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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Cretan mantinada for death
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## Abbreviations

### Archaeological periods

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Period</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>EBA</td>
<td>Early Bronze Age</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EH</td>
<td>Early Helladic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EM</td>
<td>Early Minoan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FN</td>
<td>Final Neolithic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LH</td>
<td>Late Helladic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LM</td>
<td>Late Minoan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LN</td>
<td>Late Neolithic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LBA</td>
<td>Late Bronze Age</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MBA</td>
<td>Middle Bronze Age</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MH</td>
<td>Middle Helladic</td>
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<tr>
<td>MM</td>
<td>Middle Minoan</td>
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<tr>
<td>MN</td>
<td>Middle Neolithic</td>
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### Other

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<thead>
<tr>
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<th>Description</th>
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<tr>
<td>A.S.L.</td>
<td>Above Sea Level</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>diam.</td>
<td>diameter</td>
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<tr>
<td>gr</td>
<td>gram</td>
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<tr>
<td>h</td>
<td>height</td>
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<tr>
<td>kg</td>
<td>kilogram</td>
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<td>w</td>
<td>width</td>
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<tr>
<td>wt</td>
<td>weight</td>
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<tr>
<td>th</td>
<td>thickness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>lt</td>
<td>liter</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MMD</td>
<td>Mean Measure of Divergence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MNI</td>
<td>Minimum Number of Individuals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NISP</td>
<td>Number of Identifiable Specimens</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SM</td>
<td>Archaeological Museum, Siteia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>vol.</td>
<td>volume</td>
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### Petras Area

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area</th>
<th>Description</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>HT</td>
<td>House Tomb</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R</td>
<td>Room</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>L</td>
<td>Lakkos</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P</td>
<td>Petras</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PTSK</td>
<td>Petras Cemetery</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

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.
<table>
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<th>Abbreviation</th>
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<tr>
<td>AAA</td>
<td>Archaiologika Analekta Athinon</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ActaPalaeobot</td>
<td>Acta Palaiobotanica</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AJA</td>
<td>American Journal of Archaeology</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AJPA</td>
<td>American Journal of Physical Anthropology</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AJS</td>
<td>American Journal of Sociology</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AmJHumBiol</td>
<td>American Journal of Human Biology</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AnnMathStat</td>
<td>Annals of Mathematical Statistics</td>
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<tr>
<td>AR</td>
<td>Archaeological Reports</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arachne</td>
<td>(on-line access to the CMS, with corrected information and enhanced illustrations) <a href="http://arachne.uni-koeln.de/drupal/?q=de/node/access">http://arachne.uni-koeln.de/drupal/?q=de/node/access</a> date March 2016.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ArchDelt</td>
<td>Archaeologikon Deltion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ArchEph</td>
<td>Archaeologike Ephemeris</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ASAtene</td>
<td>Annuario della Scuola Archeologica Italiana di Atene</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BAR-IS</td>
<td>British Archaeological Reports, International Series</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BCH</td>
<td>Bulletin se correspondence hellénique</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BICS</td>
<td>Bulletin of the Institute of Classical Studies of the University of London</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BSA</td>
<td>Annual of the British School at Athens</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CMS</td>
<td>Corpus der minoischen und mykenischen Siegel, Berlin 1964-2000, Mainz 2002-</td>
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<tr>
<td>CretChron</td>
<td>Kretika Chronika</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EtCret</td>
<td>Études Crétoises</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>JAS</td>
<td>Journal of Archaeological Science</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>JMA</td>
<td>Journal of Mediterranean Archaeology</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kentro</td>
<td>Kentro: The Newsletter of the INSTAP Study Center for East Crete</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MA</td>
<td>Monumenti Antichi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OJA</td>
<td>Oxford Journal of Archaeology</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prakt</td>
<td>Praktika tes en Athenais Archaeologikes Etaireias</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SIMA</td>
<td>Studies in Mediterranean Archaeology</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SMEA</td>
<td>Studi Micenei ed Egeo-Anatolici</td>
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Feeding the dead, toasting the living? The view from faunal remains

Valasia Isaakidou

Abstract
Funerary practices and associated rituals have been central in our understanding of EM societies, as has the practice of feasting, as a means of social reproduction and competition. Traditionally, most scholarship has focussed on the analysis of funerary artefactual assemblages, and especially ceramic vessels, which unambiguously attest to the importance of commensality in funerary contexts. On the other hand, recourse to bioarchaeological data has been limited due to insufficient recovery or reporting. Branigan (1993) and Hamilakis (1998) explored their potential, based by necessity on excavators’ brief presentations of poorly recovered and summarily reported assemblages. Increasingly rigorous recovery protocols implemented in mortuary site excavations provide more adequately retrieved bioarchaeological assemblages and studies by specialists offer us better data to explore pertinent questions, most importantly, the role, if any, of carnivorous feasting and structured deposition of its remains. This paper reviews available evidence and presents new zooarchaeological data from recently excavated and/or studied funerary contexts, in order to shed light on this controversial issue.

Introduction
The last two decades have witnessed a widespread interest among Aegean prehistorians in feasting and its role in negotiating, contesting and consolidating socio-political relations.1 Some have also argued for the practice of feasting in Prepalatial mortuary contexts, mainly on the basis of ceramic evidence, which unambiguously attests to the importance of commensality, while recourse to archaeobotanical and zooarchaeological evidence has been limited.

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1 E.g., Halstead & Barrett 2004; Mee & Renard 2007; Wright 2004; Hitchcock et al. 2008.
In his 1993 review of the then published faunal assemblages (often just brief descriptions or even laconic comments by excavators in preliminary reports), Branigan concluded from the paucity of the data that feasting was not part of EM funerary rituals. More specifically, he interpreted the rarity of reporting of animal bones from tholos tombs as reflecting a real rarity or even total absence of animal bones in relevant deposits and suggested that “feasting [was not] a part of the funerary ritual, unless it involved only token amounts of food and/or took place outside the tomb chamber.”\(^1\) In a later study, Hamilakis discussed the importance of feasts in mortuary contexts,\(^4\) drawing on theoretical approaches from sociology and cultural anthropology, which was especially pertinent for the EM, as the evidence from cemeteries rather than settlements has been central to our understanding of EM societies. Of most relevance to the present discussion, Hamilakis argues, in contrast to Branigan, that faunal evidence is sufficient to support the practice of mortuary feasting.

The present paper evaluates the two opposing views through the assessment of faunal data reported in the literature, and the study by the author of faunal assemblages recovered from systematic excavations of funerary contexts mainly since the early 2000s, in an attempt to provide an up-to-date evaluation of available data and plausible interpretations thereof.

**Faunal assemblages from published funerary contexts**

In his 1998 paper,\(^5\) Hamilakis briefly reviewed the potential of reported faunal assemblages from EM (among other) funerary contexts at Lebena, Hagia Triadha, Krasi and Archanes and concluded that there was “material evidence of food remains *in many cases*” (emphasis added) despite taphonomic and recovery biases, and disturbance of the tombs during regular cleaning.\(^6\) Looking back at the original publications of the faunal assemblages mentioned, it becomes evident that, with few exceptions, systematic reporting of animal bone assemblages from EM mortuary contexts is almost non-existent.

Arguably, this tendency may reflect the quality of excavation and reporting of mortuary sites, which in turn is probably due to the fact that their rich finds had made them a target for looters from the mid-19th century. As a result, many were excavated before WWII by the Greek Archaeological Service under considerable time pressure and with limited resources (including a rarity of access to specialists)\(^7\) to avert the risk of looting. Looting continued in the post-war decades, the degree of devastation wrought by looters illustrated in Branigan’s description of the fate of the Hagia Kyriaki tholos.\(^8\) Moreover, even in the case of ‘research’ excavations well into the 1960s, a combination of the conservatism of Aegean prehistoric archaeology and the delayed availability of relevant analytical expertise meant that excavators were often unable or reluctant to commit the resources necessary, not only for the study of faunal/osteological material, but even for its retrieval and storage (cf. the fate of the Kamilari skeletal material; Girella 2013). Thus, the general practice was, at best, to be very selective in the recovery of bones (including human) and, at worst, to avoid collection altogether or resort to immediate disposal without prior analysis.

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2 A variety of terms have been used to refer to the round mortuary structures in Cretan prehistory (e.g., round tombs, tholos tombs etc.). Here, for the sake of consistency the term ‘tholos tomb’ will be used.
3 Branigan 1993, 77.
4 Hamilakis 1998.
5 Hamilakis 1998.
7 It is of interest to read Marinatos’ frustration at the lack of specialized personnel among members of staff at the Archaeological Museum of Herakleio, who would have been able to evaluate the human remains from his Krasi excavation (Marinatos 1929, 132).
The most thorough presentation of a faunal assemblage from the sites referred to by Hamilakis is that from the EM tholos at Krasi, excavated and preliminarily published by S. Marinatos (1926). Marinatos states that the animal bones were found exclusively in the lowest deposits of the tholos and presents both the original short descriptive report of the remains by the zoologist M. Hilzheimer in German, and a summary in Greek. The data are not tabulated, but from Hilzheimer’s report we can infer that fewer than fifty specimens were recovered, many of them teeth, some belonging to the same animal. More specifically, sheep and/or goats were represented by a single ulna, an unfused distal metapodial epiphysis and a few teeth (some unworn, therefore from a young individual and some worn, therefore an adult); cattle by two premolars and one molar, all maxillary; dog by a partial mandible and several teeth, perhaps implying the deposition of a complete skull; and pig by a single incisor. Hilzheimer considered the (mainly) long bones of hare as belonging to at least two individuals, originally deposited whole. A few post-cranial bones and a right mandible of hedgehog are also reported.9

Marinatos ignores the few post-cranial elements of sheep and/or goat and interprets the presence of cattle, sheep and/or goat and pig teeth as representing the deposition of complete skulls, originally belonging to individuals sacrificed at the tomb.10 Conversely, he sees the presence of complete post-cranial elements of hedgehog, hare and dog as evidence that whole animals were deposited as offerings to the dead. There is no discussion of the presence or absence of butchery evidence, or any further details. Nevertheless, this report is still the earliest and probably the only example of recovery and discussion of faunal remains from a funerary context excavated in the pre-war period.

While it was not possible to locate any reference to animal bones by Alexiou himself in early reports of the Lebena excavations in the Archaeologikon Deltion, Daux’s summary of findings of the 1959 campaign in BCH reports “vessels filled with food (from these were recovered bones and teeth of animals, olive stones and a fair quantity of marine shells)”.11 Based on this report, Murphy concluded that funerary rituals “may have also included an eating ritual, a final meal with the dead person. The scarcity of evidence of food remains in the tombs on a whole, however, implies that if there was such a ritual it may only have involved token amounts of food”.12

For several other cemeteries there are a few brief references to the presence or absence of animal bones, but usually no reference at all. In the latter case we cannot be certain whether this denotes real absence of animal bones or lack of interest in their observation and collection. Marinatos reports a personal comment from Xanthoudides who stated that he did not focus his attention on the existence or otherwise of animal bones in his excavations of Mesara tholoi.13 Such attitudes are unfortunate, as, in order to address the issues raised here, a brief comment on the absence of bones is as useful as detailed analyses. Thus it is important that publications comment on the lack of such finds. For Hagia Photia, Betancourt and Davaras firmly state that no animal bones were found, nor evidence for cooking fires, and infer that no cooking of meals took place on site and thus cooking pots were present as offerings.14

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9 Marinatos 1929, 124, footnote 2.
10 Marinatos 1929, 133.
11 In Daux’s own words, «vases remplis de nourriture (on y a recueilli des os et des dents d’animaux, des noyaux d’olives et quantité de coquillages)». Daux 1960, 844.
12 Murphy 1998, 33.
13 Marinatos 1929, 132, footnote 8.
Mortuary faunal assemblages recently excavated or re-located

In the last decades, theoretical and methodological advances in Aegean prehistoric archaeology and bioarchaeological analyses have resulted in more rigorous recovery protocols being implemented even in the context of rescue excavations, which provide more adequately recovered and documented bioarchaeological assemblages. This enables specialists to attempt more detailed analyses which produce datasets suitable for addressing pertinent questions: in the present context, whether carnivorous feasting and structured deposition of its remains constituted part of funerary rituals. The author of the present paper has had the opportunity to examine a number of such assemblages since the early 2000s. The following sections discuss briefly the faunal evidence from three of these sites: the Moni Odigitria tholos, the Livari-Skiadi tholos tomb and Rock Shelter and the Kephala-Petras Rock Shelter. Finally, the evidence from Hagios Charalampos cave is also summarised from published sources, as it provides a unique insight into the matter in hand.

Moni Odigitria

Moni Odigitria, excavated in 1979-1980, is an excellent case study, as excavation and recovery of assemblages was systematic, despite looting, and included both internal and external areas. Moreover, some contexts had not been affected by looting and so provided well-provenanced assemblages from undisturbed contexts. Thus, it is expected that a representative sample of the materials originally deposited have been retrieved by the excavators, especially insofar as the bioarchaeological remains are concerned. The skeletal material came mainly from the looters’ dumps, carefully dry-sieved to recover both skeletal material and any artefacts which escaped the looters’ notice. Thus, despite the destruction the site suffered, subsequent recovery was thorough and prompt, so that any animal bones deposited within the tomb and its annexes would have been recovered alongside human bones. The sorting of human bones by specialists also ensured that any animal bones would have been recognised and identified as such.

As observed by Branigan, too few animal bones were recovered from the site to support claims for funerary feasting. The author of the present paper was shown the few animal bones found among the human remains while working on other material at the Stratigraphical Museum at Knossos, and the following discussion is based on notes taken by the author. The assemblage consisted of just six specimens from deposits within Tholos A, which had not been disturbed by the looters, and another six from the sieved soil of the looters’ dumps. The Tholos A group of bone included various parts of the skeletons of (possibly) cattle, dog, badger, sheep or goat and pig (one from each species). The picture is similar in material from the looters’ dumps. Also interesting but of unknown provenance were seven worked sheep and goat metacarpals found during sorting of human skeletal remains. As these specimens were both worked and derived from parts of the skeleton that are not meat-bearing, it is clear that they are not evidence for consumption, but should rather be viewed as ‘artefacts’.

Livari-Skiadi

The Livari-Skiadi tholos and Rock Shelter, excavated in 2008-2010, are of the most systematically explored EM funerary sites. Their use appears to have been more or less contemporary, covering the EM I to

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15 The materials were recorded using a uniform protocol, detailed in Isaakidou 2005.


17 Branigan 2010a, 255.
EM III/MM IA periods. Very modest animal bone assemblages were recovered from both. The tholos assemblage was the smaller: twenty-five teeth and post-cranial specimens were recorded which could be securely identified to the level of species and body part. In addition, a number of pieces of goat horncores were found in seventeen of the bone groups collected during excavation, but in most cases these were too fragmented to allow siding and calculation of minimum numbers of horncores.

The Rock Shelter yielded a larger assemblage, approaching two hundred recorded specimens. About half of these were recovered from the lowest undisturbed layer. About 80% belong to what we usually consider ‘edible’ animals (i.e., goats, sheep, hare, pigs, in approximate descending order of importance), on the basis of butchery and fragmentation patterns compatible with processing for consumption as food, from more or less contemporary settlement contexts. Dog, marten and badger bones make up the rest of the assemblage. Unfortunately, butchery marks on the Livari material are extremely rare, identified on only two specimens. Fragmentation patterns, which may also be used to identify human processing, are not very illuminating due to small sample sizes. On the other hand, the incidence of scavenger gnawing marks is very low (4%), suggesting that such animals played a minor, if any, role in the formation of the assemblage, so it is logical to assume that its accumulation is primarily anthropogenic. Parts of the skeleton (cranial, axial and appendicular) vary between species, with sheep and goats, which are the most numerous, represented by the whole range of anatomical zones. Overall numbers are small and the assemblage quite fragmentary, so it is not clear whether carcasses of a few whole animals are represented, or small parts of several animals.

The very small number of animal bones recovered in the Livari tholos cannot support any claims for carnivorous feasting, or any systematic deposition of selective animal parts as funerary offerings. The fragments of burnt horncores could be hunting trophies, if they belonged to wild goat, but their highly fragmented state and burning (leading to shrinkage) do not allow distinction between wild and domestic and, since they may represent as few as a single pair, it is unlikely that their deposition was a regular practice. Perhaps the larger rock shelter assemblage represents irregular deposition of offerings, compatible with the suggestion of successive episodes of deposition of material cleared from elsewhere, but a few examples of articulating skeletal elements from single animals implies primary deposition of at least some animal parts, possibly at the time when cleared material was deposited in the Rock Shelter. There is no single large deposit of animal bones compatible with a feasting event.

The Kephala-Petras Siteia Rock Shelter

The most directly comparable site to the Livari Rock Shelter is the also carefully excavated and documented Kephala-Petras Rock Shelter, excavated in 2006, its use dating from EM IB to MM IB–IIA. Individual groups of finds could be dated to distinct ceramic phases, indicating that material was collected from another location and re-deposited regularly in its final resting place. Almost five hundred animal bone

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18 Sofianou & Papadatos 2015.
19 Non-recordable (not identifiable either to the level of species or body part) specimens were no more than 20-30.
20 The discussion relates only to material from securely dated contexts. Any material from the uppermost layers (Layer I from the tholos and Layers I and II from the Rock Shelter), which showed evidence of disturbance, was excluded from the study.
21 See Isaakidou 2011a; 2011b; 2011c; Molloy et al. 2014 for comparative data and references.
22 Binford 1981.
specimens were recorded, most of which belonged to
domesticates (70% of total MinAU). The assemblage
is not large in terms of the statistical robustness of
resulting datasets, but larger than most others from
similar contexts. Study of the stratigraphy and ce-
ramics is in progress, so not all excavation units have
been finally dated, but there is material that can be
attributed to specific ceramic phases within the EM
and later periods. Preliminary dating of excavation
units suggests that the majority of the faunal mate-
rial accompanies the deposition of artefactual as-
semblages of the EM (mostly EM I) period.

The presence of some groups of articulating
post-cranial bones in closely dated contexts again
supports the view that at least some of the faunal
material was deposited while fresh with the indi-
vidual human and artefact sub-assemblages when
these were deposited in the Rock Shelter (other-
wise these anatomically associated specimens would
have been unlikely to end up in the same excava-
tion unit). Moreover, it suggests that care was taken
when additional material from other clearances (?)
was deposited over earlier accumulations. The low
frequency of gnawing, some of which may even be
human, is compatible with the above observations,
as is the high incidence of complete bones of sheep,
goats and pigs. More compatible with the interpreta-
tion of bones as representing offerings rather than
remains of feasts is the presence of complete foetal/
newborn long bones from two pigs and three sheep
or goats (none with butchery marks, so not likely
to have been consumed, though they could have
been cooked whole). Three examples of matching
dog metapodials may belong to paws representing
talisms.

The Hagios Charalambos cave is probably more
comparable with rock shelters, as places which
received materials from the clearance of funerary
structures and thus distinct from built (tholos or
house) tombs. Final publication of the faunal re-
 mains is in preparation, but information in pre-
liminary discussions of the finds is adequate for the
purposes of the present discussion.\(^{25}\) Human bones
and associated artefact assemblages dating from EM
I to MM II were present in the cave, with evidence
of widespread distribution of material from different
dates vertically throughout the deposits and
horizontally between the different chambers. The
excavators plausibly infer “simultaneous” (in ceramic
terms at least) deposition of materials transported
from one or more different locations.\(^{26}\)

Excavation has produced a surprisingly large fau-
nal assemblage with 4,000 specimens studied by the
time the first report was published.\(^{27}\) Animal bones
were present both in deposits within the cave that
were rich in human bone and in an important, prob-
ably primary, deposit at its mouth, that was devoid
of human bones but rich in charred plant material
and contained MM II pottery. Both assemblages contain
bones, some butchered, overwhelmingly of sheep
or goats (probably both), cattle, pigs and hares, as
well as birds (though many of the latter may repre-
sent natural deaths).\(^{28}\) The cave faunal assemblage
has been interpreted as representing offerings to the
dead,\(^{29}\) and it will be interesting to see if the final
publication provides any evidence for the timing of
the offerings. Were they deposited with the human
remains and other offerings in their previous depo-
sitional context, or were they introduced to the cave
as primary depositions (perhaps reflected in articu-
lating elements found together) when transfer of
the other materials took place in MM II? The cave-
mouth assemblage is believed to represent debris
from the cooking and consumption of animals in
the context of a feast held when the funerary as-
semblages were deposited in the cave in MM II.\(^{30}\)

\(^{26}\) Betancourt, Reese \textit{et al.} 2008; Betancourt \textit{et al.} 2014.
\(^{27}\) Betancourt, Reese \textit{et al.} 2008, 163.
\(^{28}\) Betancourt, Reese \textit{et al.} 2008, 163-164.
\(^{29}\) Betancourt, Reese \textit{et al.} 2008, 163.
\(^{30}\) Betancourt, Reese \textit{et al.} 2008, 164.
Materials from older excavations

In the late 2000s it became possible to relocate the trenches in which skeletal material excavated from the Kamilari tombs was deposited soon after excavation. A team led by Girella has been working on the re-study and publication of all materials from the site, including the human remains, studied by Triantaphyllou. During sorting of the human remains a small number of animal bones was identified. Despite the loss of contextual associations and thus dating information, the Kamilari assemblage matches the better provenanced material from tholos tombs discussed above in being very small and including a variety of species and anatomical parts. A caveat of course is that we do not know if and how selective the excavators of Kamilari were in their recovery and re-burial of the skeletal remains, as they were probably concerned mainly with preserving the human remains. For example, workmen are likely to have been able to identify animal teeth and if there was no interest in their recovery from the archaeologists to have discarded them selectively.

Faunal evidence from the recently published Monasteriako Kephali tholos tomb at Knossos is similarly fraught with problems of interpretation arising from the absence of excavation records and lengthy storage. The few animal bones discovered in the boxes at the Stratigraphical Museum at Knossos may or may not derive from the tomb, but AMS dating of equid remains allegedly from the EM layer yielded an LM III date, implying either post-excavation mixing of finds, or the mixing of deposits during excavation, or in prehistory. If we assume that the material stored at the Stratigraphical Museum is representative of what was recovered during excavation, then its paucity matches the pattern observed for other tholos tomb assemblages.

Conclusions

It is evident from the above discussion that animal bone assemblages from funerary contexts are quite rare and relatively small, especially in light of the lengthy use of the tombs and rock shelters. Evidence for preparation and cooking of meat from these assemblages is extremely sparse and certainly inadequate to support arguments for funerary feasting with a major (if any) component of meat. Of course, it is not impossible that debris from meat consumption may have been discarded in external areas and not buried, or buried but lost to erosion, or buried but not located by archaeologists. In any case, the faunal evidence, as it stands, does not allow us to infer the practice of funerary feasting, let alone its nature and scale. The Hagios Charalambos cave-mouth deposit is unique, though convincing, and is interestingly contained in a feature spatially segregated from the re-deposited mortuary assemblages, and associated not with primary burial rituals but the final deposition of ancestral remains. Within tholos tombs the sparseness and other characteristics of animal bone assemblages are more compatible with offerings to the dead than with debris from funerary feasting. Rock shelters appear to be richer in faunal remains and, although careful taphonomic analysis is necessary to exclude the possibility that material is intrusive and deposited by non-human agents (especially predators and scavengers), these are again more suggestive of offerings. The presence of elements in anatomical sequence at the Petras Rock Shelter suggests that at the time of re-deposition of materials cleared from tombs fresh animal joints were occasionally added. Given the long chronological period covered by the deposits at Petras, the faunal remains correspond to only very modest quantities of meat deposited per event.

For the time being it is not possible to evaluate how the Hagios Charalambos material fits, or not, into the patterns observed above, as detailed

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31 Isaakidou in press.
32 Preston 2013.
33 Isaakidou 2013.
34 Betancourt, Reese et al. 2008, 164.
zooarchaeological information has not yet been presented. The excavators, however, have already plausibly suggested that they discern a difference between the interior of the cave, in which they see faunal remains as offerings to the dead (as suggested here for other rock shelters), and the cave-mouth deposit which they consider a more classic example of feasting debris. The interpretation of many of the EM–MM mortuary faunal assemblages as probable food offerings has also been suggested by Soles for Mochlos: “offerings, sometimes including food as well as stone and ceramic vases, were made at each stage, placed initially with the corpse, then alongside the relocated skull”.

The review of faunal evidence, which has been emerging in the last twenty years thanks to more rigorous excavation methods and bioarchaeological recovery protocols, provides us with a more nuanced picture of the role of animals in EM–MM funerary contexts. On the basis of current evidence it appears that animal bones within tholoi represent very sporadic deposition of animal parts, most economically interpreted as food and talismanic offerings to the dead. It is possible that rock shelters, which appear to have been used as the final repositories of tomb contents, also received offerings of animal portions. Although we recognise patterns of similarity, it is also obvious that practices were fluid and differed between areas, suggesting local peculiarities, but not traditions, as no consistency can be discerned, e.g., in the range of species and/or body parts deposited as offerings, in the manner reported from other Bronze Age contexts, such as Near Eastern and Iberian Argaric mortuary contexts.

Greek Abstract

Ταϊζόντας τους νεκρούς ή κάνοντας πρότοση για τους ζωντανούς; Η εικόνα μέσα από τα ζωικά κατάλοιπα
Οι ταφικές πρακτικές και τελευταίες, όπως και η συλλογική κατανάλωση τροφής έχουν κεντρικό ρόλο στην κατανόηση των πρωτοιεραμών μετανοιών, ως μέσα κοινωνικής αναπλάσης και ανταγωνισμού. Παραδοσιακά, η έρευνα έχει επικεντρωθεί στην ανάλυση συνόλων τεχνέργων από ταφικές συνάφειες, κυρίως καραβικής, η οποία αναμφίβολα μαρτυρεί την πρωτεύουσα σημασία συλλογικών γευμάτων στα πλαίσια ταφικών τελευταίων. Από την άλλη πλευρά, η ενδεχόμενη συλλογική κατανάλωση (οστά ζώων και υπολείμματα φυτών) είναι περιορισμένη, λόγω προβλημάτων ανάκτησης ή ελλειπών παρουσίασης τους σε δημοσίευσης. Οι Branigan (1993) και Χαμπάρλικης (1998) είναι από τους πρώτους που προσπάθησαν να χρησιμοποιήσουν τέτοιες μαρτυρίες (κυρίως ζωοαρχαιολογικά σύνολα) έχοντας όμως πρόσβαση σε δεδομένα από υλικά που είχαν ανακτηθεί με συστηματικά και βασιζόμενα αναγκαστικά σε σύντομες αναφορές απο ανασκαφές. Η εφαρμογή άλλως και περισσότερο συστηματικών μεθόδων ανάκτησης προσφέρει καλύτερα σύνολα και δίνει τη δυνατότητα συστηματικότερης ανάλυσης και έτσι παραγωγής καλύτερων δεδομένων που επιτρέπουν να ερευνήσουμε αποτελεσματικότερα τη φύση των πρακτικών που οδήγησαν στην απόθεση τους, είτε αυτό ήταν τελευταία γεύματα, είτε νεκρικές προσφορές. Σε αυτό το κεφάλαιο εξετάζονται δημιουργεμένα αλλά και αδημιουργεμένα δεδομένα (τα τελευταία από έρευνα της συγγραφέως) με σκοπό να διερευνηθεί αυτό το αμφίθεσιο ζήτημα.

35 Betancourt, Reese et al. 2008, 164.
37 E.g., respectively, Horwitz 2001; Aranda Jiménez & Montón-Subías 2011.