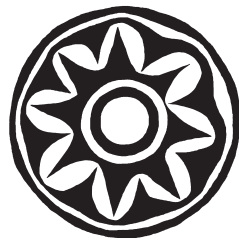


Bramiana

Salvaging Information from a Destroyed Minoan
Settlement in Southeast Crete



PREHISTORY MONOGRAPHS 66

Bramiana

Salvaging Information from a Destroyed Minoan Settlement in Southeast Crete

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Preface

In 2010, Doug Faulmann and his wife Kathy Hall took their little daughter Rosie to a popular picnic spot near the artificial lake that furnishes water for the city of Ierapetra on the southeast coast of Crete. Doug, the chief artist at the INSTAP SCEC in Pacheia Ammos, and Kathy, the senior conservator at the facility, were interested in observing the birds that stop at the lake during their migrations. Their daughter Rosie was six years old at the time, and they looked forward to a pleasant outing.

After a short time, Rosie came up to her father with something in her hand and said, “Look, Daddy, Minoan pottery.”

“No, no,” her father replied. “We don’t have Minoan pottery out here.”

“Yes,” Rosie insisted. “It’s Minoan pottery.”

Doug looked at what she had and realized that Rosie was right. Upon closer examination, fragments of other Bronze Age ceramics could be seen littering the ground. Rosie had discovered a previously unrecorded Minoan site. The discovery was reported to the Ephorate of Antiquities of Lasithi (formerly the 24th Ephorate of Pre-historic and Classical Antiquities), and the director at the time, Vili Apostolakou, investigated and confirmed the presence of the ancient site. Because this area was such a popular picnic spot for the residents of Ierapetra and its vicinity, three small rescue trenches were subsequently excavated where the soil was deep enough to yield ancient remains.

What was discovered was an ancient settlement from the second millennium B.C. that had been completely destroyed by bulldozing at some point prior to 1980. All the architecture had been displaced in order to create level fields for growing

olives. Only broken pottery and a few other artifacts remained to tell the story of a small Minoan settlement that existed here for over a thousand years.

Bramiana is important because very little is known about the history of this part of Bronze Age Crete. Few excavated settlements from the Middle or Late Bronze Age are known either from Ierapetra or from the coastal region immediately east and west of this large modern city. Bramiana provides an opportunity to learn a substantial amount about the Bronze Age history of this little-known region.

A modern approach to the study of the ceramics at Bramiana leads to significant new conclusions about the distribution patterns of this commodity at the beginning of the Late Bronze Age. This approach organizes the ceramics using fabrics that are defined by petrography. Consequently, the chapter on the trade in pottery (documenting, for example, several different sources for cooking pots and two origins for ritual vessels, both on the north coast) has provided enough new information on pottery distribution to make earlier treatments of the subject based only on style probably in need of future work.

Earlier articles and reports that discuss the site include the following: Betancourt et al. 2016; Apostolakou et al. 2019; Oddo 2019a, 2019b.

Definitions and Nomenclature for the Pottery

Pottery forms the bulk of the material recovered from Bramiana. Its fabrics are characterized by petrography (see this vol., Ch. 2), with the word fabric defined as the final state of the material used for a vessel or another ceramic object. The fabric incorporates characteristics derived from the original raw materials, the processing by the potters, the changes made during firing, and the post-burial alterations.

The nomenclature for fabric classes follows Betancourt (2008). Fabrics that have been defined by petrography in print are capitalized (e.g., Cretan South Coast Fabric and Mirabello Fabric). Fabric classes that have not been closely defined are not capitalized (e.g., metamorphic fabrics). Named fabrics are defined by characteristic aplastic constituents, with subclasses identified by workshop practices (such as variations in clay mixes, differential levigation methods, or more than a single firing practice). The nomenclature for the shapes mostly follows Betancourt (1985). Ornamental classes are called Wares (capitalized) only if both the fabric has been defined petrographically and the surface treatment has been defined in detail (e.g., Vasiliki Ware, whose style is defined by Betancourt [1979], with subclasses made of Mirabello Fabric; and Kamares Ware, defined by Walberg [1976, 1978] as elaborate white or polychrome decoration on a dark background on vessels made of Cretan South Coast Fabric). If either the style or the fabric has not been closely defined, the class is called a style instead of a ware (i.e., the Middle Minoan Dark-on-Light Style [Betancourt 1977], which occurs at Bramiana in several different fabrics). The word style is capitalized only when it is part of a named class.



Acknowledgments

The excavations at Bramiana were directed by Vili Apostolakou on behalf of the Ephorate of Antiquities of Lasithi (formerly the 24th Ephorate for Prehistoric and Classical Antiquities) in 2011 and 2012. Financial support was provided by the Greek Ministry of Culture, the Institute for Aegean Prehistory (INSTAP) and its supporters, and private donors. Some of the study was supported by grants from Temple University in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. Study was accomplished at the INSTAP Study Center for East Crete (SCEC) in Pacheia Ammos, Crete, at the Temple University Tyler School of Art Digital Laboratory in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, and at the INSTAP Academic Press offices in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. Measurements for mapping were made by Antonia Stamos and Allyson McCreery using a Topcon Electronic Distance Measuring Instrument (EDM). Additional map preparation was accomplished by Andrew Koh, Thomas M. Brogan, Philip P. Betancourt, and Diane Evitts. Trench supervisors were Konstantinos Chalikias, Lily Bonga, Florence S.C. Hsu, and Melissa Eaby.

Technical assistance for the study of the pottery and other items was provided by the INSTAP SCEC in Pacheia Ammos Crete (Thomas M. Brogan, director, Eleanor Huffman, business administrator, Philip P. Betancourt, executive director). Conservation was done by Kathy Hall, senior conservator, and Matina Tzari, assistant conservator. Photomicrographs of the petrographic thin sections were taken by Eleni Nodarou. Photographs of objects were taken by Chronis Papanikolopoulos, chief photographer. Site photographs were taken by Philip Betancourt and Melissa Eaby. The stone tools were studied by Heidi M.C. Dierckx. The database and catalog were prepared by Mary A. Betancourt[†], registrar, and assistant

registrars Florence S.C. Hsu, Marie Nicole Pareja, Amie Gluckman, Diane Evitts, and Sydney R. Sarasin. Artists were Doug Faulmann, Lily Bonga, Konstantinos Chalikias, Philip P. Betancourt, and the authors of the individual chapters.



List of Abbreviations

a	angular	l.d.	long dimension
BR	Bramiana pottery catalog number	LM	Late Minoan
BRM	Bramiana petrography sample number	m	meter(s)
c:f:v	coarse:fine:void ratio	m ²	square meters
cm	centimeter(s)	m asl	meters above sea level
d.	diameter	max.	maximum
dim.	dimension	MM	Middle Minoan
EDM	electronic distance measuring instrument	µm	micrometers
EM	Early Minoan	PPL	plane polarized light
FN	Final Neolithic	pres.	preserved
gr.	gram(s)	r	rounded
h.	height	rest.	restored
ha	hectare(s)	sa	subangular
INSTAP	Institute for Aegean	sr	subrounded
SCEC	Prehistory Study Center for East Crete	tcf	textural concentration features
kg	kilogram(s)	th.	thickness
km	kilometer(s)	w.	width
		wt.	weight
		XP	cross-polarized light

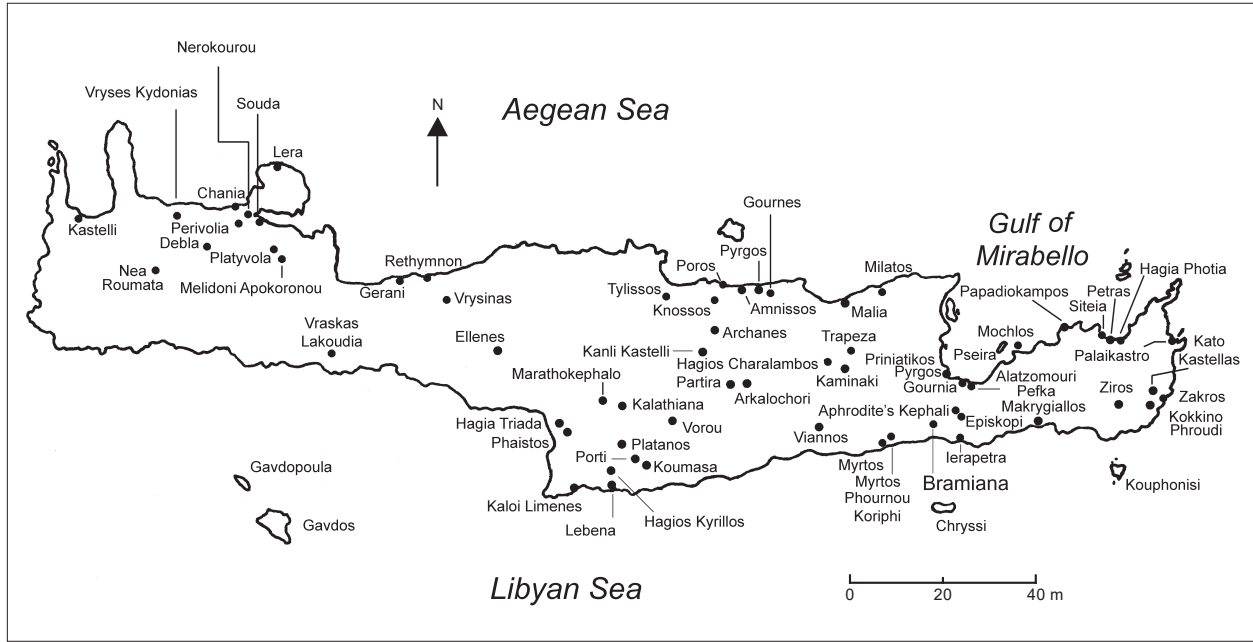


Illustration 1. Map of Crete showing some sites mentioned in the text. Drawing P. Betancourt.

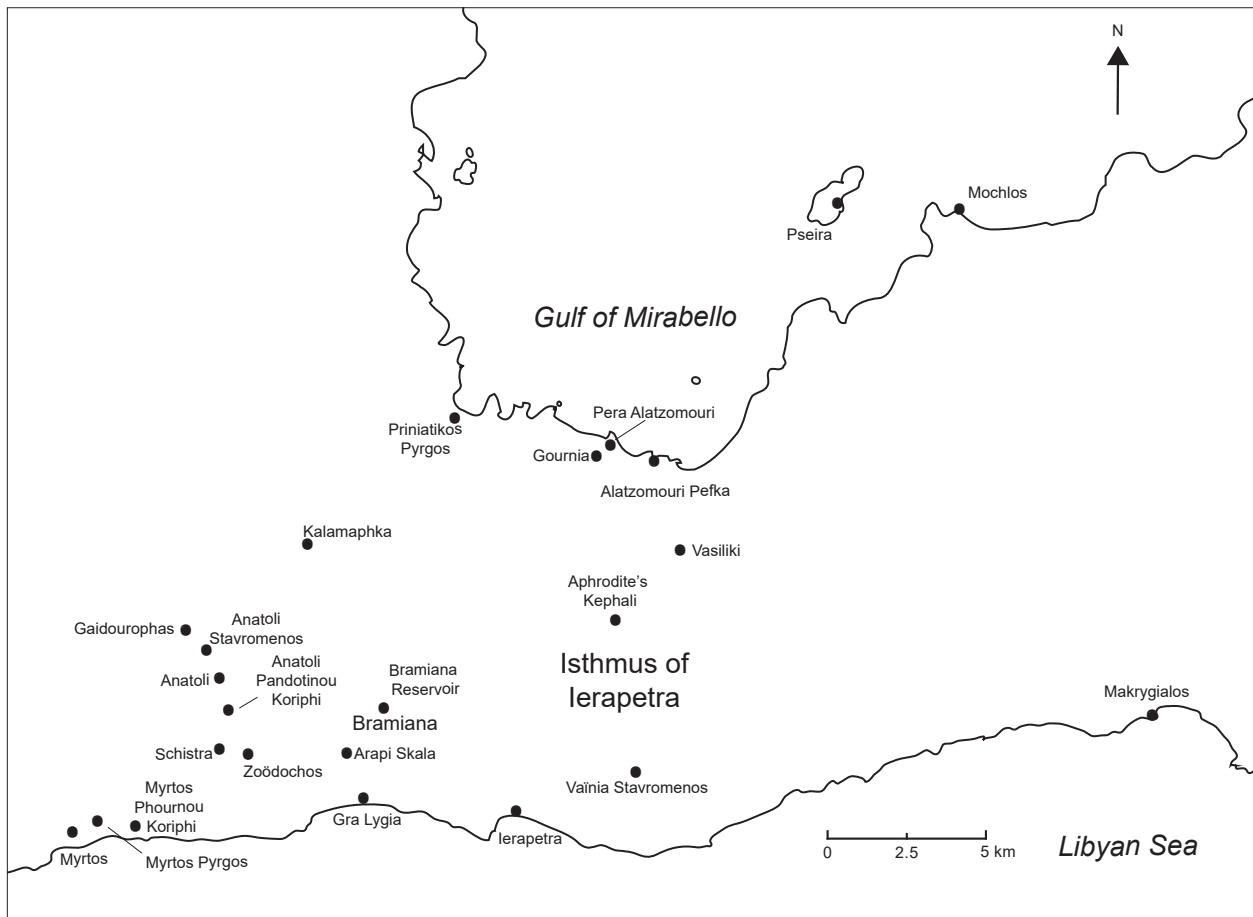


Illustration 2. Map of the isthmus of Ierapetra and the neighboring regions with some sites mentioned in the text. Drawing P. Betancourt.