

# Petras, Siteia

## 25 years of excavations and studies

Edited by *Metaxia Tsipopoulou*



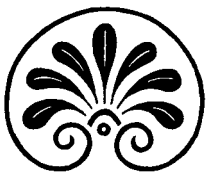
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Volume 16

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– 25 years of excavations and studies

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Edited by

*Metaxia Tsipopoulou*



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# Preface

*Βίος άνεόρταστος, μακρά όδός άπανδόχεντος.*  
Demokritos (470–370 BC)

It is indeed hard and dull to lead a life, both personal and professional, without celebrations, anniversaries, gatherings of friends and colleagues, symposia of any type. The 25th anniversary of the Petras excavations offered a wonderful opportunity for me to organize a Symposium, and for an international group of scholars, known for many things, including being members of the Petras team, to work hard, and then gather in Athens and present the results of their studies.

It was an exciting experience organizing and conducting this two-day Conference, and also editing the Proceedings and preparing the present book. I was very happy to be able to work during the multiple tasks of the preparation, the coordination of the contributors, the two days of the event itself, the collection of the papers and the editing of the present volume, with two hard working, creative, and very patient colleagues, Ms Garifalia Kostopoulou and Dr Maria Psallida. They are responsible before the event for the invitations, the preparation of the catering, the reservation of the restaurant for the speakers' dinner, and the printed material of the Conference. During the Symposium they made sure that everything went smoothly. After the Conference they worked for many months to do the pagination, the bibliography and the list of contributors, and they helped significantly with the proof reading and the index (Psallida), and the plates and the cover design (Kostopoulou). The editing of the volume was a very interesting task for me, and having no day job at the Ministry after the end of November 2011, a victim of the crisis that struck Greece, I was able to dedicate myself entirely to it. Furthermore, I am responsible for the transcription of the discussions, an interesting first-time experience. Many thanks go to David Rupp who patiently corrected all the English manuscripts of the 11 non-native speakers, as well as the dis-

cussions. Also my warmest thanks to Melissa Eaby for the final proof reading and significant improvements. The specialized text of Konstantinos Togiias, the developer of the Petras website, was translated from Greek by Ms Effie Patsatzi, Museologist, a specialist in the Management of Digital Heritage.

Dr Erik Hallager is responsible for the final pagination and the insertion of the figures into the text.

I wish also to thank the creators of the four posters presented at the Conference: two posters, one of which was in collaboration with the director of the excavation, were by Ms Clio Zervaki, the Petras Conservator, MA in Museology and MA in Cultural Management, and another two were by Garifalia Kostopoulou.

The Danish Institute at Athens, and its two consecutive Directors, Erik Hallager, a dear old friend and member of the Petras team, and Rune Frederiksen, have my gratitude for hosting the Symposium and for including the publication in the series of monographs of the Institute.

The Institute for Aegean Prehistory (INSTAP), which has been supporting the excavations at Petras, the conservation of the finds and the studies since 1987, also funded the Symposium and the publication of the present volume. My deep gratitude goes to INSTAP and its Executive Director, Philip Betancourt, also a good friend and member of the Petras team.

The success of the Symposium, which was really a wonderful and very stimulating experience, is due to all the participants, the speakers, and the chairpersons. More than 100 colleagues, Greeks and foreigners, from the Hellenic Archaeological Service, the Universities and the Foreign Schools of Archaeology in Greece, including senior members and graduate students, were present at the Danish Institute, and were very active during the discussions. They contributed to the creation of a very

friendly and positive atmosphere throughout the Symposium. A very special thanks goes to the chairpersons, Philip Betancourt, Michael Wedde, David Rupp, Erik Hallager, Colin Macdonald, Lefteris Platon, Thomas Brogan, Olga Krzyszkowska and Alexander MacGillivray. I am very grateful to Peter Warren, my mentor, who enthusiastically agreed to write the concluding remarks for this volume.

Three generations of scholars participated at the Symposium, some of the younger ones had come to Petras as undergraduate or graduate students, long ago. Their names in the order they presented their papers are: Yiannis Papadatos, Eleni Nodarou, Tatiana Theodoropoulou, Cesare D'Annibale, Philip P. Betancourt, Susan C. Ferrence, James D. Muhly, Olga Krzyszkowska, Sevasti Triantaphyllou, Heidi M.C. Dierckx, Donald C. Haggis, Maria Emanuela

Alberti, Kostis S. Christakis, Nektaria Mavroudi, Erik Hallager, David W. Rupp, Anna Simandiraki-Grimshaw, Photini J.P. McGeorge, Natalia Poulou-Papadimitriou, Chrysa Sofianou, Thomas M. Brogan and Konstantinos Toggias.

The 25 years of the Petras excavations and studies coincided with a period of crisis for Greece that worsened significantly between October 2010, the time of the Symposium, and spring 2012, the time these lines are written. From the beginning my idea for the organization of this event and its publication was an idea of resistance to the crisis. I am very happy that we succeeded and very grateful to all who worked hard and made this success happen.

Athens, Exarcheia, Easter 2012  
Metaxia Tsipopoulou



# 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
PPN	Pre-Pottery Neolithic

## *Petras Area*

HT	House Tomb
L	Lakkos
P	Petras

P.TSK	Petras cemetery
P.TSU	Petras-Rock Shelter
Σ-palace	Stratigraphical trenches of the palace

## *Other*

A.S.L.	Above Sea Level
diam.	diameter
gr	gram
h	height
kg	kilogram
w	width
wt	weight
th	thickness
lt	liter
NISP	Number of Identifiable Specimens
MNI	Minimum Number of Individuals
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 applied.



# Kephala Petras: the human remains and the burial practices in the Rock Shelter\*

*Sevasti Triantaphyllou*

## *Abstract*

Rescue excavations in 2006 on the west slope of Kephala Petras Hill brought to light an undisturbed rock shelter ranging in date from the EM I and MM IB–IIA periods. The Rock Shelter is located 50 m south of the house tomb cemetery and its entrance faces the palace of Petras. Apart from a large number of valuable artefacts and pottery vessels indicating a strong influence from the Cyclades, a thick deposit of human remains was recovered, extending over a large area of 10 m<sup>2</sup>. The study of the skeletal remains, represented primarily by commingled human bones, offers a unique opportunity to shed some light on issues related to the treatment of the deceased and the practices associated with the burial, re-burial, and multiple use of the disposal area. It will also help identify the biological parameters of the case-study population, such as the demographics (i.e., minimum number of individuals buried, sex, and age groups), health, dietary status, physiological stress factors, and the type of physical activities practiced during life.

In May 2009, the study of the human bone assemblage from the EM Kephala Petras Rock Shelter began at the INSTAP Study Center for East Crete. The human bone material was initially cleaned with soft brushes and water and sorted in accordance to major anatomical units: cranial bones, mandibles/maxillae/teeth, clavicles/scapulae, humeri, ulnae, radii, hand/foot bones, vertebrae, ribs, os coxae, femora, tibiae, fibulae, patellae, and unidentified bone fragments. The macroscopic investigation of the skeletal material, except for teeth, was completed in July 2010 and lasted almost seven months. The human skeletal assemblage consists of 20,987 bone fragments, of which 11,500 were given an inventory number and systematically recorded. In addition, 4,136 cranial fragments and 5,351 undiagnostic rib and vertebral fragments were counted and weighed only, while a total of 50 kg of unidentified bone fragments were only weighed. It is worth mentioning here the total numbers from other EM assemblages of commingled skeletal remains that have been recently studied. In the Moni

Odigitria tholos tombs, the human skeletal material consists of a total of 3,630 and 1,461 identified bone and tooth fragments from Tholoi A and B, respectively.<sup>1</sup> At Archanes, Tholos Tomb Γ produced only 72 post-cranial fragments,<sup>2</sup> while the recently published report of the Hagios Charalambos Cave

---

\* I am deeply indebted to the excavator and Director of the Petras excavations Dr Metaxia Tsipopoulou who entrusted me with the study of the human skeletal remains from the EM Kephala Petras Rock Shelter. The examination of this material, and also the comprehension of stratigraphy and aspects related to the treatment of the deceased, would be absolutely impossible without the generous provision of contextual information and instructive discussions with Metaxia. I am particularly grateful to Professor Philip Betancourt who helped enormously in practical matters. I also thank Dr Thomas Brogan, Director of the INSTAP Study Center, Eleanor Huffman, Dr Yiannis Papadatos, Clio Zervaki, Garifalia Kostopoulou, Eleftheria Tsihli and Chronis Papanikolopoulos who all helped in different ways. This work was generously funded by the Institute for Aegean Prehistory.

<sup>1</sup> Triantaphyllou 2010a.

<sup>2</sup> Triantaphyllou 2005, 68.

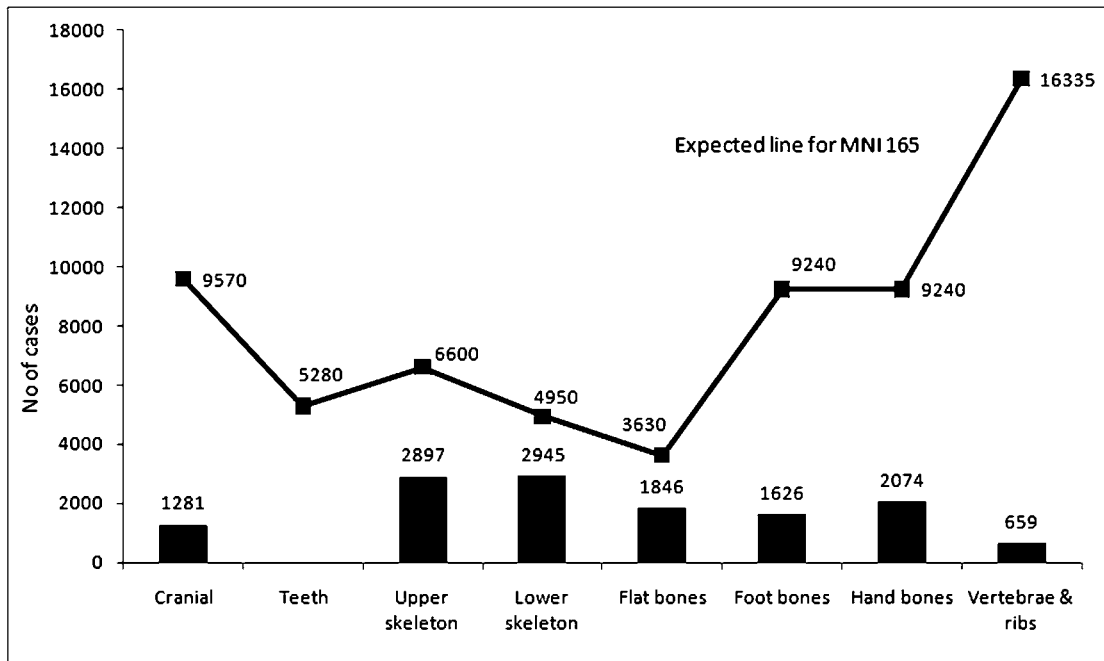


Fig. 1. Skeletal representation according to bone categories.

makes reference to 11,000 entire or fragmentary bones identified thus far.<sup>3</sup>

The study and analysis of commingled human remains differs from that of individual articulated skeletons involved in single episodes of primary burial. The skeletal assemblage of the EM Kephala Petras Rock Shelter offers a unique opportunity to explore issues related to the treatment of the deceased and the practices associated with the burial, re-burial, and multiple use of the disposal area. Also, the biological parameters of the case study population, such as the demographics (i.e., minimum number of individuals buried, sex, and age groups), health, dietary status, physiological stress factors, and the type of physical activities practiced during life, can contribute to the overall biological picture of the EM populations of Crete.

The recording system followed the standards for documenting commingled skeletal remains that were established for the two tholos tombs at Moni Odigitria.<sup>4</sup> In particular, each bone fragment was recorded according to typical anatomical features based on the standard anatomical units for disarticulated skeletal assemblages established by Lyman (1994) and slightly adjusted according to internationally accepted standards for recording commin-

gled human remains,<sup>5</sup> in order to avoid duplication of anatomical units. Long bones, for example, were segmented into five different zones: proximal end, proximal 1/3, middle 1/3, distal 1/3, and distal end. Archaeological information related to trench number, level, and stratigraphical unit, as well as taphonomic parameters such as erosion, encrusting, burning, but also completeness of skeletal elements, fragmentation, siding, age, sex, pathological conditions, and metric and non-metric traits were entered into an Access database.

The degree of fragmentation, as well as the representation of skeletal elements, can shed new light on the type of disposal in rock shelters. The Kephala Petras Rock Shelter produced a considerable number of skulls, but also of long and small bones, in a complete state of preservation. The skulls of 77 out of 82 individuals estimated, on the basis of cranial elements, are in an almost complete state of preservation, while some long bones produced sufficient measurements to provide stature estimation. Fig. 1 shows the bone representation of the

<sup>3</sup> Betancourt *et al.* 2008, 580.

<sup>4</sup> Triantaphyllou 2010a.

<sup>5</sup> Outram *et al.* 2005.

recorded Kephala Petras skeletal elements alongside the expected skeletal representation based on the minimum number of individuals held in the Rock Shelter (minimum number of individuals = 165). According to Fig. 1, although all major anatomical units are well represented, there is a significantly high prevalence of the long bones of the upper and the lower skeleton, as well as of the scapulae and the pelvis. On the contrary, cranial material is less well represented. This is not an effect of poor preservation, since the skulls recovered are almost complete. The relatively high representation of the long bones of the upper and the lower skeleton, alongside the scapulae and the pelvis, may indicate a preferential selection toward these anatomical units. It is a matter for further investigation whether the almost complete skulls belong to specific stratigraphic units which can be associated with the MM IB/IIA deceased of the final use of the house tombs before the thorough cleaning out took place.

Despite the preliminary nature of the ongoing analysis, results from the study of the skeletal material, as well as of the associated stratigraphical information, are consistent with the secondary deposition of human remains, which, however, did not involve only defleshed and skeletonised bones, but also, less commonly, body parts which were in a fresh condition preserving much of their organic components, or even their anatomical articulation in a few rare cases. In addition, there is one clear case for the deposition of the semi-articulated lower body – pelvis and legs – of an adult male in fresh condition at the time of the disposal, which was found in association with a libation jug and a conical cup suggesting, according to the excavator,<sup>6</sup> a Neopalatial ritual activity that took place in the Rock Shelter; but this is an isolated episode. Excavation with the grid system and in stratigraphic units offers a unique opportunity to investigate the character of the deposition, as well as the sequence of the deposition within the different areas of the Rock Shelter. Thus, joins of bone fragments recovered in different levels of the deposit and in different trenches reinforce the idea that the secondary deposition of the skeletal material represents one single episode rather than multiple re-openings of the Rock Shelter. Multiple re-openings would be

represented by uniform deposits of skeletal elements with joins occurring in the same stratigraphic level.

Moreover, with regard to the external bone surface of the examined skeletal remains, there is no weathering, flaking or discoloration to suggest the exposure of the bone material to outside conditions, such as sunlight and rain water. Instead, a high proportion of the bone material is covered by calcium carbonate of variable thickness. This is often associated with groundwater leaching through the skeletal remains, particularly in cave or rock shelter assemblages. Complete long bones and skulls are also common in the skeletal assemblage of the Hagios Charalambos Cave, which according to McGeorge, represents the secondary deposition of human skeletal remains.<sup>7</sup> The overall picture from rock shelters, based on the analysis of the human skeletal remains, is compatible with the use of such features as the final destination of skeletonised bones, as well as of body parts in fresh condition, which once placed there, were safely sealed away from further circulation and disturbance from the living community.<sup>8</sup>

A low frequency of (only 4%) of the human remains from the Kephala Petras Rock Shelter provided evidence of burning, mostly of smoked black and blue/grey color with minimal severe alterations (e.g., cracking and warping), thus suggest a hasty and short-term exposure to firing conditions, mainly for skeletonised human remains. Besides, as a result of their burning in fresh condition, very few bone fragments showed evidence of the white coloring accompanied by slight alterations in the physical appearance of the bone. The skeletal elements usually involved come primarily from the cranial skeleton, while it is significant to mention that the few burnt bone fragments would correspond to ten individuals only. The low frequency of burnt bone fragments in the EM Kephala Petras Rock Shelter, as well as the slight character of alterations from firing processes, appear to represent localized and small scale activities associated with

<sup>6</sup> Tsipopoulou 2007b; Tsipopoulou 2010b.

<sup>7</sup> Betancourt *et al.* 2008, 578.

<sup>8</sup> Triantaphyllou in press.

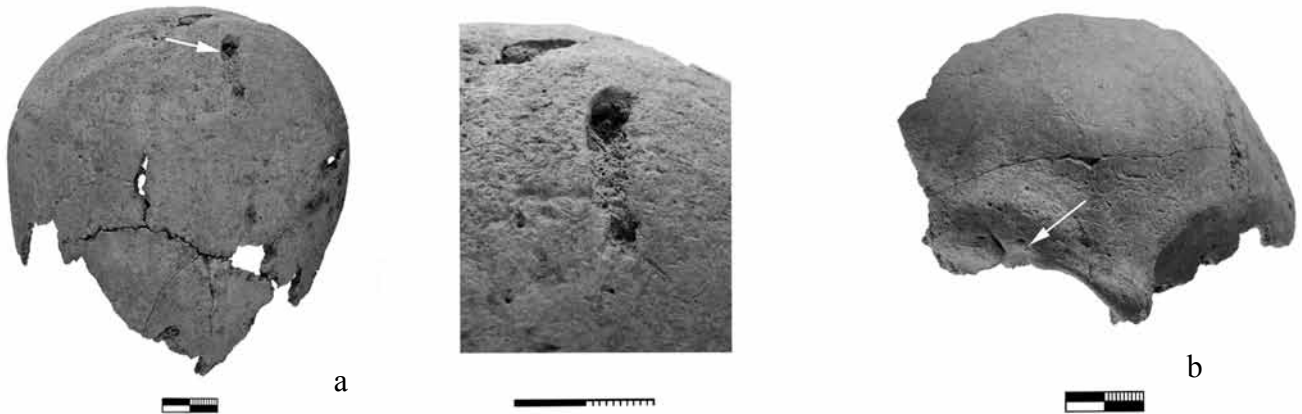


Fig. 2. a) Cranium 13, superior aspect: evidence of long term healed cranial injury and detail of the cranial injury; b) Cranium 14, left side: evidence of long term healed fracture on the left orbit.

the fumigation of the area where the human remains were primarily deposited.

One controversial issue regarding Prepalatial burial assemblages has been the estimate of the population unit accommodated. Questions regarding the minimum number of individuals, as well as the composition of the population held in communal assemblages, have been tantalizing specialists working on the island. The minimum number of individuals deposited in the Rock Shelter has been estimated at 165 based on sided identified femoral proximal thirds (137 left/165 right). Similarly, in other recently studied EM commingled skeletal assemblages, the minimum number of individuals has been estimated at 133 at Moni Odigitria Tholos A, 64 at Moni Odigitria Tholos B,<sup>9</sup> 30 at Archanes Tholos Γ,<sup>10</sup> and approximately 400 at the Hagios Charalambos Cave.<sup>11</sup> Calculation of population units based on Bintliff's estimation of 20 corpses per century<sup>12</sup> would approximate the size of one nuclear family group (0.63) to have contributed to the Kephala Petras Rock Shelter.<sup>13</sup> The distribution of sided femoral proximal thirds by age group represents 129 adults versus 36 subadults, suggesting that all age groups including neonates ( $n = 6$ ), were placed in the Rock Shelter, as would be expected in a family skeletal assemblage. This is also the case at Moni Odigitria Tholos A<sup>14</sup> and the Hagios Charalambos Cave,<sup>15</sup> while at Moni Odigitria Tholos B, there is a striking under-representation of the subadult age categories – only four out of 64 individuals<sup>16</sup> – possibly indicating an inten-

tional exclusion or limited access for certain age categories to particular burial assemblages. With regard to the sex groups, based on pelvic and cranial morphology, both males and females appear to have been deposited in the Rock Shelter, although there is a significant over-representation of men. In particular, 30 males versus 17 females and 45 males versus 20 females were recognized according to anatomical features of the pelvis and the cranium, respectively. Similar discrepancies between the two sex groups were provided by Moni Odigitria Tholos B where men are over-represented,<sup>17</sup> and Archanes Tholos Γ<sup>18</sup> where the opposite pattern occurs. It is important to point out, however, that results regarding sexing should be considered with caution, since there is a large number of unsexed individuals due to preservational bias. Nevertheless, estimation of the minimum number of individuals, combined with the distribution of age and sex groups of recently examined EM skeletal remains, would indicate that age, and to a lesser degree sex, were important criteria in terms of accessibility of

<sup>9</sup> Triantaphyllou 2010a, 233, 236.

<sup>10</sup> Triantaphyllou 2005, 66.

<sup>11</sup> Betancourt *et al.* 2008, 580.

<sup>12</sup> Bintliff 1977.

<sup>13</sup> Triantaphyllou in press.

<sup>14</sup> Triantaphyllou 2010a, 232.

<sup>15</sup> Betancourt *et al.* 2008, 578.

<sup>16</sup> Triantaphyllou 2010a, 236.

<sup>17</sup> Triantaphyllou 2010a, 236.

<sup>18</sup> Triantaphyllou 2005, 69.

certain population segments to certain burial assemblages.

With regard to levels of health status, there is a very low prevalence of pathological conditions, reflecting therefore a good standard of life for the Prepalatial Kephala Petras population. The low frequency of non-specific infections and conditions of anaemic episodes contributes to the overall picture of good health in the case study population. Also, there are a small number of long term healed cranial injuries (Fig. 2a-b) associated with men only, possibly suggesting their involvement in interpersonal violence. Similarly, McGeorge makes special reference to 16 cranial injuries involving mostly men, while it seems possible that at least in some cases in the Hagios Charalambos Cave population, trauma can be associated with deliberate injuries.<sup>19</sup> Musculo-skeletal markers on the upper and lower extremities, as well as the evidence of healed rib fractures, would be consistent with a population which was actively engaged in heavy and intense physical tasks, such as farming, herding, and walking in rough terrain. Moreover, the mean stature of the EM Kephala Petras population is estimated to 162.5 cm based on complete long bone measurements, which reinforces the overall picture of good health status since stature can be highly affected by nutrition.<sup>20</sup> Comparing the mean stature of EM Kephala Petras population with other Prepalatial assemblages,<sup>21</sup> it becomes clear that the former population appears to have been the same height with that of Hagios Charalambos<sup>22</sup> and slightly taller than in Moni Odigitria Tholos B (mean stature = 160.79 cm).

Recent macroscopic investigation of 499 permanent and 37 deciduous teeth, which comprise almost half of the total teeth recovered,<sup>23</sup> provide interesting clues concerning the dental health of the case study population. In particular, 139 out of 452 alveolar processes examined showed evidence of teeth lost prior to death due to extensive periodontal disease, while another 70 and 87 out of 499 teeth examined provided evidence of dental caries and deposition of calculus, respectively. A comparison of the oral status of the Kephala Petras Rock Shelter population with the two tholoi of Moni Odigitria shows that the prevalence of dental disease is consistent with Moni Odigitria

Tholos B, which presents a slightly higher rates of caries (15.69%, 27 out of 172) and calculus deposits (9.88%, 17 out of 172)<sup>24</sup> than Moni Odigitria Tholos A. Women at EM Kephala Petras seem to have lost their teeth prior to death slightly more frequently than men. Dental caries occur also in a small number of subadults, over eight years old, indicating the introduction of cariogenic foodstuff early in life. Furthermore, it is interesting to note that there is a tendency for men to have dental caries more frequently than women, suggesting possibly a higher consumption by men of a diet richer in plant carbohydrates. Enamel hypoplasia lines, which represent metabolic disturbances which took place during early childhood, were observed in 75 out of 499 permanent teeth investigated, thus indicating a relatively high prevalence of this defect for the EM Kephala Petras population. This figure is significantly higher in comparison to Moni Odigitria Tholos A and B, although in Tholos B, based on the estimation of the defect in the individuals with associated dentitions, half of the Tholos B population was affected by enamel hypoplasia lines.<sup>25</sup> Enamel hypoplasia defects have been closely associated with nutritional or physiological stress and in particular with the effects of weaning, i.e. cessation of breast feeding, which vary significantly even in contemporary populations.<sup>26</sup> Also, five cases of periapical abscesses, out of the 452 alveolar processes examined were observed. Periapical abscess is an infection of the periapical tissues which followed by the exposure of the pulp chamber or root, due to bacteria from severe attrition, extensive carious decay or trauma.<sup>27</sup>

Furthermore, one case of an adult man with a cranial synostosis, that is premature fusion of the sagittal suture (scaphocephaly)<sup>28</sup> resulting in an ab-

<sup>19</sup> Betancourt *et al.* 2008, 581.

<sup>20</sup> Steegmann 1985.

<sup>21</sup> Triantaphyllou 2010a, fig. 117.

<sup>22</sup> McGeorge 1988.

<sup>23</sup> Macroscopic investigation of teeth is ongoing.

<sup>24</sup> Triantaphyllou 2010a, 241–2.

<sup>25</sup> Triantaphyllou 2010a, 240.

<sup>26</sup> Katzenberg *et al.* 1996.

<sup>27</sup> Hillson 1996, 285.

<sup>28</sup> Aufderheide & Rodríguez-Martín 1998, 52.

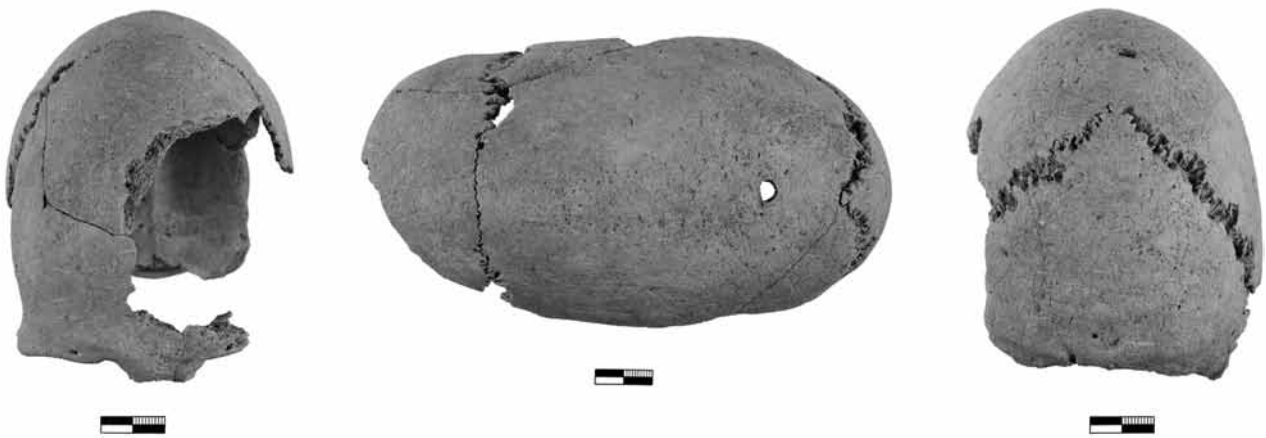


Fig. 3. Cranium 77, anterior aspect, superior aspect, posterior aspect: cranial synostosis.

normally deformed, long and narrow skull, was observed (Fig. 3). The genetically deformed skull is also associated with a remarkably enlarged parietal foramen, which is not very common in archaeological populations.<sup>29</sup> The abnormal physical appearance of the affected individual, accompanied possibly by a mental disorder, may have attributed a special social status to this particular man. Despite the genetic disorder, his inclusion in the secondary disposal area of the EM Kephala Petras population would suggest that he was considered eligible to receive similar burial treatment with the physically ordinary people of Prepalatial Petras.

Less than ten years ago, our knowledge of the manipulation of the deceased, as reflected by Prepalatial skeletal assemblages, was extremely minimal and was based primarily on empirical archaeological observations.<sup>30</sup> The analysis of the human skeletal remains from the EM Kephala Petras Rock Shelter, although at a preliminary stage, offers a great

opportunity for the exploration of aspects related to the treatment of the deceased in contexts other than in the tholoi and the house tombs, but also of biological parameters such as the demographic picture and levels of health and oral status of the living community of the case study population. There is still a long way to go in order to better understand the various stages of burial and after burial activities that took place in Prepalatial Crete. However, recent studies of large skeletal assemblages, together with systematic and well documented excavation projects of house tomb cemeteries such as at Petras Siteia and Sissi, appear very promising for leading us in the right direction.

<sup>29</sup> Aufderheide & Rodríguez-Martín 1998, 59.

<sup>30</sup> E.g., Branigan 1987.

# Discussion

**McGeorge** This was very interesting. Were you at the lecture Friday night [Minoan Seminar by Philip Betancourt on Hagios Charalambos]?

**Triantaphyllou** No, I missed it.

**McGeorge** Ok, well, I think this was a very interesting lecture. I don't think, you were suggesting that there were 22 people in the community at Hagios Charalambos? You said that in passing.

**Triantaphyllou** 22 people? No, I never mentioned that. 400.

**McGeorge** No, but for 1800 years, you said 400. In your lecture you mentioned starting with a small population increase, I think this would be a bit of oversimplification.

**Triantaphyllou** I do not understand your point here. I gave minimum numbers for the assemblages, and for Hagios Charalambos you are mentioning that.

**McGeorge** I know, but you are making conclusions about it, and perhaps you need to make a better comment on that.

**Triantaphyllou** Ok, I want to clarify this though.

**McGeorge** Yes.

**Triantaphyllou** You do not support anymore the 400 individuals?

**McGeorge** No, I am not saying that. I am saying that it is a simplification to assume that there was a single nuclear family that was responsible for the entire cave.

**Triantaphyllou** No, this was not really the point. The question is, what do the minimum numbers represent in terms of demography, and we have different views as to whether it was a nuclear family of six-seven people or an extended family.

**McGeorge** Maybe I misunderstood, but I got the impression that you were suggesting that a nuclear family had supplied that cave for 1800 years.

**Triantaphyllou** No, well, yes and no.

**McGeorge** There you are.



- Triantaphyllou** Not a nuclear family as a nuclear family. Well, what was your suggestion, that it is not?
- McGeorge** I just thought it was a simplification.
- Triantaphyllou** The numbers that you saw are based on an ambiguous estimation for demography and population.
- McGeorge** It was a brilliant talk, I just made a comment.
- Triantaphyllou** Thank you. My point was to give a general picture on what the minimum numbers we have are representing. We can see them in the chronological use of the space, because if we talk about 400 individuals, for example, they are a lot, but if we see them in chronological terms they are not that many, or the 165 of Petras they are not many, if you think how long the cemetery was used. This was really the point.
- Paschalidis** Thank you very much, it was very interesting. I would like to ask about the age of the skeletons, especially how many people were older than 18, and also is there any difference in the numbers between men and women?
- Triantaphyllou** This is an important issue, as age estimation over 18 years old in the Petras Rock Shelter skeletal remains is based on the ectocranial suture closure method, which however does not provide particularly reliable values, and in general there are problems with ageing because of the commingled state of the skeletal remains. On the other hand, when we have complete skeletons we are able to use combined ageing methods from several anatomical points and, therefore, to have a more reliable and secure age estimation of the individual. With regard to the age groups disposed in the Rock Shelter, preliminary study points to a high frequency of individuals of 40–50 years old based on age estimations from the skulls only.
- Tsipopoulou** I understand that we are all aware about the discussions relating to the type of social group, and even the social status of the particular group that used the various Prepalatial tombs in Crete. There are different suggestions about larger or smaller groups, even nuclear families. What we should keep in mind about Triantaphyllou's paper is that the social group that was buried in the Rock Shelter had good health, that all age groups are represented, and also the average height was high. If we compare these data with the architecture of the house tombs, and also the grave goods, I believe we all will agree that we are dealing here with elite burials, an elite cemetery rather. Where the rest of the community was buried is a problem, as I do not believe that the whole community living at Petras was buried here.
- Triantaphyllou** Also, we do not know whether these 165 individuals, if we round them they may even approach 200 individuals. So we do not know whether all these individuals come from one house tomb only. Because if they come from one house tomb then we would talk about a rather large number of people.

- Moutafi** Thank you, it was a very good paper, and, I think, a brilliant example about how much light can be shed on the burial practices by the study of the bones. I have a question, a technical one, about alterations on the bone surface, whether you noticed relatively similar alterations in all skeletal remains or there were any differentiations?
- Triantaphyllou** There were no alterations on the bone surface, but what do you mean?
- Moutafi** I mean the degree of weathering.
- Triantaphyllou** In different anatomical units?
- Moutafi** Not necessarily, but perhaps between individuals?
- Triantaphyllou** No, not at all.
- Moutafi** Which would support your clues about the one episode deposition.
- Triantaphyllou** I strongly believed that this deposition represents one episode from the very first time I started finding joins in bone fragments which were coming from different excavation units, not only on a vertical but also on an horizontal axis.
- Moutafi** But also in the area of their primary burial, the succession of burial episodes would probably have been very similar to that.
- Triantaphyllou** Yes.
- Haggis** I find it surprising about the age differentiation.
- Triantaphyllou** I find it surprising myself, but it exists.
- Papadatos** I was simply thinking that because the earliest house tomb in the cemetery dates to EM II, whether these EM I finds may represent primary burials at least for this early period based on...
- Triantaphyllou** You still insist on the primary character of the deposition in the lower levels of the Rock Shelter?
- Papadatos** No, no way... I am just putting some thoughts here.

### *Greek abstract*

#### Κεφάλαια Πετρά Σητείας: ανθρώπινα οστά και ταφικές πρακτικές στην ΠΜ Βραχοσκεπή

Κατά το έτος 2006, οι εργασίες σωστικής ανασκαφής στη δυτική πλαγιά του λόφου Κεφάλαια Πετρά Σητείας, έφεραν στο φως αδιάταρακτη βραχοσκεπή που τοποθετείται χρονολογικά από την ΠΜ Ι μέχρι τη ΜΜ ΙΒ–ΙΙΑ περίοδο. Η βραχοσκεπή βρίσκεται 50 μ. νότια του νεκροταφείου με τα ταφικά κτίρια, ενώ η είσοδος του αντικρίζει το ανάκτορο του Πετρά. Ανάμεσα στα ευρήματα της ταφικής σπηλιάς, εκτός από τα πολύτιμα αντικείμενα και τα κεραμικά σκεύη με έντονη την παρουσία Κυκλαδίτικων επιρροών, χαρακτηριστική είναι η μεγάλη επίχωση ανθρώπινων οστών σε μία έκταση 10 περίπου μ<sup>2</sup>, που αποτελεί ουσιαστικά την έκταση της βραχοσκεπής. Η μελέτη των σκελετικών καταλοίπων, που προέρχονται από διάσπαρτα και αναμοχλευμένα οστά, προσφέρει μοναδικές δυνατότητες για τη διερεύνηση πρωτίστως αρχαιολογικών ερωτημάτων που σχετίζονται με τη μεταχείριση των νεκρών, τις πρακτικές που συνδέονται με την ταφή, την ανακομιδή, αλλά και την πολλαπλή χρήση του χώρου. Παράλληλα, δίνεται η δυνατότητα εξέτασης ζητημάτων που αφορούν τις βιολογικές παραμέτρους του πληθυσμού, όπως είναι ο ελάχιστος αριθμός των ατόμων, ο προσδιορισμός των ηλικιακών κατηγοριών, αλλά και του φύλου, τα επίπεδα υγείας, οι διατροφικές συνήθειες και οι φυσικές δραστηριότητες των ανθρώπων.



## Final discussion

chaired by *J. Alexander MacGillivray*

**MacGillivray** I do not know about you, but I feel dizzy after two days full time; Petras information overload in some ways. I think like with all excavations and all research projects you come away with more questions than you do answers, but I guess that is why we do it. Like many people yesterday, I should probably start by asking why Metaxia Tsipopoulou asked me. That is possibly because we are such good neighbors, and we have been good neighbors – I worked at Palaikastro since the very beginning. Hugh Sackett and I went in 1983 to Palaikastro though we did not start digging until 1986. We were both younger then, it was a really long time ago. So I have been associated with Petras, and with Metaxia, for all of those 25 years. One thing that does come through is the sheer amount of hard work that is involved, I do not just mean the digging, that is the easy part, it is the bureaucracy, the fund raising, and she had to deal with land owners. That part does not really show in the Symposium. We sit back now and we marvel at these results, but there is a whole back story to this, that perhaps should never be told, or nobody would ever go into archaeology. In Metaxia's case, it was very complicated, very difficult, and she showed amazing staying power, and we are very grateful that she did. When I first went to eastern Crete in 1983, you would drive by Petras, and there was nothing there, now 25 years later, what Metaxia has done is that she has given us this amazing site, she has put Petras on the map. Bosanquet went through there for a couple of days in 1901, and wrote about it, but Metaxia has effectively put Petras on the map. It has now become a fairly big dot in the discussions of Bronze Age Crete. One of the things she has shown us, and Costas Paschalidis was reminding me that, from the very beginning, from the Final Neolithic IV to the Byzantine period, Petras, I suppose by virtually being by the sea, has an international spirit and it has international connections. We are even talking about connections with Egypt in MM IB, and it functions very well as a harbor town.

What I thought I might do, in order to lead this discussion, and you may want to talk more with the speakers, was really think about what these 25 years at Petras have given us. Being an old school archaeologist I still tend to think chronologically, instead of thematically. I thought it would be simpler really to run through what these excavations have given us in terms of the broader picture of Bronze Age Crete, and then Bronze Age Aegean, and then in the later periods, in Byzantium. Obviously the place to start is FN IV, when we have the first settlers, and we have strong Cycladic influence. What do you think that means? Are the people of Petras like people from Hagia Photia in the next period? I suppose Petras was looking for metals and lithics. The thing that still amazes me is that these people who we see trading abroad, which means that either they are going by the sea, or somebody is coming to them by sea, were not eating fish; there is a problem sailing over all this wonderful food, and not eating it, although we did see the fish hooks.

So, you can look at EM I and EM II and see what that gives us, in terms of the overall picture, what happens in EM III–MM IA, when we have the wonderful ossuaries with their pots, especially that collection of whole vases, at the end of that period. MM IB is a very interesting period when you had very expensive well painted ceramics that were put down in the Lakkos. And there is the wonderful tempting reconstruction that the hill was used, certainly in that period, if not earlier, for social gatherings, people coming together; feasting, if we want to use that trendy term, it is a focal point, for perhaps more than one community going there. What they are consuming is, certainly, when we are looking at the pottery, material locally made, but also imported, and therefore, slightly more expensive. Who are these people, where do they live, are they coming from further afield, to gather at this place? This was obviously important, and then this was replaced by the first palace, which if I am not mistaken, could be fortified; you think that the terrace wall could work as a fortification wall?

**Tsipopoulou** Not entirely, one part yes.

**MacGillivray** So it gives an impression, like the façades of the other palaces, we then have this change. There is enough wealth, enough power and enough desire to build this larger center, and this coincides with the change, it seems, in the Kephala cemetery, where, instead of re-deposited burials, we have these two males, these two fairly interesting individuals, who are using, presumably, these wonderful seals, that we saw Olga Krzyszkowska present. As they coincide with the construction of the palace, it would be interesting to speculate who were these young men, and why they were buried differently, inhumations, as opposed to whatever their normal practice was.

Then there is the destruction of this first palace, at the end of MM IIB, and we have the archive, that is one of the main reasons why we can talk about it as a palace. How big a center is Petras, is it controlling a wide area, can we tell that from the goods in the archive? I am still not entirely convinced, we might be misleading ourselves with these big state maps that we draw for Middle Minoan Crete. They could be much smaller, like Hellenistic city-state areas, much smaller areas of control. I think we are reading back almost from the modern Greek church boundaries, which currently separate Crete, and so we trying to recreate something like that, but that may have not been the case. That is something we can discuss.

This palace then, like many other buildings throughout Crete, towards or at the end of MM IIB, gets trashed, fortunately for people like Erik Hallager, who then have all this wonderful material to work with, and allows him, or us, to reconstruct what is actually being recorded in this building. And does this palace, that is very well excavated now, much better excavated than Knossos, does this allow us to answer the question that Jan Driessen has posed most recently, is this, are these, social ritual centers, or are they really the palaces of a monarch? Are we meant to view kings, or queens, living here? Or is Crete the only place in the ancient world where you do not have some divinely inspired, or actually divinely stated ruler in charge? Can Petras help us to solve that question in this period?

We then go to MM III, and that is something that we will have to see what it gives us over time, but we have that rather amazing rod, with the Linear A inscription. So, certainly there is administration in that period. But where is the building that has

been used? It is probably the building in which they have the LM IA floor deposits afterwards.

The LM IA period is amazing, I thought that we would never go through a whole two-day conference about a site in the Aegean, talking about its Bronze Age history, without mentioning the Theraeruption. But it came through at Papadiokampos, and it is kind of interesting that it was not mentioned by any of the workers at Petras.

**Tsipopoulou** We do not have ash.

**MacGillivray** You would not have ash, because the tsunami does not get up on a hill. That is what is preserving the ash at Mochlos, Papadiokampos, Palaikastro and other places. But even without the ash, you have destruction, you have abandonment, and then you have a change in LM IB, when you have a smaller courtyard, a slightly rearranged building, could that be a reflection of the kind of damage you had in the period, depopulation, etc.? When Zakros and Gournia and Mochlos and other sites have all these wonderful buildings in LM IB, the Late Minoan Renaissance, Petras has suffered somehow, the harbor at Petras may have stilted in, as a result of the debris flows coming back? It is worth discussing.

Then you have the LM IB destructions. Petras comes in line with the rest of the world. You do not seem to have evidence for LM II, so there is no instant reoccupation of the area, and in a sense it is your great LM IA palace with the Linear A that may be the last glory days at the site.

It is interesting that there is that memory of the place, where for some reason, I suppose it is the topography that demands it as well, where people would come and relocate, but not necessarily relocate to live, because in different periods you live in different places but some local community, possibly even just a family, was coming through where you have the LM IIIC settlement and megaron on Kephala.

Then in the Byzantine period, with a time span of 150 years for the use of the cemetery, it would not have been simply serving just one family, one farmstead. And they were manufacturing stuff also, up on the hill, but it remains a sacred place.

The fun thing is that Hill I has now become a sacred place again. Metaxia has fought tooth and nail to keep it from becoming a suburb of Siteia, and instead she has turned it into a place that reminds people from Siteia, or at least should remind people from Siteia, like Giorgos Alexopoulos, that they do have a very long and rich history, with a lot of external communications.

These are some of the themes I am thinking of. Then there is the theme of burial practices. That would be very interesting, changes in burial practices, what happens in MM III–LM I. If anybody would like to start, attacking, commenting on ideas that have come up, please do.

**Hallager** I was struck by one thing that you mentioned, at the very beginning, the lack of fish, and if I may suggest one possible solution. Based on my experience from the excavations in Khania, it has always been a very great mystery to me why you have no rubbish pits in the LM I settlement. As I travelled around the island I asked all our colleagues excavating LM I settlements “where are your rubbish pits?”, and they were not there. It was Phil Betancourt who gave me an answer, which I am going to suggest also for the missing fish bones. He said that during that period and probably

also in the earlier periods, such organic remains were very important and they were taken out into the fields to be used as manure. This might be one possible suggestion for the missing fish bones.

**MacGillivray** Interesting.

**Vallianou** I just want to point out that Metaxia must be a very happy Greek archaeologist. After 25 years of hard work, and having faced many difficult problems, she managed to complete an important work, to excavate a particularly important site, to establish its relations with other areas, to have very good collaborators, to publish a lot, to reach almost the end of her research, and to make the site accessible to the public, with modest but appropriate interventions. I would like to wish her luck in the future, and I believe that she deserved all she has achieved up to now.

**MacGillivray** Excellent. She has been very clever about getting the right sort of collaborators.

**Macdonald** Can I just ask about the end of LM IB, perhaps you did not go into detail, at least House II.1 is abandoned, not destroyed by fire?

**Tsipopoulou** There is fire, especially since the industrial activity taking place there was connected with hearths, heating water, etc. The whole of Room E gave evidence for a fire. In the Shaw Festschrift, the *Krinoi kai Limenes* volume (Tsipopoulou 2007c), I published, for the first time, several pictures of the destruction deposit over the central court of the palace. There was a thick LM IB destruction deposit, full of blocks fallen from the upper floor, door jambs, from *polythyra*, many with mason's marks among them (we have identified 29 on fallen blocks, and some more are *in situ*). There was this very thick deposit with intense burning, all over the central court and to the east of it. In the central court we had 10 Byzantine graves and also the ossuary. Some of them, as Natalia Poulou-Papadimitriou said, used one Minoan wall and then built another three walls, to have a cist built tomb. In other cases, they excavated in this very thick and compact destruction deposit, which was like the bedrock, and they put their dead in it.

**MacGillivray** So the LM IB fire destruction reached very high temperatures.

**Tsipopoulou** It is something very similar to the Phaistos "*astraki*". We do not have much LM IB pottery, because what we call the west wing of the palace, the parallel corridors on the plan, are all basement, or rather they are structural features to support the upper floors, so they were practically empty of any traces of the latest use. When we dug deeper, we found the walls of previous buildings. The latest phase of the palace is not well preserved, but we do have the destruction deposit.

Besides the central court, there was a room with an intense LM IB destruction deposit. This room is adjacent to the so-called "shrine" with the 4 m long plastered bench. This room with the bench was Protopalatial, and following the MM IIB destruction was sealed and never re-used. To the northeast of it, there was a long room with a flagstone floor, and in it even the slabs were burnt. It was also full of plaster and mudbricks both from the ground and from the upper floors.

- MacGillivray** That suggests that in LM IB the building was sufficiently important for someone to need to destroy it.
- Tsipopoulou** What always makes me wonder is why they kept this smaller, sort of symbolic, central court, and they did all the re-arrangement with the alternating columns and pillars. It has always been a palace with the memory of the earlier glory.
- MacGillivray** The Linear A tablets come from that?
- Tsipopoulou** Yes.
- MacGillivray** So there is administration.
- Tsipopoulou** Yes, but we do not know about the existence of an archive. There were two tablets, in the same trench, at the west part of the building, the same trench that contained the hieroglyphic archive in a deeper stratum. And in between there was also an LM IA destruction deposit, all that in the same trench, we excavated almost 3 m. Kostas Christakis excavated the LM IA destruction deposit.
- MacGillivray** I wonder if, maybe Kostas Christakis will talk about the notion of foreigners and locals that Tina McGeorge brought up quite clearly.
- Paschalidis** I would like to change the subject, based on a comment we exchanged yesterday with Metaxia. In this Symposium, the LM III period was not adequately represented, not because it did not exist at Petras.
- Tsipopoulou** Right.
- Paschalidis** So, in order to have a complete picture of the site we should need to include this important period as well.
- MacGillivray** Is there LM IIIA and IIIB?
- Tsipopoulou** And also LM IIIC, as we saw.
- Paschalidis** There was a cemetery, Metaxia, that you showed us yesterday.
- Tsipopoulou** Yes, there has been a cemetery; we had the larnakes, both chest-shaped and bathtub. The cemetery started in LM IIIB and continued into LM IIIC.
- MacGillivray** The interesting thing about having a settlement like Petras, that was occupied for thousands of years, is that you can almost visualize populations coming and going. One of the best ways to see them is through their burial practices and to see how these change over time. Because you are dealing with the same spot, but obviously you are not dealing with the same people, you are watching populations come and go.



- Tsipopoulou** I would like to remind you about the Achladia tholos, which is Mycenaean in type and construction. This is very close to Petras, only 4 km from the coast, and it was also almost on top of an earlier settlement, a very small one, a *metochi* type, both Proto- and Neopalatial.
- MacGillivray** Was that the one with the 80-year old in it?
- Tsipopoulou** Not 80, she was 45–65 years old when she died.
- MacGillivray** That is pretty old, anyway.
- Tsipopoulou** It was pretty old, and she had suffered from a very significant stress when she was very young, probably malnutrition.
- MacGillivray** The Theraeruption? No the Mycenaean invasion.  
[Laughs from the audience!]
- Tsipopoulou** The LM IB destruction. She was an upper class lady.
- MacGillivray** Does everybody know whatever they possibly want to know about Petras?
- Blackman** I am actually working on Ramnous and I found out about this conference while studying there, with surprise. It is actually wonderful to be there. We are studying with *EAIKEΘE* [Hellenic Center of Marine Research] the problem of relative sea level change. Relative is the important word here, has the sea gone down and the land gone up, or both phenomena? The question goes back to Spratt and the whole question of what Crete has done, we know about elevation in the west, but something was happening in the east, and we have these submerged buildings at Palaikastro, which we wanted to survey. The whole issue of reconstructing the palaeoenvironment is very important. Now, at Siteia we have a *neoreion* that is classical, too late for our Prehistorian friends, but there you have something which functions with a precise sea level, not far from your site. First the geologists disagree about what has happened to the sea. Secondly the land is not one block, so what applies to Palaikastro will not necessarily apply to Siteia.
- MacGillivray** No, you have local tectonics.
- Blackman** But, nevertheless, a local study of the evidence for submerged beach lines would enable you to understand what has happened in the later periods, including eruptions, what has happened to the shoreline. Geologists can help with all that. Keep working with geologists, it is a challenge, they do not know how to apply for archaeological permits, and also the jealousies of geologists are far greater than the jealousies of archaeologists.
- MacGillivray** Impossible!  
[Laughs in the audience!]

**Blackman** Nevertheless, it is very important for reconstructing communications by sea in the Minoan period, it is very important to try to reconstruct where the coastline was before you can understand the use of harbors, whatever harbors mean. It has been a wonderful conference. Congratulations to Dr Tsipopoulou.

**MacGillivray** I think this is probably the best time, to thank not only Metaxia but also her whole crew, for putting together the Symposium, and obviously these two days represent the end-result of 25 years of hard work, but you are probably less than half way there on the site, so we should probably meet every five years and get all the new information.  
[Laughs in the audience]

And I hope you will all join me thanking Metaxia and her colleagues for this fantastic Symposium!

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*ActaArch* – *Lov Acta archaeologica Lovanensia*

*AJA* – *American Journal of Archaeology*

*AJPA* – *American Journal of Physical Anthropology*

*AR* – *Archaeological Reports*

*ArchDelt* – *Archaeologikon Deltion*

*ArchEph* – *Archaiologike Ephemeris*

*ASAtene* – *Annuario della Scuola archeologica di Atene e delle Missioni italiane in Oriente*

*BAR-IS* – *British Archaeological Reports, International Series*

*BASOR* – *Bulletin of the American Schools of Oriental Research*

*BCH* – *Bulletin de correspondance hellénique*

*BCH Suppl.* – *Bulletin de correspondance hellénique. Supplément*

*BÉFAR* – *Bibliothèque des Écoles françaises d'Athènes e de Rome*

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*CurrAnthr* – *Current Anthropology*

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*JMA* – *Journal of Mediterranean Archaeology*

*JPR* – *Journal of Prehistoric Religion*

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

*OpAth* – *Opuscula Atheniensia*

*Prakt* – *Praktika tes en Athenais Archaiologikes Etaireias*

*SIMA* – *Studies in Mediterranean Archaeology*

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