



1 Burnished Jug

Final Neolithic period (ca. 3600–3100 B.C.)

Clay

Max. h. with handle 0.184 m

Lasithi, Kastelli Fourni, 1959

Herakleion Archaeological Museum, HM 14076

Complete, closed vase, biconical shape with high cylindrical neck and flat base. Perforated projection opposite the base of a raised strap handle, at the junction of the neck and body. The black surface is highly burnished.

Careful burnishing of clay vases before firing was widely practiced in the Neolithic period. Burnishing increases a vase's impermeability, which could not be achieved otherwise because of the low firing temperatures of that time (firing in heaps or inside pits at 700 to 800° C).

This jug was found inside a Final Neolithic well, together with about thirty vases of the same period whose shapes indicate that they were designed for drawing and transporting water.

The digging of a well at a height of 300 meters above sea level in the Fourni plain during this period indicates that the region's prehistoric inhabitants knew how to exploit the subterranean water sources when surface water was not sufficient for household use and farming. This was a typical practice of the Final Neolithic in Crete, which saw an increase of the population and the occupation of new sites, particularly hills with adjacent fertile plains that were appropriate for cereal cultivation.

Selected Bibliography

Betancourt 1999; Hayden 2003; *Κρητ. Χρονικά* II' (1959): 388 (Platon); Mantelli 1992.

Eirini Galli



2 Haghios Onouphrios-Ware Jug

Early Minoan I period (ca. 3000 B.C.)

Clay

Max. h. 0.188 m

Kanli Kastelli, Kyparissi, burial tomb, 1951

Herakleion Archaeological Museum, HM 10853

Finely made jug, complete. Conical upper body angles abruptly into a rounded bottom, which is smaller than the maximum diameter. The short, narrow neck ends in a raised spout. The evenly fired yellowish surface is decorated with groups of vertical red lines that converge under the base to form a net pattern.

This jug, which comes from the burial cave at Korphi tou Vatheia, near the village of Kyparissi in central Crete, is a typical example of Haghios Onouphrios Ware. The excavated deposit included human bones, a large number of vases, and other types of grave gifts, such as metal weapons and jewelry, obsidian tools, and stone necklace beads.

The production of pottery with painted decoration is one of the earliest developments of Minoan material culture and a significant indicator of the Early Minoan period. It also indicates a relatively high degree of technical knowledge, a distribution system for manufactured goods, and the organization of pottery manufacture, which appears to have been fairly complex even before the establishment of the early palaces.

The jug is the most popular shape in Haghios Onouphrios Ware and occurs in both domestic and funerary contexts. This particular shape, very popular in the northeast Aegean and western Asia Minor, may have inspired the flask-shape gourd, which had been until recently used as a container.

Haghios Onouphrios Ware, named after an archaeological site in the Mesara Plain, is characterized by painted decoration of orange-red to brownish-red motifs on a light background. The red paint is achieved by creating an oxidizing atmosphere within controlled firing conditions and is among the earliest evidence for the use of a closed kiln. In the earliest examples, the linear motifs are organically related to the shape of the vase and consist of groups of lines that often cross each another to create grids that recall basket weaving. Similar painted decoration occurs in the Syro-Palestinian region.

Vases of this ware are found in burial caves in northern and central Crete.

Selected Bibliography

Alexiou 1951, p. 277, pl. 13, fig. 1.1; Alexiou-Warren 2004, pp. 72, 125–26; Betancourt 1985, pp. 29–31; Day-Wilson-Kiriati 1997; Wilson-Day 1994, pp. 84–85.

Eirini Galli



3 Barrel-Shape Vessel

Early Minoan I period (ca. 3000 B.C.)

Clay

H. 0.104 m, l. 0.087 m

Lendas, Mesara 1959, Tomb II

Herakleion Archaeological Museum, HM 15385

This clay barrel-shape vessel has a cylindrical neck and disc-shape sides, each with a pair of tiny horizontal perforations and four small feet protruding beneath the body. Almost complete.

The vessel is decorated in the so-called Lebena Ware style with white linear motifs on a red ground. The cylindrical body bears cross-hatching with X motifs in between; the disc sides have three successive bands and closely arranged chevrons, and the neck has a zigzag pattern and two bands at the lowest part.

Barrel-shape vessels make up a rare category in Cretan ceramic production of the Early Bronze Age and recall similar vessels from Troy and the islands of the northeastern Aegean, where this ceramic type is attested more frequently.

In the Early Minoan period, personal items for everyday use are found among grave gifts, as are miniature objects specially manufactured for funerary use that imitate larger utilitarian objects. This seems to apply as well to the barrel-shape vessels, which functioned either for practical, individual use or as miniature versions of larger utilitarian vessels of unknown size.

Selected Bibliography

AD 16 (1960): 257–58, fig. 14 (Alexiou); Alexiou–Warren 2004, p. 62; Podzuweit 1979, pp. 231–32, pl. 241; Schliemann 1880, pp. 404–5, nos. 439–40.



4 Footed Cup ("Chalice")

End of Early Minoan I–beginning of Early Minoan IIA period (ca. 2700–2600 B.C.)

Clay

H. 0.235 m, max. diam. 0.185 m

Early Minoan cemetery of Haghia Photia, Siteia, Tomb 134
Haghios Nikolaos Archaeological Museum, 4157

Biconical body, with a slim waist and a triangular, perforated protuberance below the rim. Incised decoration of fifteen irregular parallel incisions on upper part of body. Mended and restored in gypsum.

It is of local clay and belongs to a Minoan ceramic form found in cemeteries. It is of the so-called Pyrgos Style and has a gray, well-burnished surface. Similar vessels have been found at many sites in central, southern, and eastern Crete.

The Haghia Photia tombs are subterranean chamber tombs, elliptical in plan, cut into the soft limestone bedrock of the region. Their entrances were usually sealed by large stone slabs. Entry into the burial chamber was through a small antechamber, which was filled with soil and stones after the interment. This cup was found in pieces on top of the stone fill in the upper part of the antechamber. This location shows that the vessel was not one of the grave offerings that accompanied the deceased but was used in a ceremony of some kind, perhaps

a final offering that took place above the tomb after the dead was buried and the entrance sealed. It also seems very likely that the smashing of the vase was not accidental but a deliberate part of the ceremony.

Rites of a similar sort seem to have been quite common at Cretan cemeteries of the Early Bronze Age and included the use of cups, pouring vessels, kernoi, and zoomorphic and anthropomorphic rhyta.

Selected Bibliography

Alexiou 1951, pl. XIV; Branigan 1993, pp. 61–63, 76–80; Davaras 1971; Davaras–Betancourt 2004, p. 118, no. 134.5, fig. 286; Galanaki 2006, pl. IV; Soles 1992, pp. 247–51; Xanthoudides 1918a, figs. 8–11.

Yiannis Papadatos



5 Incense Burner

End of Early Minoan I–beginning of Early Minoan IIA period (ca. 2700–2600 B.C.)

Clay

H. 0.20 m, max. diam. 0.175 m

Early Minoan cemetery of Haghia Photia, Siteia, Tomb 104
Haghios Nikolaos Archaeological Museum, 3845

Brownish-red, smoothed surface, with thin red slip. Conical foot and piriform body. Vertical strap handle below lip, with a protuberance above. The neck has triangular fenestrations.

The vessel is made of semicoarse clay with many limestone inclusions. Although petrographic analysis has been unable to ascertain beyond a doubt whether the vessel is local or imported, this particular clay mix with limestone is a predominantly Cycladic characteristic. It should be noted that vessels of the same shape from similarly early contexts have been found in many Cycladic cemeteries, whereas on Crete the shape has been found only at Gournes, Herakleion, in a cemetery that has many points of similarity with Haghia Photia.

The vessel was likely used as an incense burner, probably for burning aromatic substances, judging from the traces of burning on the interior, as well as from the fenestrations on the neck allowing oxygen in and smoke out. Also, the protuberance above the handle and neck would have given greater protection

to the fingers against the heat that was developing inside. The existence of incense burners in cemeteries may indicate that they served both practical and ceremonial purposes. Burning incense may have helped offset the smell that lingered in the closed chamber tombs, yet it may also have had something to do with funeral customs and rites. Thus the use of such vases at Haghia Photia suggests a particularly strong relationship between this site and the Cyclades, not only in terms of material culture but also in burial customs.

Selected Bibliography

Branigan 1987; Davaras 1971; Davaras–Betancourt 2004, p. 98, no. 104.2, fig. 229; Day–Wilson–Kiriati 1998; Doulas 1977, pp. 63–64; Galanaki 2006, p. 230; Marangou 1990, pp. 94, 102, 108, no. 106.

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6 Bird Vase

End of Early Minoan I–beginning of Early Minoan IIA
period (ca. 2700–2600 B.C.)

Clay

H. 0.15 m, l. 0.21 m

Early Minoan cemetery of Haghia Photia, Siteia, Tomb 216
Haghios Nikolaos Archaeological Museum, 4890

Gray surface, well burnished. Bird-shape body supported on three short legs. Two vertical tubular excrescences on the belly. Short conical neck on top. Incised body decoration depicts the bird's plumage. Mended and restored in gypsum.

This vessel lacks precise parallels, although its shape is a rare variation of a common Cycladic vase form with a piriform body (also known as a bottle). This form is relatively rare on Crete and is found in cemeteries with marked Cycladic features, such as Gournes and Pyrgos, Herakleion. Moreover, the vessel is made of semicoarse clay with numerous limestone inclusions, a mix that is typical of Cycladic pottery. On the other hand, we should note that no Cycladic site has yielded a similar vessel and that bird vases are generally absent from the repertoire of the Cyclades, unlike Crete. From this point of view, the vase in question could be a creative marriage of a Cycladic form with a Cretan potting tradition.

Selected Bibliography

Davaras 1971; Davaras–Betancourt 2004, p. 197, no. 216.10, fig. 485; Day–Wilson–Kiriati 1998; Doumas 1977, pl. XXXVI; Galanaki 2006, p. 230; Sakellarakis 1977, fig. 133; Zapheirou 1984, p. 35, fig. 3a.



7 Spool-Shape Pyxis with Lid

End of Early Minoan I–beginning of Early Minoan IIA
period (ca. 2700–2600 B.C.)

Clay

H. 0.04 m, diam. 0.095 m

Early Minoan cemetery of Haghia Photia, Siteia, Tomb 2
Haghios Nikolaos Archaeological Museum, 2491 and 2510

Well-burnished, brownish-red surface. Cylindrical body, with projecting base. Lid symmetrical to the body, with cylindrical vertical walls and projecting upper surface. Incised decoration on the lid, comprising vertical incisions and bands of zigzag lines on the walls and a fifteen-ray star on the upper surface, framed by two concentric circles, one of small dashes and another of a continuous zigzag line. Small amount of restoration in gypsum.

The vessel was made of semicoarse clay with limestone inclusions. Cycladic influences are confined not only to the clay but also to the incised decoration, particularly the star, a favored motif on the clay “frying-pans” of the Cyclades during the Kampos phase. In Crete similar vases have been found only in tombs displaying Cycladic influences—at Kyparissi, Pyrgos, and Gournes, Herakleion.

Selected Bibliography

Alexiou 1951, pl. XIV:2:13; Davaras 1971; Davaras–Betancourt 2004, p. 10, nos. 2A.19 and 2A.38, fig. 9; Day–Wilson–Kiriati 1998; Galanaki 2006, pl. IV:2e; Marangou 1990, p. 173, no. 180; Xanthoudides 1918a, fig. 9; Zapheirou 1984, p. 35, fig. 3b.



8 Potter's Wheel

Early Minoan IIA period (ca. 2600–2400 B.C.)

Clay

Diam. 0.23 m, th. 0.029 m

Early Minoan settlement of Phournou Koryphi, Myrtos,
Hierapetra (Room 49)

Haghios Nikolaos Archaeological Museum, 6957

Complete. Clay circular disc with flat upper surface; curved underneath. The center of the underside has traces of damage from turning. Its decoration consists of a broad strip around the edge and a cross in the center.

This piece of equipment was likely used as a potter's wheel to make clay vases, a proposition supported by the traces of damage on the base. The absence of a hole indicates that it was not used as a fast wheel but rather as a slow one, which was manually turned by the potter in order to lift up the walls of the vessel. The fast wheel made its appearance in Crete about five hundred years later in the Middle Minoan I period.

Seven other similar discs, presumably used in the same manner, were found in the same room (Room 49), which dates to the earlier phase of occupation of the settlement (Early Minoan IIA). Therefore, it could have either been a ceramic workshop or a place used for the storage of such equipment.

Selected Bibliography

Warren 1969a; Warren 1972, p. 214, dr. 98, fig. 75c, no. 14.



9 Footed Pyxis

Early Minoan II period (ca. 2600–2300 B.C.)

Clay

H. 0.145 m, body diam. 0.18 m

Platyvola cave, Kerameia, 1966–67

Khania Archaeological Museum, Π 2002

Pyxis with spherical body pressed onto a high conical foot, and twin pierced vertical handles—excrescences attached at the middle of the belly. The decoration comprises eight zones of incised designs (herringbone, small angular lines, and lozenges) on the upper body. Mended from several fragments.

The vase is in fine gray ware, which was relatively widespread throughout Crete early in the Early Minoan II period. Incised decoration is very popular and characterizes many of this ware's products. The pyxis, a form shared with the Cyclades, where it originated, played a special role during this period. Also, the discovery of Early Helladic “sauceboat”-type vases in the Platyvola cave strengthens the view that west Cretans and Cycladic islanders had close relations during this period.

Selected Bibliography

AΔ 23 B2 (1968): 415–16, pl. 376a (Tzedakis); Betancourt 1985, p. 40, pl. 3H.

Efthyhia Protopapadaki



10 “Teapot”

Early Minoan IIB period (ca. 2400–2300 B.C.)

Clay

H. 0.177 m, max. diam. 0.266 m

Early Minoan settlement of Phournou Koryphi, Myrtos
Hierapetra (Room 91)

Haghios Nikolaos Archaeological Museum, 7224

Brownish-black surface, well polished, with mottled decoration comprising orange circles with black blots at the center. Piriform body with ring base, large protruding spout, and vertical handle on the opposite side.

This vase, an example of so-called Vasiliki Ware, was found inside a small room that was filled with sixty-six small and medium-size utensils for consuming and serving food. The room next door, where a built altar and a figurine of a goddess, known as the “Myrtos Goddess,” were revealed, has been interpreted by the excavator as a shrine area. It is, therefore, likely that our vase belongs to a wider range of equipment that was kept there for use in rites in the neighboring cult area of the settlement.

Vasiliki Ware is among the finest artistic products of the Prepalatial period. The manufacture of such vases goes beyond the boundaries of domestic production on a small scale, since it called for very specialized technological expertise, both in throwing the pot and in firing it, as well as in the creation of the

mottled decoration, which was achieved by the correct application of a slip rich in iron oxide. The high degree of specialization is supported by analyses that have shown that the Vasiliki Ware was produced in only a few centers, whence it was exported to the whole of central and eastern Crete.

This particular vase, like all Vasiliki Ware found at Myrtos, was manufactured and imported from the north part of the isthmus of Hierapetra, at least twenty kilometers from Myrtos. The fact that almost half the pottery found at Myrtos is imported from this region shows how extensive the networks were and how frequent exchange was in Crete as early as the middle of the third millennium B.C.

Selected Bibliography

Betancourt et al. 1979; Warren 1972, p. 150, fig. 63c, no. P656;
Whitelaw et al. 1997.

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11 Jug

Early Minoan IIB period (ca. 2400–2300 B.C.)

Clay

H. 0.306 m, max. diam. 0.175 m, base diam. 0.08 m

Early Minoan settlement of Phournou Koryphi, Myrtos,
Hierapetra (Room 80)

Haghios Nikolaos Archaeological Museum, 7214

Red surface, well polished, with mottled decoration of orange circles with black blots in the center. Ovoid body with ring base, high spout and vertical handle at the back. Mended and restored.

This vase is an example of Vasiliki Ware. See catalogue number 10 for the technology required for the manufacture, circulation, and significance of this type of pottery.

Selected Bibliography

Betancourt et al. 1979; Warren 1972, p. 131, fig. 49a, no. P399;

Whitelaw et al. 1997.



12 Kamares Ware Tray

Middle Minoan IIB period (ca. 1750–1700 B.C.)

Clay

Diam. 0.385 m

Phaistos, Old Palace, Great Destruction, west of Court I,
1966

Herakleion Archaeological Museum, HM 18593

This circular tray has low vertical walls, a horizontal rim with three parallel grooves, two horizontal handles, and a tubular spout, now largely broken. Mended and restored.

A row of white roundels with a reserved double-axe motif occupies the walls' outer surface; simple white discs decorate the walls' inner surface. White dots on the rim and white lines on the handle complete the secondary decorative motifs. A dense radiating ornament consisting of vegetal and geometric motifs occupies the entire interior base. Four hatched, sinuous bands connect a central orange roundel, which contains a red lozenge

and a white circle with four identical roundels in the periphery. Each peripheral roundel develops into petals and spirals that end in a rosette. This symmetrical composition is based on the antithetical twisting and turning of the various decorative motifs. The composition's spiraling and radiating movement gives the impression that the multicolored motifs are floating on the black background.

Undoubtedly one of the finest examples of mature Kamares vase painting, this exquisite vase exemplifies the quality and dynamic of Phaistos's palatial workshop. It was probably intended as an ostentatious prestige item rather than as a utilitarian vessel. The spout implies a liquid content, which may have been a factor in demonstrating the "floating" decoration. Unusual in the palatial apparatus, it may have also had a ritual use.

Selected Bibliography

Levi 1976, pp. 567, 594, pl. LVII.

Dimitris Sfakianakis



13 **Kamares Ware Amphora**

Middle Minoan IIB period (ca. 1750–1700 B.C.)

Clay

H. 0.435 m

Phaistos, Old Palace, Room XVI, 1907

Herakleion Archaeological Museum, HM 5836

Complete, tall, and narrow ovoid vase with elliptical rim and two vertical handles, decorated with white and orange paint on a black background. Brown discoloration on the lower half indicates uneven firing. A large star with white rays, an orange interior outline enclosing a similar motif, and a white circle with an orange center dominate the decoration. The tips of the stars curve slightly in different directions, creating the impression of antithetical movement. The same motif occupies the wall on the opposite side between the handles. By contrast, a simpler ornament comprising two concentric white circles decorates the walls under the handles. Four circles connected by sinuous bands decorate the base of the neck.

This amphora was found inside a storeroom of the Old Palace of Phaistos, beneath and to the west of the later palace's storerooms, together with drinking cups, serving vessels, and storage jars. The rim is pressed inward on two opposite sides, so that it forms two lobes, or spouts, which allow for increased control when the contents are poured out and which makes the vase more functional. The tall, narrow body and the markedly pushed-in rim place this example in the late period of Kamares Ware production. It is one of the precursors of the elongated amphora with elliptical rim that dominates the subsequent ceramic phase.

Selected Bibliography

Pernier 1935, pp. 264–68, pl. XVIc; Walberg 1976, p. 54, fig. 5.



4 Beak-Spouted Jug

Middle Minoan IIB period (ca. 1750–1700 B.C.)

Clay

Max. preserved h. 0.281 m, base diam. 0.069 m,
max. diam. 0.185 m

Phaistos, Palace, Room IL

Herakleion Archaeological Museum, HM 10198

Beak-spouted Kamares Ware jug with an ovoid body and low neck. The decoration—white motifs on a black ground—consists of two large antithetical crescents on either side of two connected, upright and pendent triangles that form a biconcave altar. Two pairs of short oblique lines joining a horizontal band and two applied bosses, painted white, decorate both sides of the spout. Restored spout and handle.

With its minimalist, symmetrical decoration, contrast between black and white, and precise, balanced form, this vase is a simple, but characteristic example of the Kamares Style.

Selected Bibliography

Levi 1976, pl. 87.

Christina Papadaki



15 **Beak-Spouted Jug**

Middle Minoan IIB period (ca. 1750–1700 B.C.)

Clay

H. 0.218 m, base diam. 0.077 m, max. diam. 0.236 m

Phaistos, Palace, below the staircase of Room LV

Herakleion Archaeological Museum, HM 10594

Kamare Ware beak-spouted jug with spherical body, low neck, and vertical handle, decorated with white and orange-red motifs on a black ground. Two horizontal bands decorate the lower part of the body, and another with pendant semicircles underlines the neck. On the belly, below the spout, a white lozenge, filled with a central dotted rosette and four half-rosettes in the corners, is surrounded by four floral ornaments alternating with four solid orange-red semicircles. Horizontal lines and two concentric circles decorate, respectively, the handle and its base. Part of rim and spout restored.

This is a typical example of the mature Kamare Style, in which plant motifs are arranged in a symmetrical tectonic composition.

Selected Bibliography

Levi 1976, pl. 86; Walberg 1976, p. 167 (no. 12); Walberg 1986, p. 15, fig. 11.

Christina Papadaki



16 Bridge-Spouted Jar

Middle Minoan II period (ca. 1800–1700 B.C.)

Clay

H. 0.319 m, max. diam. 0.366 m, base diam. 0.257 m

Phaistos, Palace, Room XXVII

Herakleion Archaeological Museum, HM 5834

Vessel with Kamares Style decoration, ovoid body, two horizontal handles, and one smaller, vertical handle opposite the bridge spout. The painted decoration consists of white and orange motifs on a black background. Pairs of concentric circles decorate the area under the horizontal handles, and pairs of antithetically placed spirals ending in a spiraling plant motif decorate the front and back, below the spout and vertical handle. Mended and restored.

This jar was found together with a large group of richly decorated vases in a room near the west entrance of the old palace at Phaistos. It has been suggested that the room was used either for storing ritual objects or for preparing rituals of worship.

The bridge-spouted jar is one of the most characteristic shapes of Kamares Style pottery (Kamares Ware). The vase shape was already established by Middle Minoan II, when it acquired this particular form, with a spherical or ovoid body and a vertical handle opposite the spout. Most examples of this form, including the most richly decorated examples, date to this time.

The broad surfaces of the bridge-spouted jar provide space for the frontal, large-scale rendering of decorative motifs. The variety of ornaments used and the combination of geometric and floral motifs in different arrangements produce a unique decorative effect on nearly all of these vessels.

Selected Bibliography

Betancourt 1985, pp. 96–101; Carinci 1997; Gesell 1985, pp. 124–25; Levi 1976, pp. 58–69; Pernier 1935, pp. 142–50, pl. XVI; Walberg 1976, pp. 51, 57, figs. 28, 37, 43.



17 **Bridge-Spouted Jar**

Middle Minoan IIB period (ca. 1750–1700 B.C.)

Clay

H. 0.43 m, max. diam. 0.46 m

Phaistos, Palace, below Room XXVII

Herakleion Archaeological Museum, HM 5833

This wide-rimmed bridge-spouted Kamares Ware jar has an ovoid body, flat rim, two slightly raised horizontal handles, and one vertical handle set opposite the spout. The Kamares Ware decoration consists of white and orange-red motifs on a black ground. Three horizontal bands occupy the lower part of the body, and spirals combined with flower buds adorn the belly and shoulder. Vertical bands and opposing spirals, which reach the belly, decorate the handles. Mended and restored.

This is a characteristic example of the mature, or classical, Kamares Style of the Middle Minoan IIB period, which was created in the palatial workshops of Phaistos and Knossos. The style's main feature is the use of complex rotating-radiating motifs in various original, often unique combinations, which constitute a truly unlimited artistic vocabulary.

Selected Bibliography

Banti 1939–40, p. 37, fig. 46a.

Christina Papadaki



18 Askoid Vase

Middle Minoan II period (ca. 1800–1700 B.C.)

Clay

Max. h. 0.122 m, max. w. 0.173 m, base diam. 0.061 m

Phaistos, Palace, Room IL

Herakleion Archaeological Museum, HM 10162

Closed carinated vase with a conical lower half and convex upper half. Restored and mended. Two raised horizontal handles and a funnel-shape trefoil spout. The painted Kamares Style decoration is made up of white and orange motifs on a black background, which is divided into three zones. A row of vertical, arched plant motifs is arranged radiating upward from the base on the lower body. Crescent-shaped motifs alternate with small leaflike patterns on the upper part. At the top, fine orange and white lines form a cross.

The vase was found inside a room in the old palace at Phaistos, together with a large group of decorated vases and ritual vessels, such as offering tables and bull-shaped rhyta. The rooms in this area of the palace, near the West Court, are thought to have been used for storing ritual objects or for preparing religious rituals.

This vase combines the basic tendencies of the highly decorative mature Kamares Style, as it developed in the palatial ceramic workshops. The finely executed decoration is arranged, according to the so-called built syntax, in zones that correspond to the vase's different parts, emphasizing its structure. The decorative motifs radiate and twirl around the axis, creating antithetical movements that balance each other in an impressive, unified composition.

Selected Bibliography

Banti 1939–40, p. 15; Betancourt 1985, pp. 96–101; Carinci 1997; Gesell 1985, pp. 124–25; Levi 1952, p. 13, fig 18; Levi 1976, pp. 43–58, pl. 148b; Walberg 1976, pp. 17, 112, 143, figs. 27, 30, 42.



19 Three-Handled Miniature Pithos

Middle Minoan III period (ca. 1700–1600 B.C.)

Clay

H. 0.095 m, rim diam. 0.069 m, base diam. 0.038 m

Phaistos, Palace

Herakleion Archaeological Museum, HM 17971

Three-handled miniature pithos with a piriform body, low foot, broad neck and vertical handles. The Kamares Style decoration consists of white and orange-red motifs on a black background. A broad band decorates the foot. On the body, two horizontal bands support three large crocus buds, which fill the space between the handles. Bands decorate the neck and the rim's interior. Complete, rim restored.

Endemic to southeast Europe and western Asia, the crocus is a bulbous perennial plant with a short stem; its leaves have fine white veins. The purple flowers are collected in the autumn for their three valuable orange-red stamens, which contain saffron, a strong coloring substance known since antiquity for its dyeing and healing properties. Six or seven species of wild crocus grow in Crete today.

Crocus flowers are a popular motif in Minoan art, particularly on clay vessels and faience objects. Women and, in one rather unrealistic representation, monkeys are depicted gathering crocuses in wall paintings (Knossos; Akrotiri, Thera). Scholars have identified these crocuses as the species *Crocus cartwrightianus*, which occurs in western Crete, and *Crocus oreocreticus*, which grows in the island's central and western mountainous regions. The crocus flower also appears as an ideogram in the Minoan scripts. It undoubtedly had a practical and possibly symbolic significance for the Minoans. On this miniature three-handled vase from the Phaistos palace, the large white crocuses—the only motif on the black ground—produce the highly decorative effect that characterizes Kamares Ware in its mature phase.

Selected Bibliography

Evely 1999, pp. 102–4; Levi 1976, pl. 205b; Psilakis–Psilaki 2000, pp. 97–98.



20 Kamares Ware Cup

Middle Minoan IIB period (ca. 1750–1700 B.C.)

Clay

H. 0.073 m

Phaistos, Palace, Room LV, beneath staircase, 1955

Herakleion Archaeological Museum, HM 10606

Cylindrical cup with slight splaying, a very thin body, and a vertical strap handle. The painted decoration consists of white and orange motifs on a black ground with a metallic sheen. Two large white antithetical spirals, which emerge from the white band that encircles the handle, fill the cup's sides. The spirals are united above and below by an orange-red disc, from which sprout two palmetted half-rosettes. Mended and restored.

A large number of neatly stacked utilitarian vessels, which had fallen from the story above, were found in the area below the staircase in the old palace. Several cups were found one inside the other. A superb drinking vessel, this cup shows a remarkable variety of form. This particular type is probably a more refined version of the cylindrical cup, the result of the form's lengthy development in the pottery workshops of Phaistos and Knossos. The imitation of metal prototypes is evident from the squat, shallow cylinder with vertical wall to the deep cup with slightly curved walls. The strap handle, the thin walls, and even the decorative spiral motif further demonstrate the influence of metal prototypes.

Selected Bibliography

Levi 1956, p. 249, fig. 24; Levi 1976, pp. 91–96, pl. 126f.



21 **Kamares Ware Cup**

Middle Minoan IIB period (ca. 1750–1700 B.C.)

Clay

H. 0.061 m

Phaistos, beneath New Palace Room 11, 1939

Herakleion Archaeological Museum, HM 10089

Carinated cup with vertical strap handle. The lower part of the body is conical, and the upper part has concave walls. A decorative motif occupies the wall opposite the handle. This motif consists of an orange circle, with solid white semicircles on the periphery, that surrounds four cross-shape ornaments radiating from a four-petaled rosette with a central red disc. Pendant solid white semicircles are below the rim, and a white band outlines the base. Mended and restored.

The floor of the old palace room in which this cup was found, beneath the New Palace Room 11, yielded large quantities of exquisite Kamares Ware pottery. These were products of the last years of the palatial workshop, before the palaces' complete destruction. Carinated cups are the most characteristic of the Protopalatial ceramic drinking vessels. This shape was abandoned when the new palaces were established. The thin walls, vertical strap handle, and sharp carination reflect metal prototypes. The carinated cups from the Phaistos palace, probably the most impressive examples of this type, demonstrate both the ostentation of the palatial apparatus and the endless imagination of that period's potters. Here the motif occupies the entire height without taking into account the cup's main structural feature, its carination. This is an example of the so-called unified decoration, as opposed to structural decoration, in which the decorative motifs are arranged in zones. The unified syntax is a peculiarity of Minoan vase painting of that period.

Selected Bibliography

Guarducci 1942, p. 231, fig. 4; Levi 1976, pp. 365, 368d, pl. 131f.

22 Spouted Pithos

Middle Minoan II–III period (ca. 1800–1600 B.C.)

Clay

H. 0.90 m, rim diam. 0.57 m, base diam. 0.29 m

Aitania

Herakleion Archaeological Museum, HM 29752

Conical pithos with slightly curved sides, a small bridged spout and three handles below the rim—two horizontal handles on the sides and one vertical handle opposite the spout. The white-painted decoration on a dark-brown ground consists of a leafy band at handle level, a retorted running spiral that covers most of the body, and three horizontal bands directly above the base. Solid-painted arcs cover the outer side of the rim. Mended and restored.



This pithos is one of the finest examples of burial pithoi that were used mainly during the Middle Minoan III and Late Minoan I periods, and were common in many different sites of the island, although rare in western Crete.

Selected Bibliography

AD 53 B3 (1998): 853 (Rethemiotakis); Christakis 2005, pp. 20 (form 114), 56, 75, fig. 24.

Nektaria Mavroudi



23 **Bridge-Spouted Pithos with Lid**

Late Minoan IA period (ca. 1600–1525/1500 B.C.)

Clay

H. (with lid) 0.417 m, max. diam. (with handles) 0.346 m,
lid diam. 0.24 m

Mochlos, Block A

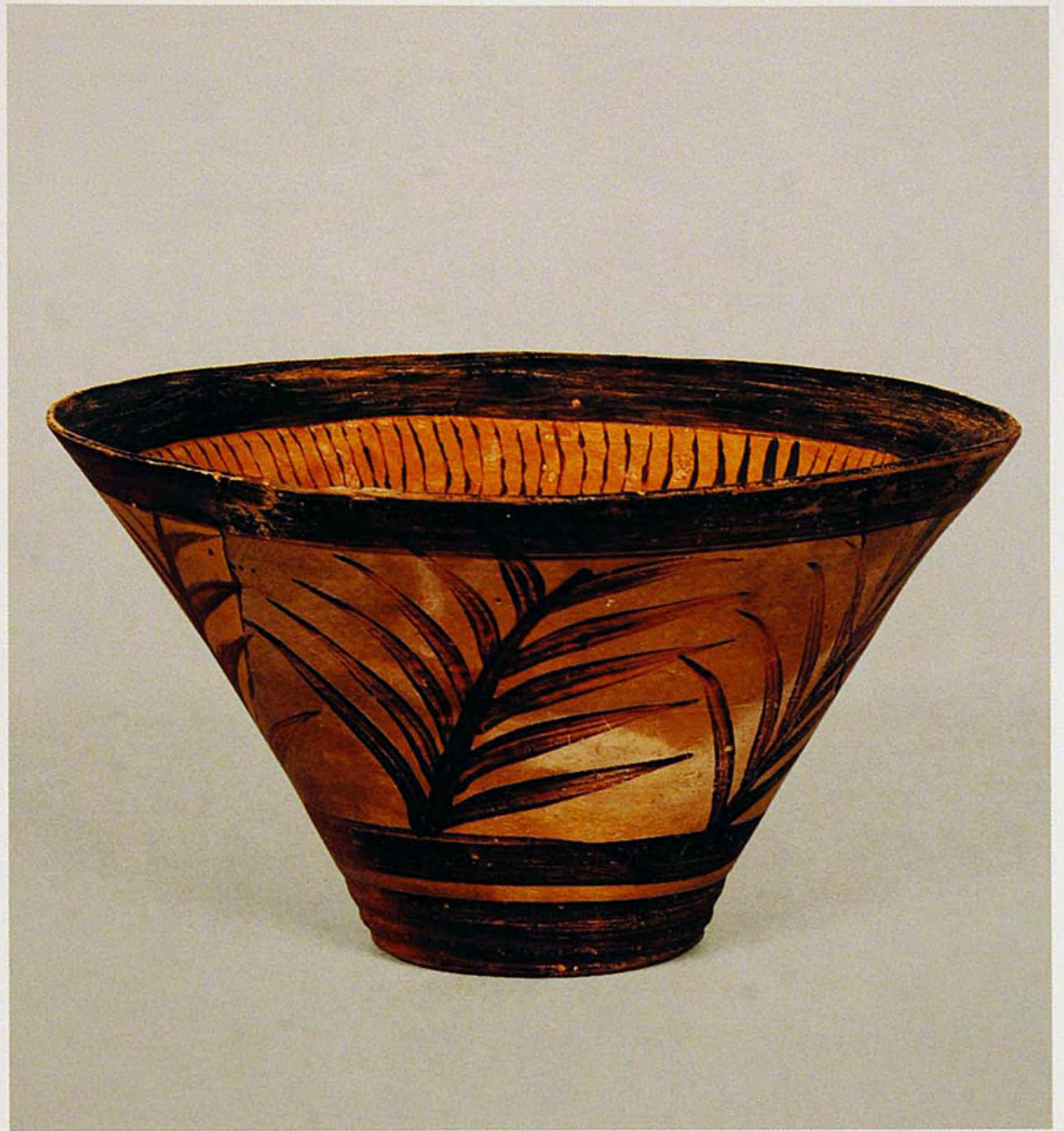
Herakleion Archaeological Museum, HM 5465

Bridge-spouted pithos with barrel-shape body and several handles: two horizontal handles on the shoulders, and one vertical handle opposite the spout flanked by two smaller ones. Slanted papyrus-lilies decorate the lower part of the body, and a solid rock pattern ornaments the shoulder with dark reddish-brown and added white color. Mended and restored.

The circular lid has an arched handle at its center flanked by two smaller handles perpendicular to the large one. Its decoration consists of wide, hatched, interchanging zones. The selection and composition of themes recall fresco prototypes. Flowers, plants, and trees were very popular motifs in Minoan wall painting. In fact, the “Lily Fresco” from the Amnisos villa confirms the existence of planned, artificial gardens in the Minoan world. Specialists have identified three main species of lilies in Minoan art, namely the white lily (*Lilium candidum*), the red lily (*Lilium chalconicum*), and the maritime lily (*Pancratium maritimum*), which are often confused with papyrus flowers. The lily, papyrus, and crocus also occur in vase painting, particularly in the Neopalatial period, and on vases and vessels that are usually associated with the perfume industry.

Selected Bibliography

Evely 1999, pp. 100–101; Seager 1909, p. 280, pl. VI; Walberg 1992.



24 Floral Style Conical Cup

Late Minoan IA period (ca. 1600–1525/1500 B.C.)

Clay

H. 0.118 m

Knossos, Palace, 1900

Herakleion Archaeological Museum, HM 3856

Conical cup with straight, thin walls and no handles. The preserved exterior wall is decorated with two oblique stems and elongated leaves contained within a wide band framed by two bands at the rim and base. Mended and restored.

The long, pointed leaves identify the plants as either grass, olive branches, or reeds, the last interpretation being the most prevalent, hence its adoption for this type of reed motif. Vertical, asymmetrically parallel lines, which recall a pleated surface, or ripple pattern, decorate the interior. The association of these two motifs is characteristic of the vase painting of this period.

The reed motif is one of the most characteristic expressions of the so-called Floral Style, which introduced a new form of dark-on-light decoration and was a favorite motif of the Knossian workshop. This cup is usually identified as a drinking vessel, despite its large size. Some of the vases with reed decoration have particular morphological features, which may indicate a special use. A group of cups from the Knossian workshop generally identified as flower pots constitute a characteristic example. The size and refined rendering of the reeds suggest a possible alternative to its use as a drinking vessel, perhaps even as a palatial display vase.

Selected Bibliography

Marinatos–Hirmer 1959, p. 93, fig. 78; *PM II*, p. 472, figs. 276, 349;

Popham 1967, p. 339.



25 **Conical Cup**

Late Minoan I period (ca. 1600–1450 B.C.)

Clay

H. 0.05 m, base diam. 0.035 m, rim diam. 0.095 m

Kato Zakros, sector Γ, storeroom inside NW wall

Siteia Archaeological Museum, 1026

The cup belongs to a large collection of such cups found stored in the West Wing of the palace at Kato Zakros.

Selected Bibliography

Platon 1962, pp. 158, 160; Platon 2002b, p. 150, pls. XLIV–XLVIIIc;

Platon–Platon 1991, p. 394.

Evi Saliaka

Cup with a flat base, conical body, and thin rim, decorated with a zone of ivy leaves with stalks framed by bands. Monochrome interior. Mended and restored.



26 Potter's Wheel

Late Minoan IB period (ca. 1525/1500–1450 B.C.)

Clay

H. 0.052 m, max. diam. 0.401 m, diam. of upper surface

0.37 m, wt. 8.38 kg.

Mochlos, Building B, Artisans' Quarter

Haghios Nikolaos Archaeological Museum, 14409

The upper side of the wheel has a channel around the circumference; the lip of the underside slopes inward to support the wooden frame. The interior of the underside has a central concavity, which is surrounded by five concentric incised circles and two relief rings. The incised circles create zones between them, two of which are decorated with small successively incised oblique lines. A large part of one side is restored with gypsum.

The upper surface preserves a noticeable amount of coarse red clay, which would have functioned to hold an object in place. The wheel was made of local clay and was probably used at some point in the studio of the potter of the Artisan's Quarter.

Excavations on the island of Mochlos and on the shore across from it began in 1908. Since 1989, new investigations have brought to light two Late Minoan IB buildings, which appear to have been industrial installations used for different activities, such as bronze working, ceramic production, and the manufacture of ivory objects. Each building, apart from its function as an industrial and storage area, was inhabited by the artisans' families and provides evidence for the existence of domestic shrines.

Selected Bibliography

Soles 2003, pp. 36–38, 48–50; Soles–Stos-Gale 2004, pp. 33–35, IC.158.



27 **Bridge-Spouted Jug**

Late Minoan IB period (ca. 1525/1500–1450 B.C.)

Clay

H. 0.231 m

Knossos, Palace, north side of Royal Road

Herakleion Archaeological Museum, HM 15052

Ovoid wide-mouth vase with bridged spout, circular base, and a vertical strap handle with a deep groove along its ridge. Running spirals with stylized ivy leaves in the center cover most of the body. Below the spirals is an equal number of double arches. Painted lozenges fill the spaces between these motifs. A single row of leaves covers the shoulder; a dentate band covers the base of the neck and a zigzag the neck itself. The decoration is characterized by the precision and symmetry of the repeated motifs. Mended and restored.

The sherds that make up this vase had fallen from the upper story with other examples of the same decorative tradition. The product of a palatial workshop, this vase exemplifies the vase making and vase painting of the so-called Special Palatial Tradition, which flourished during this period for no more than five decades. These vases are characterized as outstanding examples of Cretan pottery, and the shape is distinguished by its symmetry and finesse. Several morphological and painted decorative elements indicate that the vase imitates a metal prototype. The decorative pattern of the vessel is an expressive variation of the so-called Abstract and Geometric Style.

Selected Bibliography

Betancourt 1985, pp. 140–44, pl. 22A, B, C, E; Hood 1961–1962, p. 27, fig. 37; Popham 1967, p. 341, pl. 80a.



28 Bridge-Spouted Jar

Late Minoan IB period (ca. 1525/1500–1450 B.C.)

Clay

H. 0.29 m, max. diam. 0.343 m

Sklavokambos, Megaron

Herakleion Archaeological Museum, HM 8939

Bridge-spouted jar, with spherical, squat body; short neck; flat, everted rim; and ridged, S-shape vertical handle. Bands and coral motifs surround the base. On the body, multiple zigzag bands alternate with schematized sea urchins and solid discs. A one-sided foliate band occupies the shoulder, and a double row of reserved rosettes adorns the neck. Mended. Two-thirds of the shape and decoration restored.

A characteristic example of the Late Minoan IB Abstract Geometric Style, this jug from Sklavokambos also combines several other styles of the Special Palatial Tradition. The corals and stylized sea urchins, in particular, come from the Marine Style; the one-sided foliate band recalls the Floral Style, where it occurs on vases with spirals and arcades, whereas the reserved rosettes recall a stemmed cup in the Alternating Style from Phaistos. Similar, with the exception of the marine motifs, is the decoration of a rhyton from Gournia and two tall clay alabastra, one from Mochlos (Block B) and another from an Egyptian grave of the early 18th Dynasty, on which the zigzags may imitate the veins of their stone prototypes.

Selected Bibliography

Betancourt 1985, pp. 174, 205, pl. 22 H; Marinatos 1939–41, pp. 83–84, pl. 22; Pernier–Banti 1951, p. 533; Seager 1909, p. 282, fig. 5.





30 **Two-Handled Bucket Vase**

Late Minoan IB period (ca. 1525/1500–1450 B.C.)

Clay

H. 0.183 m, rim diam. 0.162 m, base diam. 0.132 m

Nirou Chani

Herakleion Archaeological Museum, HM 7572

Cylindrical and spouted bucket vase with two horizontal handles. Below the rim, two projections that flank the spout and three cylindrical knobs, recalling rivet heads, may reflect a metal prototype. A horizontal groove defines the base and three horizontal ridges underlie the rim. Mended and restored.

The Marine Style decoration consists of four vertical triton shells alternating with three-stemmed seaweed motifs, which look as if they are swaying in water. Corals and anemones along the bottom also convey the feeling of a seascape. The artist arranged these motifs to harmonize with the vase's shape. The stripes and pointed projections on the triton shell demonstrate an attempt at naturalism.

Selected Bibliography

Betancourt 1985, pp. 196–203; *PM* II.1, 279–81; Xanthoudides 1922, p. 20.



31 Tall Alabastron

Late Minoan IB period (ca. 1525/1500–1450 B.C.)

Clay

H. 0.223 m, max. diam. 0.154 m, base diam. 0.135 m, rim diam. 0.098 m

Knossos, Stratigraphical Museum Extension excavations, North House, west of Unexplored Mansion
Herakleion Archaeological Museum, HM 24298

Tall Marine Style alabastron with askoid body; low, narrow neck with relief ring around its base; and broad, flaring rim. A curvilinear lozenge with two wavy lines crossing one another in its interior decorates the base. Ocular “starfish” or sun motifs, rocks, and seaweed cover the body. Mended.

This is a characteristic example of the Marine Style, which is found in artistic works of the Special Palatial Tradition. The sea, an integral part of the natural environment and economic life of Crete, was an important source of inspiration for Minoan artists. Marine subjects and motifs occur on a variety of Minoan artifacts and in different media: clay and stone vases, faience

and ivory objects, and seal stones, and also in wall paintings, although less frequently than land flora and fauna. Marine Style vases depict a limited range of motifs, such as octopus and squids, nautilus/argonaut shells, tritons, and dolphins, all swimming in a seascape composed of rocks, corals, seaweed, and anemones. The highly stylized “starfish”—often described as a sun because it cannot be identified with any known marine species—is another popular motif.

Examples of the Marine Style have been found at several sites on the Greek mainland and in the Aegean islands. Scholars have distinguished several small subgroups, which may reflect the style of particular workshops, such as the Polyps Workshop, or even artists, such as the Marine Style Master, to whom the lentoid flask from Palaikastro and a stirrup jar from Zakros are attributed.

Selected Bibliography

Betancourt 1985, pp. 200–203; Catling 1979–80, p. 49, fig. 85; Evely 1999, pp. 113–14; Karetsou–Andreadaki–Vlazaki–Papadakis 2000, pp. 143–44 (Dimopoulou); Mountjoy 1984, p. 173; Popham 1978, pp. 181–82.



32 Marine Style Stirrup Jar

Late Minoan IB period (ca. 1525/1500–1450 B.C.)

Clay

Max. h. 0.198 m, max. w. 0.235 m, base diam. 0.09 m

Gournia

Herakleion Archaeological Museum, HM 2783

Squat globular stirrup jar with a short neck and three handles.
Mended and restored.

Two octopuses are painted on the front and back of the vase, following its shape. They are depicted en face, their tentacles curling around the neck and handles and meeting gracefully on the sides. Triton shells, seaweed, and a sea urchin fill all the empty spaces between the tentacles; *horror vacui* seems to be a frequent approach on vases of this period. Corals frame the main composition, emphasizing the naturalism of the seascape. This naturalism is further emphasized by the lateral tilt of the octopuses, which gives the impression that they are floating in water, and by the dots in the center of each sucker.

This vase's decoration is an excellent example of the Marine Style of the Late Minoan IB period. The artist has succeeded in combining complementary marine motifs in a harmonious composition with aesthetic perfection on the vase's rounded surface.

Selected Bibliography

Betancourt 1985, pp. 200–203; Fotou 1993, p. 66; Hawes et al. 1908, color pl. H; Mountjoy 1974; *PM* II.2, pp. 507–11; Popham 1967, pp. 339–43.



33 Stirrup Jar with Stopper

Late Minoan IB period (ca. 1450 B.C.)

Clay

Pot: h. 0.46 m, body diam. 0.35 m, base diam. 0.14 m

Stopper: h. 0.034 m, diam. 0.049-0.046 m

Kastelli Hill, Khania, Plateia Haghia Aikaterini,

Greek-Swedish excavation, 1977

Khania Archaeological Museum, Π 4464-10350

Elongated ovoid body with narrow base. Two holes on the false spout's disc were used to secure the contents during transportation. The main decorative motif, which occupies the upper body and shoulder, consists of reeds rendered naturalistically and growing densely packed along the ground, which is indicated conventionally by four horizontal lines. Mended from several fragments. Traces of burning on the exterior.

This vase was found on the floor of Room M of the Late Minoan I Building I during the Greek-Swedish excavation (Plateia Haghia Aikaterini) on Kastelli Hill, Khania. The clay stopper that probably sealed the vase's spout was found in the same place. Handmade with unfired clay, the stopper was burned during the conflagration that destroyed the building. It has an irregular, truncated, conical shape and exhibits the fingerprints of its maker. This vase is an excellent example of the Floral Style. Its shape is suitable for the storage and transportation of liquids.

Selected Bibliography

Tzedakis–Martlew 1999, p. 31, no. 3 (Andreadaki-Vlazaki).

Eftychia Protopapadaki



34 Pithos

Late Minoan IB period (ca. 1450 B.C.)

Clay

H. 1.26 m, rim diam. 0.44 m, base diam. 0.30 m

Kato Zakros, House Z, Room Γ, Hagios Antonios Hill
Siteia Archaeological Museum, 9973

Flat base, elongated ovoid body with two rows of four vertical handles, cylindrical in section, and a high neck with an inverted rim. The decoration from top to bottom consists of four large double axes in relief with stems, four encircling bands of rope pattern, four groups of three parallel rope-pattern stripes placed obliquely, and three ridges near the base. Mended and restored with gypsum.

The Zakros region was an important production center of storage vessels. Its pithoi (storage jars) are set apart by the high quality of their manufacture and the ingenuity of their decoration. This pithos is a typical example decorated with relief double axes, the preeminent sacred symbol of the Minoans. Perhaps its contents were destined for religious use.

Selected Bibliography

Christakis 2005; Kopaka–Platon 1993, p. 100, figs. 32, 36, 38;
Platon 1988, pp. 231–32, pls. 159, 160a; Platon 2002a, p. 11;
Platon–Platon 1991, fig. 173.



35 Four-Handled Pithoid Jar

Late Minoan IB period (ca. 1450 B.C.)

Clay

H. 0.93 m, base diam. 0.20 m, rim diam. 0.40 m

Kato Zakros, House Γ, Room Π

Siteia Archaeological Museum, 1057

Discoid base, piriform body, cylindrical neck, broad inverted rim, four horizontal handles on shoulder. The decoration consists of bands on base, body, shoulder, and neck: zones of reeds, revolving foliates, and branches; the usual running spirals on the body; and variegated stone pattern on the shoulder. The decoration is typical of eastern Crete with its combination of added white paint. Mended and restored with gypsum.

This pithoid jar belongs to a homogenous group of at least thirty-four pithoid jars whose decoration is organized in horizontal zones. The decorative motifs are repeated with variations, including imitations of conglomerate stones, spinning pairs of ivy leaves, spirals, foliate bands, double axes, wavy and vertical lines, and slanted reeds. This group of pithoid jars was found almost exclusively in the West Wing of the palace at Zakros. Their relatively high standard of manufacture, the execution of the decorative motifs, and the fact that a large number of them have been discovered, indicate that they were products of a palatial workshop at Zakros.

Selected Bibliography

Platon 1962, p. 160, pl. 156c; Platon 2002b, pp. 148–50, pls. XLIV–XLVIIIc.



36 Palace Style Pithoid Jar

Late Minoan IB–Late Minoan II period (ca. 1450–1400 B.C.)

Clay

H. 0.58 m

Knossos, Unexplored Mansion, Pillar Room H, 1972

Herakleion Archaeological Museum, HM 21168

Piriform jar with discoid base, cylindrical neck, and protruding, flat, horizontal rim. The three vertical handles on the shoulders are deeply grooved. The vase's morphological features suggest a metal prototype. The decoration consists of three snakelike stems with large heart-shaped ivy leaves. Between the leaves are irregular "sponge" motifs, which may represent rocks. A single-sided leafy band marks the base of the neck. The rim and base are decorated with solid color. Two reserved wavy bands adorn the neck. Mended and restored.

The sherds that compose this vase had fallen from the mansion's upper story, together with other vases and objects that suggest a ritual use (the excavator talks of a "domestic sanctuary"). This vase is one of the rare examples of the so-called Palace Style, which usually describes pithoid jars with handles. Most of these elaborate vases are attributed to Knossian workshops. The shape and quality of the decoration suggest that they were used not only for practical purposes, but also as display, or prestige, objects. The ivy is a favored plant motif, not only in vase painting, but also in other forms of art. The "sacral ivy" within a rocky landscape is usually considered a symbolic representation.

Selected Bibliography

Popham 1972-73, p. 58, fig. 32; Popham 1984, pp. 36, 171, fig. 68a, b; *PM IV*, pp. 318-22.

Dimitris Sfakianakis



36 Palace Style Pithoid Jar

Late Minoan IB–Late Minoan II period (ca. 1450–1400 B.C.)

Clay

H. 0.58 m

Knossos, Unexplored Mansion, Pillar Room H, 1972

Herakleion Archaeological Museum, HM 21168

Piriform jar with discoid base, cylindrical neck, and protruding, flat, horizontal rim. The three vertical handles on the shoulders are deeply grooved. The vase's morphological features suggest a metal prototype. The decoration consists of three snakelike stems with large heart-shaped ivy leaves. Between the leaves are irregular "sponge" motifs, which may represent rocks. A single-sided leafy band marks the base of the neck. The rim and base are decorated with solid color. Two reserved wavy bands adorn the neck. Mended and restored.

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Selected Bibliography

Popham 1972-73, p. 58, fig. 32; Popham 1984, pp. 36, 171, fig. 68a, b; *PM IV*, pp. 318–22.



37 **Three-Handled Small Amphora**

Late Helladic IIIA1 period (ca. 1400–1350 B.C.)

Plain, light-brown clay

H. 0.172 m, body diam. 0.130 m, base diam. 0.054 m

City of Khania, Greek-Swedish excavation, 1971, 1983

Khania Archaeological Museum, Π 10093

Elegant vase, Mycenaean import, with a pear-shape body, a tall foot with flat base, and three vertical strap handles. The short, wide neck ends in a spout with an almost horizontal rim. The vase is undecorated. Mended.

The amphora was found in pieces inside a wide refuse pit established in the ruined Late Minoan I Building I, in the Minoan settlement on the Kastelli Hill. It belongs to the time of the Mycenaean-Achaean rule of large parts of Crete, Kydonia in particular, a period of strong and varied influences in artistic production. This regime is associated with the establishment of a Mycenaean dynasty at Knossos, but evidence for some kind of palatial organization is also being gradually revealed in the Kydonia region.

A common type of vase, this small three-handled amphora frequently occurs inside the Kydonia cemetery's contemporary graves, together with copper-alloy weapons and other objects that illustrate political and cultural contacts.

Selected Bibliography

Hallager-Tzedakis 1984, pp. 1–2, 8–9; Pállson-Hallager 1986, p. 179; Tzedakis 1972, p. 390.



40 Multiple-Handled Flask

Late Minoan IIIA2–IIIB period (ca. 1375–1200 B.C.)

Clay

H. 0.263 m, body diam. (with handles) 0.248 m

Knossos, Palace, corridor north of the Throne Room

Herakleion Archaeological Museum, HM 2643

Biconvex body, flattened out (one side more than the other). Six handles along the periphery. Groups of concentric circles decorate both sides of the body. The rim and handle tops are also outlined with paint. Body complete. Two handles restored.

The morphological features (asymmetrically flattened body, several handles, and lack of foot) suggest that this was a pendant vase. On the basis of ethnographic parallels, such vessels are thought to have been used for carrying water or other liquids on journeys.

The flask was found in the corridor north of the Throne Room in the palace at Knossos, in its final destruction levels. Similar spherical flasks decorated with concentric circles and dating to the Late Minoan III period have been found at Zapher Papoura and Moulia. An earlier (Late Minoan IB) flask of possible Cypriot origin from Pseira has a similar shape.

Selected Bibliography

Betancourt 1998; Palmer 1962; Palmer 1969, p. 64, fig. 9b; Popham 1964, pp. 7, 9, 16 and pl. 4f–g; Popham 1966, p. 19; Popham 1970, fig. 7 and pl. 10f; Warren 1989.

Deukalion Manidakis



41 Stirrup Jar

Late Minoan III B period (ca. 1300–1200 B.C.)

Clay

H. 0.24 m, max. diam. 0.21 m

Kritsa

Haghios Nikolaos Archaeological Museum, 135

Decorated with a schematic octopus (a favorite motif on this type of vase), whose tentacles, in two rows, symmetrically cover the body of the vessel. Restored in gypsum at the lip.

Very fine stirrup jars are quite frequently found in Late Minoan III tombs and differ from their domestic counterparts found in settlements. The typological features—decoration and, above all, the clay and paint—point to a production workshop in the Khania region of western Crete. Other Khaniote vases were recovered in the same tomb where this stirrup jar was found, as well as in other tombs excavated later in the region of Kritsa.

Apart from the local East Cretan vases, and those linked to the Khania workshop, some were either imported from mainland Greece or imitated Mycenaean originals.

The quantity and quality of vases from tombs at Kritsa, as well as the fact that some were imported from other workshops within and outside Crete, indicate the existence of an economically robust community that would have had a relationship with both western Crete and mainland Greece, probably through Khania.

Selected Bibliography

Davaras n.d., n. 61; Demakopoulou 1988, pp. 150–51 (Banou); Kanta 1980, pp. 134–39, 244, 252–56; Platon 1951a; Tsipopoulou–Vagnetti 2006, figs. 1e, 2e.

Vasiliki Zographaki





43 “Teapot”

Early Minoan II period (ca. 2600–2300 B.C.)

Breccia

H. 0.086, rim diam. 0.062, base diam. 0.047 m

Mochlos, found behind destroyed wall of Tomb VI and transferred to Herakleion Museum in 1949

Herakleion Archaeological Museum, HM 2395

Teapot-shape jug of light-colored alabaster. Prominent rim, vertical handle, and beaked spout flanked by small knobs. Mended.

The stone was cut to be translucent in places, and the veining was used to maximum effect to form concentric circular motifs on one side and wavy patterns surrounding an ovoid hub on the other. The method of execution reflects ceramic prototypes, especially Early Minoan II Vasiliki Ware “teapots.”

Selected Bibliography

Κρητ. Χρονικά 2 (1948): 589 (Platon); Warren 1969b, pp. 98–99, P 558.

Nektaria Mavroudi



44 **Sauceboat**

Early Minoan II period (ca. 2600–2300 B.C.)

Gray marble

Max. h. 0.064 m, rim diam. 0.116 m, max. base diam.
0.062 m

Mochlos, Tomb VI

Herakleion Archaeological Museum, HM 1204

Sauceboat of gray marble. Long trough spout with a triangular tip. Conical body and horizontal handle, directly below the rim, with a groove on the exterior. The horizontal veining, in various shades of gray, follows the vase's form, adding a decorative touch. Mended from two pieces.

Sauceboat-shape clay vases also occur in the Cyclades and on the Greek mainland. A Cretan variation appears in the Early Minoan II period and continues into Middle Minoan I. Sauceboats come from various sites in central and northern Crete, Mochlos having yielded some of the most elegant examples.

Selected Bibliography

Gerontakou 2003, pp. 320–21; Marinatos–Hirmer 1960, p. 68, pl. II; Seager 1912, p. 51, fig. 22 (VI 3); Warren 1969b, pp. 94–95, P 538.

Nektaria Mavroudi



45 **Miniature Globular Vase**

Early Minoan II period (ca. 2600–2300 B.C.)

Green steatite

H. 0.037 m, rim diam. 0.038 m

Mochlos, Tomb VI

Herakleion Archaeological Museum, 1246

Miniature handleless complete vase of high-quality opaque steatite. Squat, globular body and flat, everted rim. The exterior surface is smooth and shiny, whereas there are drill marks on the interior in the form of horizontal scratches. This shape is thought to reflect contemporary Egyptian models.

This vase is one of the earliest examples of its type. It comes from Tomb VI, which is one of the earliest and least disturbed graves of the Mochlos cemetery. The other three examples from Mochlos and those from the Mesara tombs date to the Early Minoan III and Middle Minoan I periods.

Selected Bibliography

Phillips 1991, pp. 68–71, figs. 299–300, 302, 307; Seager 1912, p. 52, fig. 22 (VI 9), pl. V; Warren 1969b, pp. 91–92, P 503–6.

Nektaria Mavroudi



46 Small Cylindrical Pyxis

Early Minoan II–III period (ca. 2600–2100 B.C.)

Greenish steatite

H. (with lid) 0.084 m, rim diam. 0.021 m, base diam. 0.027 m

Mochlos, Tomb II

Herakleion Archaeological Museum, 1237

Slender cylindrical pyxis in excellent condition, made of high-quality, opaque, greenish steatite. The cylindrical body gradually tapers toward the top. The circular lid has a circular knob with a triangular ridge at its base. The exterior surface is smooth and shiny; traces of the carving process are visible on the interior. Complete.

This is a new shape in Prepalatial Crete. The choice of a green-colored stone for this type of vase may reflect a wish to imitate bronze and could be related to demand for that metal.

Small stone vases were originally manufactured primarily as grave gifts. They are found by the dozens in Early Minoan cemeteries, such as those at Mochlos, Pseira, and Palaikastro in eastern Crete, but also in central Crete, in Mesara, and the Asterousia mountains to the south. This small pyxis is a grave gift from Tomb II, one of the most opulent graves in the Mochlos cemetery; it may have contained an offering for the deceased.

Selected Bibliography

Seager 1912, p. 25, fig. 7 (Ile), pl. II; Warren 1969b, pp. 92–93, P 526; Warren 1992, pp. 153–54.



47 **Bowl (Sauceboat)**

Early Minoan IIB–Middle Minoan I period
(ca. 2400–1800 B.C.)

Stone

H. 0.065 m, l. 0.185 m

Mochlos

Haghios Nikolaos Archaeological Museum, 280

Bowl with horizontal open mouth ending in a heart-shape spout. Horizontal handle, circular in section, opposite the spout and three short stub feet on the base. Made of veined polychrome tuff.

The bowl is a surface find from the island of Mochlos, where there is a Minoan settlement and cemetery; it probably came from a destroyed tomb in the cemetery.

The shape has many parallels in Crete. The material is also very common for the Early Minoan IIB–Middle Minoan I period, particularly on Mochlos, where it was used for a great number of vessels in the cemetery. Although the precise provenance of the raw material remains unknown, it is certainly Cretan in origin. The attraction of this material appears to be the veins, which are red-brown and off-white to gray, as well as

the stone's softness, which allowed it to be worked with elaborate shapes and details. In order to manufacture such vessels, numerous skills and craftsmanship were needed, as well as the use of drills and abrasive materials, such as emery.

Stone vessels are a frequent find in cemeteries of the late Prepalatial period throughout Crete, although they were substantially fewer and less elaborate in settlements. Stone vessels were objects with a particular significance but of limited functional value, either deposited as grave gifts inside tombs or used in the funeral rites that took place in cemeteries.

Selected Bibliography

Branigan 1993, pp. 68–70; Platon–Davaras 1960, p. 527; Sakellarakis–Sapouna–Sakellarakis 1997, pp. 568–73; Soles 1992, p. 41; Warren 1969b, pp. 94–96, 126–27, 157–60.

Yiannis Papadatos



48 **Miniature “Bird’s-Nest” Vase**

Middle Minoan I period (ca. 2100–1800 B.C.)

Grayish-white marble

H. 0.031 m, rim diam. 0.036 m, base diam. 0.031 m

Mochlos, Tomb III

Herakleion Archaeological Museum, 1255

Miniature “bird’s-nest” vase, complete and in excellent condition. It has been combined with a circular, knobbed lid. Squat, globular body with inset rim. Polished exterior with horizontal ring marks on the interior from drilling during its manufacture.

The white vein that crosses the body of the vase indicates that the artisan intended to use the stone’s natural characteristics to achieve a decorative effect. Originally, the lid probably belonged to a different vase; it has deep red veins and does not fit the rim properly.

Bird’s-nest vases are probably the most common type of Minoan stone vase. They appear from the Early Minoan III to the Middle Minoan I–II period in small sizes and made from a variety of stones. The value they had is apparent from the way in which some were handed down from one generation to another, either as functional vessels or as grave gifts, so that they are found in funerary contexts as late as Late Minoan I. This vase, however, is probably later than the construction of Tomb III, which was looted and reused. It was at this time that the vessel was used as a pyxis in connection with offerings to the dead.

Selected Bibliography

Seager 1912, pp. 37–39, fig. 46 (IIIb); Warren 1969b, pp. 7–11.



49 **Pedestaled Lamp**

Late Minoan I period (ca. 1600–1450 B.C.)

Rosso antico stone

H. 0.455 m, max. diam. of bowl 0.20 m

Palaikastro

Herakleion Archaeological Museum, HM 616

Complete, slightly restored.

This is a luxury version of a common type of lamp of the Neopalatial period. It comprises a shallow basin at the top for the inflammable liquid; two “spouts,” or narrow channels, opposite each other and across the width of the basin’s lip to hold a wick; and a high pedestal, which rests on a discoid base. The handles hanging down from the edge of the rim were used to carry the lamp.

An essential part of any Bronze Age household, lamps were made in different materials (clay, stone, bronze), different sizes (small as a man’s hand, medium-size, heavy, and awkward to move) and many variants (high or low, with one or more spouts, with a variety of handles, lips, bases, etc.).

The Palaikastro example was manufactured from a deep red stone from the Peloponnese called *rosso antico*, which was rarely worked on Crete and is mainly found in lamps of this kind. The singular material of which the lamp is made and the relief decoration of a row of ivy leaves at the rim and in a zone that is about the midpoint of the pedestal make it exceptional. The lamp’s provenance, however, in the town of Palaikastro, whose busy harbor attracted a multitude of exotic and semi-precious materials throughout the Late Bronze Age, indicates that it blended well into the cosmopolitan environment of an urban center of the period.

Selected Bibliography

Bosanquet–Dawkins 1923, pp. 139–40; Warren 1969b, p. 58.



50 **Lamp**

Late Minoan I period (ca. 1600–1450 B.C.)

Porphyry

H. 0.042 m, int. diam. 0.065 m

Pseira, Minoan settlement

Siteia Archaeological Museum, 3161

Single-spout lamp with a long handle. Relief band of vertical incisions around lip and three incised rings at the end of the handle, which is mended.

It was found in the excavation of the Minoan settlement on Pseira in 1907 and demonstrates the use of the object in a domestic context. A similar example was found in a tomb at Mochlos.

Selected Bibliography

Seager 1910, p. 37, fig. 18; Warren 1969b, P 316, 60.

Chrysa Sophianou



51 **Lamp**

Late Minoan IB period (ca. 1450 B.C.)

Serpentine

H. 0.13 m, diam. 0.27 m

Mochlos, Building C7, Artisans' Quarter

Siteia Archaeological Museum, 9943

Large, double-spout lamp, with a low foot, conical body, and two solid horizontal handles below the broad, flat rim. Complete.

It was located in Building C7 in the so-called Artisans' Quarter of the Minoan town on Mochlos and is a local product. The stone vases of Mochlos are considered very well made and some of the most important of the Minoan era. They are found in a variety of shapes and sizes. For their manufacture, stones such as steatite, serpentine, chlorite, marble, and alabaster of various colors were used. The working of the stone was carried out in such a way that the veins in the stone showed, and this called for great expertise on the part of the craftsmen.

During the Late Minoan period, many stone vases were elaborate, with engraved and relief decoration that imitated flowers or foliage; some were designed to stand on the floor and had a high foot or pedestal.

Selected Bibliography

Soles-Davaras 1996, p. 201, pl. 57b.



52 **Bowl**

Late Minoan II–III A₁ period (ca. 1450–1375 B.C.)

Egyptian porphyry

H. 0.13 m, max. diam. of body 0.28 m

Knossos, Royal Tomb at Isopata

Herakleion Archaeological Museum, HM 611

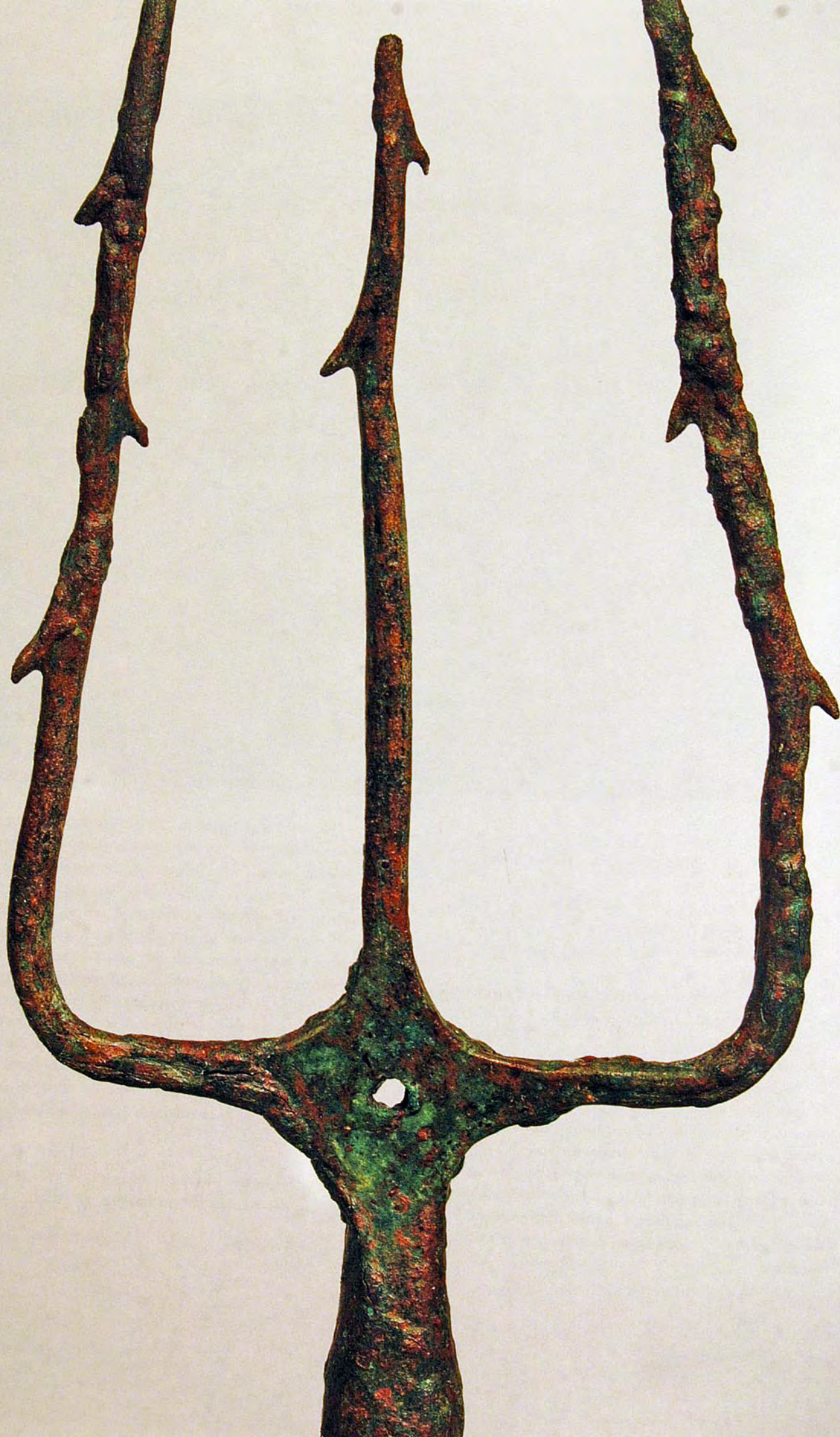
Mended and restored in places, this bowl has a carinated shape, a broad mouth, and a lightly defined base.

The material used for the manufacture of this bowl, a dark-colored rock with white inclusions, imparts an almost artistic feel. It is one of the many splendid rocks of Egypt, where this particular vessel may well have come from. At diametrically opposed points at the level of the carination, the bowl has a pair of perforations probably used for attaching handles, which may have been made of a different material. In other Egyptian imports found at the palace at Zakros, bronze rings were used for handles rather than for hanging up the vessel, as its excavator first suggested.

This bowl was found in the Isopata Royal Tomb in the Knossos region, where an interesting number of Egyptian vases of different periods were discovered, along with other opulent contents. These, combined with fact that the burial complex was large and elaborately constructed, led to its being interpreted as and named “royal.” That deposit sheds light on the close ties between Egypt and Crete over a long period of time, on an economic or mercantile and thus diplomatic level, with gift exchanges of the sort represented by the stone vessels of Isopata. However, the bowl also indirectly reflects the cultural value of a material that was transported by sea during this period, whether it was imported to Crete ready-made or was manufactured on the island using imported stone. In any case, the bowl was found to be eminently suitable as a grave gift in a “royal” tomb.

Selected Bibliography

Evans 1906, pp. 141, 146; Warren 1969b, p. 111, P 602.





53 D **Awl**

Bone

Preserved l. 0.086 m

Entrance. Excavation no. 62

Rethymnon Archaeological Museum, O 557

Chips along the edges. Tongue-shape tool with an angular outline and a polished upper surface. Almost complete.

Tools like this were made from the splinters of small bones. Their size varies according to their use, which was probably for piercing and sewing animal hides. Similar tools were found during trial excavations in the central court of the Knossos palace. This handy type of tool was used over a long period of time, as demonstrated by a bronze example found at Troy dating to the Middle Bronze Age.

Selected Bibliography

Chatzoudi 2002, drawing 1: a-d, h; Evans 1994, p. 18, pl. 5d; Sampson 1987, pp. 53-54, pls. 72-73: 901, 903 (layer 9-15) and 156-63; Treuil 1983, p. 181, note.

53 E **Spatula**

Bone

L. 0.06 m

Corridor. Excavation no. 304

Rethymnon Archaeological Museum, O 384

Fine oblique scratches from use at one end; other end possibly broken. Oblong tool with one concave surface and the other curved. Wide and thinner at one end.

This comparatively rare type of tool with one wide end was probably used for scraping animal hides. At Knossos, three bone spatulas were used for cleaning grinding stones after use. Similar tools from pre-ceramic levels in the central court of the Knossos palace were probably used for removing meat from the bone. Comparable examples have been found on Rhodes.

Selected Bibliography

Evans 1994, p. 18, pl. 5f; Sampson 1987, p. 54, pls. 73: 918, 927; Zois 1973, p. 173.



54 Five Blades

End of Early Minoan I–beginning of Early Minoan IIA period (ca. 2700–2600 B.C.)

Obsidian

L. 0.108; 0.108; 0.123; 0.123; 0.112 m, w. 0.015; 0.010; 0.018; 0.012; 0.017 m

Early Minoan cemetery of Haghia Photia, Siteia, Tombs 74, 90, 135, 140

Haghios Nikolaos Archaeological Museum, 4142ξ, 26821β, 2673η, 332ατ, 3523ε

Long narrow blades of Melian obsidian, prismatic and triangular in section. Although particularly fragile, they have two very sharp parallel blades suitable for light work, such as shaving or cutting up small quantities of food. Complete.

These blades are the final product of a difficult technical process that includes the initial cleaning of the raw material, the removal of flakes and preliminary blades, and the preparation of the core, so that, at the end, a thin but very sharp blade could be produced with only a single pressure blow at the appropriate point.

The raw material came from the Cyclades (Melos), and their deposition inside tombs is a practice also rooted in the Cyclades. For all that, both obsidian and this particular practice were very prolific in Crete, as the relatively large quantities of blades found in numerous cemeteries indicate. The absence of waste products from obsidian preparation (debris and flakes) at Haghia Photia and in nearly all Cycladic and Cretan cemeteries indicates that the preparation of cores took place in the settlement. However, the blades found in cemeteries have no traces of use, which suggests that their production took place shortly before or during the funeral, perhaps next to the tomb at the time of the interment of the deceased. Therefore, they were not deposited in the tomb because they were the personal property of the deceased but had some symbolic character not yet understood.

Selected Bibliography

Alexiou 1951, fig. 7; Carter 1994; Carter 1998; Davaras 1971; Davaras–Betancourt 2004, pp. 74, 86, 119, 126; Galanaki 2006, pl. V:2; Marangou 1990, pp. 76–77; Papadatos 2005, p. 46, figs. 27–28; Xanthoudides 1918a, fig. 15.



55 **Hammer**

Middle Minoan II period (ca. 1800–1700 B.C.)

Bronze

L. 0.099 m, w. 0.018 m, th. 0.017 m

Malia Quartier Mu, North Court (M 78/B 1)

Haghios Nikolaos Archaeological Museum, 13445

Asymmetrical ends and pierced hole for the wooden handle.
Ends are worn and damaged through use. Complete.

The hammer was not found in situ but in the North Court of Quartier Mu, in an area that had already been excavated in 1956 and back filled, south of the Potter's Workshop and very close to the Bronze Smith's Workshop, to which it probably belongs. It can be dated to the Middle Minoan II or Middle Minoan III period. The latter date is supposed by the shape and the circular hole for the handle—on later hammers the hole is square—as well as the discovery in the Bronze Smith's Workshop of a fragment of a mold for the manufacture of similar hammers, dated to the Middle Minoan II period. Comparable hammers in Crete have been found at Saba, Pediada, and at Rogdia, Malevyzi.

Selected Bibliography

Poursat 1996b, pp. 118, 125, pl. 43k.

Vili Apostolakou



56 **Axe-Adze**

Middle Minoan II period (ca. 1800–1700 B.C.)

Bronze

L. 0.167 m, th. 0.026 m, w. 0.046 m

Malia Quartier Mu, Building A, Corridor I 9

Haghios Nikolaos Archaeological Museum, 14380

Small abrasions at the ends caused by use. Made of an alloy, chiefly copper and tin. Complete.

This tool first appears in the Cyclades in Early Cycladic II. The earliest example in Crete comes from Chamezi and is dated to Middle Minoan I or II. Although Cyprus is well known for producing and exporting great quantities of copper, a large amount of the copper that reached Crete appears to have come from elsewhere, and lead isotope analyses indicate that Lavrion was the source. Chemical analyses indicate that the tin came from the east. Both materials reached Crete in the form of ingots and were processed and cupelled there.

Selected Bibliography

Branigan 1968, p. 31; Huot–Yot–Calvet 1985, pp. 120 ff., no. A 1, abb. 1–2.

Vili Apostolakou



57 Double Axe

Middle Minoan II period (ca. 1800–1700 B.C.)

Bronze

L. 0.137 m, w. 0.058 m, max. th. 0.026 m

Malia Quartier Mu, Building B, Corridor I 9

Haghios Nikolaos Archaeological Museum, 14381 (3066)

The axe is almost rectangular in outline with a central circular socket. Complete.

The small chips off the sharp ends show that it was used over a long period for hard work. It belongs to a common type of double axe that appeared in Early Minoan II in many regions of Crete. As a functional tool, the axe was used for felling trees, stone cutting, and woodworking, and some researchers include it among weapons of war. At the same time, it was one of the most important and commonly found symbols of Minoan religion and ritual, probably linked with bull sacrifice. The shape of the double axe occurs as a mason's mark carved on important Minoan buildings, and models of double axes were commonly included among the offerings at shrines.

Selected Bibliography

Branigan 1968, pp. 30–31; Huot–Yot–Calvet 1985, pp. 120 ff., no. B 1, abb. 1–2.

Vili Apostolakou



58 Double-Ended Pick

Late Minoan IB period (ca. 1450 B.C.)

Bronze

L. 0.255 m, max. w. 0.062 m, min. w. 0.043 m, th. 0.006–0.032 m, diam. of shaft hole 0.03 m, wt. 1.12 kg.

Mochlos, Hoard in the House of the Metal Merchant, House 3

Haghios Nikolaos Archaeological Museum, 14397

Two flat heads curving slightly downward, nearly equal in length and breadth. A circular shaft hole for the wooden handle with a distinctly raised edge around it on both sides of the pick. The pick has some marks from use in the form of cuts and traces of damage at both cutting ends. Complete.

The double-ended pick seems to have developed in the Aegean region, with many parallels for the basic shape. The history of the pick is linked with that of the axe, although the pick worked in such a way as to split the material rather than to chop it. It was mainly used for agricultural activities as a hand pick and for breaking soft stone, such as sandstone, during quarrying.

Selected Bibliography

AE (1910): 181 (Keramopoulos); *AE* (1924): 12 (Soteriou); Deshayes 1960, p. 109; Evely 1993–2000, 1 (1993), p. 63.

Maria Kyriakaki



59A–B **Two Chisels**

Late Minoan IB period (ca. 1450 B.C.)

Bronze

59a: L. l. 0.24 m, max. w. 0.028 m, th. 0.007 m, wt. 200 g

59b: L. 0.16 m, max. w. 0.047 m, th. 0.01 m, wt. 300 g

Mochlos, Hoard in the House of the Metal Merchant,
House C₃

Haghios Nikolaos Archaeological Museum,

14395 and 14396

Minoan chisels like these were used chiefly for working with wood, although they may have been used for cutting soft stone or giving finishing touches to bronze tools.

Selected Bibliography

Branigan 1968, p. 32; Evely 1993–2000, 1 (1993), pp. 7–13;

Hazzidakis 1934, p. 96, pl. 27.1c; Orlandos 1958, pp. 118–22;

Soles–Davaras 1996, pp. 192–94, pls. 56a,d,e.

Maria Kyriakaki

Chisel 59a is thin and shaped like a wedge, with a broad cutting edge and narrow handle. The end of the chisel is damaged through use. Chisel 59b is also a wedge-shape chisel with a broad, curved cutting edge and a narrower percussion end, worn through use. Both preserve traces of cloth, probably the linen bag in which they were kept. Both complete.



60 Trident

Late Minoan IB period (ca. 1450 B.C.)

Bronze

L. 0.24 m, max. w. 0.101 m, handle diam. 0.007-0.021 m,
wt. 136.5 g.

Mochlos, foundation deposit in Cult Building B2

Haghios Nikolaos Archaeological Museum, 14399

Three prongs and a narrow, cylindrical socket for the handle. Each exterior prong has three barbs and the central one has two. The socket for the shaft has a small hole (diam. 0.004 m) for the nail that would attach the wooden shaft. Complete.

The trident is shaped so that its exterior prongs incline inward at a slight angle toward the central prong, which appears to be slightly shorter than the exterior ones. The balance of the whole object is almost centered on the base of the central prong. A wooden shaft would have been inserted into the socket of the base and nailed in place. There are no traces of damage, and it may never have been used.

Selected Bibliography

Soles 2005, pl. 99e; Soles (in press); Soles 2007.

Maria Kyriakaki



61A-B Two Tongs

Late Minoan IB period (ca. 1450 B.C.)

Bronze

61a: L. 0.29 m, w. 0.011 m, th. 0.004 m, wt. 134.5 g

61b: L. 0.35 m, w. 0.009 m, th. 0.003 m, wt. 182 g.

Mochlos, Hoard in the House of the Metal Merchant, House C₃

Haghios Nikolaos Archaeological Museum, 14400 and 14401

Each tong has a rectangular section bent into a U-shape to create a loop and straight prongs. One complete, the other mended.

The tongs were used in furnaces and hearths, mostly in metal working, for moving the full crucible, the mold, the liquid or the cast, and the hot object. The prototype for this kind of object seems to be found in Egypt, where tongs appear in very early contexts and in large numbers. Crete may have adopted this type of tong from the Cyclades, where it is found in Early Cycladic II contexts.

Selected Bibliography

Branigan 1968, p. 33; Dimopoulou-Rethemiotaki 2005, p. 88; Evely 1993-2000, 2 (2000), p. 365.

Maria Kyriakaki



62 Knife Axe

Late Minoan IIIA-B period (ca. 1400-1200 B.C.)

Bronze.

L. 0.20 m, max. w. 0.07 m

Lasithi area

Haghios Nikolaos Archaeological Museum, 1866

Broad blade, trapezoidal in shape with a slight curve toward the handle. Two double-headed rivets served to fix a handle of some perishable material, probably wood. Mended and restored.

This bronze tool was definitely used for a particular purpose, although we do not know exactly what that purpose was. It could have been used for chopping meat or processing wood in order to produce wooden artifacts. Similar bronze items found in Late Minoan tombs are considered razors and are characteristic of male burials.

Selected Bibliography

Alexiou 1967, p. 55; Evans 1906, p. 87; Xenaki-Sakellariou 1992, p. 230; Tzedakis-Martlew 1999, no. 256 (Protopapadaki).

Chrysa Sophianou



63 Saw

Late Minoan IIIA–B period (ca. 1400–1200 B.C.)

Bronze

L. 0.422 m, w. 0.023–0.055 m

Armenoi, Late Minoan cemetery, Tomb 115 (X. III)

Rethymnon Archaeological Museum, M 452

The saw has a long, narrow, thin blade with a straight sawing edge and back and with three holes for attaching the hilt plates.

This is a typical Minoan tool that was used in construction and shipbuilding. Four fragments of medium to large saws come from the Unexplored Mansion at Knossos. Saws three times the size of the Armenoi example have been found at Knossos, Zakros, Malia, Gournia, and Haghia Triada, all dating to Late Minoan I. Their occurrence was not so significant on mainland Greece.

Selected Bibliography

Catling–Catling 1984; Shaw 1971; Tzedakis–Martlew 1999, p. 257, no. 254 (Protopapadaki).



64 Ingot

Late Minoan IB period (ca. 1450 B.C.)

Copper

L. 0.45–0.46 m, w. 0.273–0.365 m, th. 0.045 m, wt. 29.9 kg

Mochlos, Cult Building, Pillar Basement

Haghios Nikolaos Archaeological Museum, 14388

The ingot is shaped like an ox hide, perhaps to facilitate transport, with one surface smooth and the other rough and lumpy. The corners have been blunted; the long sides are curved, and the short ones are straight, with a ridge running around the upper edge. The ingot was manufactured in an open mold with the smooth surface face down. The lumpy side was created by air bubbling to its surface. The ridge seems to be the result of the initial fast solidification of the molten metal against the cold walls of the mold. Complete.

The “ox-hide” ingots found at Mochlos originated in Cyprus. Ingots also dated to the Late Minoan IB period have been found in other regions of Crete (Haghia Triada, Zakros, Tylissos, Gournia, etc.). Apart from Crete, copper ox-hide ingots are found throughout most of the Mediterranean dating from the sixteenth to the twelfth century B.C., and perhaps even later.

Of interest here are the wall paintings found in the Tomb (T.100) of Rekh-mi-re, an officer of the royal court, in Egyptian Thebes (18th Dynasty and the reigns of Tuthmosis III and Amenhotep II: 1490–1412 B.C., where foreigners are depicted rendering tribute to the pharaoh. Among the tribute bearers are “Keftiu” (Cretans), who are wearing Aegean costumes and bearing Aegean products. Ingots are included among the gifts.

Selected Bibliography

Karetsou–Andreadaki–Vlazaki–Papadakis 2000, pp. 64, 67, 90–92, figs. 64, 67 (Betancourt); Pulak 1988; Soles–Stos-Gale 2004, pp. 45–46, table 6; Stampolidis 2003, pp. 416, 668; Stampolidis–Karetsou–Kanta 1998, pp. 52–53, 105; Tylecote 1976, p. 31.



65 **Ingot**

Late Minoan IB period (ca. 1450 B.C.)

Copper

Max. l. 0.24 m, max. w. 0.335 m, w. at center 0.235 m,
th. 0.051 m, wt. 15 kg

Mochlos, Hoard in the House of the Metal Merchant,
House C₃

Haghios Nikolaos Archaeological Museum, 14389

The upper side of this “ox-hide” ingot is lumpy, with a smoother border along the long edges. A sign on it closely resembles one from the Ulu Burun shipwreck, which Pulak describes as “a quarter rudder.” Ingots with inscribed signs of Linear script have been found in other regions of Crete, such as Haghia Triada.

Selected Bibliography

Dimopoulou-Rethemiotaki 2005, pp. 210–11; Pulak 2000, p. 146,
fig. 4d; Soles (in press), pl. 100b.

Half only extant, lightly curved on the underside and with angular edges.



66 Crucible

Late Minoan IIIA2-B period (ca. 1350–1200 B.C.)

Clay

L. 0.222 m, w. 0.112 m, h. 0.08 m

Malia Quartier Nu

Haghios Nikolaos Archaeological Museum, 13113

Coarse clay crucible, handmade and ovoid in shape, with a semicircular edge at one end and no discernible spout. At the opposite end is a short cylindrical socket, probably for the handle. The exterior surface is covered with densely packed relief circles. The interior bears traces of metal that was poured into it in order to be transferred to molds for making vessels, weapons, and tools. Mended and restored in gypsum.

Fragments of molds for rings came from the same findspot as this crucible. It is therefore likely that a metallurgical workshop was active in the area.

Selected Bibliography

Branigan 1974; Catling–Catling 1984.

Vili Apostolakou



67 Tool Mold

Middle Minoan II period (ca. 1800–1700 B.C.)

Grayish-green schist

L. 0.35 m, w. 0.159 m, t. 0.05 m

Malia Quartier Mu, Bronze Smith's Workshop (B 81/C 15)

Haghios Nikolaos Archaeological Museum, 13420

It belongs to the category of multiple open molds. One surface has three cuttings, for casting different sizes of bronze chisels, while the other one has only one indentation, for casting a bronze tool with two sharp ends. Three small holes along the length of one long side were probably caused by an attempt to repair the mold. Mended.

Two metallurgical workshops—the Bronze Smith's Workshop, where this mold was found, and House C—were located in the Protopalatial Quartier Mu at the archaeological site of Malia and were identified as such on the basis of the stone molds found there.

This mold has many points of comparison with similar examples from Troy, where they were also used for manufacturing flat chisels.

Selected Bibliography

Poursat 1996b, pp. 55, 116, pl. 52d.

Vili Apostolakou



68A-B **Double-Axe Molds**

Third–second millennium B.C.

Stone

H. 0.045 m, w. 0.198 m, th. 0.09 m

Lasithi area

Hierapetra Archaeological Museum, 103

One surface has an almost rectangular cutting in the shape of the double axe. One part is slightly restored in gypsum.

As with most tools and weapons, the process of cupellation was used for the manufacture of double axes. Most molds of bronze weapons were made of stone or fireproof clay. Since axes were rather thick in section, the molds were made in two pieces joined by strips of copper, after which the liquid metal was poured into the cavity with the help of a crucible.

Apart from being the most characteristic Minoan religious symbol, the double axe was also the most typical Minoan tool used in heavy jobs such as felling trees, woodworking, and boat building.

The earliest example of a two-piece double axe mold comes from Vasiliki; it is made of metal and dates to Early Minoan IIB. Quite a few stone double-axe molds have been found at Malia.

Selected Bibliography

Branigan 1968, pp. 30–31, 43–44; Bucholz 1959; Davaras 1992; Deshayes 1960, pp. 253–61; Evely 1993–2000, 1 (1993), pp. 41–55; Poursat 1996a, p. 16.



69A–B Two Molds for Handles of Bronze Vessels

Late Minoan IB period (ca. 1450 B.C.)

Clay

69a: H. 0.067 m, max. w. 0.075 m, diam. of cavity 0.029 m, filling hole 0.007–0.014 m

69b: H. 0.073 m, max. w. 0.076 m, diam. of cavity 0.023 m, diam. filling hole 0.003 m

Mochlos, Artisans' Quarter, Building A

Haghios Nikolaos Archaeological Museum, 14392 and 14393

Made of fine clay with a layer of coarse black clay, these molds are shaped like a horseshoe and have a filling hole that protrudes slightly and leads to the internal narrow channel. One mold is complete, the other mended.

These two molds were used to manufacture a pair of handles for a large bronze vessel such as catalogue number 70, with vertical basket handles that were circular in section. The molds are semi-circular or shaped like a horseshoe, with a similar circular section and a maximum width of 0.076 m. Each has an interior channel roughly 0.01 m in diameter and has been shaped around the wax model of a handle that had a piercing for a rivet at each

end. The wax model was first totally covered with a layer of fine clay (clay lining) about 0.001 m thick, which when dried was covered by a thicker layer of coarse clay (clay covering) used to strengthen specific points of the mold, particularly the ends and lower parts. The molds were fired in a kiln before use, and the initial wax model was melted away through the perforations, probably during the course of the firing. Once the molds had been fired and were ready for use, the molten metal was poured in through the two holes and left to solidify. The molds were then broken, and the bronze handles were popped out. The molds could be used only once and then had to be discarded. The finished handles may have been altered slightly in width but were otherwise designed with slots, in order to be applied to the same surface as the rim of the vessel and riveted to its sides with a minimum of extra work.

Selected Bibliography

Soles 2003, pp. 19–22, fig. 12, pl. 9c; Soles–Stos-Gale 2004, p. 22, IC.30–31, fig. 6, pl. 4.

Maria Kyriakaki



70 **Basin**

Late Minoan IB period (ca. 1450 B.C.)

Bronze

H. without handles 0.077 m, diam. ca. 0.29 m, w. of handles 0.077 m, handle section 0.009 m, wt. 986 g.

Mochlos, Cult Building, House B2. Found with cat. no. 72
Haghios Nikolaos Archaeological Museum, 14391

The underside is concave and has two vertical basket handles, circular in section, each of which has been attached to the rim by two small rivets. Mended and restored.

The vase is made of a single sheet of hammered bronze, whereas the handles were made with molds like catalogue numbers 69a and 69b. They were all probably manufactured in the Industrial Quarter of Mochlos.

Selected Bibliography

Soles-Davaras 1996, pp. 192–94.

Maria Kyriakaki



71 Cup

Late Minoan IB period (ca. 1450 B.C.)

Bronze

H. 0.076 m, max. rim diam. 0.141 m, base diam. 0.066 m, th. 0.003 m, w. of handle 0.069 m, diam. of section 0.005 m, wt. 240 g.

Mochlos, Hoard in the House of the Metal Merchant, House C₃

Haghios Nikolaos Archaeological Museum, 14394

Mended and restored. It has a straight rim and a flat base. A horizontal handle, circular in section, was applied to the rim of the vessel with two silver-headed bronze rivets. The cup is of hammered bronze, whereas the handle was mold-made. The silver was attached to the rivet heads by hammering.

Selected Bibliography

Branigan 1968, p. 91, fig. 9,6; Seager 1912, p. 56, fig. 26, VII.c.



72 **Basin**

Late Minoan IB period (ca. 1450 B.C.)

Bronze

H. without handle 0.071 m, h. with handle 0.15 m, rim diam. 0.364 m, base diam. 0.18 m, w. of handle 0.039–0.075 m, wt. 2.53 kg

Mochlos, Cult Building, House B2. Found with cat. no. 70
Haghios Nikolaos Archaeological Museum, 14390

The vase has a flat, raised base and a vertical loop handle. The rim band is decorated with foliates and beadings executed in high relief. The handle is joined to the wall of the basin by three rivets and is decorated in the center with a row of beadings flanked by foliate bands. The basin was hammered out from a single sheet of metal, whereas the decorative band on the rim and the handle were manufactured in separate molds. The rim of the basin inclines sharply outward, and the decorative band was secured by means of eight small rivets. Mended and restored.

The basin was probably imported to Mochlos from Knossos.

Selected Bibliography

Dimopoulou-Rethemiotaki 2005, p. 349; Soles–Davaras 1996, pp. 192–94.



85 **Grater**

Middle Minoan IIB period (ca. 1750–1700 B.C.)

Clay

Max. h. 0.061 m, l. 0.288 m, max. w. 0.156 m

Phaistos, Palace, Room LX, 1955

Herakleion Archaeological Museum, HM 10620

This mended and restored clay grater has an elliptical body, a pulled-out spout, and a vertical handle. Its use is indicated by the raised, oblong segment in the middle of its interior, where eight parallel horizontal relief ridges, scored with crosswise cuttings, served to grate food, perhaps juicy fruits or vegetables. Much like vessels with similar uses today, this clay grater was essential for food preparation.

The grater was found on a bench in a room of the palace at Phaistos. In addition to Phaistos, similar vessels have been found at Monastiraki in the Amari.

Selected Bibliography

Levi 1976, pp. 56, 133, pl. 140 d; Tzedakis–Martlew 1999, pp. 96–97, nos. 68, 69 (Kanta, and Karetsou–Kavoulaki).



86 Beekeeping Vessel (Smoker)

Late Minoan IB period (ca. 1525/1500–1450 B.C.)

Clay

Max. h. 0.185 m, l. 0.345 m, base diam. 0.14 m

Zakros, House I, Room XIV, 1901

Herakleion Archaeological Museum, HM 2113

Mended and restored clay vessel with cylindrical body shaped in the form of a gun shell, with a large elliptical opening near the one end and four protruding feet for horizontal support. On top are two arched handles; underneath is a small channel that runs along the surface to allow a moving part to be inserted, perhaps a wooden rod. The ramlike end is domed and irregularly perforated; another pair of holes have been pierced near the flat, cylindrical end, presumably the bottom. Traces of burning, probably through use, can be seen on both interior and exterior, mainly on the bottom.

The function of this vessel has long been the subject of debate. Initially its use was unknown, but later it was associated with metalworking and beekeeping; it has even been identified with the beehive itself.

The morphological features of the vessel, along with relevant ethno-archaeological evidence, suggest that it may have served as a *kapnodochi*, or smoker, the most useful piece of equipment for a beekeeper and one that is still used today in traditional beekeeping. Some kind of smoke-producing material is placed in the bottom of the vessel, where two pairs of holes allow the air in and keep the embers alive. As smoke is produced, it is spewed

out from the perforation in the domed end in the direction of the bees, lulling them so that the honey can be collected.

This piece of beekeeping equipment was found in Room XIV in House I at Zakros, where it was probably stored. Similar vessels are attested in the Zakros region, which is well known today for producing honey. Less pertinent parallels of the same period come from Knossos and Phaistos and other areas of mainland Greece.

Revealing evidence for the importance of the Zakros beekeeping vessel comes from ancient Greek sources, which mention “unsmoked” or “smokeless” or “unheated” honey, apparently to distinguish it from honey that has been smoked by means of a beekeeping smoker of the Zakros type.

The importance of honey in Minoan Crete is noted in the Linear B tablets. Reference is made to its sweetening properties and probably its therapeutic qualities, which is also recorded in classical texts, and to its economic importance. Noteworthy also are the references to honey and bees in Cretan mythology, where Glaukos, son of Minos and Pasiphae, drowned in a pithos filled with honey and where the bees of the Diktaion Cave were the wet nurses of Cretan-born Zeus.

Selected Bibliography

Chouliara-Raios 1989, p. 108; Davaras 1989; Evely 1993–2000, 2 (2000), p. 365; Georgiou 1981, p. 87; Hogarth 1900–1901, p. 141; Melas 1999; Montelius 1924, pp. 88–92, fig. 253; Mosso 1910, pp. 222–23, fig. 146; Platon 1962, p. 166; Strabo IX, 1, 23, 13.

87



88





89 **Cooking Pot**

Late Minoan I period (ca. 1600–1450 B.C.)

Clay

H. 0.34 m, diam. 0.30 m

Makrygialos, Siteia, Minoan villa

Haghios Nikolaos Archaeological Museum, 8627

Flat base, ovoid body, and three legs. Two handles preserved beneath the rim. A small pulled-out spout on the rim of the vessel, between the two handles. Mended and restored in gypsum.

This particular form of cooking pot is considered typical for Middle Minoan III and Late Minoan I. Similar Neopalatial tripod cooking pots have been found at many Minoan sites throughout Crete, notable at Mochlos, Pseira, Gournia, Palaikastro, Malia, and Khania. Chemical analyses carried out on some of them have shown that those vessels were often used to boil meat and vegetables with added olive oil.

Selected Bibliography

Barnard–Brogan 2003, pp. 80–82, figs. 47, 48; Betancourt 1980, p. 3 (Type A); Tzedakis–Martlew 1999, p. 103 (Martlew).



90A-B **Cooking Pot and Stand**

Late Minoan III C early period (ca. 1200–1150 B.C.)

Clay

Cooking pot: h. 0.210 m, rim diam. 0.193 m

Brazier: h. 0.195 m, rim diam. 0.225 m, base diam.

0.215 m

Khania, Kastelli Hill, Greek-Swedish Excavation, 1977,

House I, Room O

Khania Archaeological Museum, Π 4485 and Π 4486

The cooking pot has a squat globular body, two vertical strap handles, a tall rim, and a flat base. It is heavily burned inside and out. It fits the cylindrical stand that held it over the burning charcoal. The stand has a circular piercing (perhaps an air hole) in the wall and a wide rectangular opening with a relief border. It shows heavy traces of burning on the inside. Both objects are unpainted, mended, and restored.

These two objects were found in situ in the center of a room, together with a storage jar and a grinding stone. The room belonged to a Late Minoan III C building that was erected over the remains of the Late Minoan IB, Late Minoan III A, and Late Minoan III B structures of Hagia Aikaterini Square. Like the entire settlement on Kastelli hill, this building was abandoned before the middle of the Late Minoan III C period.

Selected Bibliography

Hallager–Hallager 1997–2000, pp. 131–34 (E. Hallager), pp.

159–60, 162 (B. P. Hallager); Tzedakis–Martlew 1999, pp. 99, 102 (Andreadaki-Vlazaki).



91 Sea Shells

Middle Minoan IB period (ca. 1900–1800 B.C.)
 Khamalevri, Tzabakas House, 1996
 Rethymnon Archaeological Museum

A group of approximately sixty limpet shells was discovered inside the Minoan building at Khamalevri, in an occupation level dating shortly before the building's final destruction. They were the remains of a meal and belong to three species: *Patella rustica*, *Patella caerulea*, and *Patella ulyssiponensis*, which are still common on Mediterranean shores.

Shellfish was a very popular and important dietary supplement for the inhabitants of Khamalevri in the Protopalatial period. Limpets still cluster and cling to the upper surfaces of the rocky coastline and were probably easily found and collected by the Minoans of Khamalevri.

Selected Bibliography

Tzedakis–Martlew 1999, pp. 70–73 (Baltzinger).

Eleni Papadopoulou



92 Carbonized Grass Peas

End of Late Minoan IB period (ca. 1450 B.C.)
 Kastelli Hill, Khania, Plateia Haghia Aikaterini, Greek-Swedish excavation, 1977
 Khania Archaeological Museum

These carbonized grass peas (*Lathyrus cicercalsativus*), mixed with broad beans (*Vicia faba*) and lentils (*Lens asculentus* L.), were found inside a large tripod cooking vessel in a storeroom of the Late Minoan I Building I during the Greek-Swedish excavation at Kastelli (Plateia Haghia Aikaterini), Khania. They were probably the remains of the last meal cooked in the pot shortly before the building's destruction. The find is particularly interesting because it illustrates the dietary habits of the building's occupants. Overconsumption of grass peas may cause poisoning and, in extreme cases, lathyrism, a neurological disease characterized by a crippling paralysis of the legs.

Selected Bibliography

Tzedakis–Martlew 1999, pp. 100 (Arnott), 101 (Sarpaki).

Eftychia Protopapadaki



93 Carbonized Figs

Late Minoan IIIB period (ca. 1300–1200 B.C.)
 Sternes, Akrotiri, Khania 1972, Amygdalokephali site,
 Minoan Farmstead
 Khania Archaeological Museum

This relatively large quantity of figs (*Ficus carica*), which were dried before carbonization, were discovered during the excavation of a Minoan farmstead on Amygdalokephali Hill, south of the village of Sternes. The building had at least two rooms. One room contained a small dilapidated oven, inside which the figs were found. The site also yielded two large storage jars (pithoi) and a bronze axe.

Figs have been widely consumed in their natural state since prehistoric times. Like many other species (edible or not), they are preserved today only as carbonized remains. In this particular case, archaeo-botanical analysis provided proof of the earliest instance of drying as a method of preserving foodstuffs, a technique that was applied to the figs before they were burned.

Selected Bibliography

AA 28 (1973): 582 (Tzedakis); *Im Labyrinth des Minos*, pp. 172–73 (Andreadaki-Vlazaki); Sarpaki 2000, pp. 92, 102.

Sophia Preve



94 Miniature Cup

Middle Minoan IA period (ca. 2100–1900 B.C.)
 Clay
 H. 0.039 m, rim diam. 0.039 m, base diam. 0.031 m
 Khamalevri, Bolanis Workshop, 1992
 Rethymnon Archaeological Museum, Π 15307

Plain handmade cup with deep conical profile, flat base, and crude spout. It is burned both inside and out. Almost complete, slightly restored.

This vase comes from an important archaeological site, where the extensive remains of an open-air workshop for aromatic compounds were revealed. The cup's miniature size and its clearly utilitarian character indicate that it was used for measuring the ingredients used in the preparation of aromatic oils. This hypothesis was confirmed through chemical analyses of the clay, which revealed traces of iris oil, resin, beeswax, and grains. It appears that the inhabitants of Khamalevri were involved in perfume production on a community and collective scale as early as 2000 B.C., shortly before the first Minoan palaces were founded.

Selected Bibliography

Momigliano 1991, p. 249, figs. 11:4, 30:3 (Footless Goblet Type 3); Tzedakis–Martlew 1999, pp. 45–46, 51, no. 19 (Andreadaki-Vlazaki).

Eleni Papadopoulou





96 **Cooking Pot with Fire-Box Lid**

Late Minoan II period (ca. 1450–1400 B.C.)

Clay

H. 0.113–0.141 (with lid) m, base diam. 0.170 m

Stavromenos-Khamalevri, Rock-cut tomb, 1980

Rethymnon Archaeological Museum, Π 2338

The cooking pot has a cylindrical body with flat base, a short vertical rim, and two cylindrical, horizontal handles placed high on the shoulder. The collar rim facilitates the fitting of the lid, which belongs to the flanged type. The body of the pot is decorated with bands and labiate flowers (stylized crocuses) in a horizontal row. Complete, except for the diaphragm of the fire-box.

This vase and the strainer pyxis (cat. no. 95) were found and handed in by a private individual. They come from the same context, an almost completely destroyed grave cut into the marl limestone. The vase's shape and its association with the strainer pyxis relate it to the manufacture and use of aromatic oils at Stavromenos. Similar Late Minoan IB cooking pots (ca. 1525/1500–1450 B.C.) were found during excavations in a space identified as a workshop for the production of aromatic oils at the palace of Kato Zakros.

Selected Bibliography

Andreadaki-Vlazaki 1987; Tzedakis–Martlew 1999, pp. 54–55, no. 28 (Andreadaki-Vlazaki).



97 **Stirrup Jar**

Late Minoan III B (ca. 1300–1200 B.C.)

Fine yellowish clay

H. 0.180 m, max. diam. 0.195 m

City of Khania, Courthouse area, 1928

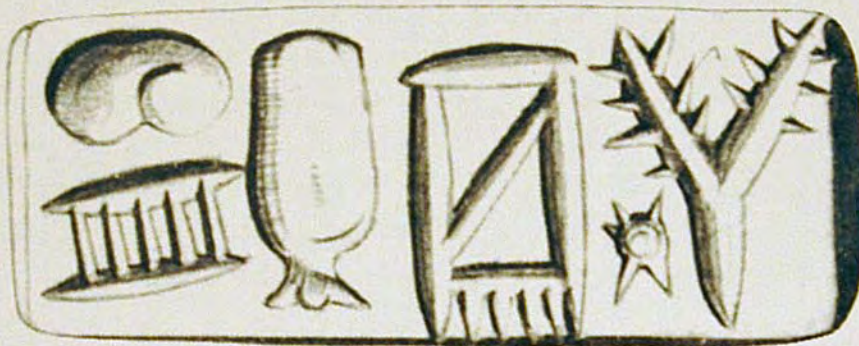
Khania Archaeological Museum, Π 726

Conical body with flat top and base. Three slender strap handles on the shoulder. Carefully painted linear and plant decoration, stylized and architecturally arranged. Bands define two decorative zones. The wider one bears two sides of equal size. On one side six panels contain voluted flowers with dotted or fringed outline, as well as palms with a double central eye. On the other side, sea anemones are bordered by semicircles and quadrants or mixed into a background of dense chevrons. The sea anemone motif is repeated on the more confined shoulder zone. Complete.

In the extensive area of the “Courthouse–Mazali plot” lies the most important part of the Late Minoan cemetery of Kydonia, where large clusters of tombs come to light every now and again during rebuilding, from 1900 to the present day. The vase in question, a product of the local workshop, was in all likelihood filled with precious aromatic oil. Like many others of a similar shape, it was a common grave gift in tombs of the period. The local Kydonian workshop of the Mycenaean period produced a large number of stirrup jars for aromatic oil, as well as a larger trading variety for the transport of oil or wine.

Selected Bibliography

Jantzen 1951, p. 74, pls. 49: 2, 59; Mackeprang 1938, p. 549, pl. XXVIII: 4; Tzedakis 1969a.



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98 Seal with Hieroglyphic Signs

Middle Minoan II–III period (ca. 1800–1650 B.C.)

Sardonyx

Max. l. 0.019 m

Malia, area of the Early Christian basilica, surface find, 1958
Herakleion Archaeological Museum, HM 1883

Half-cylindrical seal made of brownish-red sardonyx with dark spots, with a pierced circular hole along the long axis. The convex side is decorated with three tongue-shape leaves in relief; the flat side is inscribed with hieroglyphic signs. Mended from two pieces.

Hieroglyphs constitute the earliest organized script in Crete, and its appearance coincides with the establishment of the first palaces at the beginning of the Middle Minoan period.

The seals with hieroglyphic inscriptions are usually prismatic, three-sided, or four-sided. These shapes provide larger surfaces for incising one large or several smaller inscriptions. Toward the end of the Protopalatial period, seal engravers began to use hard, semiprecious, often imported stones, such as amethyst and sardonyx, which required new manufacturing techniques. Like this Malia seal, hieroglyphic seals made of semiprecious stones are usually small with short inscriptions, possibly reflecting the small available quantities of the imported raw material.

It is uncertain whether hieroglyphic seals had a different use than those with representational or geometric decoration. It is possible that hieroglyphic signs were also used for decorative purposes. The existence, however, of sealing archives with hieroglyphic inscriptions demonstrates that many of these seals were used in administration for certifying the contents or quantity of a product, as with later Linear A and B sealings.

Selected Bibliography

CMS II, 2, no. 227; Evans 1909, pp. 181–231, fig. 103; Krzyszkowska 2005a, pp. 95–97; Olivier 1995; Olivier–Godart–Poursat 1996, pp. 224–25; Younger 1993, pp. 44–45, 184.



99 **Inscribed Heart-Shape Vessel**

Middle Minoan III–Late Minoan IA period
(ca. 1700–1525/1500 B.C.)

Marble

Max. preserved l. 0.088 m, w. 0.069 m

Archanes. Troullos

Herakleion Archaeological Museum, HM 1545

Complete, slightly damaged.

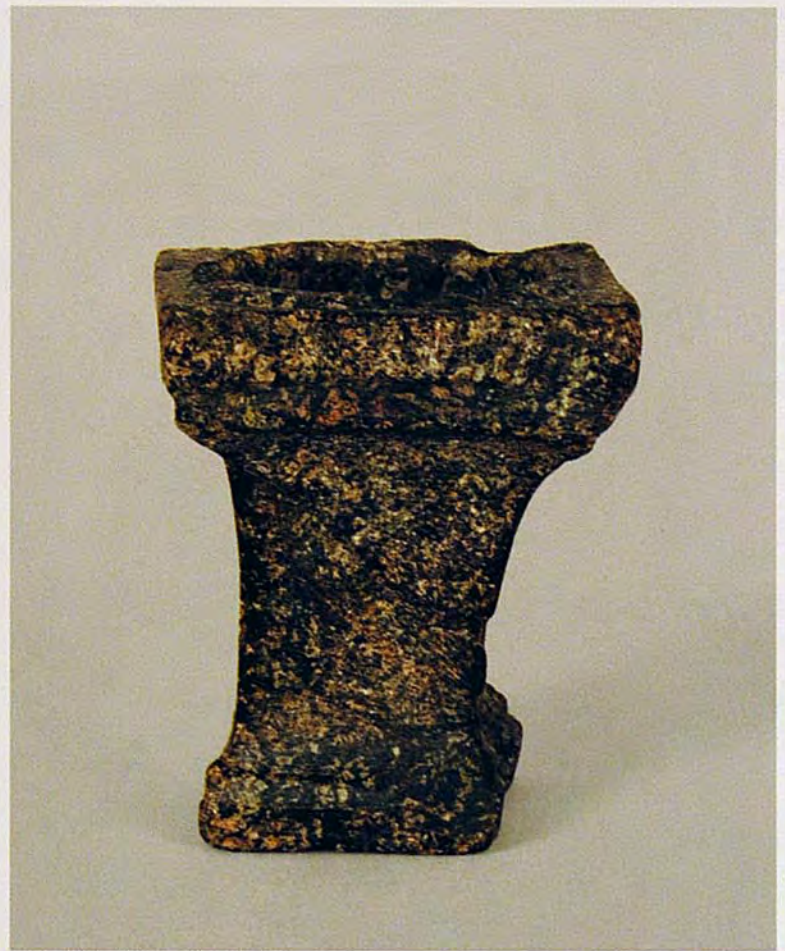
This small, marble heart-shaped vessel with a shallow interior bowl is often referred to as a “ladle” because of its shape. Comparable to similar types of vessels found at places of worship inside and outside Crete (peak sanctuary of Jouktas, Knossos, Palaikastro, etc.), the ladle has been considered a religious object.

An engraved inscription in the Linear A script runs around its rim (TL Za 1) with twenty-two preserved signs, to be read from left to right. As the inscription unfolds, some of these signs are repeated in a similar order, demonstrating a kind of regularity. Owing to the supposed ritual function of the vessel, it has been suggested that the inscription has a religious content, specifically as a kind of saying or prayer, because of the repetition of certain signs.

Selected Bibliography

GORILA 4, pp. 58–59 (TL Za 1); Sakellarakis–Sapouna-Sakellarakis 1997, pp. 335–37, 537; Warren 1969b, p. 48; Xanthoudides 1909.

Emmanouela Apostolaki



100 **Inscribed Table of Offerings**

Middle Minoan III–Late Minoan I period (ca. 1700–1450 B.C.)

Serpentine

H. 0.183 m, max. w. 0.145 m

Palaikastro, probably peak sanctuary of Petsophas

Herakleion Archaeological Museum, HM 1341

Complete but chipped.

Like many other vessels of its kind, this probably came from an area of worship, the peak sanctuary of Petsophas at Palaikastro; two similar inscribed tables and a large number of votive figurines also came from there. The table is rectangular with a circular hollow in the “table” surface, defined by a relief ring for placing the offerings; a high foot, rectangular in section, ends in a step. At the front there is a carved Linear A inscription, probably religious, a feature often found on tables of offerings of the period.

During the Neopalatial period, tables of offerings were made in a large variety of materials, sizes, and types. They were intended to display the offerings of worshipers or votaries in liquid or solid form in open-air shrines, palaces, and caves. This example from Palaikastro is typical of its kind.

Selected Bibliography

Brice 1961, p. 13 (no. 14); *GORILA* 4, pp. 32–35 (PK Za 11); Warren 1969b, p. 66 (P342).

Emmanouela Apostolaki



101A

101A–B Two Linear A Tablets

End of Late Minoan IB period (ca. 1450 B.C.)

Clay

101A: L. 0.080 m, max. w. 0.057 m, max. th. 0.008 m

101B: L. 0.105 m, w. 0.053 m, max. th. 0.013 m

Palace at Kato Zakros, Archive

Siteia Archaeological Museum, 1619 and 1627

101A: Completely preserved. Mended. Side A has six lines that contain sign groups followed by numbers—one or two units and fractions. In addition, two double axe signs (no. 52 on the table of syllabograms) may be an ideogram. The content of the text is related to the distribution of materials. Side B is uninscribed.

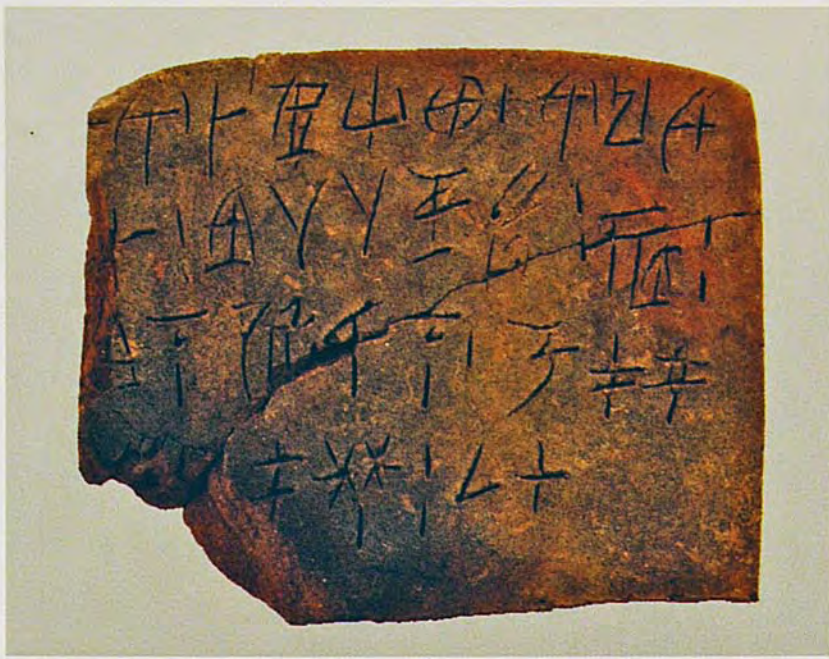
101B: Almost completely preserved. Inscribed on both sides. Mended. Side A has seven lines that contain signs followed by numerics. Side B has two lines divided by a horizontal line. The first line includes the wine ideogram 82 and a number. The second line consists of a group of syllabograms, the ideogram 82, and the number 78. The group of syllabograms means “all” or “total,” whereas 78 refers to the total number of the citations on the list that precedes it.

The text of the tablet involves a transaction with quantities of wine and some other commodity, which is indicated by sign 44. These may describe the distribution of commodities controlled by the palace administration. The content of these texts seems to be connected with accounting, since almost all contain numerical signs.

Selected Bibliography

Platon 1974; Platon–Brice 1975.





102A–B Two Inscribed Tablets

End of Late Minoan IB period (ca. 1450 B.C.)

Clay

102A (KH 5): 0.097 x 0.081 x 0.012 m

102B (KH 7): 0.111 x 0.089 x 0.014 m

City of Khania, Kastelli Hill, 1973, Archive of
10 Katre Street

Khania Archaeological Museum, KH 5 and KH 7

Mended. Marked traces of burning.

The two rectangular tablets with text in the Linear A script were written by the same scribe and belong to the group of seventy-two tablets found in the Minoan Archive at 10 Katre Street in Kastelli, Khania.

Catalogue number 102A bears a complete text in four lines. The ideograms for wine, figs, and wheat, among others, are recognizable.

Incomplete tablet (cat. no. 102B) is a rare Khania example of a tablet inscribed on both sides. The text is developed along six lines on the main side and two on the reverse. There are ideograms for wheat and human beings, among others.

The ideograms tell us that the archive contains records of individuals, animal husbandry, and agricultural products, which provide important evidence for understanding both the administration and the economy of the building complex that extended over the Kastelli hill at the end of the Late Minoan IB period.

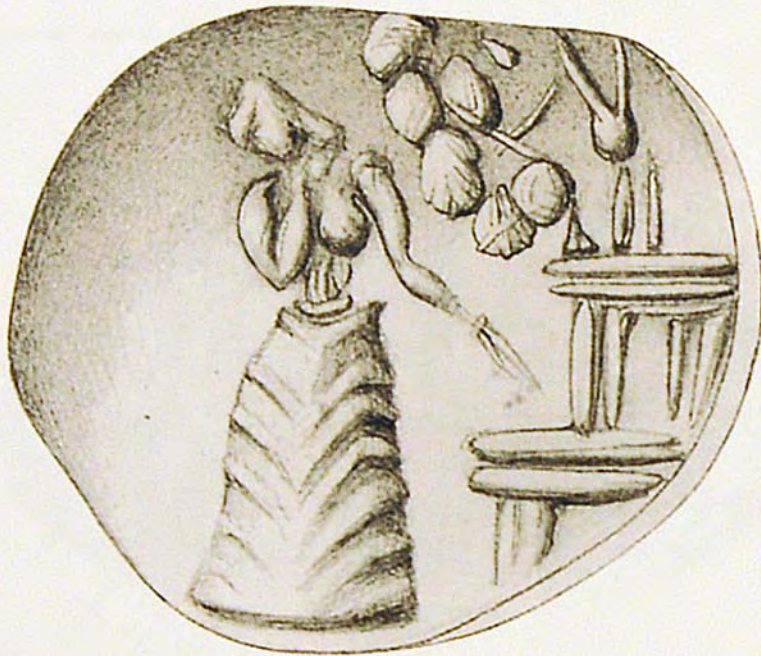
Like all documents of this sort, these tablets were originally made of unbaked clay. They were preserved by chance, baked during the conflagration that destroyed the settlement where they were found in about 1450 B.C., when similar fires destroyed the island's palatial centers and signaled the establishment of the Achaeans in places like Kydonia (Khania).

Selected Bibliography

GORILA 3, pp. 24, 25, 28–31; Papapostolou–Godart–Olivier 1976.



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103 Inscribed Roundel

End of Late Minoan IB period (ca. 1450 B.C.)

Clay

Diam. 0.047 m, th. 0.016 m

City of Khania, Kastelli Hill, 1973, 10 Katre Street
Archive

Khania Archaeological Museum, KH 2055

Complete, but cracked from burning. Linear A signs L 88+76 are inscribed on the upper surface. Along the periphery are six impressions of the same ovoid seal or signet ring.

The seal depicts a worship scene with a central female figure dressed in a long garment. The body is rendered frontally. The head with long hair tilts to her right. The figure places her right hand on her chest and reaches out with her left hand toward the tree that grows inside a stepped structure crowned with horns of consecration.

Selected Bibliography

CMS V, 1A, p. 179, no. 176; *GORILA.3*, p. 134; Hallager 1996, II, p. 93; Papapostolou 1977, pp. 17, 73–77; Papapostolou–Godart–Olivier 1976, p. 145.



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104 Inscribed Roundel

End of Late Minoan IB period (ca. 1450 B.C.)

Clay

Diam. 0.048 m, th. 0.014 m

City of Khania, Kastelli Hill, Plateia Haghia Aikaterini,
Greek-Swedish Excavation

Khania Archaeological Museum, KH 2002

Circular roundel with clear indications of the maker's fingers. Linear A sign L 80 is inscribed on one flat side. Along the periphery impressions of the same amygdaloid (almond-shape) seal stone, engraved with a seated lion in profile facing left. The antithetical head and bent forelimbs of a second lion emerge behind the main lion's back. The heads are shapeless, the manes linear and schematic. The eyes and ears are rendered with spots. An additional line marks the belly's outline. The legs connect clumsily to the body. The strongly linear representation departs from the naturalistic style. Complete.

Impressions of the same seal stone occur on fifteen roundels from the Minoan Archive at 10 Katre Street, as well as on another example from the Greek-Swedish Excavation in Plateia Haghia Aikaterini. Clay roundels functioned as receipts for imported goods in the Minoan bureaucratic system.

Selected Bibliography

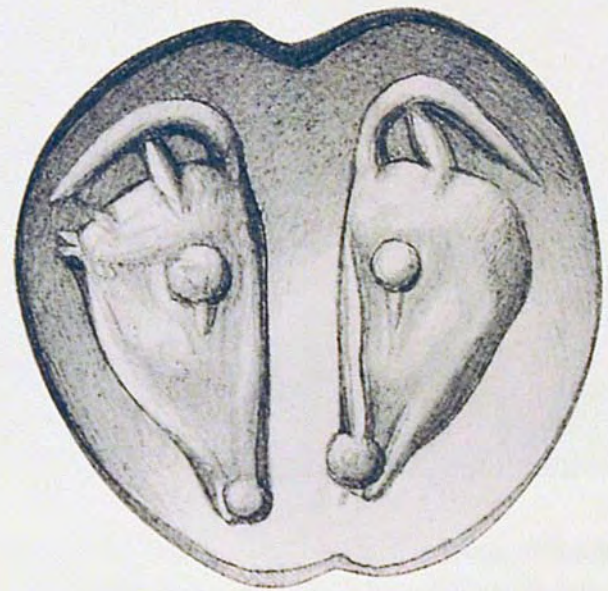
CMS V, no. 236; *GORILA* 3, p. 114; Hallager 1996, II, p. 40;

Papapostolou 1977, pp. 15, 56–57.

Eftychia Protopapadaki



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105 Inscribed Roundel

End of Late Minoan IB period (ca. 1450 B.C.)

Clay

Diam. 0.044 m, th. 0.015 m

City of Khania, Kastelli Hill, 1978, Archive at 10 Katre Street

Khania Archaeological Museum, KH 2030

Circular outline with obvious indications of the maker's fingers. The Linear A ideogram Lc 55 for *human being* is inscribed on one flat surface. Along the periphery are three impressions of the same lentoid seal stone. The seal impressions depict two antithetical bovine heads in profile and in low relief. Dots denote the eyes and muzzle, and two short vertical lines below the horns, which curve backward along the seal's outline, denote the ears. This motif has religious significance. The same ideogram and seal impression occur in two more roundels from the archive. Complete.

Selected Bibliography

GORILA 3, p. 125; Hallager 1996, II, p. 68; Papapostolou 1977, pp. 15, 64–66; Papapostolou–Godart–Olivier 1976.



106 **Roundel Fragment**

End of Late Minoan IB period (ca. 1450 B.C.)

Clay

Diam. 0.058 m, th. 0.012 m

City of Khania, Kastelli Hill, Plateia Haghia Aikaterini,
Greek-Swedish Excavation, 1982

Khania Archaeological Museum, KH 2117

Less than half preserved. The surface on the obverse is smooth, whereas the reverse is fairly worn. There are no traces of fingerprints. An unclear Linear A sign, possibly L1, L32, or L99, is incised on the obverse. Another sign, identified as L36, appears on the reverse. Along the periphery are three complete and one fragmentary impression of the same almond-shape seal.

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The seal impressions depict a female figure with long hair and large breasts standing in profile, her head tilted forward toward her hand, which holds an oar. Her posture is thoroughly naturalistic. The edge of a boat is rendered schematically in the scene's lower right. This is a religious scene.

This unusual roundel was found by chance on the floor of a Late Minoan IIIA (ca. 1400–1300 B.C.) courtyard during the Greek-Swedish Excavation at Haghia Aikaterini. It belongs, however, to the same group as the Late Minoan IB documents discovered in Khania's Minoan archives.

Selected Bibliography

Boulotis 1989, p. 72, figs. 1a–b; *CMS V*, 1A, p. 146, no. 143; *GORILA* 5, p. 47; Hallager 1996, II, p. 150; Hallager–Andreadaki-Vlazaki 1984.

Eftychia Protopapadaki



107A-B Two Linear B tablets

Late Minoan IIIA2 period (1375–1300 B.C.)

Clay

107A: max. l. 0.203 m, max. w. 0.043 m

107B: max. l. 0.133 m, max. w. 0.031 m

Knossos, Palace

Herakleion Archaeological Museum, HM 107 and 115

These two tablets, which are complete, come from the extensive archive of the palace of Knossos. They are shaped like leaves (a palm-leaf type) and are of exceptional importance, as are all the tablets, for the information they contain concerning the economy and administration during the Mycenaean period on Crete.

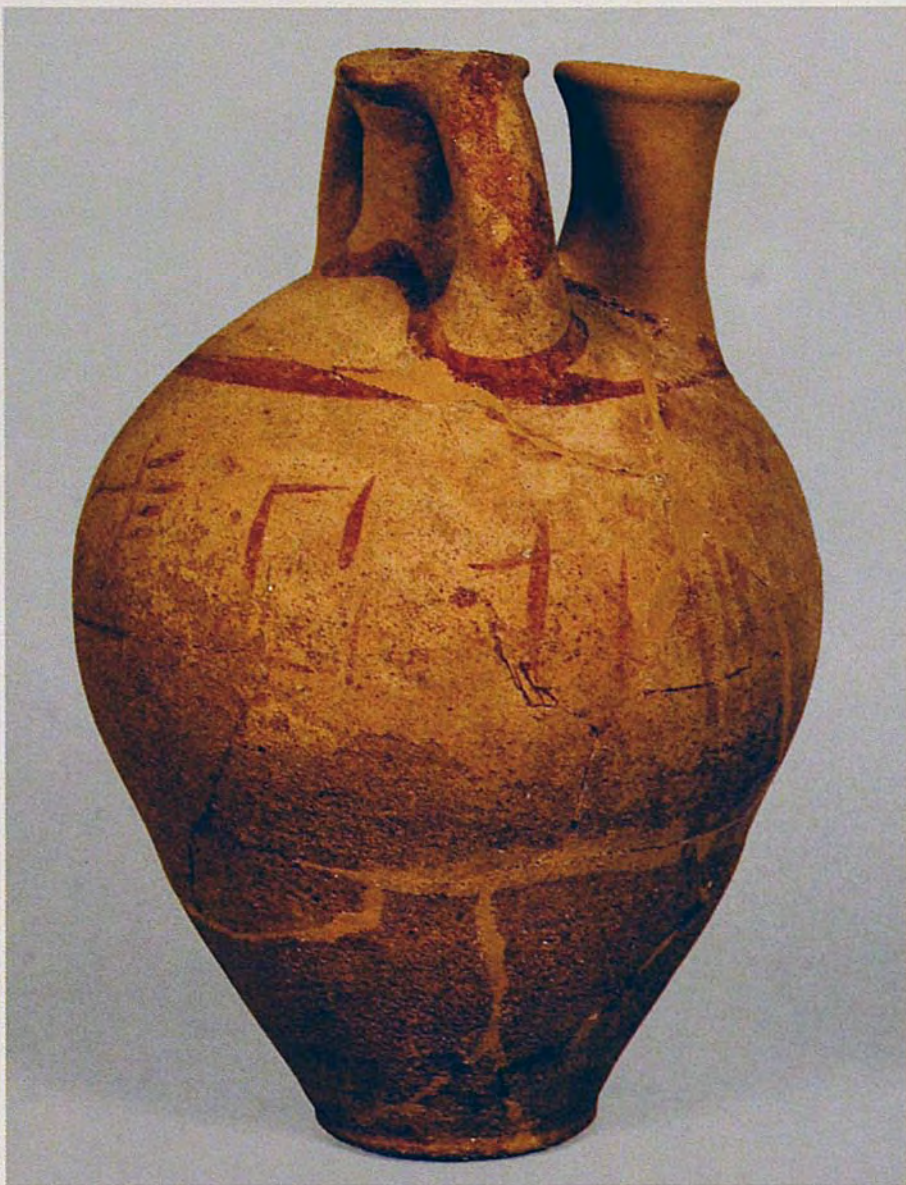
Catalogue number 107A belongs to a series of tablets that were written by the same scribe and contain lists of flocks of animals from regions far from Knossos, whose produce and transport is checked by an overseer for the palace accounts. The location of the flocks in this particular tablet is in western Crete (Kydonia), and the animals counted include 952 sheep, 365 goats, 81 pigs, and 12 oxen. The numbers are further refined according to the gender of the animals and are registered in descending order according to the type of flock, from the largest to the smallest.

Catalogue number 107B is part of a series of tablets that contains records of grain. In this particular tablet, amounts of wheat are given according to place names: 30 units or portions correspond to someone from Lato, 261 to someone from Tylissos, and 246 to someone from a place whose location is unknown, although it is probably in the vicinity of Lato and Tylissos. According to one interpretation, the amounts denote portions of wheat in the context of a monthly transaction between the palace at Knossos and a particular number of men from the regions mentioned. However, another interpretation suggests that the tablet measures the amounts of wheat that could be produced by the tilling of one animal (ox) in each of the stated regions, within the context of a kind of local tax system.

Selected Bibliography

Bennett 1985, pp. 240, 246; Chadwick et al. 1986, pp. 252 (E 668), 370 (Co 907); Palmer 1963, p. 233.

Emmanouela Apostolaki



108 **Inscribed Stirrup Jar**

Early in Late Minoan IIIB period (ca. 1300–1250 B.C.)

Clay

H. 0.390 m, body diam. 0.250 m

City of Khania, Kastelli Hill, Building 2, Greek-Swedish

Excavation, 2005

Khania Archaeological Museum, Π 10344

Pear-shape stirrup jar with a distinctive belly, narrow base, short false spout, and handles of ovoid section. Mended and restored. The brownish-red clay with white inclusions is probably local.

The Linear B inscription occupying the belly consists of three syllabograms, a separation mark, and a fourth syllabogram. These read *ze-ta-ro*, probably the personal name of the content's producer, and possibly part of the syllabogram *wa* (from the word *wa-na-ka-te-ro* = royal).

The jar was found inside Building 2 (the “Linear B House”), probably in the entrance area. For some unknown reason, it had been placed inside a pit sealed by an early Late Minoan IIIB floor. Chemical analyses of inscribed stirrup-jar fabrics from Crete and the Greek mainland suggest that Kydonia was a production center for commercial jars of this sort at that time. Filled with oil, often perfumed, or wine, they traveled to the Mycenaean palaces at Mycenae, Thebes, Orchomenos, and Eleusis. The word *wa-na-ka-te-ro* written on some of these jars may confirm a Kydonian ruler who controlled exports to the Greek mainland after the final destruction of the palace at Knossos.

Selected Bibliography

Andreadaki-Vlazaki–Hallager 2007; Tzedakis–Martlew 1999, pp. 136–37 (Godart-French).



109A–B Balance Discs

Late Minoan IB period (ca. 1450 B.C.)

Bronze

Diam. 0.113 m and 0.11 m, th. 0.002 m, combined wt.
215.3 g

Mochlos, Hoard in House of the Metal Merchant,
House C₃

Haghios Nikolaos Archaeological Museum, 14407 and
14408

Two slightly concave discs bent at the edge to form a small lip. Four small holes, one in each quarter, were used to attach the suspension chain. The discs were hammered from a sheet of metal. Suspended at the ends of a pivot, which was balanced on a central vertical axis, they were used to measure the weight of goods such as wool, linen, perfumes, wax, ivory, or precious metals, including fragments of bronze, tin, and lead. The discs are now stuck together, and one is mended from three pieces.

Scales, a product of Eastern inspiration, were probably imported to the Aegean from Egypt. The weighing discs are more common as grave goods on mainland Greece than in Crete and are found throughout the Late Minoan/Early Helladic period. All published examples come from tombs.

Weighing involves comparing the weight of two different objects. The invention of standard weights was derived from the measuring of gold in Egypt. Balances and standard weights have been found in houses, palaces, and tombs in both the Aegean and Egypt. The discoid stone or lead standard weights, which predominated in the Neopalatial period in Crete, were used for the so-called Minoan system, with a basic unit of weight being 61 to 65.5 grams. At the same time, in 18th Dynasty Egypt, the *deben* unit of 91 grams predominated.

Weighing provides an instant method of two amounts—two objects as well as two values, material or not. Since it functioned automatically and objectively, the scale enjoyed a dominant role both in economic life and in the ideology of the people of the Aegean and Egypt.

Selected Bibliography

Brogan 2006; Karetsou–Andreadaki–Vlazaki–Papadakis 2000, pp. 132–33 (Michailidou), 134 (Markoulaki).

Maria Kyriakaki



A



B



C

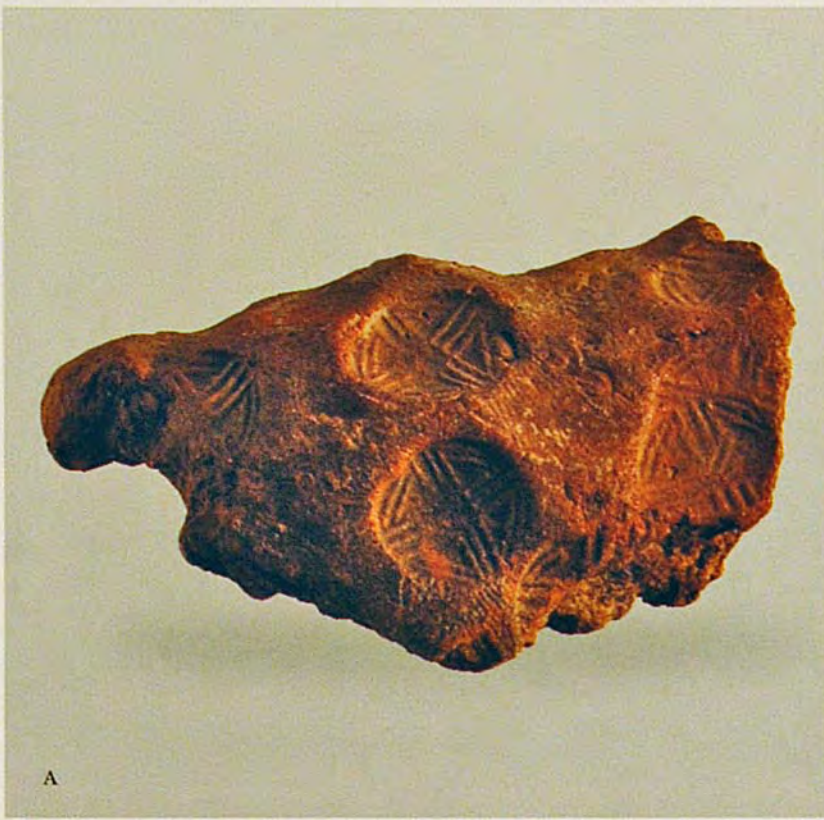


D



E





115A–B Sealings

Middle Minoan II period (ca. 1800–1700 B.C.)
Clay

115A (Π 7577): max. l. 0.055 m, max. w. 0.038 m

115B (Π 7581): max. l. 0.078 m, max. w. 0.062 m

Monastiraki palatial center

Rethymnon Archaeological Museum, Π 7577 and
Π 7581

115A: Elongated, almost semicylindrical piece of clay. Traces of rope or another fine cylindrical object, to which the sealing was attached, are visible on the reverse. Ten impressions made with the same circular seal are visible on the main surface. The impressed motif consists of two double lines crossing each other diagonally within a double square.

115B: Elongated, irregularly shaped piece of clay with curved section. Traces of the rim of the vase, probably a pithos or a basket to which the piece of clay was attached, are visible on the reverse. Eleven impressions made with the same circular seal are visible on the main surface. The impression comprises an S-shape motif flanked by hatched triangles.

Excavations at Monastiraki revealed a large complex of Protopalatial buildings (ca. 1900–1700 B.C.), whose architectural characteristics recall the Cretan palatial centers. The discovery of large numbers of sealings in three different areas within the complex confirms its palatial character. The need to control supplies (agricultural produce and artifacts) in the Protopalatial period led to the creation of an administrative system in which sealing was the main bureaucratic device. Pieces of unbaked clay were used to secure doors, vases, and other containers in various materials. The clay was subsequently stamped with the seals of those who were responsible for the protection and redistribution of these goods. These clay sealings were preserved by chance when the clay was baked during the fires that destroyed the island's early palaces at the end of the Middle Minoan IIB period, in approximately 1700 B.C.

The discovery of sealings at Monastiraki confirms the existence of a centralized administration that controlled access to and redistribution of produce at the center. It has been suggested that the Monastiraki palatial center depended on Phaistos, in the Mesara plain. This is confirmed by the center's position on the route that links the fertile plain with the north coast of Rethymnon and the affinities in the pottery of these two sites. Further proof is provided by the use of the same seal for two sealings, one from Monastiraki and the other from Phaistos.

Selected Bibliography

Godart–Kanta–Tzigounaki 1996; Kanta 2006; Tzigounaki 2006; Tzedakis–Martlew 1999, pp. 94–95 (Kanta).



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116 Seal Stone

End of Late Minoan IB period (ca. 1450 B.C.)

Amethyst

L. 0.016 m, w. 0.011 m, max. th. 0.004 m

Zakros

Siteia Archaeological Museum, 4509

Elliptical in shape with curved upper surface. A groove runs around the sides with a perforation through the long transverse axis. Complete.

A lion or lioness with an open mouth is rushing toward the left into a schematically rendered rocky landscape with reeds. The animal's body is naturalistically depicted, and the violent movement is portrayed in a lively and realistic manner. The Neopalatial period (Middle Minoan IIIB–Late Minoan IB), to which this work of art belongs, saw the peak of seal-stone carving.

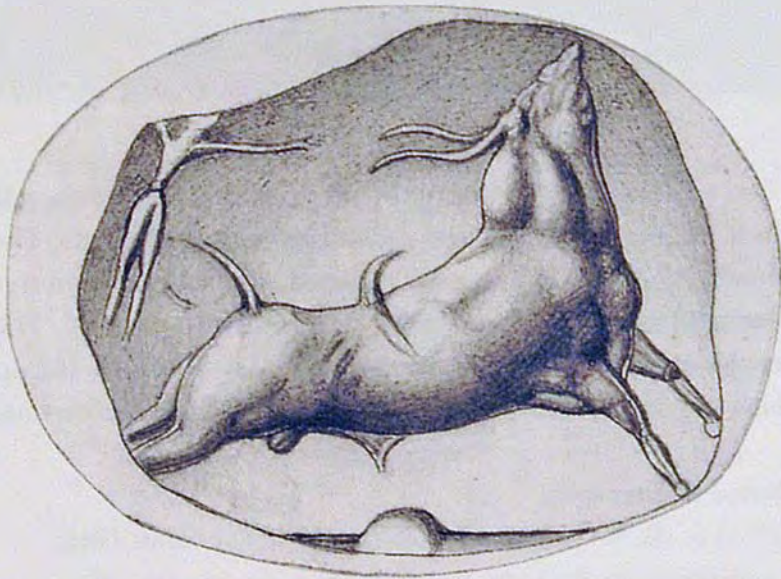
Selected Bibliography

CMS V, S. 1B, no. 331; Krzyszkowska 2005b; Papadakis 1984, p. 137; Papatsarouha 1998, pp. 94–99, 328, 341–44, 352–53.

Evi Saliaka



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117 Sealing

End of Late Minoan IB period (ca. 1450 B.C.)

Clay

L. 0.0225 m, w. 0.0185 m, th. 0.007 m

City of Khania, Kastelli Hill, 1973, 10 Katre Street Archive
Khania Archaeological Museum, KH 1547

Small piece of clay with four-sided cutting on the lower side with the imprint of the string by which the sealing was attached to the sealed object. The upper surface displays a bull-leaping scene, which occurs on nine other simple sealings from the same archive. The sealing was probably made with a gold signet ring with ovoid bezel. Complete.

The bull strides to the right at a gallop, its head thrust backward. The wavy horns occupy the empty space above the beast's body, and the tail swings upward. Behind the galloping bull hovers the leaper shortly before he reaches the ground, his body and open limbs rendered frontally and his left arm extended toward the bull. Except for the belt, no other detail of a garment is visible. A simple horizontal line denotes the ground below.

In terms of style, this representation is an exquisite example of realism in its most powerful pictorial expression. It belongs to a group of sealings that are well known through examples from Gournia, Haghia Triada, and Sklavokampos, which depict bull-leaping and were impressed by metal rings. The similarity between these rings suggests that they were made by the same goldsmith or in the same workshop.

Selected Bibliography

CMS V, 1A, p. 174, no. 171; Papapostolou 1977, pp. 33-43, pl. 1a.

Eftychia Protopapadaki



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118 Prismatic Sealing

End of Late Minoan IB period (ca. 1450 B.C.)

Clay

L. 0.024 m, w. 0.017 m

City of Khania, Kastelli Hill, Plateia Haghia Aikaterini,
Greek-Swedish Excavation

Khania Archaeological Museum, KH 1561

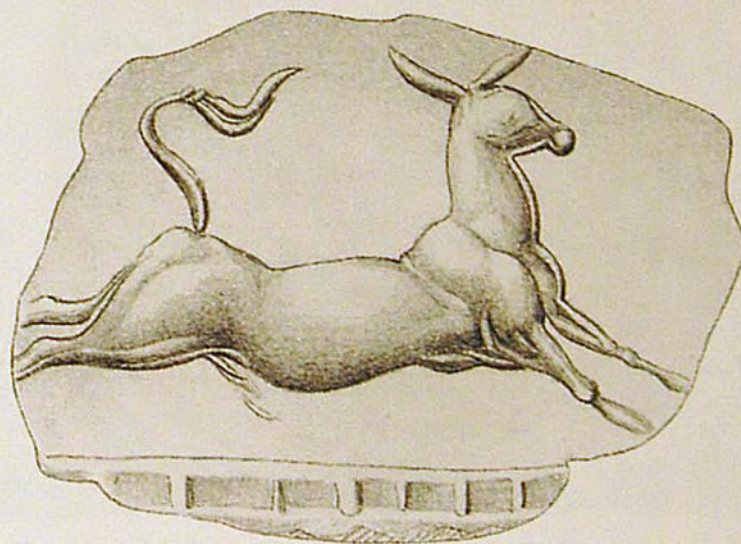
Complete. Fingerprints on the surface. The impression of a signet ring with ovoid bezel occupies the obverse. The sealing depicts with remarkable naturalism a bull in a “flying gallop” over a paved area, a possible reference to bull-leaping.

Prismatic sealings were autonomous documents, which probably enveloped the ropes that secured boxes or cupboards, like a kind of proof or label. This find comes from the floor of Room D of the Late Minoan I Building I. It was found near a cupboard together with other precious objects.

Selected Bibliography

CMS V, 1A, p. 148, no. 145; Papapostolou 1977, p. 20.

Eftychia Protopapadaki





119 Seal Stone (Lion Attacking a Bull)

Late Minoan II period (ca. 1450–1400 B.C.)

Onyx with white veins

Diam. 0.023–0.025 m

Knossos, Haghios Ioannis, Gold Cup Tomb

Herakleion Archaeological Museum, HM 1712

Complete, slightly restored.

The Haghios Ioannis seal depicts a lion with a body that has been elongated to follow the border of the circular seal surface in a most unnatural way as it savages a bull, biting its back. The bull has been carved on an axis perpendicular to the attacking animal. This conventional composition owes much to the effect created by the circular impressions that have been engraved in depth by a drill.

Compositions with animals simply arranged, attacking or fighting one another, are favorite subjects for seal engraving, primarily during the Neopalatial period and later. The subject of a



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lion mauling a bull has as many parallels in Crete as it has in mainland Greece during the Mycenaean period. The theme occurs mostly on seals from the so-called warrior graves, accompanied by a plethora of weapons, jewelry, and luxury items, as in the case of the Haghios Ioannis tomb. As a result, some scholars have suggested that the subject matter of the seals was chosen for its symbolism, i.e., the valor or military prowess of the deceased. In Crete, particularly in the area of Knossos, the fact that many seals of very good quality have been found in wealthy tombs of the period is indicative of the established order of ownership or use. The seal's shape (lentoid), its large diameter, and the style of rendering belong to the early Mycenaean period.

Selected Bibliography

CMS II, 3, p. 71 (no. 60); Hood 1956, pp. 93–94; Krzyszkowska 2005a, pp. 203, 325; Laffineur 1990; Niemeier 1997; Younger 1985, pp. 67–68.

Emmanouela Apostolaki



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120 Three-Sided Seal Stone (Bull and Lion)

Late Minoan II period (ca. 1450–1400 B.C.)

Carnelian with gold granulation

L. with granulation 0.024 m, diam. 0.019–0.02 m

Knossos, Sanatorium, Tomb III

Herakleion Archaeological Museum, HM 1658

Complete. Three-sided prismatic seal with rounded and curved surfaces, two of which have seal engravings, the third left uncarved. The edges of the string hole—the perforation for the chain or string from which the seal stone was suspended or by which it was held—are ornamented with groups of gold granules.

One side of the seal depicts a bull running to the left and a tree with branches at the seal's border. The bull is depicted in some detail. On the other side and perpendicular to the string-hole axis, a lion is depicted seated on the ground, head turned backward, wounded in the side by a javelin and in the chest by a smaller shaft, perhaps an arrow. The way in which this animal is depicted is more schematic than the bull.

As a shape, the prism, which was used from the inception of seal-stone carving in Crete and was widespread in earlier periods, appears only rarely in the Mycenaean period. It is even rarer in the entire Late Minoan period to find a gold “setting” with the granulation technique, which this Sanatorium seal has. Its closest parallel is a three-sided seal of sard from the Neopalatial cemetery at Poros, Herakleion.

The rarity of the prism seems to be consistent with its discovery in a rich tomb in one of the wealthiest cemeteries of the period, where the dissemination of seals appears to be restricted now, indirectly giving some indication of the social status of its owners.

Selected Bibliography

CMS II, 3, p. 75 (no. 64); Hood–de Jong 1952, p. 273; Krzyszkowska 2005a, pp. 203, 325; Laffineur 1990; Niemeier 1997; Younger 1985, pp. 65–66.

Emmanouela Apostolaki



121 Egyptian Scarab

New Kingdom, 18th dynasty (ca. 1390–1353 B.C.)

Faience

W. 0.039 m, th. 0.028 m, h. 0.017 m

City of Khania, Kastelli Hill, Lionakis/Vlamakis plot, 1967

Khania Archaeological Museum, Π 6182

This complete scarab of Egyptian pharaoh Amenhotep III is made of gray-brown faience blackened by fire. Five hieroglyphic signs occupy the sealing surface: 1 and 4, solar disc symbolizing the god Re; 2, open wicker basket *nebet*; 3, seated goddess of justice and order *Maat*; 5, agricultural tool *meri* with the same phonetic value as the epithet “beloved.” The first three make up Amenhotep III’s throne name—that is, the name that he took when he ascended to the throne: “Neb (2) Maat (3) Re (1).” The other two constitute the epithet that accompanies the throne name: “Meri (5) Re (1),” that is, “beloved of the sun god Re.”

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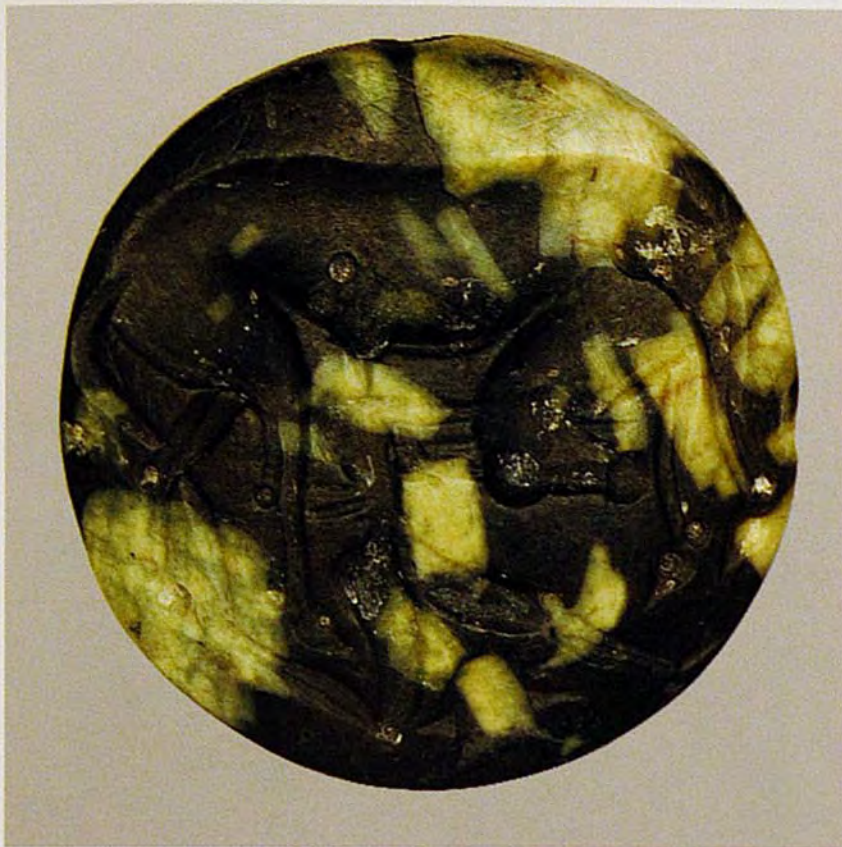


This scarab with Amenhotep III’s cartouche, found in the excavations on Kastelli Hill, Khania (prehistoric Kydonia), stresses the overall atmosphere of close relationship between Egypt and Crete at the beginning of the fourteenth century B.C., when the island was under Achaean rule. Another scarab with the same pharaoh’s cartouche was found in a chamber tomb at Sellopoulo, Knossos, and a scarab with the name of his wife, Queen Tiye, was found in a tomb at Haghia Triada.

It is worth mentioning that the names of well-known Cretan and Greek cities, including Kydonia, are inscribed on the base of Amenhotep III’s funerary monument. This list of cities may refer to an official journey of the Egyptian pharaonic court, and possibly of the pharaoh himself, in Crete and the Greek mainland.

Selected Bibliography

AΔ 22 B2 (1967): 501 (Tzedakis); Karetsou–Andreadaki–Vlazaki–Papadakis 2000, p. 320, no. 329 (Keel–Kyriakides).



122 Seal Stone (Bull-Leaping, Two Bulls)

Late Minoan II–III A 1 period (ca. 1450–1375 B.C.)

Basalt (*Lapis lacedaemonius*)

Diam. 0.022 m

Maroulas cemetery, 2001, Chamber Tomb 3 (Late Minoan IIIA2 context [1375–1300 B.C.])

Rethymnon Archaeological Museum, Σ 217

Large lentoid seal with depictions on both sides. One side shows a male figure with a belt and a codpiece kneeling before a bull, which he holds by the horns. An astral symbol with ten rays is depicted between the man's legs. The other side has two antithetical bulls on either side of an impaled triangle, a well-known sign of the Linear B script.

A similar scene of a man wrestling a bull, although in a different style, occurs on a seal stone from Grave 7 at Kalyvia, near Phaistos; a few more examples were found at Knossos, Mycenae, and Pylos. Although unrelated to each other and limited in number, these scenes were probably part of the broader bull-leaping cycle and were directly related to the promotion of Knossian palatial rule. The heliacal disc is probably not a mere decorative motif, but may be, according to some scholars, a means of indicating a particular time period during which certain related rituals took place.

Lapis lacedaemonius, a hard green stone encountered only at Krokees in Lakonia, was rarely used in seal carving. In Crete it only appears in the Neopalatial period, unlike other hard stones that were in use as early as the Protopalatial period. Seal stones in *Lapis lacedaemonius* are rare in the Aegean, and very few have a known provenance. All of them, including this Maroulas example, are distinguished by the high quality of craftsmanship and are usually associated with palatial workshops.

Selected Bibliography

CMS III, p. 1, 16; Gill 1966, pp. 11–16, figs. 6: 1–10; Hallager 1996; MacGillivray 2004; Marinatos 1986, pp. 61–64; Niemeier 1997, p. 298; Papadopoulou (in press); Younger 1995, p. 510, pls. LX d–g.

Eleni Papadopoulou



123 Seal Stone (Bull-Leaping Scene)

Late Minoan IIIA₂-B period (ca. 1350-1200 B.C.)

Basalt (*Lapis lacedaemonius*)

Diam. 0.0196-0.0199 m

Malia, Quartier Nu

Haghios Nikolaos Archaeological Museum, 13944

Complete. The scene on one side of this lentoid seal stone depicts a bull running to the left with its head raised. Above its back, a naked male figure with open legs and his head in an unnatural position seems to be trying to vault as he holds the bull's head with his hands. The lentoid shape of the seal stone lends itself to the arrangement of the subject matter, which fills the pictorial surface.



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The sport of bull-leaping, popular in the context of religious affairs, appears in Minoan iconography as early as 2000 B.C. and is frequently depicted, because of its particular religious significance, on seals, vases, rhyta, figurines, and wall paintings.

Two seal stones of similar shape, of the same material and with a comparable bull-leaping scene, come from Gournes, Herakleion, and Maroulas, Rethymnon (cat. no. 122).

Selected Bibliography

CMS I, no. 408, II, 4, no. 157, VII, no. 108, X, no. 141; CMS V, suppl. 3, no. 33; Driessen-Farnoux 1994, p. 474, fig. 4; Younger 1986, pp. 136-37, 1.

Vili Apostolakou



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124 Seal Stone (Bull-Leaping Scene)

Late Minoan IIIA period (ca. 1400–1300 B.C.)

Agate with white veining

Diam. 0.024–0.026 m

Praisos, Tomb D

Herakleion Archaeological Museum, HM 185

Complete, with a little damage.

This seal depicts a dramatic moment in the popular Minoan sport of bull-leaping. A huge bull, its strength made clear by the depiction of its anatomy, appears to be sitting on the ground, as a male athlete, his belt around his hips, executes an acrobatic leap above its back, having grabbed hold of the animal's horns. Other elements are depicted conventionally, namely the ground with four horizontal lines and a small tuft of grass at the right. The Praisos seal is somewhat removed from the more realistic representations of the Neopalatial period, when naturalism dictated that the springing of the acrobats and the forward movement of the bulls gave a sense of urgency to the modeling of the muscular bulk. What interested the craftsman here was the depiction of the subject in a schematic way rather than an analytically detailed narrative.

The choice by the seal engraver or his agent of bull-leaping as a subject at a time when the sport may no longer have been practiced reflects its popularity, which is also evident from the large number of similar representations dating to different periods of the Bronze Age on the island.

The subject of bull-leaping appears to be a recognizable and clear image in Minoan Crete, a kind of sign or symbol that, during the acme of the island, was deemed suitable for validating economic and administrative relationships between trading centers. This is reflected in the bull-leaping scenes on clay sealings produced by gold signet rings, which accompanied negotiable or exchangeable products both within Crete (e.g., Haghia Triada, Zakros, Sklavokambos) and beyond, notably Akrotiri on Thera.

Selected Bibliography

Bosanquet 1901–2; *CMS II*, 3, p. 322 (no. 271); Krzyszkowska 2005a.

Emmanouela Apostolaki



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125 Seal Stone (Caprids, Lioness)

Late Minoan IIIA period (ca. 1400–1300 B.C.)

Agate

Diam. 0.0156–0.0163 m

Armenoi, Late Minoan cemetery, Chamber tomb 167

Rethymnon Archaeological Museum, Σ 131

Complete lentoid seal with two sealing surfaces. The string hole is horizontal in relation to Face A and vertical in relation to Face B. Face A depicts two caprids in a circle. One gallops toward the right, its horned head turned back, while the second, smaller animal is shown upside down, its body and legs contracted. Face B has a left-facing lioness, her head bowed toward her nursing cub, which stands on its rear legs. Short lines denote her stylized mane, and an arrow, directly above her back, may refer to hunting. In both scenes, circles mark the eyes and joints. Despite their naturalistic postures, the figures are rendered in a stylized manner.

Animals, particularly deer, caprids, cattle, wild boars, and pigs, singly or in pairs, stationary or in action, were often depicted up to about 1300 B.C. In the late Mycenaean period, these figures became highly stylized to the point of abstraction. Forms were simplified, and legs were engraved separately as lines with dots in the place of the joints; compositions were formal and not natural as seen in the earlier seals.

Selected Bibliography

CMS V, 1B, no. 276, p. 271.

Epameinondas Kapranos



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126 Seal Stone (Griffin)

Late Minoan IIIA period (ca. 1400–1300 B.C.)

Serpentinite

Diam. 0.0178–0.0185 m

Armenoi, Late Minoan cemetery, Chamber Tomb 87

Rethymnon Archaeological Museum, Σ 76

This complete lentoid seal with vertical piercing depicts a griffin galloping toward the left, its head turned back. The front legs are contracted, the wings are sickle shape, and the tail is raised.

Similar representations of griffins occur on other serpentinite seal stones from Armenoi, but also on steatite seal stones from the Late Minoan cemetery at Metochi Kalou, near Herakleion. The sickle-shape wings also occur on a seal stone from a chamber tomb at Maroulas, near Rethymnon.

The origin of the griffin motif on seal stones is Minoan. It often occurs in Mycenaean times, since it is a popular motif of Creto-Mycenaean iconography, and usually appears in religious scenes.

Selected Bibliography

CMS V, 1B, p. 241, no. 222.

Epameinondas Kapranos



127 **Seal Stone**

Late Minoan IIIA2 period (ca. 1375–1300 B.C.)

Blue glass paste

Diam. 0.020 m

Maroulas cemetery, 2001, Chamber Tomb 2

Rethymnon Archaeological Museum, Σ 218

Mold-made lentoid seal with conical back. The obverse depicts two upright intersecting wild goats, with palm fronds between their heads. The same scene occurs on six other glass-paste seal stones from the Mycenaean cemetery at Medeon, in Phocis. Despite the iconographic similarities, the representations are not identical, showing that the seal stones were not made in the same mold.

Mold-made glass-paste seal stones appeared in the Aegean in about 1400 B.C. Stylistically they are related to the so-called International Style. Unlike contemporary glass-paste beads, they are hard to find.

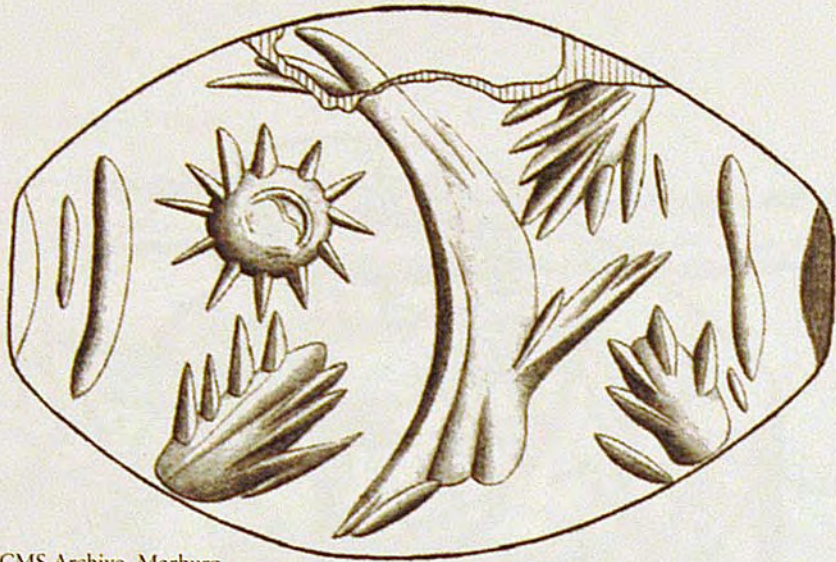
Most glass-paste seal stones come from the Greek mainland, particularly central Greece, where there may have been a workshop. A very few have been found in Crete, in graves in the city of Khandia and the Late Minoan cemetery at Armenoi, near Rethymnon. A unique mold associated with the production of glass-paste seal stones was discovered at Katsambas, the port of Knossos.

Glass paste was a precious material imported from the East in the form of ingots, as demonstrated by the Ulu-Burun shipwreck on Turkey's south coast and dated to about 1300 B.C.

Selected Bibliography

Bass 1986, pp. 281–82; Krzyszkowska 2005a, pp. 198, 267–70; Müller-Celka 2003, pp. 87–88, 90–91; Papadopoulou (in press); Pini 1999, p. 332; Younger 1999, pp. 955–56.

Eleni Papadopoulou



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128 Seal Stone (Dolphin)

Late Minoan IIIA period (ca. 1400–1300 B.C.)

Jasper

L. 0.0192 m, w. 0.0129 m, th. 0.007 m

Armenoi, Late Minoan cemetery, Chamber Tomb 188

Rethymnon Archaeological Museum, Σ 148

Cracked amygdaloid (almond-shape) seal depicting a dolphin with its head placed down across the sealing surface and a sea urchin at the right. Three highly stylized plant motifs ornament the background of the composition.



Scenes inspired by the marine world may indicate the interests of those who lived near the sea or engaged in maritime travel. Like catalogue number 125, this seal belongs to the category of talismanic seals, which developed from the Middle Minoan III period (ca. 1700 B.C. onward) and were thought to have magical properties for their owners.

Selected Bibliography

CMS V, 1B, no. 300, p. 285.

Epameinondas Kapranos



131A–B Myrtle-Shape Leaves

Early Minoan II period (ca. 2600–2300 B.C.)

Gold

131A (HM 325): L. 0.059 m

131B (HM 326): L. 0.052 m

Mochlos, Tomb III (131A); Tomb XIX (131B), 1908

Herakleion Archaeological Museum, HM 325 and 326

Two gold myrtle-shape leaves with punch-dotted outlines and threadlike stems, bent at the end. They were probably attached by the thin wire to holes on a diadem.

These leaves were made from hammered gold sheets cut into the shape of a leaf and embellished with a simple punching technique to create a relief (*repoussé*). The precision and regularity of the punched dots that shape the outline indicate an experienced and specialized craftsman.

Myrtle, a typical Cretan plant, was a popular decorative motif in Minoan art. These gold leaves in the shape of myrtle, which are some of the most interesting examples of naturalistic art in the Prepalatial period, come from the cemetery of Mochlos, where excavations produced one of the largest collections of Prepalatial gold jewelry on Crete.

Selected Bibliography

Branigan 1983, p. 16; Cameron 1968; Davaras 1975; Effinger 1996, p. 256; Higgins 1961, p. 62; Seager 1912, p. 39; Televantou 1984, pp. 27, 46.

Katerina Athanasaki



132A–B Flower-Shape Pins

Early Minoan II/III–Middle Minoan I period

(ca. 2500–1800 B.C.)

Gold

132A (HM 260): max. h. 0.053 m

132B (HM 261): max. h. 0.051 m

Mochlos, Tomb XIX, 1908

Herakleion Archaeological Museum, HM 260 and 261

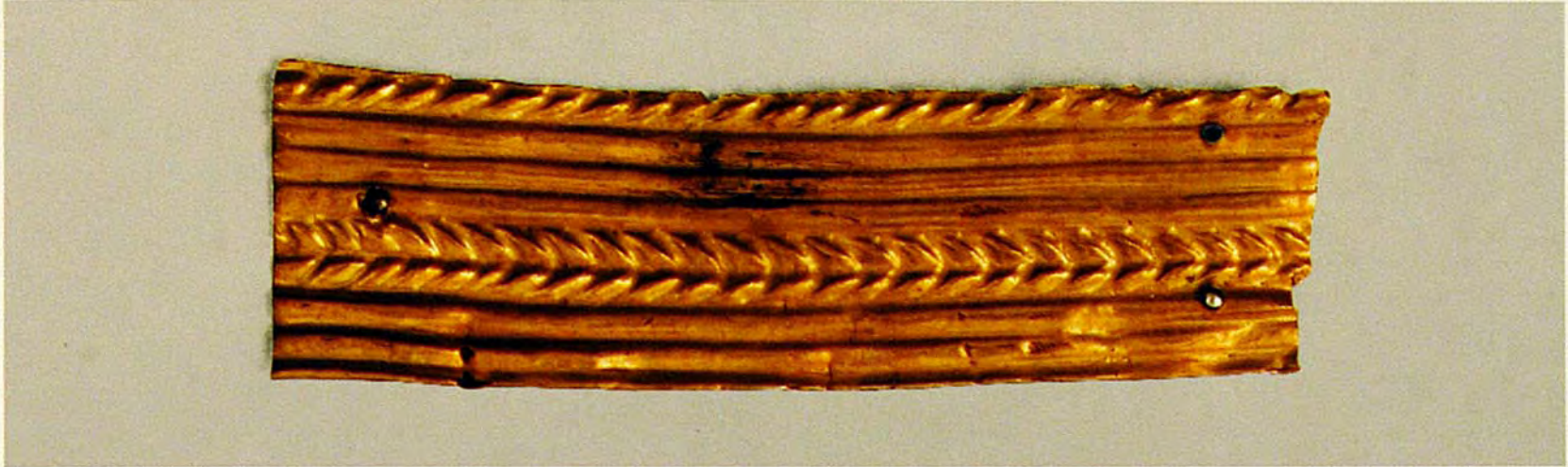
Two identical, complete gold ornaments in a flower shape, with long stems and eight petals each. On top of the pointed stem, which is made of fine hammered wire, is a cutout sheet in the shape of a flower. Flower-shape pins were probably used either for securing gold diadems on the head or, on their own, for decorating hair.

These two gold daisies were found in the larger chamber of Tomb XIX at Mochlos, which despite the opulent grave gifts is not one of the cemetery's most monumental graves. The daisies were made using the simple, basic techniques of that period, but the result is one of the most elegant and imaginative examples of Prepalatial Minoan jewelry and was the work of an able craftsman, possibly of a local workshop.

Selected Bibliography

Branigan 1974, pp. 38–39, pl. 19; Branigan 1991; Seager 1912, pp. 70–72, figs. 41–42; Soles 1992, pp. 64–65.

Eirini Galli



133A–B Bands

Early Minoan IIB–Early Minoan III (ca. 2600–2200 B.C.)
Gold

133A (HM 287): max. w. 0.022 m, max. l. 0.097 m

133B (HM 289): max. w. 0.021 m, max. l. 0.072 m

Mochlos, Tomb II, 1908

Herakleion Archaeological Museum, HM 287 and 289

Two joining bands of gold leaf have embossed decoration consisting of horizontal, parallel grooves alternating with herringbone motifs (a half-herringbone motif is preserved along the edge). One long edge is folded inward for securing the band on a perishable material, such as leather or textile. Holes along the short edges served the same purpose. Fragmentary joining.

These gold bands were found inside Tomb II at Mochlos, the richest and one of the most monumental of this cemetery's grave complexes. Jewelry in the form of gold-leaf bands are among the most important finds from the Mochlos cemetery. Depending on their size, the bands have been interpreted as diadems, appliqué ornaments for garments, or armbands. These two bands belonged originally to a larger piece of jewelry, probably an armband, as indicated by a complete example found in another grave, which was carefully cut into three or four pieces.

Mochlos's rich and well-built tombs are associated with the social elite that was able to acquire many luxury goods. Because the tombs were used over a long time period and contained several burials and mixed groups of grave gifts, it is difficult to define the social structure of this elite. In any case, the Mochlos finds illustrate an elaborately organized community that directly or indirectly supported the importation of raw materials for the manufacture and consumption of luxury goods through long-distance trade.

Selected Bibliography

Branigan 1974, pp. 43–44, pl. 22; Davaras 1975; Evely 1993–2000, 2 (2000), pp. 401–2, 404–11; Seager 1912, pp. 22–24, fig. 8.II.18a, c, fig. 38; Soles 1992, pp. 17–23.



134 **Necklace with Beads and Pendants**

Early Minoan III–Middle Minoan I period (ca. 2300–1800 B.C.)

Steatite

L. 0.088 m

Mesara, Marathokephalo, Tholos Tomb, 1917

Herakleion Archaeological Museum, HM 1229

Necklace grouping of seventy-three beads made of steatite. The beads have various forms: disc-shape, almond-shape, barrel-shape, biconical, pyramidal, and irregular four-sided; one bead is shaped like a drop. The arrangement of the necklace is modern.

These objects come from the tholos tomb at Marathokephalo, Mesara. The same funerary context yielded vases, daggers, seals, hundreds of small disc-shape steatite beads, dozens of larger beads of hard semiprecious stones, and pendants of stone and bone.

Jewelry does not necessarily indicate its owner's sex. Clay male figurines and male figures on frescoes usually wear jewelry, including necklaces, armbands, and bracelets.

Because the Marathokephalo grave was used for multiple burials over a long period of time, as was customary in Mesara, the beads' original arrangement is uncertain. The decorative effect of necklaces made of a single material, such as steatite, lies in the great variety of the stone's natural shades. One of the most common Cretan stones, steatite was widely used for vases and jewelry in the Prepalatial period. Its softness and lack of porosity allowed the creation of smooth surfaces without recourse to complex, specialized tools.

Selected Bibliography

Sakellarakis–Sapouna–Sakellaraki 1997, pp. 625–26; Warren 1969b, pp. 140–41; Xanthoudides 1918b, pp. 15–20, fig. 8.



135 Necklace

Early Minoan III–Middle Minoan I period
(ca. 2300–1800 B.C.)

Rock crystal, sardonyx

L. 0.36 m

Mesara, Platanos, Tholos Tomb B, 1915

Herakleion Archaeological Museum, HM 1151

Necklace grouping of twenty-seven beads, of which thirteen are of rock crystal and fourteen of sardonyx. The beads have various shapes: cylindrical, lentoid, and barrel-shape; one is prismatic. They come from Tholos Tomb B at Platanos, one of the most impressive of the Mesara tombs. The three tombs at Platanos contained more than 2,000 beads, of which 1,800 are of steatite, the remaining beads being of sardonyx, rock crystal, and glass paste. The arrangement of this necklace is modern.

Beads found in their original position in the graves at Phourni in Archanes demonstrate that necklaces were often composed of beads of different materials and shapes arranged in various color combinations. Hard semiprecious stones, which require relatively advanced manufacturing techniques and specialized tools, were also used after the establishment of Crete's first palaces, along with the softer Cretan stones, such as steatite. The development of maritime communications from the end of the second millennium B.C. favored the importation of raw materials and the spread of ideas and new techniques. Sardonyx, amethyst, and lapis lazuli were imported from the East and Egypt. In combination with one another or with gold, the beads formed pieces of jewelry that accompanied their owners in death as in life.

Selected Bibliography

Krzyszowska 2005a, p. 12; Sakellarakis–Sapouna–Sakellaraki 1997, p. 618, fig. 655; Warren 1969b, pp. 136–37; Xanthoudides 1924, pp. 90–92, 124, fig. LVIII.

B. FIGURINES



170 **Female Figurine**

Early Minoan II period (ca. 2600–2300 B.C.)

Bone

H. 0.09 m

Haghios Charalambos, Lasithi Plain, burial cave

Haghios Nikolaos Archaeological Museum, 13067

Female figurine of animal bone. Rectangular face with abstract rendering of the eyes, nose, and mouth. Flattened body with carved folded arms and pubic triangle. Legs separated and fragmented below. Complete.

The figurine belongs to the so-called Siva type and has parallels from the Siva cemetery of the Mesara Plain. This particular type of figurine is thought to be a Cretan creation imitating Cycladic prototypes, particularly the marble figurines with folded arms. On the other hand, the rendering of the eyes and mouth, as well as the separated legs, are signs of divergence from the Cycladic iconography.

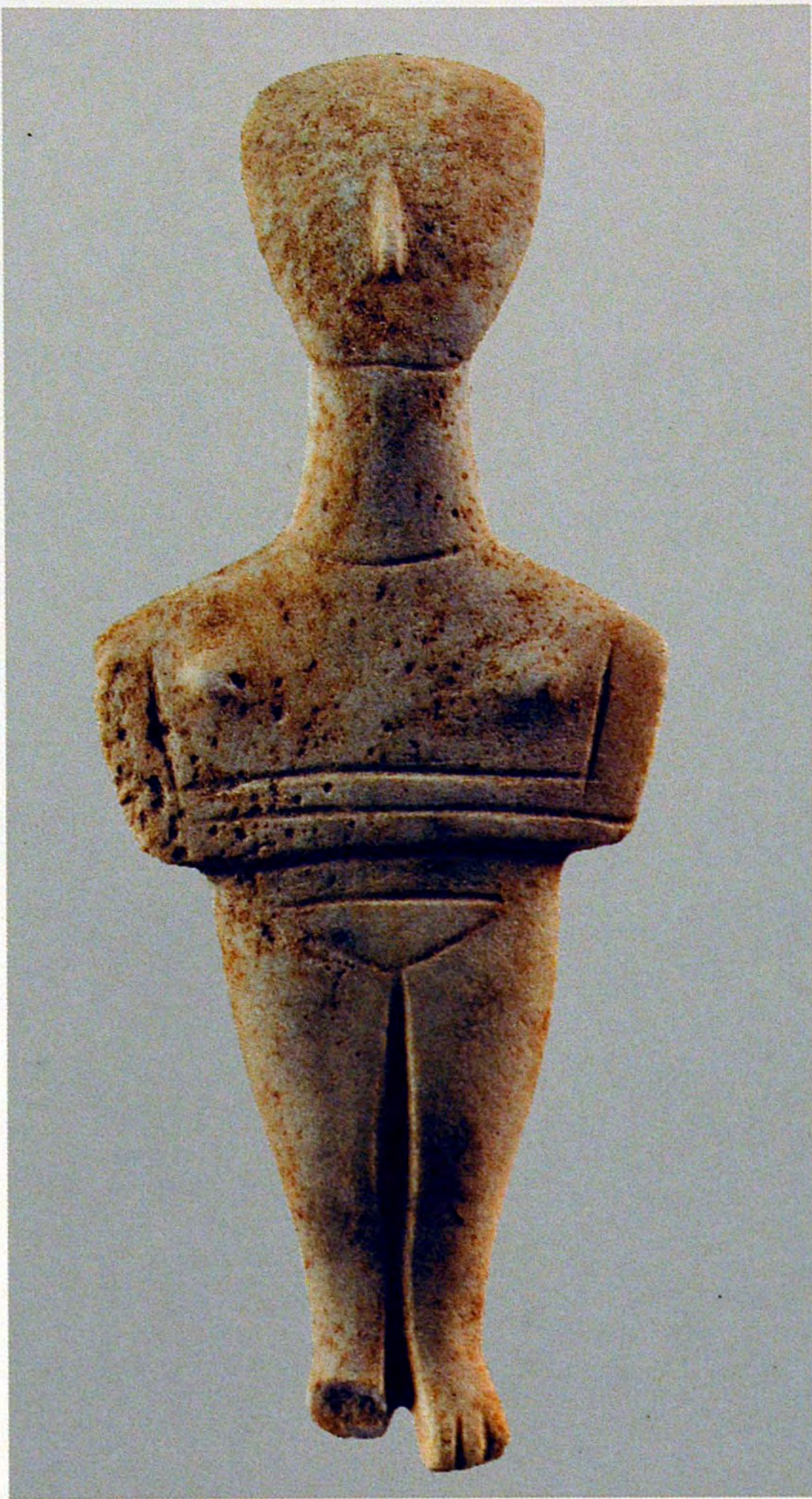
Cretan figure-making, at least until the Middle Minoan I period, did not have indigenous types, apart from some very abstract examples. Nearly all figurines manufactured in the Early Minoan period were imitations of or heavily influenced by Cycladic art, as this is most apparent in the folded arms and the abstract rendering of facial characteristics. The discovery of similar figurines in the Lasithi Plain and at Mesara indicates how very far Cycladic cultural influence had penetrated into the Cretan hinterland.

Selected Bibliography

Branigan 1971; Ferrence (in press); Papadatos 2003.

Yiannis Papadatos





171 Cycladic-type Figurine

Early Minoan II–III period (ca. 2600–2100 B.C.)

Marble

Max. h. 0.132 m

Teke, Herakleion, N. Nisioti field, 1933

Herakleion Archaeological Museum, HM 282

Marble Cycladic-type figurine depicting a standing female figure *en face*; complete. Incised straight lines denote the arms, which are folded over the belly with the left forearm under the right. An incision defines the pubic triangle, and two small protrusions mark the breasts. A rough incision separates the torso from the long neck, which ends in an almost lyre-shape head that tilts slightly back. The nose is shown in relief. The legs are joined down to the ankles but are separated by a deep groove. Two vertical incisions denote the toes on the raised feet.

This figurine was found at the area of Teke, near Knossos, together with other Cycladic-type figurines and two metal daggers. Cycladic-type figurines are a particular type of Prepalatial artifact, and they clearly demonstrate the prominent presence of a Cycladic element on Crete and the contacts between Crete and the Cyclades in the Early Bronze Age.

Of the rich repertory of Cycladic sculpture, the most popular type in Minoan Crete is the so-called canonical type in which female figures are rendered in *en face* with arms folded under the chest. In most cases, it is difficult to determine whether a figurine was imported from the Cyclades or manufactured locally.

This Teke figurine belongs to the Koumasa type, a variation of the canonical type, which as yet has occurred only in Crete and may have been a local creation. Koumasa-type figurines are smaller than their Cycladic equivalents, with a particularly thin and flat profile; wide, angular shoulders; and short legs.

In Crete, Cycladic-type figurines usually occur in the central and southern parts of the island; characteristic groups come from Archanes and the Mesara Plain. Most examples have been found in graves, which gives them a pronounced religious-symbolic character. The fragmentary state of many figurines may be caused not only by burial conditions, but also by the fact that they may have been smashed deliberately during funerary rituals.

Selected Bibliography

Branigan 1971; Doumas 2000, pp. 48, 52; Karantzali 1996, pp. 153–236; Marinatos 1933, figs. 9–14; Renfrew 1969, pp. 22–23; Sakellarakis–Sapouna-Sakellarakis 1997, vol. 1, pp. 338–49.



172 **Female Figurine**

Middle Minoan I–II period (ca. 2000–1700 B.C.)

Clay

H. 0.098 m, max. w. 0.077 m, max. th. 0.065 m

Prinias, peak sanctuary

Haghios Nikolaos Archaeological Museum, 6028

Handmade figurine depicting a seated female figure and covered with reddish-brown paint. The head is missing, as are the two arms at shoulders. The figure wears a long skirt with an added thick flounce. Part of the skirt has been restored with gypsum. The torso is rather crudely molded without well-defined anatomical details.

The important peak sanctuary of Prinias is located on the second highest (height a.s.l. 803 m.) peak that rises above the village of Zou, Siteia, and, like Piskokephalo, it is connected to the Minoan town of Petras, Siteia. Because of its typical elliptical shape and the fire that would have been lighted on it, the peak sanctuary must have been visible from a great distance and from most parts of the region. Even though the sanctuary was found looted, a large quantity of anthropomorphic figurines of exceptional quality was collected during its excavation, along with animal figurines, including clay models of small scarab beetles of the subfamily *Oryctes rhinoceros* (coconut rhinoceros beetle), which was considered sacred.

Selected Bibliography

AΔ 27 B2 (1972): 651 (Davaras); Davaras n.d., fig. 29; Rutkowski 1988, pp. 86–87, pls. XXI, XXII.



173 **Female Figurine**

Middle Minoan II–III period (ca. 1800–1600 B.C.)

Clay

H. 0.15 m, w. 0.075 m

Vrysinas, peak sanctuary, 1973

Rethymnon Archaeological Museum, Π 7618

The figurine represents a standing woman. Facial features are carelessly rendered, and the head is not differentiated from the neck. Slits mark the eyes, and triangular projections denote the nose and ears. The figure wears a cylindrical headdress and a garment that consists of a bell-shaped skirt with double belt and tight bodice. The right arm is bent across the breasts, which are rendered in relief. Mended with lower part restored in plaster; left arm missing

Figurines in human or animal shapes are the most characteristic offerings found at the peak sanctuaries and were used in rituals performed in open-air places. By dedicating a figurine representing an adorant, the devotee fulfilled his need to communicate with the deity, perpetuated his presence at the sanctuary, and assured his permanent protection by the divinity.

The Vrysinas peak sanctuary, the largest and most important in western Crete, functioned during the Protopalatial and Neopalatial periods.

Selected Bibliography

Pilali-Papasteriou 1992, pp. 153–60; Rethemiotakis 1998, p. 107.

174 **Female Figurine**

Middle Minoan II–III period (ca. 1800–1600 B.C.)

Clay

H. 0.110 m, w. 0.052 m

Vrysinas, peak sanctuary, 1973

Rethymnon Archaeological Museum, Π 2060

The handmade figurine represents a standing woman in frontal position. The lower body, right arm, and left hand are missing. The facial features are rendered schematically. Impressed circles mark the eyes, and triangular projections denote the ears and nose. A Petsophas-type headdress, decorated with three applied clay roundels, covers the head. Similar roundels make up the necklace. The left arm is bent and rests under the schematically rendered breasts in a characteristic gesture of worship. Traces of black are visible on the surface throughout. Mended at the neck.

The Petsophas-type headdress is the most common headdress on female figurines, with examples known from most peak sanctuaries, indicating that this was a common fashion throughout Crete. Jewelry is rarely represented on Protopalatial figurines, and its presence is often interpreted as a possible sign of social differentiation through the individualization of the features of the offering.

Selected Bibliography

Papadopoulou–Tzachili (in press); Pilali-Papasteriou 1992, pp. 124–26, 131, nos. 41, 50.





175 **Head of Female Figurine**

Middle Minoan IIIB–Late Minoan IA period

(ca. 1650–1525/1500 B.C.)

Clay

H. 0.074 m

Piskokephalo

Herakleion Archaeological Museum, HM 9735

Slightly chipped head of female figurine with elaborate hairstyle. The nose, mouth, and eye sockets are executed in low relief. The face, neck, and hairband are covered with white paint, the hair itself with red-brown paint.

Many similar figurines with comparable characteristics come from the open-air sanctuary at Piskokephalo, Siteia. They were found with male figurines, house or shrine models, and figurines of the rhinoceros beetle. The modeling of the figural features, notably their hairstyles, places them among the best and most representative examples of clay sculpture in the Neopalatial period. The well-molded contours of the face and the realistic modeling indicate that the Piskokephalo figurines are products of a single specialist workshop that produced sculptural works, which were in high demand for the needs of a prominent group of votaries.

All the female figurines are distinguished by their impressive hairstyles. In this instance, the hairdo is shaped by a mass of fine, long locks, which are gathered up at the nape to create a complex plaited bun held in place by a broad ribbon, apparently a piece of cloth in the original. One of the plaits goes under the ribbon, falls free, and is cut or styled into a triangular shape on top of the forehead.

The composition and creation of such a striking hairstyle must have taken time and skill. The variety of styles with many variations, as seen on other figurines from the same sanctuary, demonstrates an emphasis on the aesthetics of the female haircut, as well as an apparent tendency toward display and prestige in a specific social context, a model of sophisticated behavior with recognizable values.

Selected Bibliography

Platon 1951b, pl. ΣΤ', fig. 2.

Giorgos Rethemiotakis



176 **Head of Female Figurine**

Middle Minoan IIIB–Late Minoan IA period

(ca. 1650–1525/1500 B.C.)

Clay

H. 0.081 m

Piskokephalo

Herakleion Archaeological Museum, HM 9823

Head of female figurine with elaborate hairstyle. The nose, eyebrows, mouth, jawline, and ears are all executed in gentle relief with a naturalistic feel. There are traces of white paint on the face.

The sophisticated, impressive hairstyle doubles the height and mass of the head. It is made up of two groups of very long tresses with a part in the middle of the forehead. The locks, arranged in a thick, wavy manner, cover the temples above the ears and are supported with knots at the back of the head above the nape. From the point where the hair is held together at the bottom of the main hairdo, the tresses are divided into slim plaits and rise up vertically, forming loops at the end. The hair was probably all woven onto some kind of “skeleton” of pins and clips, although they do not show, since the impressive cylindrical shape of the hairdo is surrounded and held in place by a wide band, which would have been of real cloth.

The figurines of Piskokephalo—especially this example—illustrate the great depth of skill in styling women’s hair. The particularly detailed way in which such a sophisticated and pretentious hairdo is treated in all the figurines from the sanctuary and the deliberate lack of detail in the face show that the hairstyle was the most important aspect of appearance, perhaps also evidence of prestige and social value in a defined group of female votaries.

Selected Bibliography

Platon 1951b, pl. H', fig. 1.

Giorgos Rethemiotakis



177 Male Figurine

Middle Minoan II period (ca. 1800–1700 B.C.)

Clay

H. 0.17 m, w. 0.085 m

Petsophas, peak sanctuary

Haghios Nikolaos Archaeological Museum, 9953

The figurine stands on a rectangular base; the head was manufactured separately and then fitted to the body. It probably held an offering, as perhaps indicated by an almost circular piece of clay between the palm and the body. Mended.

The figure is clothed in the simplest and most common Minoan male dress, including a codpiece, which is rendered sculpturally. The arms are folded on the chest, which is a gesture of worship, one of the most typical and common poses for male Minoan figurines. The head is inclined sharply backward as though looking up. This upward gaze is characteristic of the Petsophas figurines.

Most peak sanctuaries have been located at the eastern end of Crete, including Traostalos, Prinias, Piskokephalo, Modi, and Petsophas, where this figurine comes from. The last two peak sanctuaries are connected with the important town of Palaikastro. Through excavation at the peak sanctuary of Petsophas, it became clear that one of the ritual activities was lighting a pyre where the faithful would scatter their dedications.

Selected Bibliography

AA 27 B2 (1972): 652–54 (Davaras); *AA* 32 B2 (1977): 334, pl. 208a (Davaras); Davaras 1980, pp. 88–92; Davaras 1981; Dimopoulou-Rethemiotaki 2005, pp. 90 ff.; Marinatos 1993, pp. 115–23; Myres 1902–3; Platon 1951b, pp. 120–22; Rutkowski 1972, pp. 73–98; Rutkowski 1986; Rutkowski 1991; Sapouna-Sakellarakis 1971, pp. 8–9, 88–92.

178 **Male Figurine**

Middle Minoan II period (ca. 1800–1700 B.C.)

Clay

H. 0.235 m, max. w. 0.07

Petsophas, peak sanctuary

Haghios Nikolaos Archaeological Museum, 9955

Mended at the neck.

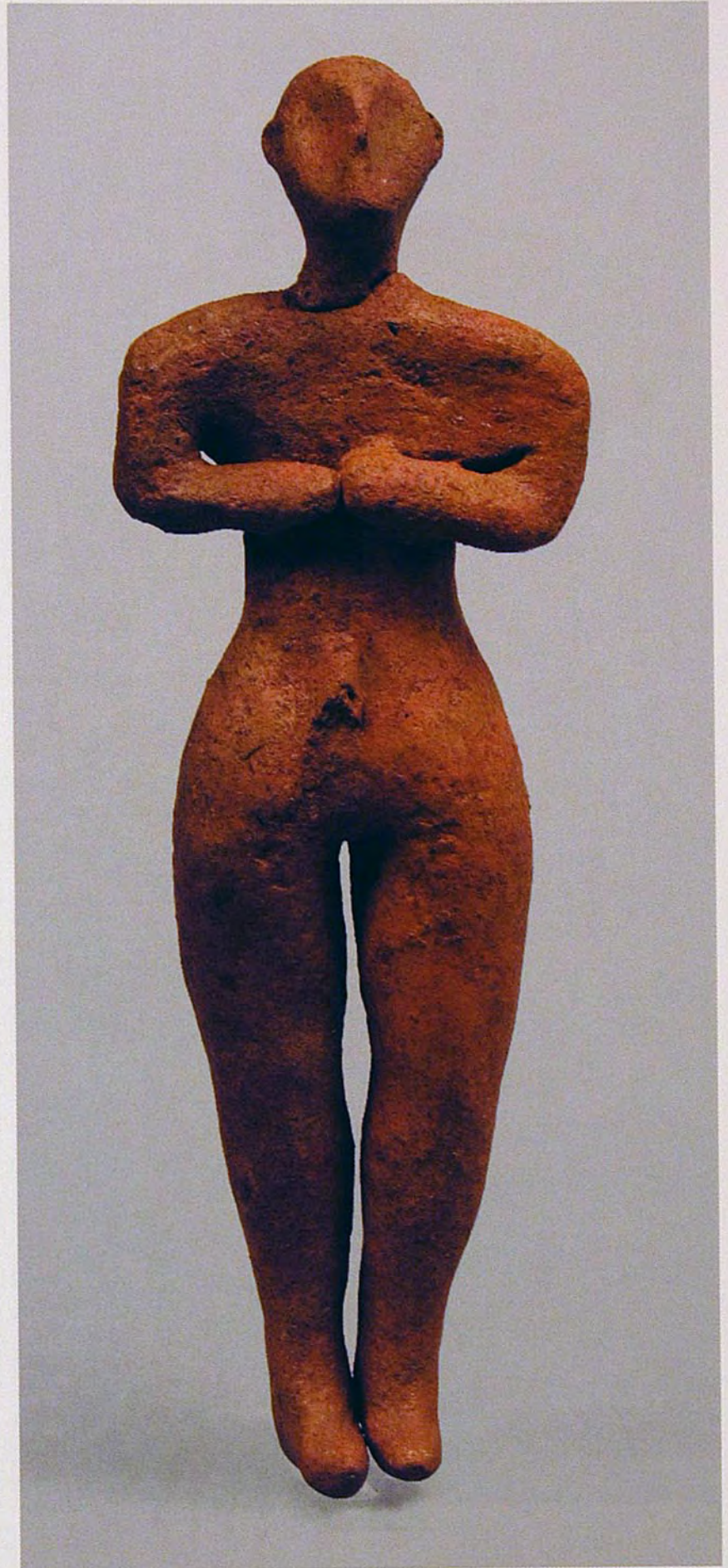
This male figurine is the most typical example from the peak sanctuary at Petsophas, as well as all contemporary sanctuaries. The care taken to achieve the relatively accurate proportions of the body, the significance given to the lower part of the body, and the formation of the slender waist are all characteristic of figurines made during this period.

The figurine wears a codpiece and the head is inclined lightly back, as though the artist wanted to show the eyes gazing upward. The arms are folded across the chest, a typical gesture for figurines and one that may reflect gestures used in real life, particularly in prayer or worship.

Selected Bibliography

ΑΔ 27 Β2 (1972): 652–54 (Davaras); Myres 1902–3; Platon 1951b, pp. 120–22; Rutkowski 1991.

Vasiliki Zographaki





179 **Figurine**

Middle Minoan III–Late Minoan I period

(ca. 1700–1450 B.C.)

Bronze

H. 0.077 m

Skoteino cave

Herakleion Archaeological Museum, HM 2574

Bronze figurine of a male votary, missing feet and base. Torso heavily bent at the waist with the right hand raised to the forehead and the left at its side pointing down. Round elongated head, without facial features. The right ear and the hair, which consists of three locks reaching down to the waist and a mass of hair at neck level, are indicated in low relief. The figurine has a ring-shaped belt, hollow in section, perhaps with a metal frame, like most bronze figurines of this period. Two parts of the codpiece are fixed to the belt, the front elongated one with a leafy ending between the thighs and the back part shaped like a horse-shoe to cover the buttocks.

This figurine was found in the excavation of the Skoteino cave in the Pediada, one of the largest and most spectacular sacred caves of Crete. Other bronze figurines were found in the same cave, as well as cult equipment, votive bronze strips, and pottery dating from the Middle Minoan period to the Roman period.

Although small in size, the figurine has all the general characteristics known from bronze figurines of the Neopalatial period: the organic articulation of the body, the realistic and proportional rendering of the limbs, and the backward bend of the torso. Also consistent with other such figurines is the generalized representation or complete absence of facial features, obviously because the face was not the principal element of the figure. Another standard feature of bronze figurines of the time is the devotional gesture with the right hand on the forehead, which expresses the act of praying, supplication, or the impulsive reaction of the votary at the climactic moment of spiritual communication with the deity. In addition, evidence for the priestly office or social status of the figure is the long front part of the codpiece and the long, loose hair, which may indicate a certain degree of maturity.

Selected Bibliography

Davaras 1969, pl. XI; Sapouna-Sakellarakı 1995; Verlinden 1984, pp. 112–14, 116, 192, pl. 22:44.

180 **Figurine**

Middle Minoan III–Late Minoan I period

(ca. 1700–1450 B.C.)

Bronze

H. 0.102 m

Tylissos

Herakleion Archaeological Museum, HM 1832

Bronze figurine of a male votary. Triangular torso curving sharply into the waist. The right hand is on the chest and the left is extended downward with a clenched fist. Spherical head with facial features (nose, eyes, ears) and button-shaped haircut in relief. Toes are indicated; the legs are bent slightly backward. The soles of the feet stand on a rectangular base, slanting forward in relation to the axis of the body. A double relief ring represents a belt with a phallus sheath shown below it. Complete.

A young man is shown in the pose of an adorant/votary. A feature common to most figurines of this period is the noticeable backward bend of the torso, as well as a corresponding but lesser bend of the legs at the knees and of the arms at the elbows. In the context of the singular semiotics of anthropomorphic Minoan sculpture, where all figural idioms express socio-religious perceptions and corresponding behaviors, this flexing has its own special meaning. It would appear that the worshiper's inner tension is externalized and given form in this way, as is the sense of awe that overcomes the faithful at the climactic moment of communing with the divinity. The "standing-to-attention" stance reveals respect, and the gesture indicates supplication or invocation of the deity being worshiped.

Selected Bibliography

Hazzidakis 1934, pp. 71–72, 95, pl. XXVIIb; Sapouna-Sakellarakis 1995; Verlinden 1984, pp. 31, 130–31, 202, pl. 49:107.

Giorgos Rethemiotakis





181 Model of a Female Body

Middle Minoan I–II period (ca. 2000–1700 B.C.)

Clay

H. 0.105 m, max. w. 0.04 m

Petsophas, peak sanctuary

Haghios Nikolaos Archaeological Museum, 6079

Headless and handleless. Particularly bold at flat chest with two perforations where the nipples should be; these could be used as suspension holes. Many incisions in the pubic region and belly. One deeper incision indicates the sex. Right knee mended, left foot restored in gypsum.

The presence of models in the form of individual human limbs or other parts of the body, often deformed, as well as some complete figurines with particularly bold characteristics, probably indicates an attempt by the faithful to gain the protection of the divinity, in order to heal the specific limb or, perhaps, give thanks for their cure. This particular female body with its special features may be indicative of a gynecological illness or infertility.

Selected Bibliography

AA 27 B2 (1972): 652–54 (Davaras); Davaras 1980, p. 91; *Im Labyrinth des Minos*, p. 252; Rutkowski 1986, pp. 87–89; Rutkowski 1991, pls. XLIII, 5–6.

Vasiliki Zographaki



182 Model of Half a Human Figurine

Middle Minoan IB–II period (ca. 1900–1700 B.C.)

Clay

Max. h. 0.123 m

Petsophas, peak sanctuary, 1903

Herakleion, Archaeological Museum, HM 3443

Terracotta male half figurine. The right half of the body is represented with the head thrown backward. It is standing with the right forearm held at right angles to the body. White painted decoration preserved on a brownish-black background denotes the eye, footwear, loincloth, and necklace. Mended from two pieces.

The figurine, which belongs to a particular category of votive offerings in the shape of human parts, was found at the Petsophas peak sanctuary. This figurine represents the entire right half of a male figure in the characteristic worship stance found on most complete worshiper figurines from peak sanctuaries. The brownish-black slip is a Minoan convention for representing the male gender. The great majority of the male figurines from Petsophas wear the characteristic Minoan loincloth. On this figurine, the loincloth is depicted with white paint as two curved pieces of fabric that cover the front and back of the pelvis down to the top of the thighs.

The careful application of the slip and paint on this section indicates that this is a complete figurine. Assuming that terracotta human parts were offered in exchange for healing, this half figurine may correspond to a case of hemiplegia, that is, paralysis of one side of the body.

Selected Bibliography

Myres 1902–3, p. 381, pl. XII.35; Peatfield 1990; Rutkowski 1991, pp. 32, 92, pls. XLII.13, XLII.12, fig. 8.2; Sapouna-Sakellarakis 1971, p. 16, fig. 2, pl. 10b.

Eirini Galli



183A–B Two Models in the Shape of Legs

Middle Minoan I–II period (ca. 2000–1700 B.C.)

Clay

183A (5962): H. 0.14 m

183B (10586): H. 0.09 m

Petsophas, peak sanctuary

Haghios Nikolaos Archaeological Museum, 5962 and

10586

Two leg models with suspension holes. Catalogue number 183A is mended at the top of the ankle.

They belong to the same category as the naked female body (cat. no. 181): a group of dedications at peak sanctuaries consisting of models of individual limbs of the human body, sometimes deformed; half sections of the body; heads, or even complete figurines with emphasis given to some part of the body. Footwear is rendered in paint on some of the foot models.

These models were probably dedications—votives of ill people who sought a remedy for the corresponding affected limb or who gave thanks to the divinity for their cure. Votive limbs have also come to light at Minoan settlement sites, such as Tylissos and Malia.

Selected Bibliography

AD 27 B2 (1972): 652–54 (Davaras); Davaras 1976, p. 246, figs. 138–39; Davaras 1980, pp. 88–92; Myres 1902–3, p. 357, nos. 49–51, pl. 12; Nilsson 1950, pp. 174 ff.; Platon 1951b, pp. 110, 120–22, 147–60; *PM*, I, p. 152, figs. 111p–q; Rutkowski 1991, pls. XLV 9–12, 16–17, and XLVI.

Vasiliki Zographaki



184 Forearm

Middle Minoan IB–Middle Minoan II period

(ca. 1900–1700 B.C.)

Clay

L. 0.076 m

Petsophas, peak sanctuary, 1903

Herakleion Archaeological Museum, HM 3448

Complete clay model of an arm, from forearm to hand with straight fingers (thumb missing). A small lump on one side may represent the bent elbow. There is a suspension hole through the upper forearm. A shiny red slip covers the surface; a white painted band around the wrist may denote a bracelet.

Terracotta human limbs constitute a particular category of finds. Most of them come from peak sanctuaries—that is, Minoan centers of worship situated on the tops or slopes of hills—and were offered by the worshipers as an expression of religious beliefs during organized religious rituals. Terracotta limbs were probably offered to solicit divine help to heal an ailing limb, or to give thanks for the successful outcome of a request, or to request future protection. Characteristic examples of such votive offerings are a head with an overdeveloped thyroid gland and a seated woman with an obviously swollen foot. Paint is often used to depict the jewelry or garments, and many offerings have holes by which they were suspended in the sanctuary.

These votive offerings confirm the communal identity of peak sanctuaries. Although some were probably included in official palatial religious practices, all of them were deposited far from the developing proto-urban environments. Their offerings reflect the needs and concerns of the social groups that bolstered the agricultural economy.

Selected Bibliography

Marinatos 1993, pp. 115–23; Myres 1902–3, pl. XII.43; Platon 1951b, pp. 109, 120–22; Rutkowski 1986, pp. 73–98; Rutkowski 1991, pp. 32–34.

Eirini Galli



185 **Bull Figurine**

Middle Minoan II–III period (ca. 1800–1600 B.C.)

Clay

H. 0.12 m, l. 0.18 m

Vrysinas, peak sanctuary, 1973

Rethymnon Archaeological Museum, Π 24927

This handmade figurine has a solid cylindrical body and short legs. Deep hollows mark the eyes and nostrils, and an incision denotes the mouth. The modeled left ear is preserved under the horn. The tail is twisted to the right and rests on the bull's rump. Traces of brown paint are visible all over. Mended and restored.

The many bull figurines found at Minoan peak sanctuaries were an integral element of open-air rituals. By offering these, the faithful sought prosperity for their community and appealed for the fertility of their lands and herds. These figurines are often considered a substitute for the ritual sacrifice of real animals.

Selected Bibliography

AD 28 B2 (1973): 583–84 (Davaras); Papadopoulou–Tzachili (in press).

Eleni Papadopoulou



186 **Bull Figurine**

Middle Minoan II–III period (ca. 1800–1600 B.C.)

Clay

H. 0.095 m, l. 0.122 m

Vrysinas, peak sanctuary, 1973

Rethymnon Archaeological Museum, Π 7592

This extraordinary type of bull figurine has two heads on opposite sides. The horns and ears are modeled; a deep incision denotes the mouth. The eyes, represented by small discs, are preserved on one head only. Horns and legs are restored.

Although a rare type of offering at most Cretan peak sanctuaries, two-headed bull figurines abound at Vrysinas. By adding a second head, the donor was perhaps emphasizing the importance of the request he sent to the deity. A comparable offering is the double bull's-head rhyton from the Traostalos peak sanctuary near Zakros.

Selected Bibliography

Athanasopoulou-Tzedakis 2003, p. 172, no. 51; Papadopoulou-Tzachili (in press); Zeimbeki 2004, pp. 359–60.

Eleni Papadopoulou



187 Bull's Head

Middle Minoan III period (ca. 1700–1600 B.C.)

Clay

H. 0.094 m

Vrysinas, peak sanctuary, 1973

Rethymnon Archaeological Museum, Π 7590

The bull's head is carefully rendered, with long curved horns and fully modeled ears. The powerful anatomical features, particularly the cheeks and muzzle, are represented realistically. Monochrome painted. Mended. Body entirely missing.

This fine example of a naturalistic trend in rendering figures is characteristic of Neopalatial art. The bull's-head rhyta from Knossos and Zakros are exquisite examples of this new style in Minoan art.

Selected Bibliography

Hatzaki 2005, pp. 184–85; Peatfield 1990, p. 127; Rethemiotakis 1998, p. 135.

Eleni Papadopoulou



188 Bird Figurine

Middle Minoan III period (ca. 1700–1600 B.C.)

Clay

H. 0.028 m, l. 0.070 m

Vrysinas, peak sanctuary, 1973

Rethymnon Archaeological Museum, Π 23672

This handmade figurine is solid, with long, well-formed wings and a slender body. The raised neck ends in a triangular head with an open beak and two grooves for the eyes. The naturalistic rendering is enhanced by the body's continuous curved outline. Almost complete, with a chip off the bottom.

Because of its size, this figurine probably stood alone on a short base, like similar examples from the Petsophas peak sanctuary. It was likely used together with other offerings for ritual purposes at the Vrysinas peak sanctuary. Birds were a very popular motif in Minoan iconography, particularly in religious and ritual pictorial cycles. They were associated with divine epiphany, either as the deity's heralds or as its zoomorphic incarnation.

Selected Bibliography

ΑΔ 28 Β2 (1973): 583–84 (Davaras); Rutkowski 1991, pp. 110–11, pls. XLVII: 4, 5, 8; Tilmann-Pöhling 1990, p. 121, no. 124 (Papadopoulou).

Eleni Papadopoulou



189 **Beetle Figurine**

Middle Minoan III–Late Minoan I period

(ca. 1700–1525/1500 B.C.)

Clay

Max. l. 0.199 m

Piskokephalo, sanctuary, 1952

Herakleion Archaeological Museum, HM 9796

Terracotta figurine of a beetle, hollow, with a small hole at the rear. Two groups of deep parallel incisions denoting the wings cover the back; the head is flat, and no effort has been made to depict the legs. The beetle is covered with a red slip. Restored in places.

Terracotta figurines of beetles belong to the category of animal figurines of which large groups were found at peak and open-air sanctuaries, such as Piskokephalo. Although most animal figurines are smaller than life size, beetle figurines are very much larger than life size, with their main anatomical features emphasized in order for them to be recognizable. The beetle's symbolic role in the Minoan world is also suggested by the discovery at Palaikastro and at the Prinias peak sanctuary of pierced, hollow beetle figurines that may have served as ritual rhyta.

The beetles represented can be identified as dung beetles (*Copris hispanus*), a subspecies of the scarab (*Scarabaeidae*). Dung beetles feed off the feces of herd animals and pets, and their presence is therefore linked to them. The small terracotta nodules or balls found in the remains of ritual pyres are identified by some scholars as representing dung. Dung beetle figurines were offered at open-air sanctuaries and peak sanctuaries, which were associated with nature and rural life, probably to appeal for the successful outcome of agricultural and farming activities. Crete's involvement in maritime trade and its extensive contacts with Egypt probably fostered the belief that the beetle, like the Egyptian scarab, was a symbol of good fortune.

Selected Bibliography

Davaras 1988; Platon 1952, pp. 475–76; Rutkowski 1986, pp. 89–91.

Eirini Galli

C. MUSIC



190 **Sistrum**

Late Minoan IB period (ca. 1450 B.C.)

Bronze

H. from base to top 0.285 m, h. of frame 0.171 m, w. of frame 0.08–0.083 m, l. of horizontal pins 0.148–0.152 m, diam. of discs 0.021–0.024 m, l. of handle 0.125 m, w. of U-shape support 0.055–0.064 m, diam. of handle 0.016–0.026–0.032 m, wt. 420 g.

Mochlos, Hoard from House of the Metal Merchant, House C₃

Haghios Nikolaos Archaeological Museum, 14398

A closed ovoid shape with a curved frame made from a thin piece of metal joined to the interior of the U-shape support of the handle by two small rivets on each side. Two horizontal pins are inserted via pierced holes near the lower half of the frame, bent into a loop at each end. The upper horizontal pin has three discs and the lower pin has two. The handle is hollow with a turned base that tapers toward the U-shape support of the frame. This support is pierced where it joins the handle and tapers at each end where it joins the frame. It is stabilized on the lower part of the shoulders by two irregularly shaped pieces of metal. Mended and slightly restored.

The sistrum is of Egyptian origin and is connected to female deities. Two types of sistrum can be distinguished, the temple shape and the closed ovoid. The second type, to which this Mochlos sistrum belongs, was used widely in Egypt from the Middle Kingdom onward in religious processions, symposia, festive occasions, and as funerary offerings. The use of the sistrum outside Egypt was not only for music making but also for magical healing practices. Many seal stones are known from the cemetery at Phourni, Archanes, on which the hieroglyphic symbol of the sistrum is depicted. In Burial Building 9 of the same cemetery, a complete sistrum made of clay was found, but this may be an imitation of the real thing since clay is not a suitable material for producing sound. However, since it accompanied a child's burial and since its handle is hollow and its construction light, it may have been a child's toy.

When a sistrum is shaken, the discs clang against each other and the side of the frame, and the pins move backward and forward in the frame. A relief stone vase from Haghia Triada, the "Harvester Vase," reproduces the image of such a sistrum and points to its use in religious ceremonies, in this instance, at a harvest festival.

This sistrum was probably imported from Egypt, where no bronze example appears to have survived from a time as early as this, although a type with a loop-shape frame and similar handle is painted in the tomb of Menkheperasonb, which dates to the reign of Tuthmosis III, and it also appears frequently in reliefs at Amarna. The construction details of the Mochlos sistrum are the same as those on the later Egyptian bronze sistrum, and the findspot of the Mochlos instrument, next to the ingot in catalogue number no. 65, indicates that it could have been imported to the area in the same load.



Selected Bibliography

Andrikou et al. 2003, p. 111; Karetsou–Andreadaki–Vlazaki–Papadakis 2000, p. 267 (Sapouna); Mikrakis 2000, pp. 163–64; Sakellarakis–Sapouna–Sakellaraki 1997, pp. 351–57; Soles 2005.

Maria Kyriakaki



191 Sistrum

Middle Minoan I-II period (ca. 2100–1700 B.C.)

Clay

H. 0.18 m, handle diam. 0.018 m, max. w. 0.054 m

Burial cave of Haghios Charalampos, Lasithi Plain

Haghios Nikolaos Archaeological Museum, 13976

Clay sistrum with solid cylindrical handle and strap hoop with two pairs of holes. Mended and restored.

Three perforated clay discs were found next to the sistrum and were probably put on wooden shafts that were held in place by the two holes of the hoop. The hoop has painted decoration consisting of white bands on a dark background. Five similar sistra were found in the same cave, associated with burials.

The sistrum was a very common musical instrument in Egypt, where it was used to accompany singing and dancing, although it has also been found in tombs. Usually made of metal, the discs would hit each other and the loop when shaken vigorously, thus creating a rhythmic sound.

In Crete this instrument seems to have been well known and prolific. Apart from the Haghios Charalampos examples, another clay sistrum was found in the Phourni cemetery at Archanes. It is not known whether clay sistra were symbolic copies of metal prototypes destined for the grave, as opposed to being functional musical instruments in their own right. However, it is certain that metal sistra existed on Crete and were used as musical instruments, as demonstrated by the metal sistrum found recently in the Late Minoan I settlement at Mochlos (cat. no. 190), as well as by the scene on the stone rhyton from Haghia Triada, where harvesters are represented singing to the accompaniment of a sistrum. Lastly, the widespread acquaintance with and significance of sistra in Minoan Crete are also apparent from their depiction in scripts, both Hieroglyphic and Linear A.

The sistra constitute undeniable evidence for a strong relationship between Crete and Egypt and of the influences exerted by Egypt on Minoan civilization. The sistra from Haghios Charalampos are especially important, since they reveal that these contacts had begun at a very early stage, very probably before the construction of the first palaces. They also show that familiarity with that distant civilization was not confined to large and important seaside towns but that resonances of it reached even remote parts of the Cretan hinterland, such as the Lasithi mountain plain.

Selected Bibliography

Betancourt–Muhly 2006, dr. 2 right; Mikrakis 2000; Sakellarakis–Sapouna-Sakellarakis 1997, pp. 351–55; Soles 2005, p. 433.



192 Pyxis

Late Minoan IIIB early period (ca. 1300–1250 B.C.)

Fine, yellowish clay

H. 0.15 m, max. diam. 0.167 m

Kalami cemetery (area of prehistoric Aptara), Chamber Tomb I, 1969

Khania Archaeological Museum, Π 2308

Cylindrical body and short, vertical rim. Four handles, immediately below the rim, alternating horizontal and vertical. Attachment holes for the missing lid flank the horizontal handles. Complete. Monochrome interior. Exterior covered with a large number of motifs divided up into panels and rendered according to the stylized trend of the period: horns of consecration, double axes, birds in flight, chains of shells, wavy and zigzag lines. The most important panel depicts a musical scene: a man with short hair dressed in a sleeveless robe, his head in profile and his body *en face*, is holding a branch in one hand; the other hand is touching a large, upright seven-stringed musical instrument, a lyre (*κίθαρς* in Homer) amid birds, horns of consecration and double axes. The musical instrument is shaped like a horseshoe and has vertical horns (Greek *πήχεις*, Latin *cornua*) with S-shape decoration, a straight bridge (Greek *ζυγόν*, Latin *transtillum*), and lunate sounding box. The two painted protuberances on the outside on the upper part of the sounding box probably depict the flutes (holes) that let the sound out of the hollow sounding box.

The musical scene, known from examples in the Creto-Mycenaean world (e.g., Haghia Triada sarcophagus, procession wall painting of Haghia Triada and wall painting of a musician

at Pylos, a krater from Nauplion, and an amphora sherd from Tiryns), is interpreted as a religious ritual. The discovery of the vase in a tomb may link the scene to funeral rites. The direct relationship between the music of religious worship and funeral rites is well known in the prehistoric period. The musician can be interpreted as Apollo or Orpheus but also as a simple singer or priest. If the male figure depicts a divinity, this is a religious scene; if it is a singer, then an epic scene as described in Homer is more likely. If he is a priest honoring the deceased with music or calling the deceased to Hades, then it is a depiction of funeral rites.

The tomb was found by chance during the construction of the National Road from Khania to Rethymnon, on the side of the Aptera hill, a short distance before the river Koiliaris. The Kalami pyxis is the best-known representative example of the Kydonia ceramic workshop, which flourished in the Khania region during the fourteenth and thirteenth centuries B.C. (Late Minoan IIIA and IIB phases). Its products, which can be distinguished by their high quality, are characterized by a white or yellowish clay, yellowish-white slip, and orange-red paint. Examples from the Kydonia workshop have been found in Rethymnon, Knossos, eastern Crete, the Peloponnese, Thebes, Cyprus, and Sardinia, and they show the range and importance of the Khaniote export market (mainly in scented olive oils) during the period of the so-called Mycenaean *koine*.

Selected Bibliography

Andrikou 2003; Andrikou et al. 2003, pp. 122–23 (Andreadaki-Vlazaki) but also pp. 114–15 (Mandalaki), 120 (Chatzi-Speliopoulou), 124 (Papademetriou); Demakopoulou 1988, p. 153, no. 105 (Andreadaki-Vlazaki); Dragona-Latsoudi 1977, pp. 95, 98, pl. 22a; Tzedakis 1969b; Tzedakis 1970, figs. 1–2.

D. RITUAL EQUIPMENT





193 **Tripod Table Leg**

Middle Minoan IIIB–Late Minoan IA period

(ca. 1625–1575 B.C.)

Plaster

H. 0.249 m

Palaikastro, Minoan town, Building 7

Siteia Archaeological Museum, 11365

One leg and a small part of the body from a tripod table of offerings. Painted decoration depicting narcissus flowers covers the exterior. The decoration is in white, blue, green, red, and yellow. Mended.

Tables of offering are part of the paraphernalia of worship in Minoan religion. They are usually made of stone, clay, or plaster held up by three legs. Offerings to the divinity such as fruit and grain would be placed on top of these tables.

This tripod table was a very fine and fragile vessel, thanks to the material of which it is made. It is a characteristic example of the artistic skill of the Minoans, who rendered their natural environment on wall paintings with great realism and particularly fine technique. The excavations at Palaikastro have brought to light notable quantities of plaster with polychrome decorative motifs belonging to wall paintings.

Selected Bibliography

MacGillivray et al. 1991, p.139, fig. 15.



194 **Votive Axe**

Middle Minoan IIIB period (ca. 1650–1600 B.C.)

Gold

L. of axe 0.0493 m, l. of haft 0.057 m

Arkalochori cave, 1934

Herakleion Archaeological Museum, HM 599

A gold votive double axe with engraved linear decoration on the wings of the axe and the edges of the haft. The haft is circular in section with slightly thicker ends. Two perforation holes are at the lower end, one of which has a thin gold wire running through it.

The axe comes from the Arkalochori cave, which produced a notable amount of bronze, silver, and gold double axes. Ritual or votive axes vary in size and come from sacred places and religious sites, such as that described above, and from settlement complexes, such as the huge axes from the Villa of Nirou, where they are found from the Early Minoan period to the Late Minoan period and beyond.

The double axe, a preeminent symbol of Minoan religion, occurs often in iconography either on its own or in combination with other motifs, such as the horns of consecration.

Selected Bibliography

Bucholz 1959; Dietrich 1998; Hazzidakis 1912–13; Marinatos 1935a; Marinatos 1962; Moss 2005, pp. 117–19, 197; Nillson 1950; Rutkowski–Nowicki 1996, pp. 24–25.

Katerina Athanasaki





195 Votive Double Axe

Middle Minoan III–Late Minoan I period

(ca. 1700–1450 B.C.)

Bronze

L. 0.50 m

Arkalochori cave

Herakleion Archaeological Museum, HM 2418

Blades widening toward the curved cutting edges. Decorated with double relief lines and oblique bands with consecutive crescent-shaped motifs. It was found together with other similar artifacts inside the Arkalochori cave. Complete, edges chipped.

Several small gold and silver double axes were found at the center of the cave. Hundreds of bronze axes of different sizes and uses (e.g., thin votive axes, utilitarian axes), as well as a large number of votive swords and daggers, remains of cylindrical wooden objects, small copper ingots, and copper slags, had been deposited at the cave's northernmost end. Most of the axes have engraved decoration, and three are inscribed with Cretan hieroglyphic symbols.

At first Marinatos believed that during the Middle Minoan III–Late Minoan I period the cave was dedicated to some war

deity, to whom the swords and double axes were offered. He later suggested that the cave served as a metallurgical workshop.

Worship in caves was widespread in Crete in the Neopalatial period. Some caves have yielded examples of the double axe, the emblematic symbol of Minoan religion, and the Psychro cave even contained a steatite stepped base to hold the pole of a large double axe.

The Arkalochori cave, however, is unique, because of the great number of double axes and votive weapons and the absence of any other type of ritual or votive object.

Selected Bibliography

Buchholz 1959, pp. 8–9, 33, pl. 1; Hazzidakis 1912–13; Marinatos 1935a; Marinatos 1935b; Moss 2005, pp. 115–19; Rethemiotakis 2002, pp. 64–65; Rutkowski–Nowicki 1996, pp. 24–26; Tyree 1975, pp. 28–30, 306–11; Tyree 2001, p. 41.

Deukalion Manidakis



196 Double Axe

Late Minoan I period (ca. 1600–1450 B.C.)

Bronze

L. 1.118 m, max. h. 0.63 m

Nirou Chani, Room 7

Herakleion Archaeological Museum, HM 2049

This double axe is made up of four thin sheets of bronze. The two larger sheets form the blades, which widen toward the curved ends with tongue-shape tips. The two smaller, almost square sheets cover the middle of the blades and hold them together with rivets, at the same time forming the shaft hole. Almost complete, mended.

This is the largest of the four similar axes discovered in the Minoan villa in the coastal settlement at Nirou Chani. Covering an area of 1,000 square meters, the villa had about forty rooms and two paved courtyards, one of which contained a stepped construction and a pair of stone horns of consecration.

The double axe is the emblem of Minoan religion. Large ritual or votive axes have been found at many sites, including settlements, palaces, and sacred caves. The axes were probably fitted onto tall poles that were set into stepped stone bases, like

those discovered in the Palace and the Little Palace at Knossos and in the Psychro cave, but also outside Crete, at Mycenae. A pair of large double axes with tall poles on similar stepped bases is pictured in the offering scene on the Haghia Triada sarcophagus, providing evidence for the rituals in which these objects were used.

The stepped construction and the stone horns of consecration found inside the east paved court of the Nirou villa suggest a ritual use of that space, possibly in relation with the large four axes.

Selected Bibliography

Buchholz 1959, p. 8; Hakulin 2004, pp. 12–13; Marinatos 1993, p. 5; Nilsson 1950, pp. 217–19; *PM* IV.2, pp. 437–47; Xanthoudides 1922, pp. 6, 12–13, fig. 10.

Deukalion Manidakis





198 Lid

Late Minoan IB period (ca. 1450 B.C.)

Clay (Knossian)

H. with handle 0.029 m, diam. 0.213 m

Pseira, Minoan settlement

Siteia Archaeological Museum, 7141

Flat, with a raised lip and strap handle in the middle. Four double-bladed, double axes decorate the surface around the handle. Mended and restored.

As a decorative motif, the double axe is found on vases, pithoi (storage jars), and sarcophagi. It is without doubt one of the sacred symbols of Minoan religion and is connected with ceremonies. The lid was found together with two bull-shape rhyta and a basket vase also decorated with double axes in a room of Building BQ. Both decoration and shape of these vessels lead to the conclusion that they were equipment used in religious ceremonies that probably took place in that room.

Selected Bibliography

Betancourt-Davaras 1999, p. 136, no. BQ4, pl. 21A, fig. 15; Seager 1910, p. 31.



199 **Hammer-Axe**

Late Minoan I period (ca. 1600–1450 B.C.)

Conglomerate veined limestone

L. 0.108 m, W. 0.41 m, diam. of striking surface 0.038 m,
diam. of shaft hole 0.016–0.018 m

Poros, tomb at Vlastos Plot, 1967

Herakleion Archaeological Museum, HM 3174

Mended, slightly restored.

As indicated by the name, hammer-axes resemble both hammers (*sphyra*), for their rounded striking surface, and axes (*pelekis*), for their sharpened edge. Hence they are assumed to have been used for hammering and cutting or chopping and as tools and weapons at the same time. They were attached haft handles through pierced holes like common utilitarian axes.

The hammer-axe from Poros is very well made, with a smooth surface and a shallow groove running along both sides of the blade. The stone veining, which is rarely attested on tools, the care in which it was treated, and the lack of traces of use at any point on its surface have led to the hypothesis that this

object must have served as a ceremonial axe. Its prototypes are foreign to Crete, but its emblematic function parallels that represented on some Minoan seals, where similar tools are depicted together with individual figures.

Hammers and axes that were never used as tools, judging from their find contexts, sizes, materials, and the absence of use marks on their surfaces, have been found at various sites in Crete, mainly of the Neopalatial period (Knossos, Archanes, Zakros, etc.). A unique and revealing feature of all these objects is a single-edged stone axe from the palace at Malia, broadly contemporary with the Poros find, whose blade bears a normal edge at one end and an animal figure with engraved embellishment at the other.

Selected Bibliography

Lebessi 1967, 208–9; Manti-Platonos 1981, p. 79; Marinatos 1993, p. 7; Muhly 1992, pp. 134–40, 285.

Emmanouela Apostolaki



200 **Ritual Hammer**

Late Minoan IB period (ca. 1525/1500–1450 B.C.)

Marble

L. 0.103 m, diam. of shaft hole 0.022 m, max. diam. 0.07 m, diam. of percussion head 0.06 m

Zakros, Palace, West Wing, Room XXV (Treasury of the Shrine)

Herakleion Archaeological Museum, HM 2698

Complete ritual hammer of white marble, with a little dark veining in places. Slender, spindlelike shape, with curved percussion surfaces at either end, clearly differentiated from the rest of the body. Shaft hole, circular in section in the middle of the hammer. Two shallow grooves around the body, nearly touching the edge of the shaft hole, probably for securing twine.

This is one of three complete stone hammers found in the southwest corner of the so-called Treasury of the Shrine in the palace at Zakros. The superb carving of the material places it among the finest examples of this particular category, which comprises about twenty objects (without counting hammers of similar shape, but made of bronze, from Haghia Triada).

The religious symbolism and ritual use of objects in this category is, in most cases, suggested by their excavation context. In the case of Zakros, the ritual use of the corpus of equipment from the Treasury of the Shrine, which included the three hammers, is very clear because of its character. The remaining examples in this category come from other shrine treasuries, peak sanctuaries, burial caves, and the tombs of priests or other eminent individuals.

One hammer, from the Metaxas Collection in Herakleion Museum, has a hole in one of the percussion surfaces, which indicates that the object served as a rhyton.

However, the main use of these hammers as cult symbols is confirmed by the way they are portrayed in ritual scenes in contemporary iconography. On two Minoan amygdaloid seal stones from House Delta at Malia and the Vapheio tholos tomb in Laconia, figures with long robes, probably priests, walk in a ritual procession, each holding a hammer with a long haft supported on one shoulder. On two seal stones, from Kastelli, Khania, and Haghia Triada, priestly figures brandish similar objects before them or above their heads. These representations bolster the idea that the hammer in Minoan Crete, along with the double axe, was used mainly as a religious emblem. However, the enigmatic question of the symbol's origin appears to be a more difficult matter, along with the likely initial use of the objects in religious ritual. It has been suggested that hammers, like double axes, were first used for ritual animal sacrifice. Another hypothesis suggests that the symbolic character of the object originated in the ritual of knocking on the shrine's door so that it would be opened for the appearance of the goddess (a ritual that is also found in other ancient religions related to Minoan). In addition, it is well known that hammers similar to the Minoan examples, both in Pharaonic Egypt and the Syro-Palestinian region, were used as scepters or religious symbols.

Selected Bibliography

Platon 1974, p. 127; Platonos 1981; *PM*; Schiering 1972.



201 Composite Horns of Consecration

Middle Minoan IB–II period (ca. 1900–1700 B.C.)

Plaster

L. 0.14 m, w. 0.044 m, h. 0.098 m

Petsophas, peak sanctuary

Haghios Nikolaos Archaeological Museum, 6805

One pair of horns is flanked by another, larger pair. There are three additional miniature pairs of horns on the front and three square protruding altars in a composition reminiscent of the tripartite arrangement of Minoan shrines. Mended and restored with gypsum. The model has been thought to depict the actual shrine building or the two peaks of hills adjacent to Petsophas, as they appear from the site of the shrine.

The double sacred horns, or “horns of consecration,” as Arthur Evans called them, made of clay, stone, or plaster—as in this example—constitute the symbol par excellence of Minoan religion and symbolize the animal force and potency of the bull, the most sacred animal of the Mediterranean region and the Near and Middle East, as well as of southern Asia. Excavated finds attest the central role of the bull in ceremonial ritual as early as the Middle Minoan period, and the double horns occur as a typical part of worship and are indicative of shrines and altars. Painted and plastic depictions of sacred horns, common in Minoan and Mycenaean iconography, turn up on sarcophagi, religious equipment, pithoi (large storage jars), and seal stones.

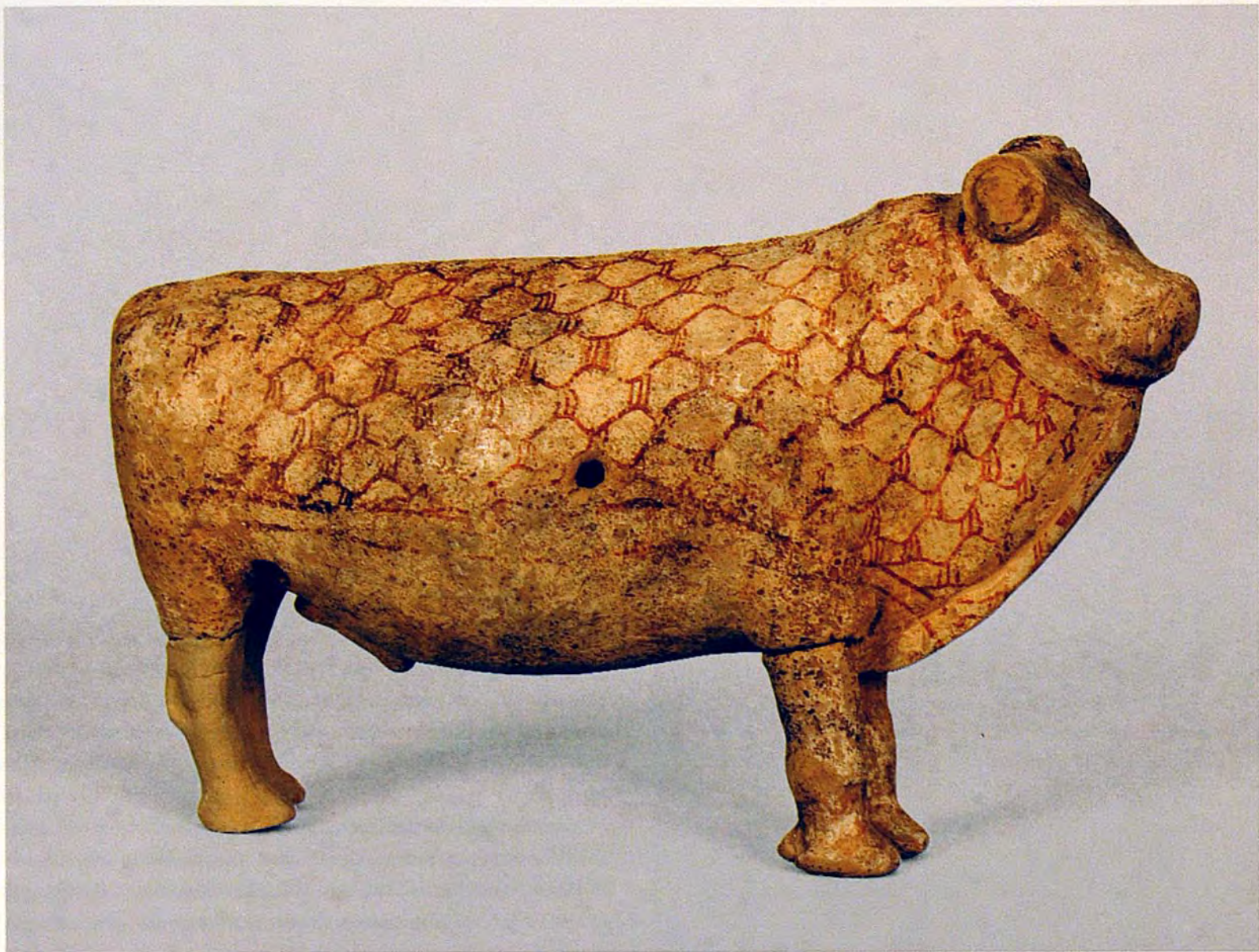
The peak sanctuary of Petsophas (height a.s.l. 255 m.), the most important in eastern Crete, is linked to the Minoan town of Palaikastro. The *temenos* encloses an area of 500 to 700 square meters and probably extends onto the neighboring peak. The sanctuary comprised a complex of five rooms, some of which were roofed. It had a particularly long life, beginning in Early Minoan III and lasting to Late Minoan I (ca. 2300–1500 B.C.). It yielded a large number of offerings, more than a thousand human and animal figurines, clay cups, and miniature vessels. Among the finds there are two important stone tables of offerings with inscriptions in the Linear A script, probably of a religious character.

Selected Bibliography

AA 27 B2 (1972): 652–54 (Davaras); AA 31 (1976): 380 ff. (Davaras); Davaras n.d., p. 22, fig. 31; Davaras 1976, pp. 273–74; Myres 1902–3, pp. 356–87; Platon 1951b, pp. 120–22; Rutkowski 1991.

Vili Apostolakou





207 **Bull-Shape Rhyton**

Late Minoan IB period (ca. 1525/1500–1450 B.C.)

Clay

H. 0.17 m, l. 0.26 m

Pseira, House A (Seager), Building AA (Betancourt-Davaras)

Herakleion Archaeological Museum, HM 5413

Hollow bovine figurine, partly restored. The body, particularly the musculature, is rendered in a naturalistic manner. The horns appear to have been cut off near the middle before firing. A ring at the base of each horn binds the horn and ear tightly together. At the nape, behind the horns, is a circular filling hole; a small pouring hole is located on the muzzle. A lustrous whitish slip covers the bull's body. A highly naturalistic orange net covers the body, closely following the relief of the musculature. The net, which has double stitching along the edges and triple stitching on the knots, leaves the head and the lower part of the belly uncovered. The legs are joined as if tied together, indicating the animal's immobility.

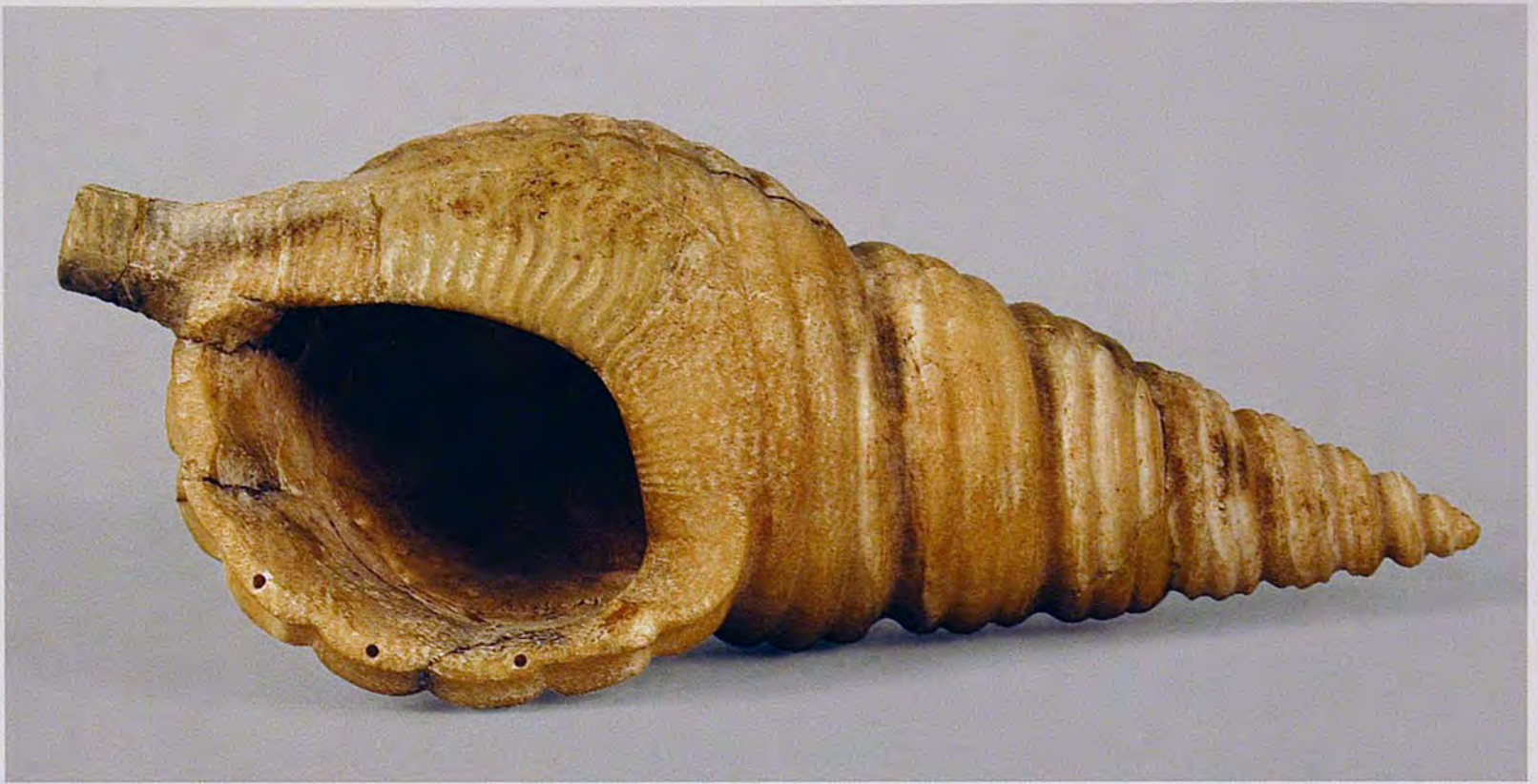
Scholars originally believed that the motif of the orange net on the whitish slip was a ceramic technique unknown at the time this vase was manufactured, a remarkable “archaicism” in the production of these ritual vessels. The white bull was perhaps the most important animal victim of ritual sacrifices. The iconographic features of this figurine—the net covering the fat body, the tied and possibly cut horns, the tied legs, and so on—suggest that the animal was intended for sacrifice. Of course, the fine, featherweight net is not the same as the heavy, resistant net known from bull-hunting scenes but was a ritual cover, symbolic of the animal's capture and designation. It is possible that the blood of the sacrificial animal was gathered in this kind of vessel, but this example was found inside a private house, where it may have served in private daily rituals. This libation vase is called a rhyton, although both its function and its form recall an animal-hide askos more than a rhyton. Bull-shape rhyta are considered to be Eastern in origin and have a long history in the Cretan civilization of the second millennium B.C.

Selected Bibliography

Koehl 2006, pp. 16–17, pl. 3:22; *PM IV*, pp. 259–60, fig. 154b;

Seager 1910, pp. 22–23, fig. 7, pl. IX.

Dimitris Sfakianakis



208 Model of Triton Shell

Middle Minoan IIIB–Late Minoan I period

(ca. 1650–1450 B.C.)

Alabaster

Max. h. 0.317 m, max. w. 0.137 m

Knossos, Palace, Central Palace Sanctuary

Herakleion Archaeological Museum, HM 45

Life-size stone model of a triton shell, a common Mediterranean gastropod mollusk of the *Charonia* family. In imitation of the real shell, the diameter gradually increases as the form spirals, creating a conical vessel. The spiral begins at the apex and ends at the opening. In natural shells, the rings join at the stitch lines, which are denoted by deep grooves on the replica. Half of the rim is decorated with dense, parallel, wavy incisions, which imitate the folds and dents of the rim of natural triton shells. The other half has four small holes, possibly for attaching ornaments. The siphon canal is circular in section and separate from the rim. Mended and restored.

This imitation triton shell is made of alabaster, an off-white, semitranslucent mineral stone, usually imported from Egypt for the manufacture of precious vases. It was found in the West Wing of the palace at Knossos, in the so-called Central Palace Sanctuary, a group of rooms containing an impressive number of objects related to religious practices. The replica belongs to the palace's famous group of ritual stone vases that are thought to have fallen from a room in the upper story, which may functioned as a shrine or a storeroom for ritual objects until the palace's final destruction.

Natural triton shells are found in settlements starting in the Prepalatial period. They may be food remains, but their reworked ends suggest they were used as vessels for drawing

water or as sound-producing instruments, a use attested in Crete as recently as the beginning of the twentieth century A.D. After the foundation of the palaces and particularly during the Neopalatial period, triton shells appear to have played an important role in organized Minoan rituals. Imitations of triton shells in stone, clay, and faience have been found in shrines, settlements, and graves (Knossos, Malia, Zakros, Kalyvia, and Haghia Triada). Stone triton shells are among the great achievements of Minoan stone carvers. They were probably standard religious symbols and not just utilitarian or decorative objects.

The shape and context of the shells suggest that they were used in the ritual consumption or offering of liquids, even though most of them are not pierced at the base like rhyta, the libation vessels par excellence. A characteristic example is the famous stone triton shell from Malia, which depicts in relief Minoan lion-shape daemons performing libation in a rocky landscape or perhaps a seascape. The role of triton shells in religious practices, even after the final destruction of the Minoan palaces, is revealed in a scene depicted on a stone seal from the Idaean cave, which shows a human figure standing before an altar holding a triton shell at shoulder level. Although it is uncertain whether the figure performs a libation on the altar, offers the triton shell itself, or blows into the shell to summon a deity, the gesture clearly refers to worship and emphasizes the significance of the sea in Minoan art, economy, and religion.

Selected Bibliography

Åstrom–Reese 1990, pp. 5–14; Baurain–Darcque 1983, pp. 5–58; Darcque 1983, pp. 59–73; Marinatos 1993, pp. 193–200, fig. 209; Panagiotaki 1999b, pp. 274–75; *PM IV*, pp. 211, 820–23, figs. 288, 537, 539; Warren 1969b, pp. 91, 125–26, pl. 498.

Eirini Galli

209 **Conical Rhyton**

Late Minoan I period (ca. 1600–1450 B.C.)

Veined limestone

H. with restored handle 0.405 m, rim diam. 0.117 m

Haghia Triada, NW Royal Apartments, Portico

Herakleion Archaeological Museum, HM 336

Tall rhyton, with symmetrical conical walls, a rim embellished with a relief band of four very narrow horizontal rings, and a markedly pointed bottom, where the discharge hole is. The raised strap handle has been restored on the basis of preserved examples, where the handle is usually manufactured of a separate piece of stone.

The manner in which the stone carver has taken advantage of the natural veins of the rock to make the greatest aesthetic impression, the fine carving of the relief band on the rim, and the even polish of its surface reveal the care with which this rhyton was made.

Conical rhyta are very common, also known from many examples in clay and from depictions on seal stones and wall paintings. Like the ovoid ones, conical rhyta were used as ritual libation vessels, as grave gifts for the dead, and on occasion as a kind of funnel to transfer liquids into another vessel. The luxury versions of this type were offered as formal gifts, as the parallels from wall paintings show: the famous figure of the “Cup [rhyton] Bearer,” a fragment of a larger composition from the palace at Knossos depicting a priestly procession, carries a large conical rhyton to offer to a female figure—a goddess. Similarly, the Minoans/Keftiu on the wall paintings of the tomb of Rekh-mi-re at Egyptian Thebes (18th Dynasty) bring conical rhyta as gifts, among other luxury items and valuable raw materials, to the pharaoh on the occasion of some special event.

The Haghia Triada rhyton was found in the portico at the entrance to the Royal Apartments in the northwest part of the wealthy villa, together with a notable number of Linear A tablets.

Selected Bibliography

Halbherr–Stefani–Banti 1977, p. 84; Koehl 2000, pp. 97–99; Koehl 2006, pp. 330–32, 342–45; Warren 1969b.

Emmanouela Apostolaki





210 Ovoid Rhyton

Late Minoan I period (ca. 1600–1450 B.C.)

Breccia

H. 0.325 m, max. diam. 0.173 m

Pseira, House D5 Room 1/ Area CB

Herakleion Archaeological Museum, HM 1126

Mended and restored.

A large version of the ovoid type of stone rhyton, this example is noticeable for its relief ring, which is carved directly around its mouth, thus omitting the neck. Two pairs of holes on the upper wall of the vessel were used for attaching the now-missing handles. It was manufactured from a conglomerate stone with dark-colored inclusions in a reddish matrix and was polished sufficiently at the surface to achieve a shiny, glassy look. The unusual choice of shape for this particular stone and the quality of the work on the vessel demonstrate, as with most stone vessels, the high degree of specialization of the craftsmen who worked stone during this period.

The shape and material used are similar to another ovoid rhyton from Knossos.

Selected Bibliography

Koehl 2006, p. 106 (224); Seager 1910, p. 37; Warren 1969b, p. 88 (P488a).

Emmanouela Apostolaki

211 **Ovoid Rhyton**

Late Minoan I period (ca. 1600–1450 B.C.)

Egyptian alabaster

H. 0.39 m

Archanes, Phourni, Burial Building 3

Herakleion Archaeological Museum, HM 3041

Mended.

This is a common type of ritual vessel of the Neopalatial period, with a narrow mouth, ovoid body, and rounded bottom with a discharge hole for liquids. Rhyta of this type frequently have separate attached necks and/or separate relief rings, where the neck is attached to the body, although in this example from Archanes, the vessel was made from one piece of alabaster, thereby demonstrating indirectly the skill and experience of the stone craftsman who made it. It has no handles but it does have decorative chasing on the lip and on the relief ring at the junction between the neck and body.

The rhyton was found underneath a clay burial sarcophagus, together with one silver cup and three bronze weapons in an excavation context later than the likely period of its manufacture. This indicates that the vase was preserved for a long time until it was used in a ritual or as a grave gift in the Burial Building at Archanes.

Selected Bibliography

Koehl 2006, p. 104 (212); Sakellarakis–Sapouna-Sakellarakis 1997, pp. 198, 579; Warren 1969b, p. 87.

Emmanouela Apostolaki





212 Ovoid Rhyton with Marine Style Decoration
 Late Minoan IB period (ca. 1525/1500–1450 B.C.)
 Clay
 H. 0.341 m
 Zakros, NW hill, House A
 Herakleion Archaeological Museum, HM 2085

Ovoid body, gradually narrowing to an almost conical bottom equipped with a discharge hole. Modeled ring at the transition from shoulder to neck. Reel-like neck. Flat, everted rim. Small, vertical handle under the rim ending in the middle of the neck. Mended and restored.

The vessel is decorated in the so-called Marine Style. Starfish are the central motif in the middle of the body, with concentric-circle eyes in the middle of each and simple circles between their arms. Marine rocks with coral appear on the lower part of the body and on the shoulder, neck, and upper side

of the rim. Tritons are below and around the starfish, as well as on the neck of the vessel, where they are smaller. The modeled ring is decorated with groups of three vertical S-shape lines that alternate with thicker S-shape strokes. Small vertical dashes on the edge of the lip.

This shape of ovoid rhyton was as popular in stone as it was in clay and appears only in the last phase of the Neopalatial period on Crete, i.e., the Late Minoan IB period. Most examples are decorated in the Marine Style and are certainly products of palatial ceramic workshops. The outstanding, sometimes almost finicky, rendering of the details of sea organisms—and of the undersea world generally—combined with the scarcity of works in this style, have tempted some to identify the “hands” of individual painters. Scholars such as Betancourt and Müller have suggested that vessels of this type were made in pairs. Indeed, House A on the NW hill at Zakros yielded part of a similar vase, probably a twin ovoid rhyton. This hypothesis is supported by finds from other Neopalatial sites such as Knossos, Palaikastro, and Pseira, even if the practice may not have been exclusive to Marine Style rhyta but included other outstanding ritual vessels.

Ovoid rhyta, particularly the variant with a small vertical handle beneath the rim, could have served practical purposes, such as transferring liquid from a large vessel to a smaller one. If a rhyton is plunged into a larger wide-mouthed vessel containing liquid, it then fills up through the hole in its base, owing to the system of communicating vessels. By temporarily sealing the vessel’s mouth with the palm of the hand, one can prevent the liquid from flowing (due to air pressure) until the mouth is unblocked.

However, there is no doubt that rhyta were mainly intended for use in libation rituals and other religious activities. Not only are they usually found in treasuries for shrines and other places of religious significance, but precious primary materials were used to manufacture stone examples of this type and they were decorated almost exclusively in the Marine Style and related styles. These decorative styles are found on a relatively limited number of examples and only on specific vase types, a fact that leads one to surmise that they are specially produced by palatial workshops, with a clearly ritualistic purpose.

From an iconographic standpoint, the well-known “Cup-bearer” (or rhyton bearer) from the “Procession Fresco” in the palace at Knossos is certainly taking part in a ritual by offering libations to a deity, probably female. Lastly, on the famous gold “Ring of Minos,” a lamenting male figure is depicted shaking the sacred tree with one hand, as he holds an object in the other. This object is very like a rhyton of the type represented by the example from House A at Zakros.

Selected Bibliography

Betancourt 1985, pp. 135, 144–45; Hogarth 1902, pl. XII; Koehl 2006, pp. 31–32, 108, 264 (fig. 11); Müller 1997, pp. 25–26, 265–69, 362–63.

213 **Dolphin Rhyton**

Late Minoan IB period (ca. 1525/1500–1450 B.C.)

Clay

H. 0.285 m, rim diam. 0.07 m, max. diam. 0.099 m

Pseira

Herakleion Archaeological Museum, HM 5408

Ovoid rhyton with a broad, flat rim and a small handle with a circular section. Mended and restored. The relief collar ring marking the joint between the neck and body reflects a metal prototype.

The rhyton's shape is particularly characteristic of the Late Minoan IB period. Alternating dolphins arranged vertically cover the rhyton's body conforming to the shape of the vase. The rest of the surface is decorated with a grid of wavy lozenges filled with dots. Seaweed and coral-like motifs adorn the neck and upper lip surfaces.



The composition recalls the Knossos “Dolphin Fresco.” The grid, which represents the reflection of sunlight on a calm liquid surface, and the rendering of the dolphins, with their fins pointing downward and their tails turned toward the viewer, are common to both representations.

The Dolphin rhyton is thought to form a pair with a similar Marine Style rhyton also from Pseira. Both were found together in a stepped street that leads directly from the coast to the settlement's main square. They were probably used during ritual processions that followed this route.

Selected Bibliography

Betancourt 1985, pp. 196–203; Koehl 2006, pp. 29–31, 330–32; Marinatos–Hirmer 1960, p. 94; Mountjoy 1976; *PM* II.1, pp. 223–26, II.2, pp. 507–11, IV.1, p. 269; Seager 1910, pp. 29–30.

Nektaria Mavroudi



214 Conical Rhyton

Late Minoan IIIA₂ period (ca. 1375–1300 B.C.)

Clay

H. 0.435 m

Knossos, Gypsades, House A

Herakleion Archaeological Museum, HM 2493

Elongated conical vase with pierced, pointed bottom (rhyton). Mended and restored. Parallel bands define four zones that are decorated with vertical, asymmetrically parallel, linear motifs: (from bottom to top), groups of three dotted lines, sinuous lines, curved lines over dots, and curved lines below dots. Three pairs of horns of consecration, each with a leafy branch in the middle, fill the incomplete uppermost and tallest zone. The decoration was restored on the basis of similar compositions.

This vase was found on the floor of the Late Minoan IIIA₂ phase of a much earlier building. The few other finds do not allow for a secure interpretation of the building's use during the Mycenaean period. The rhyton, or libation vase, is one of the most characteristic ritual vases in second millennium B.C. Crete. This particular type of rhyton was most popular during this period and until the end of the Bronze Age. Its representational decoration includes major cult symbols, which may refer to the religious ritual in which the rhyton was used. The depiction of horns of consecration on rhytons is not considered coincidental, and, indeed, such rhytons are thought to reflect the real bovine horns used for libations. Horns of consecration were usually placed on altars, with other symbols, such as double axes or even libation vases, such as jugs, at their center. On this rhyton, the horns of consecration are associated with leafy branches, which refer to the cult of the vegetal cycle. This association is particularly common in cult representations and on similar conical rhyta.

Selected Bibliography

Hogarth 1899–1900, p. 73, fig. 16; Koehl 2006, pp. 45–53; *PM II*, pp. 547–48.

215 Goblet of the “Communion Cup” Type

Late Minoan IB period (ca. 1525/1500–1450 B.C.)

Gabbro

H. 0.075 m, rim diam. 0.095 m, base diam. 0.08 m

Zakros, Palace, West Wing. Room XXV (Treasury of the Shrine)

Herakleion Archaeological Museum, HM 2711

Conical main body, gradually widening upward. Straight rim. Separate spindle-shape base with the main body fitted on top. Complete.

This elegant goblet of the “communion cup” type is one of four discovered in the Treasury of the Shrine in the palace at Zakros. Of particular interest is part of another cup of the same type with bronze plating, again from Zakros. The first cups of this group, certainly products of Minoan Neopalatial workshops, were found outside Crete, in the shaft graves at Mycenae. Other examples from outside Crete have been found on Kea and Thera, two islands where Minoan cultural presence was strong.

In all, this type of ritual vase includes more than twenty examples so far. Of interest is the variety of material used in their manufacture, among which are included many stones imported to Crete from other regions, namely obsidian, a white-spotted variety from Giali on Nisyros; Spartan basalt, or *Lapis lacedaemonius*, from the Peloponnese; different polychrome marbles and veined limestone from the Aegean islands; and Egyptian alabaster. These precious, exotic primary materials, combined with the high technical proficiency of the Minoan craftsmen, enable the cups to be ranked among the finest creations of the prehistoric Aegean.



The ritual use of vessels in this particular category is not demonstrated only by the excavation context in which they occurred. On the basis of the Knossian “Campstool Fresco,” which seems to have decorated the Sanctuary Hall in the West Wing of the palace at Knossos, first A. Evans and then N. Platon described a ritual act, which they called “Holy Communion.” Apart from kylikes, the seated figures in the wall painting (the famous “La Parisienne” among them) are holding stemmed goblets of the type discussed here and receiving libation from ritual jugs held by standing figures. A marvelous example of a cup of comparable form is depicted on the Tiryns signet ring. A procession of daemons (*Tawaret*) is depicted offering libations to a seated goddess who is lifting a goblet of the “communion cup” type in front of her.

The iconographic evidence makes a strong case for such rituals taking place in open-air areas of the palace. Groups of priests and priestesses, each playing the part of different deities of the Minoan pantheon, would receive libations, which were probably offered by the participants in the ritual procession, in stone goblets perfectly represented by the present example from Zakros.

Selected Bibliography

Platon 1974, pp. 123–26; Platon 1959; *PM*; Warren 1969b, pp. 36–37.



216 **Chalice**

Late Minoan I period (ca. 1600–1450 B.C.)

Veined limestone

H. 0.225 m, rim diam. 0.098 m, base diam. 0.059 m

Haghia Triada, NW Royal Apartment, Portico

Herakleion Archaeological Museum, HM 338

Mended and restored.

This kind of high conical cup without handles, conventionally called a “chalice” or “communion cup,” had a long tradition in the ceramic production of Crete during the Bronze Age and appears to have been very popular in stone during the Neopalatial period. The Haghia Triada cup is made of grayish-white limestone with veining, chosen with great care by the craftsman to follow the direction of the body as it narrows toward the base, thus emphasizing the conical shape.

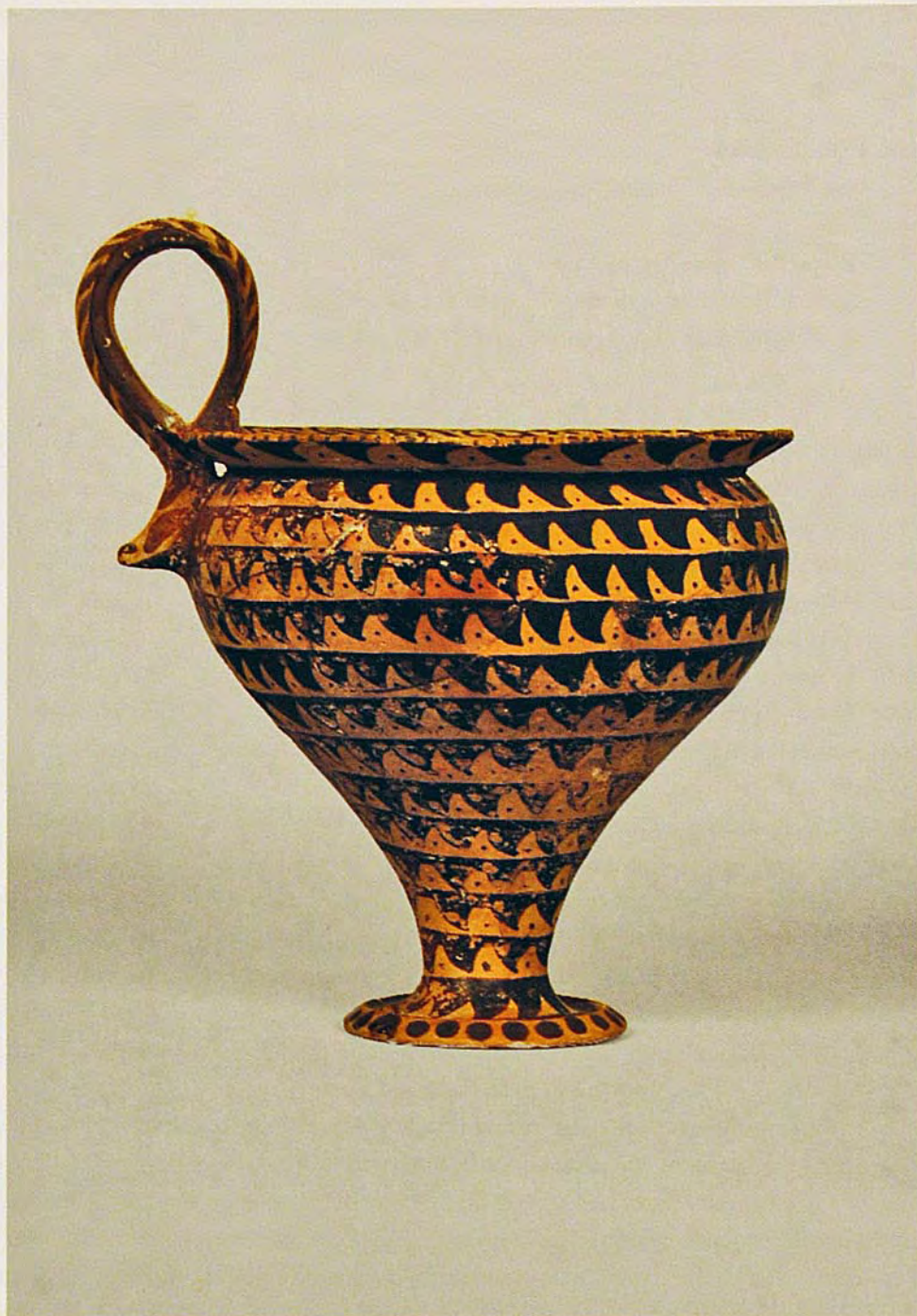
Luxury versions of chalices, like this example, have been interpreted as a kind of formal vessel that was used in contexts usually related to the consumption of wine and on special occasions (celebrations, festivities, ritual symposia). From this point of view, chalices reflect a perception of social behavior defined by specific rules and modes of expression. In addition to their practical use, they functioned symbolically to mark or display the formal character of a certain occasion within the palatial society.

Chalices have been found at various sites in Crete, the most impressive being a collection of such cups in a variety of stones from the palace at Zakros. A second vessel similar to the example described here was found in the same place at Haghia Triada.

Selected Bibliography

Halbherr–Stefani–Banti 1977, p. 85; Platon 2002a; Warren 1969b; Wright 2004.

Emmanouela Apostolaki



217 **One-Handled Stemmed Cup-Rhyton**

Late Minoan IB period (ca. 1525/1500–1450 B.C.)

Clay

H. 0.196 m, rim diam. 0.147 m, base diam. 0.066 m

Knossos, Tomb east of Hogarth's House B

Herakleion Archaeological Museum, HM 2484

Narrow-stemmed cup-rhyton with a flat, pierced off-center circular base; low foot; hemispherical body; broad, slanted rim; and raised handle. Bands with dentate motifs, known as addermarks, alternating with dots, decorate the foot, body, and rim's outer surface. Mended and restored.

Minoan rhyta (a term first used for animal-shape classical Greek vases) are ritual vessels for liquid offerings. Their shape and material vary; they may be conical, ovoid, spherical, or zoomorphic and made of select stones (serpentinite, chlorite, steatite, rock crystal, strikingly veined stones) or clay. Numerous clay

rhyta are decorated with either sacred symbols (horns of consecration, double axe, sacral knot) or according to the refined styles of the palatial workshops, like this example. A most interesting group of clay Neopalatial rhyta of various types was found in the room C58 of the Gournia settlement.

Vases of the so-called Special Palatial Tradition, such as this one, are characterized by refined and precise shapes influenced by metal prototypes and by elaborate decoration, which became increasingly schematized over the course of time.

Selected Bibliography

Betancourt 1985, pp. 185, 191 pls. 102, 196; Dimopoulou-Rethemiotaki 2005, pp. 151–66, 223, 287; Evely 1999, p. 192; Hogarth 1899–1900; Karetsou–Andreadaki–Vlazaki–Papadakis 2000, pp. 91–92 (Betancourt); Koehl 2006, p. 227, fig. 44: 1247.

Christina Papadaki

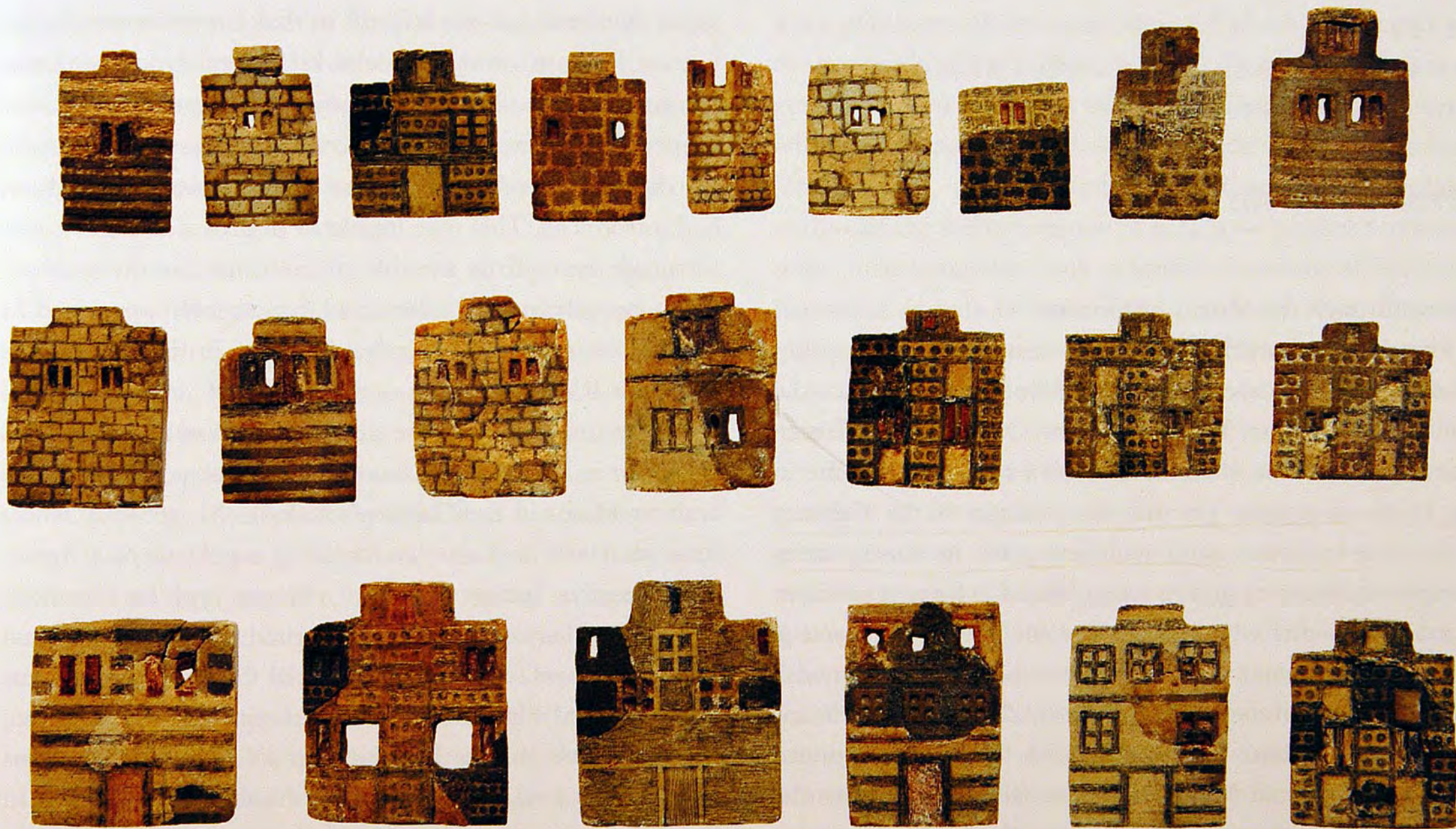


Fig. 10. "The Town Mosaic." Faience plaques depicting two- or three-storied houses. Knossos (ca. 1600–1500 B.C.). Herakleion Archaeological Museum.



Fig. 9. "Master Impression." Clay sealing (ca. 1450 B.C.). Kastelli Hill, Greek-Swedish Excavation. Khania Archaeological Museum.



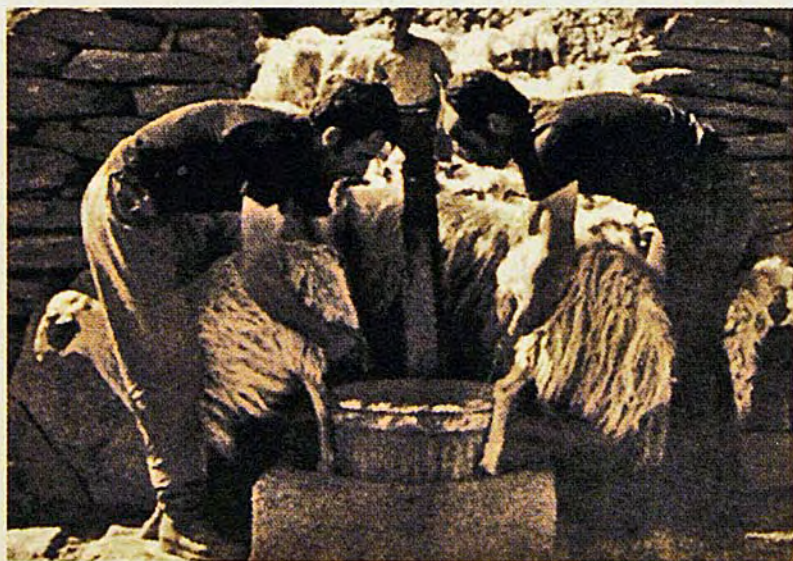
Fig. 11. Bull leapers and bull from Knossos (“Toreador Fresco”)
(ca. 1450–1400 B.C.). Herakleion Archaeological Museum.



Fig. 1. Votive basin with the modeled figurines of a herd of goats and their herdsman. Palaikastro (ca. 2000–1900 B.C.). Herakleion Archaeological Museum.



a



b

Fig. 2. a. Drawing of a clay seal impression with a scene of the milking of animals. Khania (ca. 1450 B.C.).
b. Modern scene (CMS V. Suppl. 1A, no. 137).
© CMS Archive, Marburg.



Fig. 3. Faience figurine of a "snake goddess" (ca. 1600 B.C.).
Palace at Knossos, Temple Repositories. Herakleion
Archaeological Museum.



Fig. 7. The "Cupbearer." Fresco fragment of a large composition depicting a ceremonial procession (ca. 1525/1500–1450 B.C.). Palace at Knossos. Herakleion Archaeological Museum.



Fig. 8. "Camp-stool Fresco." Restored wall painting showing palatial feasting (ca. 1400–1375 B.C.). Palace at Knossos. Herakleion Archaeological Museum.



Fig. 9. "Grandstand Fresco." Miniature fresco depicting a columnar construction with horns of consecration, standing and seated figures on grandstands, and a gathered crowd underneath (ca. 1600–1500 B.C.). Palace at Knossos. Herakleion Archaeological Museum.



Fig. 7. Gold covering of the pommel of a great bronze sword.
Palace at Malia (ca. 1800–1700 B.C.).
Herakleion Archaeological Museum.



Fig. 6. "The Captain of the Blacks." Fresco wall painting from Knossos (ca. 1350–1300 B.C.). Herakleion Archaeological Museum.



Fig. 5. Sherd with relief depiction of a runner holding a wreath. Prasas, Herakleion (ca. 1600–1450 B.C.).

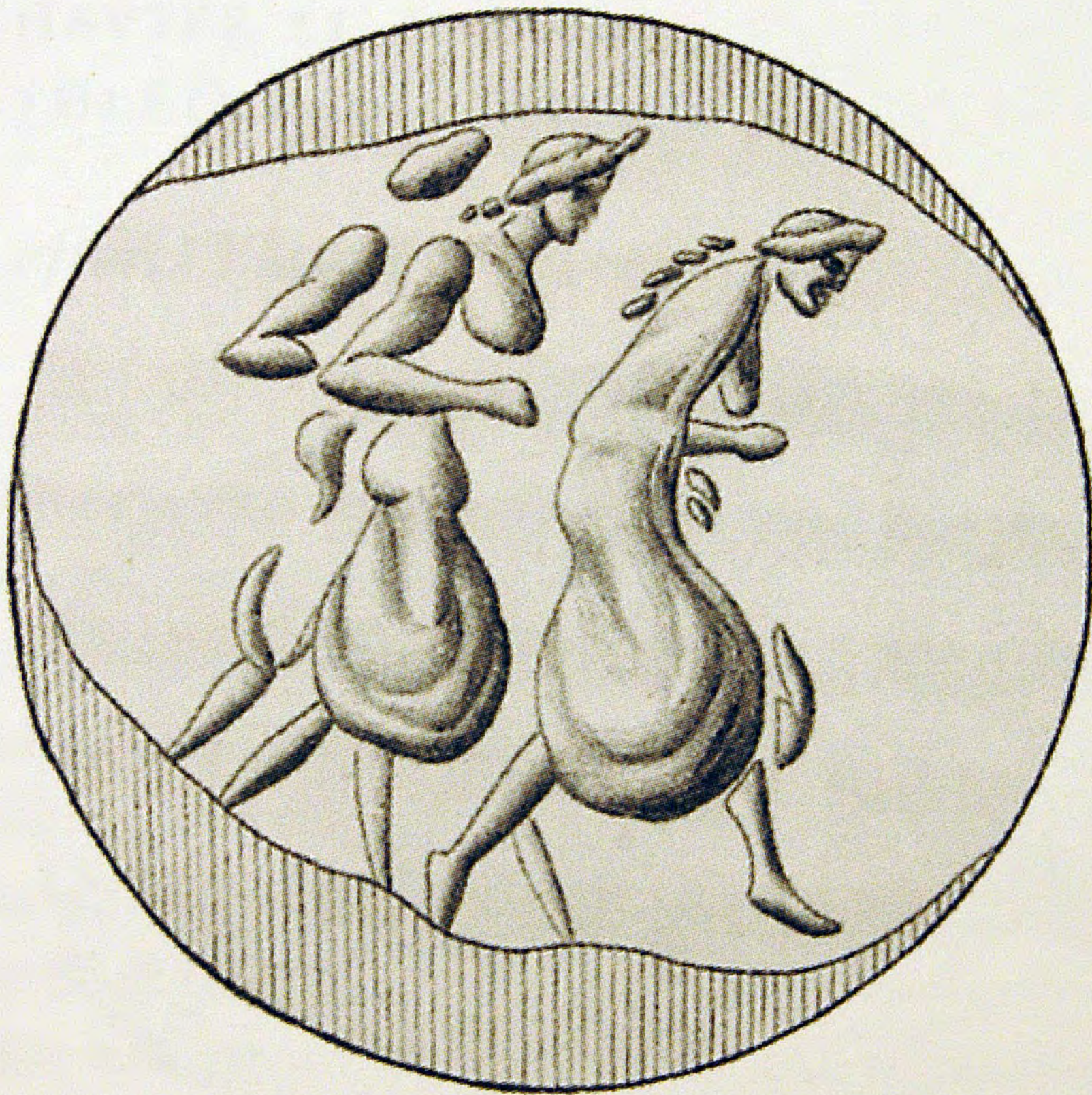


Fig. 4. Sealstone with runners. Zakros (ca. 1500–1450 B.C.)
(CMS II 7, no. 15). © CMS Archive, Marburg.



Fig. 5. Elephant tusks. Palace at Zakros (ca. 1450 B.C.).
Herakleion Archaeological Museum.



Fig. 4. Wall painting with part of the “Bull and Maze” scene.
Tell el Dab’a (ca. 1600–1400 B.C.) (Karetsou–Andreadaki–
Vlazaki–Papadakis 2000, fig. 277a).



Fig. 5. Elephant tusks. Palace at Zakros (ca. 1450 B.C.).
Herakleion Archaeological Museum.



Fig. 1. Olive tree fresco fragments. Palace at Knossos (ca. 1600–1450 B.C.).
Herakleion Archaeological Museum.



Fig. 7. Reconstructed wall painting depicting a blue monkey in a rocky landscape collecting flowers or stealing eggs. Knossos, House of the Frescoes (ca. 1525/1500 B.C.). Herakleion Archaeological Museum.



Fig. 2. Votives from the Traostalos and Petsofas peak sanctuaries.

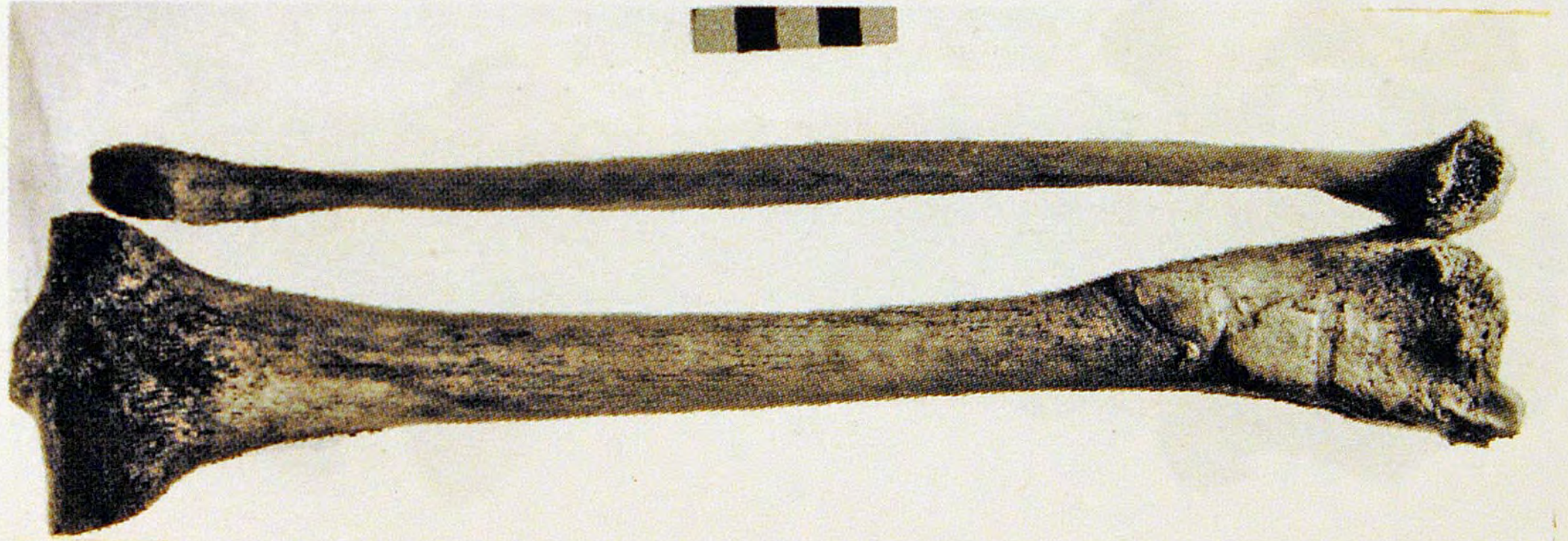


Fig. 3. Healed fractures of tibia and fibula from Armenoi, Tomb 89.

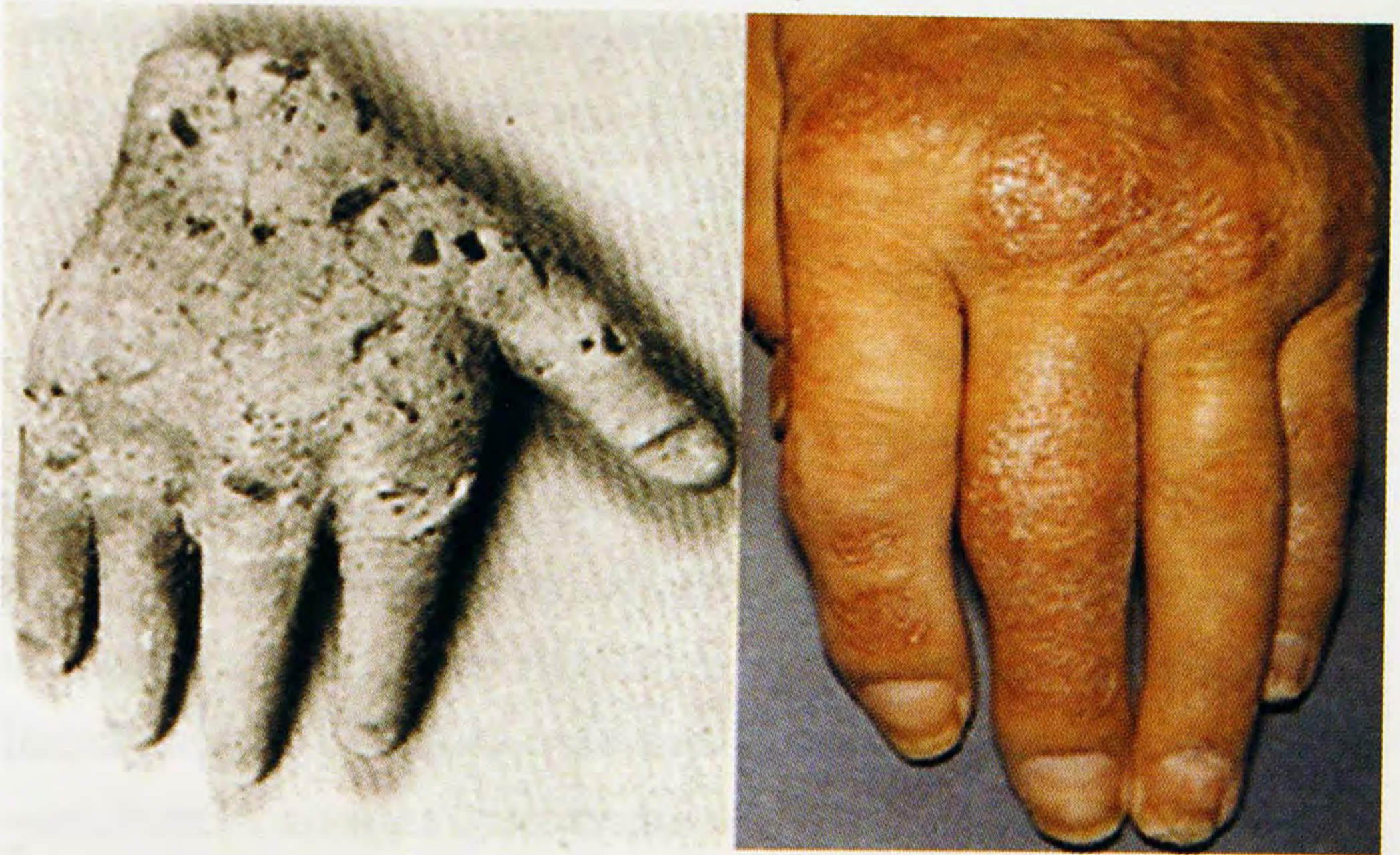


Fig. 4. Clay hand from the Petsofas peak sanctuary next to a modern text book illustration of osteoarthritis.



Fig. 5. Knee and toe bones from Early/Middle Minoan Haghios Charalambos with arthritic changes.



Fig. 10. Clay model of male dance on circular dancing floor with consecration horns (ca. 1600–1450 B.C.). Kamilari, Phaistos. Herakleion Archaeological Museum.



Fig. 11. Clay model depicting offerings to seated figurines, perhaps the dead ancestors (ca. 1600–1450 B.C.). Kamilari, Phaistos. Herakleion Archaeological Museum.

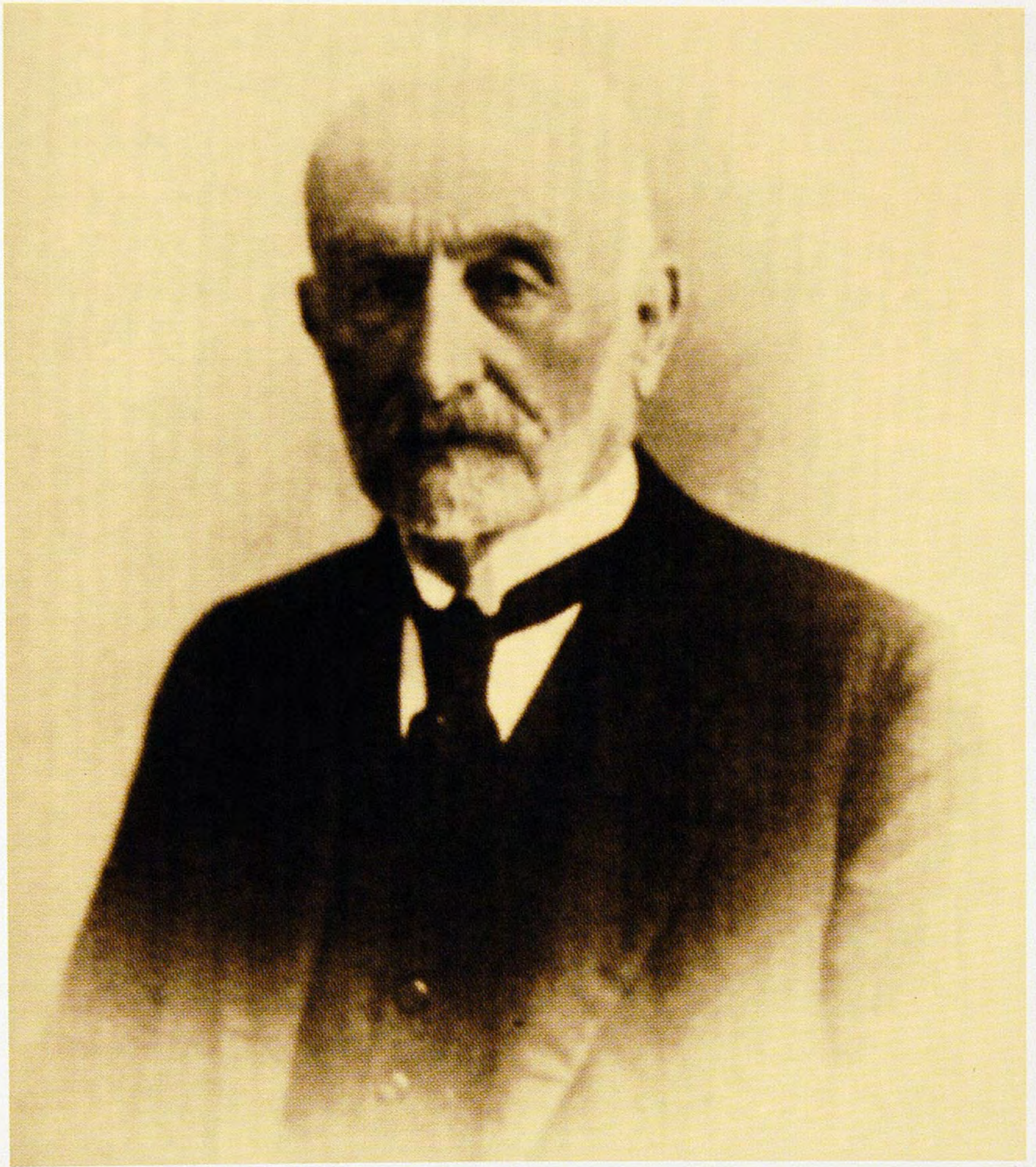


Fig. 3. Joseph Hazzidakis.



Fig. 4. Stephanos Xanthoudides.



Fig. 5. Federico Halbherr.



Fig. 7. Nikolaos Platon.



Fig. 8. Harriet Boyd.

