MONI ODIGITRIA

A Prepalatial Cemetery and Its Environs in the Asterousia, Southern Crete

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A Prepalatial Cemetery and Its Environs in the Asterousia, Southern Crete

by

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with contributions by

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For

Michalis A. Vasilakis

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Introduction and Acknowledgments

This volume presents the final report on the excavation of two Prepalatial tholos tombs and their associated remains at Chatzinas Liophyto near the Moni Odigitria (a monastery), as well as reports the results of the associated survey of the upper catchment of the Hagiopharango region in south-central Crete (Fig. 1).

The lower catchment of the Hagiopharango was surveyed in 1971 and 1972 by a team led by Keith Branigan and David Blackman. One of the sites recorded in the survey, the Prepalatial tholos tomb at Hagia Kyriaki, was excavated by the same team in 1972 following extensive but incomplete illegal looting. The reports on the survey and the excavation, together with a report on a limited survey of the south coast between the mouth of the Hagiopharango and Lasaia, were published in the *Annual of the British School at Athens* (Blackman and Branigan 1975, 1977, 1982).

The northwestern limit of the 1971–1972 survey was the Moni Odigitria itself. Had time and funds been available to survey the area immediately north of the monastery, then the Prepalatial cemetery at Chatzinas Liophyto would probably have been identified, and an archaeological catastrophe averted. As it was, Early Minoan III pottery was recorded from the site in 1975, and in 1979 large-scale illegal looting was reported. It is likely that the first illegal excavations began in the mid-1970s. As soon as looting was reported in 1979, Nota Dimopoulou was sent to undertake rescue excavations. In the spring of 1980, however, further illegal looting took place, and Yannis Sakellerakis, then Director of the 23rd Ephoria at Herakleion, gave Andonis Vasilakis the task of completing the exploration of the cemetery.

Given the enormous pressures under which the staff of the Archaeological Service operate, including further rescue excavations elsewhere to meet the threat

of illegal looting, it was no surprise that neither of the excavators were able to find the time and resources to record, analyze, and publish the excavations at Chatzinas Liophyto. During discussions in 2000, however, Andonis Vasilakis and Keith Branigan explored the potential for collaborative work to see the excavations through to publication. As a result, a program of recording, analysis, and writing was agreed in 2001, and applications for funding were submitted. Thanks to the generous support of those named below, the program was able to start in 2002. Study seasons were planned to take place in 2002, 2003, and 2004, with writing to be completed by autumn 2005. Due to the reorganization of both the Ephoreia and the Herakleion Museum as separate units, the preparation of the final plates, figures, and texts of some chapters was delayed for a year.

The delay, however, has allowed the incorporation into this volume of a report on the survey of the northwest upper catchment of the Hagiopharango, which was undertaken in 2003 by a team led by Keith Branigan and Andonis Vasilakis. The survey has allowed for the placement of the cemetery in its contemporary context, and the report on the cemetery undoubtedly benefits from having the survey published alongside it.

A program of work such as the excavation, study, and analysis of the Moni Odigitria Prepalatial cemetery and its surroundings is possible only because of the generosity and good will of several institutions and the hard work, expertise, and good will of many individuals. We take pleasure in having the opportunity to express our gratitude in a public and permanent form here.

Funding for the project was principally supplied by the Institute for Aegean Prehistory (INSTAP), to whom we are immensely grateful. At a personal level we are pleased to thank Philip Betancourt and Karen Vellucci for always making themselves available to offer sound advice and encouragement. Important financial support was also provided by the 23rd Ephoreia, the University of Sheffield, the British School at Athens, the British Academy, and the Trust for Mediterranean Archaeology. A debt of gratitude must be paid to the British School at Athens, the Archaeological Museum of Herakleion, and the University of Sheffield for making space and facilities for study and analysis available at Knossos, Herakleion, and Sheffield.

Many thanks to Nota Dimopoulou for allowing the publication here of her excavations of 1979, for allowing access to her excavation diaries, and for her willingness to discuss the excavations. The excavation of 1980 involved about 25 persons, and Andonis Vasilakis would like to thank the following people for their contributions to the successful completion of the work: Nikos Daskalakis, a skilled workman from Knossos, who was the excavation foreman; Sifis Kosoglou (philologist), Eugenia Lembidaki, Polixeni Arcahovitou, Eleni Giannakoulopoulou, Maria Manoura, and Prokopis Katomeris (then all students at the University of Athens) who formed the archaeological staff; 10 guards of antiquities from Phaistos, Gortyn, Hagia Triada, and Matala, under the chief guard from Phaistos, Zacharias Spyridakis who organized the workmen and the security (a role he played also at Hagia Kyriaki in 1972!); and 12 skilled workmen recruited from the nearby villages of Pitsidia, Petrokefali, Sivas, Vori, and Hagios Ioannes near Phaistos. The excavator was lucky to have the advice of Yannis Sakellarakis, who took much interest in the work and visited the site three times. His considerable experience of Prepalatial cemeteries, at Archanes-Phourni (Tholoi E and Γ) and at the tholos near the village of Hagios Kyrillos in the Mesara, was very helpful. Malcolm Wiener also visited the excavation site and expressed his interest. The restorer, Georgios Lazanakis, undertook the conservation of the ruins of the cemetery in 2003.

The survey of the area north of the monastery involved a team of 12 members in addition to the directors. Particular thanks must be paid to Colin Merrony who, in addition to laying out the survey grid and planning several sites, also took on the role of general "trouble shooter." The field walkers were: Tim Campbell-Green, Garry Badeley, Lisa Barton, Victoria Brown, Mike Garnham, Marina Giasta, David Kingsnorth, Manolis Kosmadakis, Anne Melas, Flora Michelaki, Mark Peters, and Sanne-Marie Roberts. They worked hard in the field, and spent "leisure hours" washing and sorting pottery with Nong Branigan, and they are all owed a big thank you.

Fortunately, superb accommodation was found in Sivas and provided by Georgios and Pelagia Syngelakis to whom we are very grateful, and we should also like to thank the people of Sivas for making us welcome in their lovely village.

It is of course well known that a few weeks of fieldwork yields many, many months of recording and study in the museum and storerooms. Most of the post-excavation work was undertaken in the Stratigraphic Museum at Knossos where every assistance was given by successive curators Eleni Hatzaki and Don Evely, and during Don's absence by Todd Whitelaw, and by the *phylax* of the Knossos area, Stavros Amanakis. We owe much to all of them. We are obviously indebted to the specialists who spent so much of their time recording, analyzing, and studying the various materials from the excavations—Tristan Carter, Don Evely, Flora Michelaki, Kostas Sbonias, and Sevi Triantaphyllou. Particular mention must be made of, and profound gratitude expressed to, Tim Campbell-Green for the long hot hours spent meticulously sorting and recording the mountain of pottery sherds. Like so many Aegean archaeologists, we are also indebted to Ann Thomas for her careful drawings of the vases and Pepi Stefanaki prepared additional drawings of some of them. Greco-Roman pottery from the survey was examined and researched by Jane Francis to whom we are very grateful. Throughout the process of sorting and recording the pottery sherds, the expertise and comments of many others working in or visiting the Stratigraphic Museum was of great benefit, including Colin Macdonald, Aleydis Van de Moortel, Peter Warren, and Todd Whitelaw. Additionally, through the good offices of Vincenzo La Rosa we were able to visit the stores at Phaistos and benefit from Simona Todaro's knowledge of the Prepalatial sequence there.

Conservator Spiros Liapakis reconstructed the skulls from the Ossuary. The vases were reconstructed by conservators Georgios Iliakis, Kostas Vitorakis, Tasos and Eirine Karousos, and Panagiotis Sinadinakis.

All of this work is only now available for others working in the field due to the many painstaking hours that have gone into preparing the text and illustrations for publication. Thanks are due to the specialists for their contributions in this process, submitting materials in the formats and styles required by the publisher. Flora Michelaki worked for many hours and days transcribing manuscripts from Greek into English and vice versa, and she also had initial overall responsibility for the plans, drawings, and photographs, etc., for the publication. Katie Astrinaki prepared the illustrations of the seals. The photographs of the finds are the work of Georgios Xylouris and Christos Stefanakis. Particular thanks are due to Tim Campbell-Green for his initial manipulation of the pottery drawings and plates and some of the finds photographs. We are most indebted to Martin Dearne for his editing, copy editing, and manipulation of the complete text and illustrations, carried out with his usual meticulous attention to detail. He also drew or redrew the illustrations for Chapters 1 and 8, parts of Chapters 2 and 3, and the Bronzework and Stone Vases sections of Chapter 5, and he also completed the manipulation and

layout of many of the plates. Valasia Isaakidou assisted with checking bibliographical references in Greek, and Flora Michelaki helped with other bibliographical checks. Finally we must again record our gratitude to INSTAP for taking on the publication of this project, and to its staff for their prompt response and helpful advice whenever we have needed it.

Note on Herakleion Museum Numbers

Herakleion Museum numbers, where assigned or known, are given in chapters dealing with the finds from the cemetery excavation, generally in the form of HM xxxx, omitting any material/category code as this is readily deducible from the context in which they appear. Thus HM Π 5436 for a pottery vessel is given as only HM 5436. Where there might be doubt about the material/category code, however, this is retained for the relevant entries in Chapters 5–9. Concordance B lists all of the HM numbers in alphanumeric order with their corresponding catalog numbers.

List of Abbreviations

The following standard abbreviations are used throughout this volume. For abbreviations of human bones, see Tables 102 and 103.

AMS	Accelerator Mass Spectrometry
amt1	antemortem tooth loss
AV	average surface visibility
C	counter catalog number
ca.	circa
CG	chronological group
cm	centimeters
CS	chipped stone catalog number
dia.	diameter
dims.	dimensions
EBA	Early Bronze Age
EDM	electronic distance measuring device
EH	Early Helladic
EM	Early Minoan
est.	estimate(d)
ext.	exterior
F	female
F	figurine catalog number
FN	Final Neolithic
g.	grams
h.	height
ha.	hectare
HM	Herakleion Museum
int.	interior
J	jewelry catalog number
km	kilometer
L	left
L.	length
LH	Late Helladic
LM	Late Minoan
M	male
m	meter
MA	mature adult
m.a.s.l.	meters above sea level
max.	maximum
MH	Middle Helladic
MISC	miscellaneous catalog number
mm	millimeter
MM	Middle Minoan
MNI	minimum number of individuals
MNV	minimum number of vessels
MSV	Warren, P. 1969. *Minoan Stone Vases*, Cambridge
NAD	notional average density

No.	number
om.	omada
OA	old adult
P	pottery catalog number
PA	prime adult
pers. com.	personal communication
pers. obs.	personal observation
pres.	preserved
R	right
S	seal catalog number
Sh	shell catalog number
SP	survey pottery catalog number
St.	stratum
ST	stone tool catalog number
SV	stone vessel catalog number
TAQ	terminus ante quem
TF	Type Fabric
th.	thickness
TPQ	terminus post quem
Tr.	trench
VERA	Vienna Environmental Research Accelerator
w.	width
wt.	weight
YA	young adult

Glossary

The text uses the following terms, which are specialized terminology or do not have exact English equivalents.

area	subdivision of a piece of landscape, usually defined by topographic features, or of an archaeological site
combing	decoration of a pot surface with a toothed comb, producing multiple parallel striations
context	homogenous archaeological deposit
hard standing	area of ground with a surfacing of rammed rubble or gravel
kouskouras	white marl
omada/omades	excavation unit(s)
phylax	guard
"poppies"	long metal pegs with a red ribbon tied around their top, used to denote significant points in a survey grid
pot boiler	large pebble, which is heated and dropped into a vessel of liquid as a way of heating it
Second Byzantine	A.D. 961–1204
skinoi	lentisk trees
slipped	solution of clay, which is used to coat a pottery vessel before it is fired
trackway	unsurfaced path
transect	minimal survey unit, in our case normally a one-meter-wide strip running from one side of a survey Field to the other
washed	suspension of clay or pigment brushed or poured over the surface of a pottery vessel before firing

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