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.

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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		PTSOU	Petras Rock Shelter
EBA	Early Bronze Age	Σ-palace	Stratigraphical trenches of the palace
EH	Early Helladic	W	Wall
EM	Early Minoan		
FN	Final Neolithic	Other	
LH	Late Helladic	A.S.L.	Above Sea Level
LM	Late Minoan	diam.	diameter
LN	Late Neolithic	gr	gram
LBA	Late Bronze Age	h	height
MBA	Middle Bronze Age	kg	kilogram
MH	Middle Helladic	W	width
MM	Middle Minoan	wt	weight
MN	Middle Neolithic	th	thickness
		lt	liter
Petras Area	L	MMD	Mean Measure of Divergence
HT	House Tomb	MNI	Minimum Number of Individuals
R	Room	NISP	Number of Identifiable Specimens
L	Lakkos	SM	Archaeological Museum, Siteia
Р	Petras	vol.	volume
PTSK	Petras Cemetery		

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 – Archaiologika 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 correspondence 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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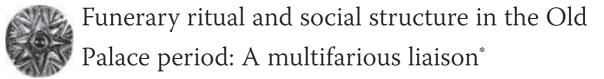
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Abstract

The diversity of the Middle Minoan funerary record continues to defy patterning, since several tombs and cemeteries continue to be used and even expand, although the majority falls out of use by the MM II. Researchers are still puzzled as regards the interpretation of such a non-pattern, but there is a general consensus that the funerary record is more or less reflective of wider social dynamics, namely the emergence of the institutionalized social organization that characterizes the Old Palace period. The continuing funerary sites are usually explained away as remnants of Prepalatial organization or as archaistic strategies for the ritual expression of the new social dynamics. These approaches fail to recognize that funerary ritual, like any type of ritual, may either reflect or deny its related social reality. Such a fact is better appreciated through a posthumanocentric approach, which hinges upon the materiality of the funerary arena and regards the latter as a socially active entity rather than a passive medium for human signification.

This premise is employed here in order to argue that people attained a continuous and dynamic encounter with the funerary arena during the Middle Minoan, which evolved in parallel and actively responded to the wider social trajectories through a tendency towards formalisation and thus towards concrete expression of features of funerary ritual that had remained materially elusive in the Prepalatial period. Such an argument may also challenge the wider picture about Old Palace society as it deconstructs the emergence of centralized institutions as the main driving force of socio-historical evolution on the island.

Introduction

There is a wide consensus among researchers that Prepalatial Crete was characterized by many smallscale kin-based communities, whose coherence was symbolically appropriated mostly – albeit not exclusively – in the course of funerary ritual activity. As the processes of the regional integration of these communities escalated during the late Prepalatial period, investment in the funerary field peaked. New tombs were built, more artifacts were deposited in tombs and dead bodies were handled in increasingly elaborate ways, one of which was their trussing in clay receptacles. The Old Palace period saw the culmination of these processes with the establishment

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of institutionalized social life that largely revolved around the formation of the first palaces and urban centers on the island. It is assumed that burial locales then lost their popularity because they were connected to the old social regime. The period favored the symbolic appropriation of social relations within the context of the palaces.

This narrative has always been better suited for central Crete than east Crete, where the palace at Petras, the first and until now the only such Middle Minoan edifice in east Crete, was built relatively late, i.e., in the MM IIA period.¹ This chronological mismatch between east and central Crete blurs the line between the Prepalatial and the Old Palace periods in east Crete and renders necessary both a separate examination of Middle Minoan east Cretan burials and a distinct narrative about sociocultural evolution during the Early Minoan and the Middle Minoan periods for the area east of the Lasithi massif. For example, it has been argued that funerary locales in east Crete were repositories of social memory, which helped people react to wider social transformations, such as the eastern reverberations of the palatial phenomenon, in a knowledgeable manner.² By the Middle Minoan period they had become landmarks and thus were able to retain their significance and place in the landscape, both in the natural and social sense, despite the wider transformations of the social web at the time.

This argument is now in need of fresh reflection. On the one hand, new evidence has been brought to light, such as the spectacular finds that the excavation of the cemetery at Petras has recently yielded.³ In addition, new bottom-up approaches to the first palaces and to the function of Minoan society⁴ have coupled with post-humanocentric calls for the recognition of the active role of material culture within the Middle Minoan social web.⁵ As a result, both the funerary record and the conceptual framework of its interpretation prompt the re-examination of the social dimension of Middle Minoan burials in east Crete. The present paper is a contribution towards such an aim and revolves around two questions that are fundamental for any examination of funerary remains: What is the role of material culture in the mechanism of funerary ritual? What does this role reveal for the ways in which funerary ritual contributed to the function of society?

The Middle Minoan funerary evidence in east Crete

The Early and Middle Minoan burial record of Crete has been recently reviewed,⁶ while the latest finds, both from Petras and from other east Cretan sites, are presented in this volume.7 Hence, it suffices here to note a few key features of the existing MM funerary evidence in east Crete, including the areas of Mirabello and of Ierapetra. Middle Minoan tombs are mostly found either isolated or in small clusters. Exceptions are the relatively small North Cemetery at Gournia⁸ and the extensive pithos cemeteries at Sphoungaras,9 at Gournia again, and Pacheia Ammos.¹⁰ They are not far from their related settlements. Their forms demonstrate considerable variety, although rectangular built tombs, usually called "house tombs," had been and continued to be the most popular type of burial edifice. Typical examples are the tombs at the North Cemetery of Gour-

¹ Tsipopoulou 2002, 137.

² Vavouranakis 2007, 162-163.

³ Tsipopoulou this volume, "Documenting Sociopolitical Changes".

⁴ Driessen 2010.

⁵ Knappett 2005, 133-166.

⁶ Legarra Herrero 2014, 91-134, including references to specific sites.

⁷ E.g., see papers by Cadogan, Papadatos, Schoep and Tsipopoulou.

⁸ Soles 1992, 1-40.

⁹ Soles 1992, 1-3.

¹⁰ Seager 1916.

nia and the Palaikastro tombs at Sarantari and the Galeti Ridge.¹¹ The tomb at Myrtos-Pyrgos featured an upper story.¹² Other tomb types include probable enclosures, such as the two tombs at Pezoules, Zakros¹³ and Tomb VIIa at Palaikastro,¹⁴ and tholos tombs, such as the one at Myrsini Galana Charakia¹⁵ and possibly the round structures at Hagia Photia Kouphota.¹⁶ Burials were also placed in rock shelters and caves, such as the ones excavated at Kavousi-Evraika¹⁷ or the Mavro Avlaki at Zakros,¹⁸ and in pithoi, as in the case of the aforementioned cemeteries at Pacheia Ammos and Sphoungaras.

The practices regarding the handling of the dead were equally diverse. The record includes primary burials either directly on the ground or in clay receptacles such as pithoi and larnakes. The piling of skulls in the tombs of Pezoules suggests secondary burial treatment, while in other cases, such as at Kavousi-Evraika, bones were found heaped as if they had been casually pushed aside, probably in order to practically make room for the next interment.¹⁹ The small compartments that constitute Tomb VIIa at Palaikastro may represent a series of built ossuaries. The same function accompanied a pithos placed in a specially built compartment at Myrtos-Pyrgos. By contrast, most funerary sites show uniform features regarding the material depositions that accompany the dead. These usually comprise a few pottery vessels, mostly for serving and consuming liquids. Other types of paraphernalia, such as stone vessels or seals, appear less frequently.

- 13 Platon this volume; Platon & Tsiboukaki this volume.
- 14 Soles 1992, 188-191.
- 15 Platon 1956; also Legarra Herrero 2014, 73.
- 16 Tsipopoulou 1988, 31--47. Belli 2003.
- 17 Tsipopoulou in press.
- 18 Platon 1971b, 235; also Legarra Herrero 2014, 124-125, 128-130, 132-133.
- 19 Tsipopoulou in press.

As a general rule, the excavated burials represent only a small part of the assumed population. Exceptions are the extensive pithos cemeteries of Sphoungaras and Pacheia Ammos. The several dispersed tomb groups at Palaikastro and the similar pattern at Zakros may account for part but not all of the funerary activity of their respective Middle Minoan communities. The reason behind this mismatch is archaeological visibility. Isolated or small groups of enclosures and modestly sized edifices and clay receptacles in simple pits or rock crevices are difficult to pin down, while they are easily destroyed in the course of modern agricultural works.

The above review has deliberately left out Petras,²⁰ in order to underline that it constitutes an exceptional case. It is an extensive cemetery of built house tombs spatially organized around open air spaces for public gatherings furnished with stepped and tripartite built features that operated as foci of ritual activity. It has yielded a significant number of burials and a wealth of accompanying objects. It may be compared only to Mochlos²¹ in the early Prepalatial period or Archanes-Phourni in central Crete. Despite its exceptionality, the cemetery of Petras was abandoned in MM II, like most of the other burial locales.

Existing interpretations of the MM funerary record

The features of the Middle Minoan funerary record of east Crete are similar to the developments in central Crete. This common pattern is usually explained as connected to island-wide social tendencies of the time, which included the emergence of regionally integrated societies and a shift from funerary to other types of ritual. In central Crete this shift is

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¹¹ Legarra Herrero 2014, 114, 119, 130.

¹² Soles 1992, 178.

²⁰ Tsipopoulou this volume, "Documenting Sociopolitical Changes".

²¹ Soles 1992, 41-113.

usually attributed to the establishment of the palaces. The latter are traditionally assumed to have dominated the social web because they were seats of elite authority. Alternatively, they are explained as ceremonial centers,²² which expressed the ideology of indigenism triggered by the cease of imports in the late Early Bronze Age and the consequent turn of social interaction on Crete to the consumption of agro-pastoral produce.²³

East Crete is usually seen as a similar, albeit not identical, case to central Crete.²⁴ Here funerary ritual is supposed to have lost its popularity to cult events that took place at peak sanctuaries. These proved better suited arenas to facilitate inter-communal competition as well as the social goals of aspiring elite groups. Signs of the latter are taken to be the built tombs of the North Cemetery at Gournia,²⁵ the two-story tomb at Pyrgos²⁶ and the Lakkos deposit at Petras.²⁷ The general lack of palaces with the relatively late exception of the court-centered building at Petras and the lack of formal areas for public gathering outside east Cretan tombs have been taken to suggest that social processes were less intense in east Crete than in the central part of the island. Following this line of reasoning, the distribution of tombs into small and dispersed groups may be interpreted as a sign of small-scale social groupings, such as households, holding strong despite the wider phenomena of regional social integration.

As much as the above narrative accommodates the material evidence comfortably, it still leaves pending questions. For example, it is difficult to understand why the shift from funerary to other types of ritual happened in MM I and not earlier, since the palace sites, such as Knossos and Phaistos, had attained special status already in the Final Neolithic.28 In the same vein and before tombs started losing their popularity, there was a sudden growth of funerary investment in EM III and mostly in MM IA. This phenomenon suggests social processes that were more complex than the ones assumed so far. This suggestion is further supported by the possibility that the shift from Prepalatial kin-based communities to regionally integrated societies was not easy or straightforward. The destruction of EM II settlements in east Crete, such as Myrtos-Phournou Koriphi and Vasiliki, the shift of habitation to upland and naturally defensible locations, one of which is Monastiraki-Kataleimata,²⁹ and the establishment of fortification³⁰ imply social turbulence with human casualties.³¹ The latter would have highlighted and not downplayed the social importance of the funerary arena.

In addition, and with the exception of the Lakkos deposit at Petras,³² the arguments for the existence of aspiring elite groups are based upon manifestations of funerary display, namely a type of social strategy that suits the early more than the late Prepalatial or the Old Palace period, since the latter is assumed to have endorsed an opposite shift away from funerary ritual. Nonetheless and even if it is accepted that exceptions to the rule existed, such as the North Cemetery at Gournia, Chrysolakkos at Malia³³ and the tomb at Pyrgos, Petras presents another problem, namely the relation between the arena of the elaborate cemetery and the events of conspicuous consumption at Lakkos. Do these two assemblages represent one or two social groups? Were they complementary or competing arenas of social interac-

32 Haggis 2007.

²² Schoep 2010.

²³ Hamilakis 2013, 129-190.

²⁴ Legarra Herrero 2014, 150-160.

²⁵ Soles 1988.

²⁶ Cadogan this volume.

²⁷ Haggis 2007.

²⁸ Todaro 2011; Tomkins 2011.

²⁹ Nowicki 2008.

³⁰ Alušík 2007.

³¹ Cf. Branigan 1999, 91-92 and Chryssoulaki 1999, 81-82 for opposing views; Tsipopoulou 1999b, 185-188 for the political, economic and wider social aspects of late Prepalatial upheavals.

³³ Soles 1992, 160-179.

tion? These questions are beyond the scope of the present paper. Nevertheless, they demonstrate the necessity of revisiting the relationship between burials and social structure in Middle Minoan east Crete in order to achieve a meticulous understanding of the ways in which changes in the funerary arena are linked to their wider historical and social contexts.

Towards an appreciation of the active role of material culture

Tsipopoulou³⁴ and I³⁵ have in parallel suggested that the key to understanding the social dimension of Minoan burial places lies in the role they attained as repositories of social memory. I have further argued that such a role rendered funerary ritual the obvious choice for the symbolic filtering and re-appropriation of the wider social changes that Crete saw in the beginning of the Middle Minoan period. Nevertheless, the social emphasis upon funerary locales pushed the latter beyond the limits of their symbolic and social malleability. As people attempted to filter everything and anything that was happening to them through these places, they lost their strict funerary character. The parallel emphasis on increasingly effective techniques of handling the bodies of the dead, such as their placement in clay receptacles and built ossuaries, brought to the fore a distinction between mortuary rites that tackle the dead body itself and veneration rites that have a strong but generic social dimension.³⁶ Hence, Middle Minoan house tombs looked like their Early Minoan counterparts but may have operated within a completely different system of symbolic signification.

The above narrative accounts both for the sharp popularity and the following drop in the popularity of burial places. However, it has an important shortcoming. It is over-intellectual, as it places primary emphasis on the conceptual framework that upheld the social function of Middle Minoan communities. As Hamilakis has rightly pointed out recently,³⁷ the engagement of people with burial and the rest of their surroundings was foremost practical and mediated by sensory and experiential regimes. Hence, the funerary process was about the re-negotiation of a corporeal landscape and the practical engagement of people with dead people, other living people and with the material paraphernalia of this activity.

It would be plausible to argue additionally that the materiality of such engagements was cast into relief in the Middle Minoan period, because of the fundamental changes in the material facilitation of social life at the time. The cease of imports since the EM IIB may have increased the emphasis on other funerary depositions and the pottery vessels that are predominantly found in Middle Minoan tombs may not have been as simple as we sometimes assume. The Middle Minoan technological innovations in pottery manufacture, such as the increasing use of the wheel and the production of Kamares ware, may have further accentuated the symbolic stress on all vessels, including the ones used in funerary ritual. In addition, the social trajectory towards regional integration and its reverberations upon agro-pastoral economy may have prompted a similar symbolic stress upon the food and drink that was consumed in the course of funerary ritual.

The turbulent conditions of the late Prepalatial period and the human casualties that may have entailed certainly raised social awareness of both the concept of human life and of the physicality of human existence. This suggestion is not only in accord with the adoption of elaborate techniques for handling corpses at the time but it is also supported by the deposition of human figurines at peak sanctuaries. Male figures wearing daggers in particular

³⁴ Vavouranakis 2012, 123-126.

³⁵ Vavouranakis 2007, 160-164.

³⁶ Vavouranakis 2014, 215-218.

³⁷ Hamilakis 2013, 135-143.

may be signs not only of high status,³⁸ but also of a reflection that had been trending in the Middle Minoan period. Such a reflection would revolve around the materiality of human life, namely the practical ways in which human life was safeguarded but also of the ways in which it was possible to physically take it away.

It follows that the Middle Minoan period attained all the necessary conditions for an increased awareness of the material implementation of social relations. This phenomenon may operate as a guide for a fresh approach to Middle Minoan funerary remains. Such an approach should move away from any view of material culture as directly reflective of people's thoughts, actions and relations. Social developments should not be assumed to form first in people's minds and then take the form of action, wherein material culture is instrumental. Instead, we should focus on the active role of material culture in the web of social relationships and a symmetrical approach to both people's actions and the entanglement of people and the material paraphernalia of these actions.39

This focus has a specific conceptual premise. Things and places are polysemous, much like ritual acts that they facilitate, including the funerary performances during the Middle Minoan period that are discussed here. Polysemy triggers a specific process. People try to pin down the symbolic content of ritual in order to render the latter socially effective. The usual strategy is the addition of behavioral cues, which are supposed to ensure the proper performance of ritual. These cues are usually material. Relevant examples from Early and Middle Minoan funerary ritual may be open air spaces that became paved courtyards, and dead bodies that started to be contained in clay receptacles or built spaces. As already mentioned, Hamilakis⁴⁰ has proposed that such developments attempted to fix funerary ritual to the promotion of an ideology of indigenism in late Prepalatial central Crete.

However, the more material cues that are added, the more the symbolic potential of a ritual performance opens up, and thus late Early Minoan and early Middle Minoan funerary contexts may have accommodated a variety of symbolisms; it would probably be chimeric to try and chart them. Instead, it would be more realistic to step back and appreciate the fact that funerary contexts highlighted the fluid boundaries between people and the material world. After all, the funerary process is by definition about this relationship. It takes a person, namely a social subject that has died, out of the world of people and turns her/him into an artifact or an object, since the living participants of a funeral manipulate the dead body in its final resting place. In other cases, artifacts may become so emblematic of the meanings they carry that they achieve a social status of their own. It is not hard to envisage such a status for an elaborately decorated eggshell Kamares cup. This type of vessel carried with it the connotations of its elaborate manufacture techniques and the cost of its acquisition. At the same time, its elegant form almost obliges the person that uses it to handle it with care.

As a result, the materiality of things allows them to affect and modify human behavior, and due to this capacity they may be considered as active social agents. The example of the Kamares cup shows that the blurring of the boundaries between people and things is not an exclusive privilege of the funerary context. However, it is in the latter that the materiality of things, upon which their status hinges, may come under contest. For example, the finding of Kamares cups smashed in funerary contexts suggests that their material constitution was brought to the limit and with it their capacity to be meaningful social entities. Their biographies ended with their smashing and/or deposition, much like the biographies of the dead were terminated during their burial and the fragmentation of their bod-

³⁸ Pilali-Papasteriou 1987, 98.

³⁹ Hodder 2012.

⁴⁰ Hamilakis 2013, 171-174.

ies in the course of secondary funerary rites. The contrast between dead bodies and things, both of which became fragmented and/or discarded, created powerful metaphors and increased the living participants' awareness about the possible meaning of life and death and also about the ways in which they should engage with eggshell Kamares cups on future occasions.

It follows that material culture is not merely instrumental to people's actions, either in practical or symbolic terms. There is always a dynamic relation between people and things, including both artifacts and buildings, wherein both people and things are "act-ants".⁴¹ This dynamic relation is usually brought to the fore in funerary contexts, where the very definition of human life and its relation to the material world are central issues of the ritual performances that take place. Below, I provide a few examples of such a relationship from Middle Minoan east Cretan burial assemblages in order to demonstrate its potential for a renewed understanding of these assemblages.

The importance of Early Minoan remains for the construction of the first EM III house tombs above them at Petras may be employed as an illustrative example of the autonomous agency of objects and other non-human entities. Beyond the quest for the specific connotations that such an action may have entailed, it is plausible to argue that the architectural remains stood out of their environs and thus oriented or "collected", as phenomenological thinkers would put it,42 the gaze of people upon them, and in a sense attracted the building of the house tombs and led to the formation of the lower part of the later area of Ceremonial Area 2. In a similar process, House Tomb 2, with its benches, tripartite façade and open court, was established not only due to the symbolic or wider social aspirations of the people that built and used it, but also - or at least partly - in response to the house tombs that had already existed in this place.

It follows that the final stages of the development of the Middle Minoan cemetery with the rest of the house tombs, the corridors and the complete formation of Ceremonial Area 2 constituted a response to House Tomb 2. As much as it is not possible to know whether the difference between the lower and upper part of the cemetery with their respective open air areas reflected a binary opposition between two different social groups, it would not be unreasonable to suggest that the inevitable effect of such a spatial arrangement created the potential for the formation of different funerary practices and regimes of value and, effectively, for intra-communal competition.

Similar examples of the importance of the material world may be sought beyond Petras in other examples of the east Cretan funerary record. Part of the contents of the early Prepalatial Tomb III at Gournia, both skulls and pottery vessels, were preserved in a pit in the later Tomb I at the same site.⁴³ This act may be seen as the material expression of reverence for the past importance of the tomb and the local burial, which was re-collected and appropriated, materially and conceptually. Chrysolakkos at Malia was also founded upon an earlier stratum of buildings, either houses or house tombs.44 Beyond the funerary sphere, the house at Chamaizi45 is nothing more than the result of another active engagement with the previous structures, as its oval plan was based upon and re-appropriated the plan of the previous building phase. In all these cases we may not be certain what exactly it meant to respect and transform an old building, but we can be confident that people decided to engage in a symmetrical relationship with past monuments and the results of this dialectic entanglement acquired material form.

⁴¹ Latour 2005.

⁴² Norberg-Schulz 1991.

⁴³ Soles 1992, 8-9.

⁴⁴ Treuil 2005, 213-214.

⁴⁵ Davaras 1972.

The late Prepalatial and Old Palace periods were not the only time of dynamic interaction between human and non-human act-ants in Crete. An early Prepalatial similar case is "organic architecture".⁴⁶ The term describes the use of the natural bedrock as a backdrop for most of the built tombs of Mochlos and for built Tomb III at the North Cemetery of Gournia.⁴⁷ Organic architecture fused natural and manmade additions and created burial spaces that stood in between natural rock shelters and *stricto sensu* house tombs. The difference between the early Early Minoan and the late Early Minoan to early Middle Minoan periods is the focus of the latter in the interplay between human and artificial nonhuman entities, namely buildings and artifacts.

This suggestion is supported not only by architecture but also by the similar treatment of dead bodies and artifacts, such as the broken and discarded stone vessels.48 Furthermore, while Early Minoan organic architecture created buildings that constituted hybrid entities with a fusion or mixing of natural and artificial elements, the Middle Minoan funerary practices shifted the focus of such hybrid making practices from nature to human-artifact relations. The best relevant example is the close connection of dead bodies to the funerary pithoi wherein they were trussed. The fit was so tight that the two became amalgamated until the flesh rotted. The same may be argued for the small built ossuaries at Myrtos-Pyrgos⁴⁹ and Palaikastro Tomb VIIa.⁵⁰ The ossuary of Pyrgos was a triple hybrid entity, comprising the built space, a path and the human remains that tightly filled the space. The small cells at Palaikastro Tomb VIIa were custom-sized to the requirements of space of each bone assemblage that was placed in them. In all these cases human remains fused with the built environment and with artefacts and created what are dubbed "mixed hybrids".⁵¹

The emphasis on the re-creation of material entities, both human and non-human, resulted in a material abundance of expressions of funerary symbolism, as a greater part of the burial and veneration process left visible traces. In the early EM, the bones from old burials were deposited in the Rock Shelter of Petras and thus remained invisible. By contrast, late Early Minoan and Middle Minoan human remains in the cemetery remained visible as they accrued in the form of bone heaps in the various house tombs, such as the heaps of dishes found at Petras House Tomb 2. The same happened to the human remains in other contemporary tombs as well as to the material paraphernalia deposited with them, hence the deposits of pottery that are frequently found in Middle Minoan burials. These practices may be plausibly interpreted as attempts to spell out the established funerary rites of passage by rendering them more concrete than before.

The sublime status of materiality and the function of Middle Minoan society

If the diversity of the MM funerary record is attributed to people's attempts to actualize the symbolic capital of their funerary traditions and to give this material form, then it was indeed the materiality of funerary ritual that mattered as a whole, and more than the various significations it was able to facilitate. This phenomenon is reminiscent of Žižek's thesis about the relation between objects and ideology in society.⁵² Žižek argues that sometimes people let things believe for them, instead of first thinking and then attributing meaning to things. To substantiate this reasoning he mentions the Tibetan prayer

⁴⁶ Soles 1992, 210-211; Vavouranakis 2007, 99-111.

⁴⁷ Soles 1992, 28-33.

⁴⁸ Relaki this volume.

⁴⁹ Soles 1992, 178.

⁵⁰ Soles 1992, 188-191.

⁵¹ Ackermann 2012, 15-16.

⁵² Žižek 2009, 31-33.

wheels. In order to pray, a Tibetan monk simply writes a name on a piece of paper and then turns the wheel. It does not matter what the monk thinks. As long as he turns the wheel he is objectively praying, both in the literal and the metaphorical sense. The wheel and the written paper do the praying and thinking for him.

The promotion of materiality did not only intensify the funerary interaction between people and things. It also prompted the formalization of funerary rites. However, and as already noted, this formalization did not necessarily fix the meaning of funerary rites. In its final form, the cemetery of Petras was a spatially complex place, with different open areas, alleys and morphologically diverse house tombs, which accepted an equally diverse collection of depositions. This complexity opened up the connotations of the cemetery to different interpretations. The interpretative potential of such a place may be highlighted by contrasting House Tomb 2 with the benches, the tripartite façade and the consumption of food to House Tomb 10 and its plastered walls, the bench and horns of consecration, as well as its extraordinary depositions. The ritual performances at each of the two tombs probably entailed and renegotiated different regimes of social value.

The same may be argued beyond the limits of funerary ritual and through a contrast between the cemetery and the Lakkos deposit. The decoration of the artifacts that were found at Lakkos copied the motifs of objects deposited at peak sanctuaries and it has been proposed that these aesthetic affinities were part of a social strategy by the aspiring elites of Petras to infiltrate places of popular activity.⁵³ This strategy is radically different from what was happening at the cemetery, where the sphere of funerary symbolism was blended with other regimes of signification, resulting in tombs that resembled domestic architecture, and the tripartite arrangement and the

53 Haggis 2007, 762-768.

horns of consecration that made reference to cult contexts.

The open and diverse character of the symbolic potential of funerary contexts is compatible with the general picture that has been established for Middle Minoan society. This picture shows a balance between co-existing but diverse hierarchical and heterarchical structures,⁵⁴ and between an increasing importance of corporate groups such as houses⁵⁵ and greater network connectivity.⁵⁶ As Legarra Herrero has pointed out,⁵⁷ corporate groups and networks are not compatible in terms of social organization and this suggests that the constitution and function of Middle Minoan society was an idiosyncratic hybrid of different types of social constituents. The only way to achieve this mixture and make it work, as it evidently did, was a relaxed regime of social principles, wherein diverse systems of value were able to co-exist. Co-existence should not be misinterpreted as a lack of social friction, though. The emphasis on house tombs may be demonstrating a need to charge the notion of the house symbolically, perhaps because regional integration had started threatening real households and corporate affiliations were becoming more popular than actual kinbased relations.

I have elsewhere argued⁵⁸ that the mosaic of larger and smaller social units that constituted Crete in the Middle Minoan period may be described as a manifestation of the "multitude".⁵⁹ This is a 17thcentury concept that describes a wide social group, which is less coherent than the nation or the people but more organized than the mass or the mob. It is a network of individual social subjects and groups connected via the production of immaterial wealth, such as common life values. The multitude is based

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⁵⁴ Schoep & Knappett 2004.

⁵⁵ Driessen 2010.

⁵⁶ Knappett this volume.

⁵⁷ Legarra Herrero 2014, 164.

⁵⁸ Vavouranakis 2015.

⁵⁹ Hardt & Negri 2004 for analysis and further references.

upon swarm intelligence and thus does not suppress individuality as it does not require uniformity. The diversity of the Middle Minoan funerary record, the similarities and regional differences between peak sanctuaries and even the guarded road networks are signs of the emergence of such a social entity. Thomas Hobbes in his famous work Leviathan argued that the multitude must be harnessed because it is so eager for power that it becomes a threat to humanity. This is why he believed that authority is a necessary evil for societies. Leaving aside the Hobbesian pessimistic view of the human condition, it is important to note that the multitude produces authorities and not vice versa. Perhaps the exceptional house tombs of Petras and Gournia, the Lakkos deposit and the exceptional building at Gournia, as well as the later palace of Petras, were the offspring of a similar social process.

Conclusion

In conclusion, I have argued that the difficulty in discerning a pattern in the Middle Minoan burial record of east Crete does not necessarily mean that the Middle Minoan communities were not interested in funerary investment and its symbolism. Rather, the diversity of the funerary record reflects the fluidity of social organisation that characterized Middle Minoan Crete, especially its eastern regions. The parallel existence and competence of different types of social relations and groupings needed a stable reference point which would anchor diverse regimes of collectively held values. The very materiality of the funerary field of ritual activity constituted an ideal solution to this need. An emphasis on the material implementation of funerary ritual itself may be the common thread behind the morphological diversity of the record, and it may explain the intensity of practical engagement that late Early Minoan and early Middle Minoan funerary ritual demanded.

The high status of funerary materiality was part of a generalized awareness of the material conditions of social life and the autonomous and active social role of these material conditions, since they facilitated the transformation of Minoan Crete from a group of dispersed kin-based communities to a series of regionally integrated and institutionalized societies. As material mediums became more stable and reliable in the ideological connotations they carried, the way was paved for the de- and re-construction of social relations and the contexts wherein these relations were being re-appropriated, hence the funerary arena started losing its popularity to other ceremonial contexts, such as the peak sanctuaries and the palatial courts.

Discussion

Relaki:	This was very interesting; as you know we like the same things. I am not so sure I un-
	derstood how you envisage this interaction between individuals and the multitude. I
	mean this is a new theory to me and I have probably not understood the basics of it. I
	think this is the interesting new thing here: how do we understand individuals and the
	multitude in the funerary context. Could you expand a little bit on that?
Vavouranakis:	The relation of the individual to the multitude in general is that the multitude does not
	extinguish individuality. On the contrary, the aggregation of many individuals means
	something a lot bigger than simply adding them.
Relaki:	Right, this is what I understood. So, how do we pin that down materially? So, let us say
	that at Petras we see fragmented individuals, thrown all over the place, and fragmented
	pots and other objects, so we can see the fragmentation, how do we see the coming to-
	gether of individuals as opposed to the multitude?
Vavouranakis:	I think the diversity of treatment of the bodies may well be a sign of individuality, but at
	the same time there is a wider picture that is not uniform, because there are individual
	cases, but still it does show a general tendency.
Wright:	Thank you for providing us with a framework for discussing so many of the things that
	we have been discussing today. I would like to go back to the paper that Yiannis Papada-
	tos gave and the one that followed by Efi Nikita, because they actually help us deal with
	some of these issues and I think that in current social history we are very concerned
	with issues of agencies and actors, and within a long discourse basically in argument
	with Marx – basically carried out in social history – about the heavy hand of history and
	historical circumstance on individual and on social groups and social actors. That is a
	central topic that sociologists have been wrestling with for the last 50 years at least. And
	I think people have tended to resolve that today when we talk about agencies and social
	actors; we really do have to think about how individuals do not exist except in relationship
	with other social actors, other individuals, who form different forms of social groups,
	which have agency and which create, as you said, structures that act back to individuals
	in different ways. What I found appealing in the papers they gave, which speaks to the
	issues that you are contending with here, is on the one hand Yiannis Papadatos pointed
	out that there are different ways in which the material record, looking at these burials and
	mortuary practices, seems to reflect a community of communication within Crete and

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outwards into the islands that creates differentiation that does not have to be explained by people moving around according to patterns just of migrations, but rather through some kinds of social relation that Efi Nikita points to as probably managed socially - if I understood what she is looking at – because we are looking at genetic changes, people making relationships with each other that become genetic, that is there is intermarriage going on. And if you think about how the knowledge people have about living in the Mesara or people living in eastern Crete, the geographic knowledge, the knowledge of different communities, the personal relations that are built up, what happens when those heat up and get to a point when they are having an impact on social relations and economic production, that really is leading to higher levels of organization, that lead in other words to something that we might describe as quasi-hierarchical, because it is extracting something from the economy? Donald Haggis has talked about this in different ways too. What I am pressing here is why would we need to invent a new theoretical perspective when we have one in social agency models which seems to be working very well? And what we might want to do is take some of this work by bioarchaeology or work that is looking at different community groups that are engaging in different kind of practices, community practices that have to do with consumption and production of objects to get into exchange and interchange among people, based on very diverse growing and communities of interaction. What I am pointing to is that the ceramic analysis, the dental work here, all seem to be pointing to agents acting in different ways as they get to know the geography, the social geography of the landscape, increasingly well, and we can even then refer to the work that some of the other papers have presented, about metallurgy for instance, which is bringing in outside influences that are inquisitive in nature and people want to go on what they want brought in - they want copper and they want tin, and they are finding ways to move out into the Aegean to bring these in. It seems to me that we have a pretty good way of dealing with these, I guess I am a little bit leery of the notion of the multitude, because as you said it is sort of plucked out without any particular social theory context - that is my comment. You seem to be asking us to engage in a model that, to my mind, is not going to advance us beyond the models we have here. But I might have missed something, so. Sorry about this long comment.

Vavouranakis: No, it is a very interesting comment/question. So, I will try to give an answer that is as brief as possible for such an important series of issues that you have raised. (a) I think that the notion of agents as it is now has overestimated the cognitive ability of people in contrast with their dynamic relation to their material entrance and I think there is exactly this growing body of literature in case studies that says so. (b) I find I have to say I am not happy with the idea that households or houses existed throughout the Bronze Age and followed a linear process towards a different kind of society. I do think that the Protopalatial society at least is qualitatively different from the previous periods and that this difference in quality is a historical phenomenon, and on one hand this phenomenon is political and we have to account for it, on the other hand it has to do with the regionalization of the societies – and to say that we have houses or bigger houses or bigger households, this is too minimalistic to explain the regional scale of organization.

	We need a different concept for this. The concept is not straight out of Thomas Hobbes
	and Spinoza – to mention the two main 17th-century theorists – it has also been used
	more and more progressively, but what they find intriguing about the original concep-
	tualization of the multitude is that it pertains to fluid political institutions and, I think,
	Middle Minoan Crete was about fluid political institutions. Not quite as much, as you
	have very well commented on a previous talk of mine, as early proto-states; a bit less than
	that maybe, but certainly more than simple houses and the Prepalatial configuration of
	social organization. And this is where my problem lies. At the same time we do have this
	funerary field, where we see material forms that do not really conform, so I think that
	we have to accept that the materiality of death, like the materiality of any kind of human
	activity, is slightly autonomous from the human subject, at least in an interesting and
	dynamic relation: the same way that it would be, I mean, of course I can put on my nice
	suit and then sleep on my couch, but I am not likely to do that, because the niceness of
	my suit tells me not to put it on if I want to lie on my couch. It is my jumper that tells
	me to put it on. Of course I have given the jumper and the suit those meanings, but then
	they project them back to me.
Relaki:	I am quite fascinated, I mean I do agree that the Protopalatial people wanted to be differ-
	ent, but as you well know I have argued that they looked back a lot, and I still see that in
	funerary patterns, so I was wondering where do you see the differences from the previous
	periods and within this new framework that you have developed? And the bottom line
	is we have talked about networks and broad sorts of connections, so whatever it is that
	the multitude will bring, it is not served by these concepts. That is my idea.
Vavouranakis:	I think that the multitude is compatible with the idea of the network.
Relaki:	Yes, indeed. And I think it is probably too compatible. So what is the new thing?
Vavouranakis:	I think that the network places more emphasis on who is the navigator. It sees sailorswho
	become navigators. I think that the multitude has a much more possibilistic attitude.
Relaki:	I think that we agree. I do not see the network as that, as having a beginning and a direc-
	tion, it is multidirectional and I think this is what you are describing here – if I understand

vavouranakis:vavouranakis:very hierarchical interaction that probably is not very hierarchical.Vavouranakis:Yes, the two concepts are very similar, just that one gives more emphasis on the relations

themselves and the other gives more emphasis on identities themselves and people – where you draw the line, or where you construct lines.

Greek abstract

Ταφικό τελετουργικό και κοινωνική δομή στην Παλαιοανακτορική περίοδο: μια πολυσχιδής συσχέτιση Η ποικιλία των MM ταφικών στοιχείων εξακολουθεί να αποφεύγει την τυπολογική ένταξη, εφόσον αρκετοί τάφοι και νεκροταφεία όχι μόνον συνεχίζουν, αλλά και επεκτείνονται, αν και η πλειονότητα σταματά να χρησιμοποιείται στην MM II. Η έρευνα ακόμα εκπλήσσεται σε σχέση με την ερμηνεία μιας τέτοιας μητυπολογίας, αλλά υπάρχει γενικά η παραδοχή ότι τα ταφικά δεδομένα αντικατοπτρίζουν λίγο ως πολύ τις ευρύτερες κοινωνικές δυναμικές, ιδιαίτερα την ανάδυση της θεσμικής κοινωνικής οργάνωσης που χαρακτηρίζει την Παλαιοανακτορική περίοδο. Οι συνεχιζόμενοι ταφικοί χώροι ερμηνεύονται συνήθως ως λείψανα μιας Προανακτορικής οργάνωσης ή ως αρχαϊστικές στρατηγικές για την τελετουργική έκφραση των νέων κοινωνικών δυναμικών. Αυτές οι προσεγγίσεις δεν είναι σε θέση να αναγνωρίσουν ότι το ταφικό τελετουργικό, όπως κάθε τύπος τελετουργικού, μπορεί είτε να αντανακλά, είτε να ακυρώνει τη σχετική κοινωνική πραγματικότητα. Ένα τέτοιο γεγονός εκτιμάται καλύτερα μέσω μιας μετα-ανθρωποκεντρικής προσέγγισης, η οποία στηρίζεται στην υλικότητα της ταφικής αρένας και βλέπει την τελευταία μάλλον ως κοινωνικά ενεργή οντότητα παρά ως παθητικό μέσον ανθρώπινης σημασίας.

Αυτή η προσέγγιση χρησιμοποιείται εδώ ώστε να υποστηριχθεί ότι οι άνθρωποι κατακτούσαν μια συνεχή και δυναμική διαδραστική σχέση με την ταφική αρένα κατά τη MM περίοδο, η οποία εξελίχθηκε παράλληλα και επέδρασε ενεργητικά στις ευρύτερες κοινωνικές συντεταγμένες μέσω μιας τάσης προς την τυποποίηση και επομένως την συγκεκριμένη έκφραση χαρακτηριστικών του ταφικού τελετουργικού τα οποία έμεναν υλικά ασαφή στην Προανακτορική περίοδο. Αυτό το επιχείρημα μπορεί εξάλλου να κλονίσει την ευρύτερη εικόνα μας για την Παλαιοανακτορική κοινωνία, καθώς αποδομεί την εμφάνιση κεντρικών θεσμών ως την κύρια κινητήρια δύναμη της κοινωνικο-ιστορικής εξέλιξης στο νησί.

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