

¹ Tsipopoulou 1999a, 2002.

² Tsipopoulou & Papacostopoulou 1997, 203-206.

³ Tsipopoulou 2002, 141-143.

sites of the region. However, the excavation of the Petras cemetery provides new evidence and allows a comparative analysis of the mortuary practices at a regional level. The aim of this paper is to discuss the available evidence for the Pre- and Proto-palatial mortuary practices in the Siteia region in order to (a) place the Petras cemetery in its wider historical and geographical contexts, and (b) examine the degree of influence exerted by Petras on other sites in the area.

The archaeological evidence

EM IA

In Crete the first *extra muros* organized and formalized burial places emerge in the Final Neolithic–Early Minoan IA transition. With the exception of the Mesara and the Asterousia, where burials were made inside circular tholos tombs, the earliest burials in Crete, including Siteia, were made inside natural rock shelters. In Siteia the only EM IA examples are the Maronia Rock Shelters,⁴ but the excavation and the material remain largely unpublished. Similar burial rock shelters excavated in neighboring areas, such as Hagios Nikolaos near Palaikastro, Katalionas, Lamnoni and Karydi on the Ziros plateau, and Hagios Antonios, Pseira and Gournia in the Mirabello,⁵ clearly suggest that this was a regular practice during this early period.

No safe conclusions can be inferred since most of the above contexts have suffered extensive disturbance, erosion or looting, and some of them are old excavations with poor recording. However, the available evidence plainly shows that these rock shelters were used by a large population group, perhaps the entire community, over a long period of time and for a large number of burials. This is a practice characterizing Cretan mortuary practices from the

beginning of the Early Bronze Age until the end of the Protopalatial period. Of particular interest is the undisturbed Rock Shelter III at Hagios Nikolaos-Palaikastro, which contained skeletal remains of at least a dozen individuals, but the excavator suggests that it is rather improbable that the primary burial was made inside the Rock Shelter, due to the limited space and the “absolute confusion of the remains”.⁶ For this reason it has been suggested that the Rock Shelter received relocated skeletal remains of burials made primarily elsewhere. Although it is difficult to assess this suggestion due to the quality of the published information, similar hypotheses have been expressed in two other instances of later burial rock shelters excavated and studied, those of Petras⁷ and Hagios Charalambos.⁸

At Petras, however, no burials of this period have been found so far. The hill of Kephala is occupied by an FN–EM IA settlement,⁹ but there is no evidence for a cemetery in the immediate vicinity of the settlement, or in the broader area. A small fragment of a human skull with traces of burning, found in the fill of a room of the FN settlement,¹⁰ remains an isolated find, which cannot be associated with any sort of mortuary practice. Human skeletal remains have also been found in FN Phaistos, in ritual contexts suggesting the manipulation and use of human bones in ceremonies that involved the communal consumption of food and drink by a large number of people.¹¹ Furthermore, the excavation of the burial Rock Shelter a few meters from the FN–EM IA settlement did not produce any material of the FN or EM IA period. This may suggest that the Kephala hill had not yet become an organized burial place for the Petras community, although future excavations at the cemetery may change this picture. In any

⁴ Legarra Herrero 2014, 286.

⁵ Legarra Herrero 2014.

⁶ Duckworth 1903, 348.

⁷ Triantaphyllou 2012, 163.

⁸ Betancourt, Davaras *et al.* 2008, 578.

⁹ Papadatos 2012.

¹⁰ Papadatos work in progress.

¹¹ Todaro 2012, 33.

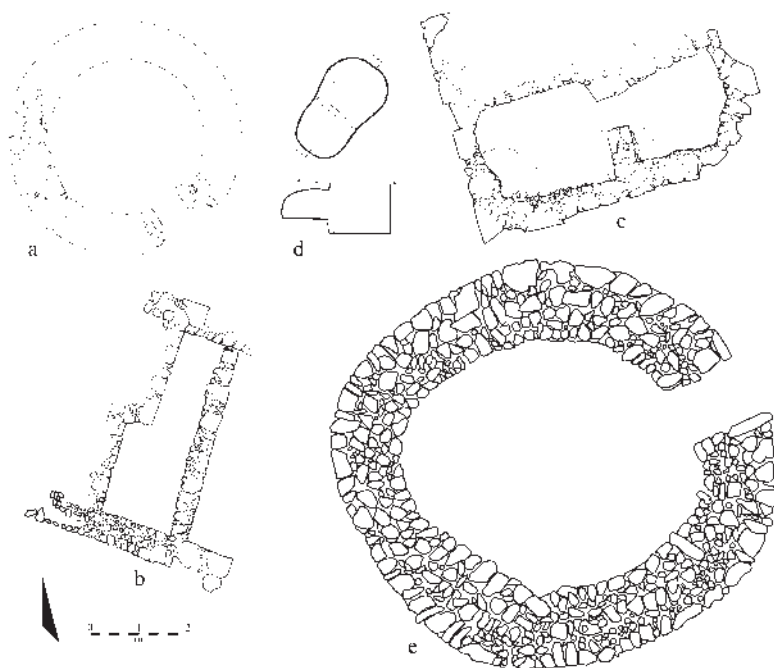


Fig. 2. a) The tholos tomb at Mesorrachi (after Papadatos & Sofianou 2013, fig. 4); b) The house tomb at Linares (after Soles 1992, fig. 66); c) The house tomb at Mantalia (after Soles 1992, fig. 58); d) Rock-cut chamber tomb at Hagia Photia (after Davaras & Betancourt 2004, figs. 525 and 526); e) Tholos Tomb A at Hagia Photia (after Belli 2003, pl. LXXIIIa).

case, there is absolutely no reason to suppose that the EM IA burial places in Petras, if they existed, would deviate from the typical East Cretan type of the rock shelter.

The only departure from the widespread East Cretan tradition of burial rock shelters is the tholos tomb recently excavated at Mesorrachi (Fig. 2a).¹² The tomb is contemporary with the earliest tholoi of the Mesara and the Asterousia and follows closely the tholos tomb tradition not only in the form and method of construction but also in the associated symbolisms, as evidenced by: (a) the east-facing entrance and (b) the location of the tomb at the east edge of Mesorrachi, just above the gorge, in such a way that the entrance looks away from the settlement area.¹³ Unfortunately, because of the extensive looting and subsequent erosion of the tomb, the excavation provided only a few human bones and limited evidence concerning mortuary practices.

On the basis of parallels from the Mesara and the Asterousia it has been deduced that it was used over a long period of time by a large population group and for a large number of burials. In that sense it is similar to the burial rock shelters but differs in the organization of the contributing population.

Rock shelters were used by a single nearby settlement, as seen in the cases of Gournia, Pseira and Hagios Antonios, and probably other sites as well. In contrast, the field survey of the Mesorrachi showed the presence of at least six habitation sites, namely farmsteads or hamlets, located between 200 and 1000 meters from the tomb.¹⁴ The condition of the surface pottery does not allow precise dating, but all these sites are dated within the EM I–IIA time span, and they share similar characteristics in terms of location and size. It seems plausible, therefore, that the tholos tomb of Mesorrachi served as a symbol of unity for this isolated and fragmented population that was dispersed into a number of small habita-

¹² Papadatos & Sofianou 2013.

¹³ Branigan 1998.

¹⁴ Papadatos & Sofianou 2016.

tion sites. From this point of view, the Mesorrachi community was much closer to the Mesara and the Asterousia than to east Crete in terms of (a) settlement patterns, (b) social organization and (c) the way conspicuous burial monuments were used in order to enhance the unity, parity or kin affiliation of its members.

EM IB

In the next period, EM IB, it is possible to discern both interesting continuities and changes. The Mesorrachi tholos produced no EM IB material but this is probably because the only deposit that escaped looting and erosion was a thin layer of soil at the basal level of the tomb, just above the bedrock.¹⁵ Moreover, habitation in the area continued and new sites –two elliptical farmsteads – were established during this period, only 300 meters from the tholos tomb.¹⁶ It is probable, therefore, that the tholos continued to be used in EM IB by those sites. The Maronia Rock Shelters also continued to receive funerary material, namely skeletal remains and burial offerings,¹⁷ but, as in the previous period, there is no evidence for the associated mortuary practices.

At Petras, the FN–EM IA settlement on top of the Kephala hill was abandoned and habitation probably moved to the lower hill of the later palace. From this period onwards the Kephala hill became the primary if not the only burying place of the Petras community.¹⁸ Thus, it is plausible to suggest a connection, both spatial and symbolic, between the shift in habitation and the establishment of the cemetery on the Kephala hill, where the first settlement of the founding ancestors of the Petras community was established several centuries before. The close

proximity between the cemetery and the abandoned FN–EM IA settlement, the ruins of which were still visible on the slopes beneath the top of the hill, strengthened the relations with the founders of the community and served as a testimony of continuity with the past.¹⁹

So far, material from the first phase of the cemetery has been found only in the Rock Shelter, on the west slopes of the hill, at ca. 50 meters from the ruins of the abandoned settlement. Like other East Cretan sites, the Petras Kephala Rock Shelter was not a place for primary disposal, but had received relocated skeletal remains²⁰ and burial offerings, dated from EM IB to MM IIA period.²¹ It is, therefore, plausible that other areas or tombs for primary burial, not yet discovered, existed in the Petras cemetery. In any case, the Rock Shelter shows that since its beginnings the Petras cemetery followed pre-existing local mortuary traditions and practices, as seen in the Siteia and other neighboring areas as early as the EM IA period.

On the other hand, as in the case of the EM IA Mesorrachi tholos tomb, a second significant deviation from the widespread East Cretan tradition of burial rock shelters appears in EM IB: the Hagia Photia cemetery with rock-cut chamber tombs (Fig. 2b). The material culture of this cemetery has strong Cycladic affinities²² but analyses have shown that most if not all of the pottery was produced locally, though under strong Cycladic technological influence.²³ The type of the rock-cut chamber tomb is traditionally regarded as Cycladic but it should be emphasized that, apart from the cemetery of Ano Kouphonisi,²⁴ all the cemeteries with a similar type of tomb have been found outside the Cyclades:

15 Papadatos & Sofianou 2013, 8.

16 Papadatos & Sofianou 2016; Brogan & Sofianou pers. comm.

17 Legarra Herrero 2014, 286.

18 Tsipopoulou 2012b, 119.

19 Tsipopoulou 2012b.

20 Triantaphyllou 2012, 163.

21 Tsipopoulou 2012b, 117.

22 Davaras & Betancourt 2004, 2012.

23 Day *et al.* 2012.

24 Zapheirou 2008.

Hagia Photia and Gournes in north Crete,²⁵ Manika in Euboea²⁶ and many sites on the Mainland.²⁷ For this reason, greater emphasis should be given not to the material culture, nor to the type of the tomb of the Hagia Photia cemetery, but rather to the associated mortuary practices. These, indeed, constitute a strong and meaningful divergence from the traditional Cretan ones, for two basic reasons: First, burials were made inside chambers cut out below the ground surface, instead of utilizing built tombs or natural cavities above ground. Second, the Hagia Photia tombs were used for a short period of time, for single or a few inhumations, probably representing a family, in contrast to the rest of the Cretan cemeteries, in which tombs were used by large burial groups or the entire community. This is further corroborated by the large number (about 300) of tombs at Hagia Photia, which is in sharp contrast to other Cretan cemeteries comprising one to three tholos tombs or a few rock shelters.

EM IIA

In the following phase, EM IIA, the evidence is rather scarce. The earlier “deviant” cemeteries of Mesorrachi and Hagia Photia were abandoned. The tholos tomb of Mesorrachi probably ceased to be used during EM IIA: the surface survey of the surrounding area did not produce material of the EM IIB, EM III or MM I periods. However, the establishment of a new tholos tomb at Myrsini,²⁸ outside but very close to the Siteia area, and about 15 km from Mesorrachi, shows that the tradition of the tholos tomb continues in east Crete, although it remains a rare phenomenon outside the Mesara. The Hagia Photia cemetery also ceased to be used

at the end of EM IB or the beginning of EM IIA,²⁹ following the abandonment of the contributing settlement.

On the other hand, the communities at Maronia and Petras continued to use burial rock shelters, and in the case of Petras, where detailed evidence is available, the Rock Shelter was used for the secondary disposal of funerary material which had been primarily deposited elsewhere. The EM IIA partially destroyed House Tombs 15 and 17 offered important evidence for this period.³⁰ Apart from the EM IIA funerary material found in the Rock Shelter, the excavations at the cemetery also discovered EC IIA Cycladic-type marble figurines.³¹ It is interesting to note that most of these figurines were found in the surface layers, suggesting that the tombs in which they were originally deposited had been destroyed or eroded away long before excavation.³²

EM IIB

Evidence becomes more abundant in the next phase, EM IIB. In this period the settlement of Petras seems to occupy a large part of the hill, particularly the large plateau upon which the palatial building was later raised. The excavations discovered architectural remains covered with red painted plaster, clay floors, industrial installations cut into the bedrock and abundant pottery with imports and affinities as far as the Mirabello.³³ Despite the fragmentary character of the evidence, it seems that, in EM IIB, Petras begins to emerge as a regional center; in this it is following a path seen at other important sites in neighboring areas, such as Vasiliki, Malia, Gournia and Palaikastro. This is further corroborated by

25 Davaras & Betancourt 2004, 2012; Galanaki 2006.

26 Sampson 1988.

27 For a comprehensive bibliography see Cultraro 2000; Vasilogamvrou 2000.

28 Legarra Herrero 2014, 274.

29 Davaras & Betancourt 2012, 108-110.

30 Tsipopoulou this volume, “Documenting Sociopolitical Changes”.

31 Tsipopoulou 2012a, 59.

32 Tsipopoulou & Simandiraki-Grimshaw in press.

33 Tsipopoulou 1999a, 847; 2002, 136; 2012; Relaki in press.

the evidence from the cemetery. The Rock Shelter continued to receive secondary depositions of funerary material, but to this period are also dated the remains of two partially damaged EM IIA and B house tombs, the earliest so far discovered in the cemetery.³⁴

To this period is also dated the earliest material from the house tomb at Linares (Fig. 2c), above Papadiokampos, on the east edge of the Siteia territory.³⁵

The above evidence suggests that in EM IIB, if not earlier, the type of the house tomb was adopted not only in the old cemetery of Petras, but also in newly established cemeteries, such as Linares. In any case, the appearance of the house tombs constitutes the first meaningful addition to the long East Cretan funerary tradition of burial rock shelters. It is also the first clear evidence in the area of Siteia for the construction of conspicuous burial monuments standing above ground. This act may imply a completely different perception about the significance of the tombs as landmarks. This possibility is further corroborated by the fact that at both sites the house tombs are placed on high ground, overlooking their corresponding settlements and the arable lands around them. Finally, it is interesting to note that the adoption of this type of funerary monument in the area of Siteia coincides with the first direct evidence of an emerging regional center at Petras. This could mean some sort of influence, cultural or ideological, is being exerted by Petras upon other sites of the Siteia region, but the evidence is very limited at the moment.

EM III–MM IA

No significant changes are observed in the EM III and MM IA phases. At Maronia the use of the rock shelters continues.

At Petras, there is clear evidence for growth and prosperity. The settlement increases in size and expands onto the hillsides, where larger buildings were erected.³⁶ A similar picture can be seen in the cemetery, which grows significantly with the establishment of new tombs, all belonging to the type of the rectangular multi-room house tomb.³⁷ The burial rock shelter continued to receive funerary material, probably deriving from the clearing of the house tombs that stood a few meters uphill.

In this period the type of the rectangular house tomb becomes more widely adopted in the broader Siteia area. Apart from the Linares tomb, which continues from EM IIB,³⁸ a new house tomb was built at Mantalia (Fig. 2d),³⁹ about 12 km from Petras, in the Siteia hinterland. On the basis of the available evidence, mortuary practices are similar and parallel to those at other house tomb cemeteries across Crete. The large number of house tombs at Petras indicates that the community was divided into smaller, probably kin-based burial groups. This picture of social fragmentation in death is in agreement with evidence about social competition, which will further increase in the following MM IB–IIA period.⁴⁰

As suggested for the previous period, the adoption of the house tomb by the remote communities of the Siteia hinterland in EM III–MM IA could be the result of influence exercised by the continuously growing center of Petras. However, these influences were probably limited to the realms of symbolism and ideology related to death and the dead. There is

34 Tsipopoulou 2012a, 58; also Tsipopoulou this volume, “Documenting Sociopolitical Changes”, for more recent finds.

35 Soles 1992, 158; Vavouranakis pers. comm.

36 Tsipopoulou 2002, 136; Haggis 2007, 718.

37 Tsipopoulou 2012a, 58–59.

38 Soles 1992, 159; Legarra Herrero 2014, 284.

39 Soles 1992, 127; Legarra Herrero 2014, 285.

40 Tsipopoulou 2002, 136.

no clear evidence for influences in terms of material culture, and certainly no evidence for any sort of political or economic control.

MM IB–II

In the Protopalatial period the picture at Petras changes significantly. MM IB is a period of increased social complexity, as witnessed in both the settlement and the cemetery. In the settlement the architectural evidence is rather scanty, but the high-quality pottery of the so-called “Lakkos” assemblage clearly suggests increased social competition between elite groups and diacritical feasting aiming at social distinction between similar groups.⁴¹ The construction of the palace at the beginning of MM IIA could be the result of either (a) one elite group gaining more power, surpassing the others and establishing an administrative system operating in the palatial building,⁴² as the hierarchical model of interpretation implies, or (b) a collective effort to establish a monumental context for the articulation of dominant elite ideologies expressed through communal ceremonies by competing social groups,⁴³ according to a more heterarchical model of social organization.

In any case social complexity, increased competition and commensality are key elements of social life at Petras, just before and after the erection of the monumental palatial building, as seen also in the funerary record. The cemetery of Petras increases in size and more house tombs were built near the earlier ones. Some of the burials belong to members of elite groups, as evidenced in the elaborate architecture of the tombs,⁴⁴ and the quality and quantity of the finds, particularly the seals with complex shapes

and sealing motifs, and hieroglyphic inscriptions.⁴⁵ Moreover, the high-quality pottery found in the ceremonial areas outside the tombs implies elaborate non-funerary rituals taking place in the open areas of the cemetery in honor of the dead ancestors, and involving collective eating and drinking.⁴⁶

With Petras emerging in MM IIA as an important administrative center, the matter to be addressed is the degree and character of its influence in the broader Siteia area. Recent studies have challenged the role of the earlier palaces as institutions controlling politically and economically contiguous territories, and have argued for the existence of decentralized segmentary states in which the palatial centers exerted only cultural and ideological influence over other communities.⁴⁷ Regional patterns in mortuary practices may provide evidence on this issue, since, apart from their social dimensions, they may be related to beliefs and ideology about death and the dead. Thus, the degree to which other communities in the area follow the material culture and the mortuary practices seen in Petras may indicate the degree of cultural if not economic or political integration of the Siteia region under the sphere of influence of Petras.

Unfortunately the evidence is rather poor, since there is little evidence for Protopalatial cemeteries across the rest of the Siteia region. The House Tomb at Linares ceased to be used, but the tomb at Mantalia continued well into the Protopalatial period, suggesting the maintenance of the house tomb tradition in the broader area. On the other hand, the construction of two tholos tombs at Hagia Photia-Kouphota in MM IIA (Fig. 2e) is rather surprising.⁴⁸ The tombs were built on top of an earlier, MM I building, of which only the foundation course is preserved. Because of extensive erosion the evi-

41 Tsipopoulou 2002, 136–137; Haggis 2007.

42 Tsipopoulou 2002, 137.

43 Schoep 2002; Haggis 2007, 715–718.

44 Betancourt 2012.

45 Tsipopoulou 2012b, 119–120; Krzyszkowska 2012.

46 Tsipopoulou 2012b, 121–123.

47 Knappett 1999; Knappett & Schoep 2000.

48 Tsipopoulou 1990; Belli 2003.

dence is scanty and does not allow safe conclusions. Undoubtedly, the people who built these tombs were aware of the existence of an earlier building underneath but it is impossible to know whether they were descendants of the earlier inhabitants or responsible for the destruction and abandonment of the MM I building. The tholos tombs at Mesorrachi (EM I) and Myrsini (EM III–MM IA) show that the tholos tomb tradition, although rare, was not unknown in the area, suggesting that there is no reason to suppose that the Hagia Photia tholos tombs were established by a group of immigrants from the Mesara. Their dating to MM IIA also suggests that they represent a short-lived phenomenon, and that the site was abandoned immediately or soon after their construction, perhaps due to competition or rivalry with Petras. In any case, the construction of the Hagia Photia tholos tombs so close to Petras indicates the presence of a community with different cultural traditions and perhaps different social organization, following “foreign” mortuary practices in order to express in a rather emphatic way an identity distinct from that of the important habitation center of the region. Thus, a certain degree of mortuary diversity seems to exist in the Siteia area in a period during which a higher degree of cultural integration might have been expected.

Discussion

The above account constitutes an effort to present a historical outline of mortuary practices in the area of Siteia. As is to be expected, this synthesis is not without gaps or problems, and, due to the lack of relevant evidence, is largely based on the typology of the burial facilities rather than the mortuary practices themselves. Nevertheless, a few general points can be made on the basis of the available evidence.

A high degree of diversity is observed, particularly during the early Prepalatial period (EM I–IIA),

when the local mortuary tradition, i.e., funerary deposition in rock shelters, coexists with “foreign” traditions referring to distant areas, namely the Mesara, as seen in the Mesorrachi tholos tomb, and the Cyclades, suggested by the Hagia Photia rock-cut chamber tombs. It would be rather simplistic to interpret this diversity as the result of major population movements from the Mesara or the Cyclades and the colonization of certain areas in the Siteia gulf. In any case, it seems that through the use of different tomb types and mortuary practices, the Mesorrachi and Hagia Photia communities aimed at (a) expressing their relations with distant areas and (b) emphasizing their differences from Petras and other neighboring settlements. Regardless of the origin and the ethnic or cultural identity of these communities, their decisions to follow distant and distinct mortuary practices clearly imply that Petras was not a regional center influencing the mortuary traditions of its neighboring communities. It should be noted, however, that the different way in which the communities of Mesorrachi and Hagia Photia were structured in death does not imply isolation from or hostile relations with Petras. Pottery from Petras, namely grog-tempered pithoi, was imported to Mesorrachi,⁴⁹ and pottery from Hagia Photia, namely Cycladic-type calcite-tempered vases, has been found in Petras.⁵⁰

The decrease of mortuary variability in the late Prepalatial period, from EM IIB onwards, could be associated with the growth of Petras into a large settlement of regional importance. The adoption of the house-tomb type in the Siteia hinterland may be the result of influences in mortuary practices and the ideology of death exerted by Petras over these communities. However, the construction of two tholos tombs at Hagia Photia in the Protopalatial period implies that this influence was rather limited. This could mean that smaller neighboring communities

49 Papadatos & Sofianou 2013, 28.

50 Tsipopoulou 2012b; 2012d.

felt able to follow different mortuary practices from those of the elite groups of the palatial center, and/or that the adoption of the ideologies of the Petras pa-

latial elite(s) concerning death and the dead was not considered an important social strategy at a broader regional level.

Discussion

- Sotirakopoulou:** You mentioned that these rock-cut tombs are known from a Cycladic site. Which one do you mean?
- Papadatos:** Ano Kouphonisi.
- Sotirakopoulou:** Yes, because they are also known from Phylakopi at the later phase.
- Papadatos:** Yes, I know.
- Sotirakopoulou:** I wanted to make it clear. I also do not think that they are of Cycladic origin, and I remember an example of the Final Neolithic from Corinth.
- Papadatos:** Exactly, and also from Manika, from Achaea, etc.
- Sotirakopoulou:** Yes.
- Platon:** Thank you very much; what you presented was very interesting. I would like to ask you whether this diversity in the forms of the tombs could be explained in terms of social differentiation, not just provenance and ethnicity, for example the use of the rock shelters or the caves could be explained along these terms? At Zakros we have a very good example, about which we will present a paper later: at the time of the use of the burial enclosures, caves were used for burials. One of them is very characteristic, but there are two or three more. There one cannot think of a different ethnic group, but maybe this could reflect a different social class?
- Papadatos:** I could accept that very easily, since we have also other types of tombs; the same is true at EM II Gournia. There seems to be a social differentiation between those buried in the Rock Shelter and those buried in the House tombs, but even there one must be very careful. At Petras there was no social differentiation between the Rock Shelter and the house tombs. The Rock Shelter, according to Sevi Triantaphyllou's very careful study, received material from the cleaning of other tombs, and not burials from a different social group. And since in most cases, such as Zakros and Gournia, we are dealing with old excavations, and we did not have the chance to conduct studies like these conducted at the Petras cemetery, one should be careful, but yes, I believe that when we have two or three different types of tombs at the same cemetery it is quite possible that we are dealing with different social groups.
- Tsipopoulou:** I am very happy Yiannis Papadatos that you presented this paper.

- Papadatos:** I promised I would!
- Tsipopoulou:** Otherwise I would have done this research myself. It was very good and very useful: congratulations. I just wanted to note, continuing what Lefteris Platon said, that there are various rock shelters on the west slope of the Petras Kephala hill; we have never touched them, because we do not want to open a new excavation front – there is no time for it. The fact is though that there are at least seven rock shelters on the slope facing the palace and the settlement of Petras. Some of them look empty, especially the lower ones. It would be worthwhile for the next generation of excavators at Petras to investigate them, and maybe the picture we have now would change. On the other hand, the tholos at Mesorrachi is small and very early, it reminds me of the Lebena tholoi, that are also dated to the same period.
- Papadatos:** Yes, it is even smaller.
- Tsipopoulou:** On the other hand, the tholoi at Myrsini and Hagia Photia are large and impressive constructions. The one at Myrsini starts in EM II, the Hagia Photia tholoi are later (MM II), and of more solid construction. Concerning Mesorrachi and the choice of such a remote and isolated place, I just wonder, is it impossible that a small group of people arrived from another area and not having any idea whether the environment was hostile or not, decided to stay there in order to feel safe?
- Philippa-Touchais:** Thank you Yiannis Papadatos, your paper was very good. Lefteris Platon referred to Zakros, and I have studied one of these caves; I wrote that a different population, conducting agricultural and pastoral activities, lived in this area, outside of the central settlement, and used this cave for burials. Furthermore they were more conservative and this explains the difference in the burial habits. I do not know whether you agree with this idea.
- Papadatos:** This is understandable. Only I do need to observe that, as has been very clear from Sevi Triantaphyllou's paper, the only rule we can identify is that there are no rules. The best we can do is to observe all cases and see what we can say about them. As for the Petras Rock Shelter, based on the very detailed study by Triantaphyllou, we can safely state that there is no social differentiation. What will come to light after the excavation and the study of the other rock shelters one cannot say. I do not deny that at Zakros this might have been the case. Furthermore the Rock Shelter excavated at Livari is a completely different case; its relationship to the neighboring tholos tomb is different. What I tried to do in my paper was to talk about the case of Petras, and Siteia in general, and not to propose an explanation for the rest of Crete.
- Philippa-Touchais:** There are no general rules.
- Tsipopoulou:** Speaking of caves and rock shelters, let me tell a story: when I did the intensive survey at Hagia Photia, and having read what was previously written about the area, I discovered that Nikolaos Platon reported the presence of a small cave, or rather a rock shelter, in *Praktika* 1959. Due to erosion it is now only accessible from the sea.

- Papadatos:** At Hagia Photia?
- Tsipopoulou:** Yes, low on the north slope of the Kouphota hill. During the survey in 1985 we visited this rock shelter, because Platon also mentioned a Kamares vase from it. I thought it might have been the burial place of the people who constructed and inhabited the rectangular fortified building. All we found were sherds from one or two Hellenistic amphorae as well as a few possible MM sherds. When I went to Athens I visited Nikolaos Platon and asked him if he had collected any pottery from the rock shelter. Unfortunately, all he could remember was that his wife, pregnant with Lefteris at the time, slipped on a rock and almost fell, which scared them both. Fortunately it was nothing serious, so Lefteris was born a few months later!
- Kyparissi:** I would like to ask you if the bones that were found in the Petras Rock Shelter have been dated.
- Tsipopoulou:** Yes, they have been dated by the pottery, and we know that they are dated between EM IB and MM IB/IIA.
- Palyvou:** Just to say that every time I see tholos tombs, I am shocked by the circular shape. As the rest of the architecture is rectangular, the circle is a statement. All other differentiations I can accept, as a group, but when I see a circle I cross myself and say someone was buried here – I mean I would have thought the same if I was a Minoan, as there were circles only in tombs.
- Papadatos:** This is what I believe too: tholoi are a statement.
- Vavouranakis:** If I may add something: there are a few early specimens of curvilinear architecture, for example in the settlement at Kephala-Petras.
- Papadatos:** Curvilinear yes, but not circular.
- Vavouranakis:** Not circular, by any means.
- Papadatos:** I need to add here that the Mesorrachi tholos is the first construction in the area that is, I would not say monumental, but in any case quite different from what existed previously. What we find in the area from before was mostly rock shelters. Furthermore, the tholos is situated at the edge of the ravine and it faces east. This was the first burial construction that was built in eastern Crete, on the present evidence. The communities in the area were very poor, the land is not fertile, and it is not easy to understand why they went up there, since there is an almost empty large plain at Siteia they could have gone to – so this was really a statement, quite different from what other people in the area were doing.
- Tsipopoulou:** That this is different from whatever else was happening in the area is certain. So maybe this could mean that they came from another area, did not have a good knowledge of the area, did not spent time exploring the region to the east, and discovering that the situation there was better, just over two hills to the east.
- Papadatos:** The plain of Siteia is visible from Mesorrachi.
- Tsipopoulou:** Yes, I can see that.

Papadatos:

I cannot easily accept that a very small group of people, we are dealing with six sites, no more than 50 people in total, would move from the Mesara and walk through half of Crete to arrive at Mesorrachi of all places!

Greek abstract

Ταφικές πρακτικές, πολιτισμική ποικιλομορφία και κοινωνική οργάνωση στην Ανατολική Κρήτη κατά την Προανακτορική περίοδο: μερικές σκέψεις για την ευρύτερη περιοχή του νεκροταφείου του Πετρά
Οι προανακτορικές ταφικές πρακτικές στην ευρύτερη περιοχή της Σητείας παρουσιάζουν αξιοσημείωτη ποικιλομορφία, ακόμα και μεταξύ γειτονικών θέσεων. Αυτή η αυξημένη ποικιλομορφία δεν παρατηρείται σε άλλες περιοχές της Κρήτης, και συνιστά πρόβλημα για την καλύτερη κατανόηση της ιστορίας της κατοίκησης σε αυτήν την περιοχή του νησιού κατά την Προανακτορική περίοδο. Στην παρούσα ανακοίνωση εξετάζονται τα αρχαιολογικά δεδομένα από τα νεκροταφεία της ανατολικής Κρήτης και γίνεται προσπάθεια κατανόησης του συγκεκριμένου φαινομένου, με παράλληλη εξέταση ζητημάτων όπως η πολιτισμική ή/και εθνική ποικιλομορφία και ο τρόπος οργάνωσης των αντίστοιχων κοινωνιών.

