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Celtic Stylized Face, detail of a mounting for a shield, Iron Age, 2nd or 1st century BCE.

Found in the River Thames at Wandsworth, Middlesex, London, United Kingdom

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Letter from the Editor

Volume 5. Our first, of what I hope are many, milestones. In those five years, we have done a lot of growing. From humble beginnings as a SUNY Buffalo only publication, we have grown into a peer reviewed journal with an international reach. This has all been possible to all the authors, reviewers, and editors we have had over the years. I owe a great thanks to them for all their hard work in making Chronika the journal that you now hold in your hands.

I have been involved with Chronika in some capacity since the first issue. Author, editor, and finally editor-in-chief, I have spent a lot of time over the past five years with this journal. When Laura Harrison had decided to pass the reigns, I was hesitant to grab them. I had seen the amount of work it took, and was unsure if I was up to the task. There has been a lot of headaches, long nights, author wrangling, editor wrangling, deadline crunches, and general nerve wracking. Each issue represents the combined passion and drive of a group of young scholars adding their contribution to our field. I am really glad to have been a part of it. Our little journal has made great strides, I know that I am leaving it in capable hands, and I just hope that I have made a secure enough of a foundation from which the next step can be made.

Darren Poltorak
Editor in Chief

Publish or Perish: Reflecting on Chronika's Past, Present and Future

Six years ago, Chronika was born out of a conversation between three Ph.D. students in the halls of the University at Buffalo, after an IEMA talk. James Artz, Michael Rienti and myself were wondering why IEMA seemed to serve senior level scholars, but lacked a graduate student component. Sure, we could attend IEMA lectures and events, but IEMA publications (IEMA Conference Proceedings and IEMA Monograph Series) were out of our reach as young scholars.

What could we do to gain some traction in academia? We wanted to get our feet wet: gather experience with the publishing process, expand our CV's, publish and present our research. Most of all, we wanted to grow as scholars. Our various dissertation projects were progressing, but our work wasn't mature enough for a senior-level academic journal yet. What were our options? And, could IEMA help?

Eager to turn our brainstorming session into a reality, Michael, James and I approached the IEMA Board with an idea about a "Student Newsletter," and a lunch-hour "Student Brownbag" speaker series. IEMA enthusiastically supported the idea, and suggested we adopt their interdisciplinary structure. The idea of a "Student Newsletter" was scrapped in favor of a more rigorous "Graduate Student Journal," and "Student Brownbag" lectures were scheduled once per month. Within a year, IEMA followed up by establishing a Student Research Scholarship, offering University at Buffalo students financial support for pre-dissertation and dissertation research.

In the five years since Chronika Volume 1 was published, the journal has grown substantially. Many of the most important changes have occurred under the leadership of Darren Poltorak, who has filled the Editor in Chief position since I stepped down in 2013. Under Darren's leadership, Chronika is more competitive: each year we collect an increasing number of compelling abstracts from a growing body of international submissions. Our editorial policy is more rigorous: Chronika has established a large body of peer reviewers with expertise in spanning from prehistoric to Classical times. And, we have expanded our digital presence: Chronika is accessible at www.chronikajournal.com and we are focusing on providing digital accessibility at university libraries worldwide.

Chronika's growth has been fostered with unwavering support from IEMA, the University at Buffalo graduate students who produce it each year, our extended network of peer reviewers, and of course our authors. I look forward to overseeing Chronika's role in disseminating interdisciplinary, international research in Europe and the Mediterranean, in the next five years and beyond.

Laura Harrison
Editor Emeritus

The *Megara* of the Thesmophoria: Reconciling the Textual and Archaeological Records

Katherine R L McLardy

A scholion to Lucian Dialogi Meretricii 2.1 suggests that the Thesmophoria, a widespread ancient Greek women's festival, was centred on a rite involving the deposition of piglets into pits (megara), and later recovering their remains. The megara of the Thesmophoria are prominent in the secondary literature concerning this festival, but they remain curiously absent from many archaeological reports of sanctuaries dedicated to Demeter. This paper will examine evidence for pits excavated at sanctuaries dedicated to Demeter that can be identified as potential megara. The focus will be twofold, firstly to consider whether there was a standard form for such pits or whether there was considerable local variation occurring, and secondly to consider reasons for their absence in the archaeological record at the majority of identified Demeter sites. In this way, I aim to establish whether it is possible to reconcile the textual evidence with the archaeological evidence for the rites involving piglets during the Thesmophoria.

Introduction

The focal point of the Thesmophoria is generally theorised to have been a rite that involved the deposition of piglets into pits (*megara*), and later, the recovery of their remains.¹ These *megara* are prominent in the scholarly literature, based on a small number of ancient literary sources, though there is not nearly as significant a focus on collating archaeological evidence for these features. This paper will survey some of the potential *megara* identified in excavation reports from sanctuaries in honour of Demeter in order to consider whether there is a standard representation of a *megaron* that can be identified. Based upon this information the universality of this feature of the Thesmophoria festival will be considered.

Literary Evidence

The rite involving the deposition of piglets into pits named *megara* is mentioned only in three ancient literary sources relating to the Thesmophoria and all of these sources are somewhat problematic. As it is based on these brief mentions that the *megara* have drawn such scholarly interest, it is necessary to consider the literary testimonies before moving onto the archaeological remains which could potentially be identified as *megara*.

Scholion to Lucian Dialogi Meretricii 2.1

The *scholion* to Lucian (*Dialogi Meretricii* 2.1) is believed to provide the only description of what was probably the main rite of the Thesmophoria.² However, the text is problematic and somewhat obscure.³ The author of the *scholion* is unknown, with suggestions ranging widely in date, but N. Lowe convincingly argues for an identification with one of the Hellenistic *exegetes*.⁴ The *scholion* is generally assumed to refer to the Thesmophoria in its entirety,⁵ but actually mentions

three festivals, the Thesmophoria, the Skirophoria and the Arrhetophoria. It appears that the *scholion* is, as R. Parker describes it, “a crude abbreviation of a fuller and more nuanced account.”⁶

The text describes the rite as follows.⁷ Certain women, the so-called ‘bailers’, for whom chastity was a requirement for three days prior to the event, collect the rotten remains of what had been thrown into the *megara*. These remains are later specified as models of snakes and phalluses made from dough, pine branches, and the rotten remains of piglets although there is some debate as to whether the piglets were deposited alive or already sacrificed.⁸ The *megara* are also stated to have snakes in them.

Supporting Textual Sources

Two other literary sources support this *scholion*. Clement of Alexandria (*Protrepticus* 17.1) preserves a brief account of the use of the *megara*.⁹ It is obvious that his account of this practice is a more condensed version taken from the same source as that of the scholiast to Lucian.¹⁰ Persephone is named as Pherephatta. This suggests an Attic origin for the source text as this version of the name is in the Attic dialect.¹¹ Clement (*Protrepticus* 17.1) notes merely that the ‘*megarizing*’ women of the Thesmophoria throw piglets into chasms.

Pausanias (*Graeciae descriptio* 9.8.1) also records an account of the practices involving the *megara* at Potniae, however, the main verb is corrupted and the passage is difficult to interpret.¹² The text does not name the Thesmophoria though it is clear from the context that this is the most likely identification for the festival described. Aside from the difficulties of the text, Pausanias also seems to be somewhat dubious about the truth of the events he is describing in this passage. He suggests that the piglets are deposited, living, in the

megara at Potniae and, perhaps, appear at Dodona the next year.¹³

In addition, Eustathius (*Commentarii ad Homeri Odysseam* 1.13.40) notes that the *megaron* is the subterranean dwelling of Demeter and Kore, and further explains that, according to Aelian, it was where the ritual holy things were kept or located.¹⁴

There are also sources that mention the occurrence of *megara* for the Thesmophoria at specific places. Herodotus (6.134.2) notes the presence of a *megaron* within the sanctuary of Demeter Thesmophoros at Paros. Pausanias (*Graeciae descriptio* 9.8.1), as noted above, discusses *megara* at Potniae. In addition, there are a small number of inscriptions that mention specific *megara*, including one from the Piraeus (IG II² 1177), one at Eleusis (IG II² 1363), and one from Delos (ID 2047).

Identification of a *megaron*?

Although for many, the term *megaron* has a specific technical meaning as a large hall in a Mycenaean palace, it has been noted in scholarship that even within Homer, *megaron* can be seen to have a much wider sense.¹⁵ B.C. Dietrich notes that “*megaron* in the singular can mean hall or any kind of room, whether bedroom, store, or workroom of men, women or gods.”¹⁶ By the time of Herodotus, the meaning of *megaron* appears to refer specifically to a sacred building.¹⁷ M-C. Hellmann notes that in the Classical period, the term is generally associated with mysteries or cult purposes.¹⁸ B.C. Dietrich identifies the usage of *megaron* that is found in festivals to Demeter as meaning “‘cave’ or ‘underground chamber’”.¹⁹ He suggests that the *megaron* was probably originally a special underground chamber but that it subsequently became incorporated into a temple structure.²⁰ M-C. Hellmann suggests that a *megaron* in the context of Demeter was a building or area enclosed

by walls in order to preserve the necessary secrecy for the rites,²¹ and within this area may perhaps have been a pit. She also notes that, based on notes from lexicographical sources and *scholia*, the term could also refer to caves or underground chambers.²² N. Robertson notes that there has been some dissension in the past, but concludes that the term *megaron* in the context of Demetrian ritual cannot mean anything other than a sacrificial pit.²³ Therefore, it can be seen that there is no definitive description of what Demetrian *megara* would be expected to look like.

Archaeological Evidence

In the past, little attention has been paid in scholarly literature to the overall picture provided by the excavated remains of potential *megara*. These have only been discussed by their respective excavators in the context of individual sites but there has not been a more encompassing focus on what information these *megara* can provide about the celebration of the Thesmophoria festival. In order to form a bigger picture of what constituted a *megaron* in the rites of Demeter, it is necessary to consider identified *megara* in the published literature. As the nature of this work is a survey, descriptions will be brief though detailed information on each can be found in the original excavation reports.

Eleusis

The site of Eleusis is much more associated with the Eleusinian Mysteries than the Thesmophoria, but there is evidence that points towards a local celebration of the Thesmophoria there (Aeneas Tacticus *Polioretica* IV.8).²⁴ There have been two options for *megara* flagged at this site, and an epigraphic source from the late fourth century BCE refers to a *megaron* at Eleusis in a specifically Thesmophorian context (IG II² 1363). K. Clinton suggested that some of the pit structures

abutting the porch might be the remains of Thesmophorian *megara*.²⁵ Although the sanctuary at Eleusis has a long history of continuous use, potsherds in the relevant pits suggest that they were in use during the third and second centuries BCE.²⁶ The pits are five in number and rectangular.²⁷ The width and length vary but the depth is generally more than 7 m.²⁸ Pit E is the largest of the five and has been said to resemble the supposed Thesmophorian *megaron* at Priene.²⁹ K. Clinton stated that there was no functional need for these pits and proposed that they owed their existence to a ritualistic purpose.³⁰ Contents of the pits included black soil, potsherds, animal bones, fragments of marble and stele, and bronze vessels.³¹

Alternatively, N. Robertson suggests that a pit located in the northeast corner of the temple may be identified with the *megaron* of the Thesmophoria.³² The pit is circular with a diameter of approximately 1 meter and a depth of 2 m.³³ In noting these two theories from Eleusis, an important fact becomes apparent – that the way in which scholars conceive of what a *megaron* constitutes will affect their inclination or disinclination to identify them as such. K. Clinton's criteria include stone walls, a link with the earth, and sufficient drainage.³⁴ N. Robertson notes that “these criteria for a *megaron* are far from self-evident.”³⁵ For his part, N. Robertson suggests that the ability to retrieve the remains of the piglets is the essential criterion by which to judge a potential example of a *megaron*.³⁶ It is important not to define the term too narrowly in the absence of primary evidence.

Mytilene

The sacrificial pit at Mytilene provides interesting evidence for the consideration of potential *megara* used in the celebration of the Thesmophoria.³⁷ The height of

its use was in the late Classical to early Hellenistic period (late 4th century BCE to 2nd century BCE).³⁸ It is a relatively shallow semi-circular pit with a maximum diameter of 2 m.³⁹ The construction is fairly crude, and the pit has been disturbed by later construction at the site.⁴⁰ It is located to the east of the altar and the excavators theorise that it may have been associated with a temple which has not yet been located.⁴¹ The remains of piglets dominate the archaeological assemblage recovered from the pit and show evidence of being burned *in situ*.⁴² Also found in the pit were barley and grape seeds, potsherds, seashells, and low numbers of bones of other animals, including birds, fish, and snake bones.⁴³ The piglet bones comprise more than 3,000 fragments, and are mostly identified as perinatal.⁴⁴ D. Ruscillo's study found these fragments came from at least 29 piglets.⁴⁵ However, she notes that due to damage, probably less than one third of the pit is preserved, and if the pit were intact, there may have been a minimum of one hundred piglets deposited there originally.⁴⁶ Despite associating the faunal remains at Mytilene with the Thesmophorian ritual, D. Ruscillo notes that “an underground *megaron* was not discovered during the course of the excavation,” and suggests that one may be found in the future.⁴⁷ However, it seems possible to at least consider that this pit itself might be the *megaron*, as the definitions above show that a *megaron* need not have necessarily been an underground chamber.

Priene

The sanctuary of Demeter at Priene where potential pits have been found was constructed around 350 BCE.⁴⁸ It seems relatively certain that the Thesmophoria was celebrated there, as, in addition to the normal Demetrian offerings of female figurines carrying *hydriai* and piglets,⁴⁹ there are unique female figures found only at this sanctuary.⁵⁰ These have been linked

with Iambe/Baubo,⁵¹ who is prominent in the justification of *aischrologia* (vulgar jesting) at the Thesmophoria.⁵² The pit is identified by the excavators as a *bothros*, a sacrificial pit for liquid offerings,⁵³ but has been identified as a *megaron* in other literature.⁵⁴ It is almost square, measuring 2.85 m by 2.95 m, and approximately 2 m deep.⁵⁵ It is located to the south of the temple building, and some care has been put into its construction. Remnants of the original roof to the pit remain, and a wall had been added some time after the pit's construction,⁵⁶ possibly to provide extra privacy.⁵⁷

Knidos

An early excavation at Knidos yielded a pit which has been touted as an example of a *megaron*.⁵⁸ The pit found was an elliptical limestone chamber.⁵⁹ It had been severely damaged, probably in an earthquake, and the excavator hypothesised that it was originally a circular room.⁶⁰ Dimensions were 2.74 m by 1.92 m, with a depth of more than 2 m.⁶¹ The pit had a wide range of objects inside it, including rubble (most likely the remains of the roof), sculptures, potsherds, hairpins, inscriptional material, marble votive pigs, and the bones of pigs, small oxen, goats and birds.⁶² From the finds, it appeared to have been in use during the Roman period; however, some elements of the *temenos* of Demeter at Knidos could not be located in more recent excavations and so re-examination of the evidence is not possible.⁶³

Other Sites

The above examples represent those sites mostly commonly identified as featuring *megara* in the secondary literature relating to the Thesmophoria. Mentions of other potential *megara* occur at a few other sites throughout the Greek world, but not enough information is available to discuss

these in depth. For example, a recent paper argues that there may have even been a *megaron* at Pagus Triopus outside of Rome though it has not been the subject of an official excavation.⁶⁴ It consists of a long underground cavern, measuring 2 m by 27 m, lying to the north of a small temple and within, or underneath, a sacred field.⁶⁵ Nonetheless without a proper excavation at the site, it cannot be definitely identified as a Demeterian *megaron*, and there are other possible explanations for this feature. Excavators at Cyrene suggested that the single-chamber buildings they found at the extramural sanctuary of Demeter may have been *megara* but were unable to narrow down the function and positively identify these structures in the absence of good epigraphical evidence.⁶⁶ Both W. Burkert and M-C. Hellmann flag a possible *megaron* or *megara* at Agrigentum though it is unclear whether they are discussing the same feature.⁶⁷

Conclusion

A summary of the main archaeological evidence for the presence of Demeterian *megara* leads to a firm conclusion. There is no evidence for a standard form for these pits if it is accepted that all the examples discussed above were used for the purpose of chthonic rites in the Thesmophoria. These can be circular, elliptical, rectangular, or square. Some feature roofs and others appear to have been open to the air. Some examples are very deep, whilst others are comparatively shallow. In addition, some of the pits under discussion were constructed with good materials and a great deal of care, whilst others are crudely and haphazardly constructed. Of course, there are also many cultic sites of Demeter where there have not been recovered pits which could be construed as a *megaron* or a *bothros*. In some cases, these sites have not been completely excavated, or the standards of excavation may be less in-

depth than the preferred standard today, but it does not seem unreasonable to conclude that some Demetrian sanctuaries never had these features. This suggests a widespread variation in the practices such as are detailed in the *scholion* to Lucian.

In the case of the varying styles of *megara*, perhaps the shape, dimensions and depth, as well as the standard of the construction, was not influenced by the ritual needs of the Thesmophoria festival. Instead, these may have been influenced by local conditions, such as the wealth of the community, or the natural landscape, which would indicate that certain structures would be easier to impose upon this landscape, especially in the case of those sites where natural clefts in the rock seem to have played a role in the desired ritual activities. In some cases, perhaps the ritual described by the scholiast was significantly modified in order to occur without the use of a *megaron* at all. An awareness of the potential variability of these features when considering excavations of Demetrian sanctuaries may reveal more examples of features that could have been used for these chthonic rites for Demeter Thesmophoros.

Endnotes:

- 1 Frazer 1911, 839; Parke 1977, 159; Stehle 2007, 169; Stallsmith 2009, 31.
- 2 Most modern scholars follow this viewpoint, but for example, see Zeitlin 1982, 138; Dillon 2003, 113-114; Goff 2004, 126; Parker 2005, 272; Stallsmith 2009, 30.
- 3 Frazer 1911, 839; Parke 1977, 159; Stehle 2007, 169; Stallsmith 2009, 31.
- 4 Lowe 1998, 163.
- 5 That is to say, discussion generally focuses solely on the Thesmophoria and the other festivals are only mentioned in passing or not at all. For example, see Burkert 1985, 242-243; Dillon 2003, 114; Goff 2004, 126; Stallsmith 2009, 31. Parke 1977, 159 suggests it is impossible to tell which rituals belonged to which festivals mentioned. Robertson 1996, 365 argues instead that the early part of the *scholion* describes the Thesmophoria, and the later part describes the Arrhetophoria, with the reference to the Skirophoria being merely a passing mention.
- 6 Parker 2005, 272-273.
- 7 See Lowe 1998 for the most recent treatment of the text. See also Rabe 1906 for the text.
- 8 As to whether the piglets were alive or dead at the time they were deposited, there are various viewpoints. For the assumption that the pigs were dead before they were placed in the *megara*, see, for example, Dillon 2003, 115 and Larson 2007, 70. For living piglets, see, for example, Frazer 1911, 840 and O'Higgins 2001, 150. Ruscillo 2013, 191 suggests that the piglets would have to be alive or freshly killed in order to attract the attention of snakes.
- 9 For original text, see Mondésert 1949.
- 10 Lowe 1998.
- 11 Larson 2007, 69;
- 12 For original text, see Rocha Pereira 1981.
- 13 The main verb is partially corrupt but is usually reconstructed as *epiphaino* (to appear).
- 14 Original text may be found in Stallbaum 1970.
- 15 Dietrich 1973, 11; Hellmann 1992, 259; White 1993, 98.
- 16 Dietrich 1973, 3. Likewise Hellmann 1992, 259 – “En réalité, si l'on examine l'emploi qu'en fait Homère, μέγαρον n'est nullement confiné dans ce sens et désigne n'importe quel abri, habitation, ou pièce à l'intérieur d'un bâtiment.”
- 17 For example, Herodotus 6.134.2. See Dietrich 1973, 4 for further information.
- 18 Hellmann 1992, 259.
- 19 Dietrich 1973, 5.
- 20 Dietrich 1973, 8.
- 21 Hellmann 1992, 259. Perhaps by this definition, the term *megaron* could be stretched to include something like the South Stoa at Pergamon which Cronkite 1997, 481 suggests “may have been used for chthonic cult purposes.”
- 22 Hellmann 1992, 260.

23 Robertson 1996, 339-340. He also rejects the possibility that it could refer to an inner sanctum inside a larger building.

24 Original text may be found in Bon and Dain 1967. For discussion, see Clinton 1988, 72-73; Clinton 1993, 113.

25 Clinton 1988, 73. White 1993, 99 concurs with this suggestion.

26 Clinton 1988, 76.

27 Clinton 1988, 73, 76.

28 Clinton 1988, 76.

29 Clinton 1988, 76.

30 Clinton 1988, 73.

31 Clinton 1988, 73, 76.

32 Robertson 1996, 329-330.

33 Robertson 1996, 329.

34 Clinton 1988 73, n. 43, 80. See also Henrichs 1969.

35 Robertson 1996, 330.

36 Robertson 1996, 330.

37 Ruscillo 2013, 187.

38 Ruscillo 2013, 182.

39 Ruscillo 2013, 187.

40 Ruscillo 2013, 187.

41 Ruscillo 2013, 184, 187.

42 Ruscillo 2013, 187.

43 Ruscillo 2013, 189.

44 Ruscillo 2013, 188.

45 Ruscillo 2013, 188.

46 Ruscillo 2013, 188.

47 Ruscillo 2013, 192-193.

48 Cronkite 1997, 501.

49 Cronkite 1997, 502.

50 Schede 1962, 93.

51 Schede 1962, 93; Cronkite 1997, 502.

52 See O'Higgins 2001, 139-141.

53 Schede 1962, 93.

54 Burkert 1985, 243. See also Henrichs 1969, 35.

55 Cronkite 1997, 502.

56 Schede 1962, 93.

57 Schede 1962, 93.

58 Burkert 1985, 243.

59 Newton 1863, 383.

60 Newton 1863, 383.

61 Newton 1863, 383.

62 Newton 1863, 383-390.

63 Love 1972, 399; Cronkite 1997, 411.

64 Lucchese 2013, 161-163.

65 Lucchese 2013, 178-179. The sacred field is, in Lucchese's description, a necessary part of the rite, being the location where the remnants of piglets recovered from the *megara* are plowed to ritually ensure human and agricultural fertility.

66 White 1993, 99-101.

67 Burkert 1985, 243; Hellmann 1992, 260.

68 This is supported by a few other sources in the published literature. See Henrichs 1969, 35 – "Natürlich darf man dieses Beispiel nicht verallgemeinern. Es dürfte grössere *Megara* gegeben haben." as well as Burkert 1985, 243 – "The constructions were obviously not everywhere of the same type."

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Imagi(ni)ng 'The Palace of Minos': A view from the Architectural Drawings

Giorgos Sofianos

This paper examines the architectural drawings of 'The Palace of Minos', the final publication of Knossos' excavations conducted by Sir Arthur Evans. The main aim is to investigate the meaning of their use and their incorporation in 'The Palace of Minos'. An examination based upon the study of architecture and architectural drawings in archaeology, as well as the history of archaeological research, proposes that 'The Palace of Minos' contains a very characteristic, radical and exceptional assemblage of architectural drawings in terms of Aegean archaeology. Such special architectural drawings may derive from specific epistemological assumptions made by Evans in order to support his vision for Minoan Civilization. I will argue that Evans based his narrative for the Minoan Civilization not only upon the archaeological discourse, but also upon the archaeological image. More specifically, I will examine the way in which architectural drawings contributed to this direction.

Introduction

The 19th and early 20th century saw the transformation of archaeology from an elite pastime into a comprehensively constituted humanities discipline.¹ This transformation went hand-in-hand with systematic field research and with the involvement of architects in archaeological excavations. Key-moments into such an epistemological trajectory were the publications of the excavations at Samothrace² and ancient Olympia³ which integrated architectural drawings drafted by trained architects.⁴

Sir Arthur Evans followed this developing trend when he started excavating the prehistoric site of Knossos in Crete. During the ten years of excavation and almost another two decades of restoration, he employed four architects (Theodore Fyfe, Christian Doll, Francis Newton, Piet de Jong) for the mapping and the “reconstitution,”⁵ as Evans himself called it, of the excavated architectural remains, with the result of a very characteristic, radical and exceptional assemblage of architectural drawings in terms of Aegean archaeology. Most of these architectural drawings were published in Evans’ four-volume work titled ‘The Palace of Minos’ (PM). PM is not only a final excavation report, but, mostly, the seminal interpretative synthesis on Bronze Age Crete and its so-called “Minoan Civilization”.

Recent research has established that images published in this magnum opus do not simply record the architectural remains or illustrate Evans’ narrative about Prehistoric Crete but rather they are an integral and structural part of its argument. However, such views have been restricted to the photographs⁶ and the reconstruction drawings⁷ of PM. A comprehensive assessment of the architectural drawings and the meaning of their incorporation in Evans’ work is still lacking. This paper addresses this research gap and discusses

the architectural drawings of PM, on the one hand in relation to the study of architecture in archaeology and the role of architectural drawings in such a study, and on the other hand with reference to the history of the archaeological research and especially to Evans’ disciplinary background.

Form – Function – Meaning

The examination of the architectural drawings of PM will be largely based upon the triptych *Form – Function – Meaning*, namely the three focal points of the study of architecture in the frame of archaeology.⁸ *Form* deals with the investigation of the structural and constructive issues along with the questioning of the original architectural form of the remains. *Function* is closely related to *Form*, though the former implies a higher degree of interpretation. *Function* is related to the way in which certain architectural parts of a building were used, according to a specific point of view: what potentialities and confinements architecture integrates as a field of human action (movement, visibility, etc.). It can be said that *Function* is an approach to the architectural remains which is not strongly bounded within historical and cultural issues, thus the study of *Function* is more architectural in nature rather than archaeological. The investigation of *Meaning* departs from the strict limits of architectural study into the placement of the building in its historical, social, and cultural milieu. This is because, in order for someone to investigate the possible meaning that a building would have for a special group of people in a relatively limited chronological period and in specific cultural boundaries, they have to consider *Form* and *Function* but, also, has to take into account the archaeological context. That is to say, the broader architectural frame in which the building falls into, the character of its mobile finds (pottery or other artifact categories), and

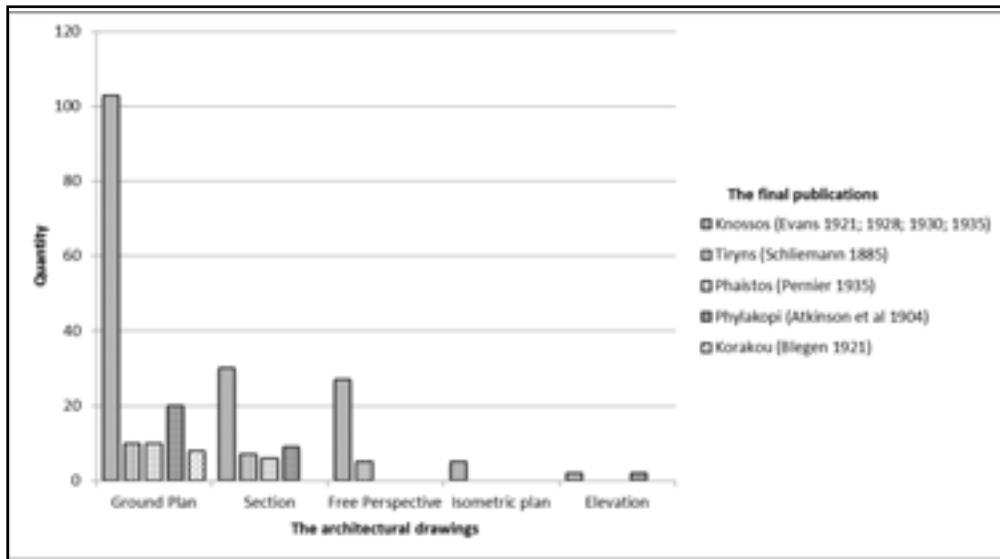


Figure 1: Chart showing both the quantity and the categories of architectural drawings incorporated in 'The Palace of Minos' and its contemporary publications.

other units of excavation recording (bones, charcoal, etc.). Archaeological context plays a significant role in the development of archaeological interpretation, in other words, the definition of *Meaning* of each architectural space.⁹

The architectural drawings of 'The Palace of Minos'

PM includes five categories of architectural drawings: ground plans, sections, elevations, isometric plans and free perspectives.

Ground plans

Ground plans constitute the majority of the architectural drawings that are integrated in PM. In comparison to contemporary publications of prehistoric sites in the Aegean, such as the publications of the excavations at Tiryns,¹⁰ Phylakopi,¹¹ Phaistos,¹² and Korakou,¹³ the ground plans in PM are not only of considerably higher number (fig. 1), but also of a different character. Notwithstanding the fact that each excavation program forms a separate case, the excavation programs mentioned above share almost the same approach to

ground plans despite the diverse ethnic and epistemological background of the archaeologists and architects involved. Like Knossos, they all occupied trained architects who drew plans for the needs of their final publications. In contrast, the ground plans of Knossos feature major differences.

A considerable number of PM's ground plans are not small-scale plans¹⁴ including solely architectural features as was usual at the time,¹⁵ but they state mobile finds and other excavation features as well, focusing on limited architectural areas (fig. 2). Such a thing renders these plans more archaeological in character as they place each find or feature into its archaeological context. Thus, PM's ground plans depart from the study of the *Form* and the recording of the architectural remains,¹⁶ which is the original aim of this type of architectural illustration, into the investigation of the *Meaning* of the architecture. Moreover, many of them present both extant and missing parts of the ground level of the edifice. Not only this, but there are plans which present the layout of the first level of the edifice.¹⁷ Dotted lines usually, though not always, denote the largely tentative

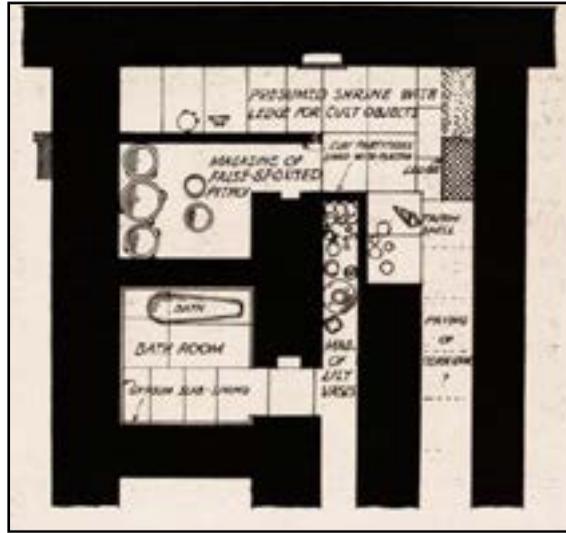


Figure 2: Ground plan of northwest angle of southeastern Insula (Evans 1921, fig. 419).

layout of space.¹⁸ As a result, such plans entail a high degree of interpretation. This contradicts with PM's contemporary publications which are characterized by a significant degree of an empiristic approach to archaeological remains.¹⁹ Empiricism in archaeology considers the material remains of the past as objective scientific–archaeological data independent from the observer–archaeologist and the final archaeological interpretation. As a result, the archaeologists distance themselves from the data to guard the assumed neutrality of the latter and thus to aim for an impartial interpretation. The lack of empiricism is accentuated by the fact that PM's ground plans identify most architectural spaces using descriptive, almost interpretative, labels such as the Queen's Megaron, Hall of the Double Axes, Bedroom, Bathroom and Treasury of Shrine.²⁰

Sections

Fyfe had elaborated small-scale architectural sections for extensive areas which was a frequent architectural choice at the end of the 19th and the beginnings of the 20th century as demonstrated by the publications

of Tiryns, Phylakopi and Phaestos.²¹ However, Evans included only one of them in PM,²² and did not ask Doll or de Jong for more small-scale sections.²³ He preferred to publish large-scale sections focused on limited architectural areas, instead of small-scale sections covering an extensive area, a tendency which is responsible for the high number of integrated sections in PM.²⁴ Moreover, many sections are not confined to recording extant architectural remains, but entail a considerable degree of reconstruction of the building's original height and other features (fig. 3). As a result, they diverge from the original aim of this type of architectural illustration, namely the comprehension of the *Form* of each architectural part.²⁵ Instead, the high degree of archaeological interpretation applied denotes the *Function*, and sometimes the *Meaning*, of architectural spaces.

In the case of the Niche of the Royal Villa, a building close to the Palace of Minos also excavated by Evans, a human figure takes a seat and is also able to see or hear someone at the ground or first level of the building denoting the *Function* (fig. 4).

Furthermore, this image projects Evans' archaeological interpretation for that specific and special architectural part of the building and thus states the *Meaning* that the British archaeologist attributed to the Niche. *Meaning* is derived from several special features of the human figures, such as indicators of social class and rank, which are closely associated with Evans' narrative for the Minoan Civilization. The male figures at the ground level are almost identical to those carved on a Neopalatial stone vessel from Hagia Triada, namely the Chieftain Cup.²⁶ Evans interpreted the figures depicted on the Chieftain Cup as a 'Young Prince' and a guard based on their paraphernalia (sword, lustral sprinkler, jeweled collar, armband, bracelets),²⁷ some of which are denoted in the Niche section. The interpretative character of the Niche section is further accentuated by the large scale, which further underscores that PM does not treat the data as independent from its interpretation, contrary to what Evans' contemporaries accepted.

Elevations

Elevations should be examined in connection with the isometric plans which follow. Evans maintained their architectural character in contrast to what he did with ground plans and sections. Considering that among the architectural remains of Bronze Age Knossos not a single edifice was preserved in its full height, PM's elevations entail a high degree of interpretation. Evans employed elevations for architectural areas such as the Grand Staircase, the Northern Entrance System and the Temple-Tomb (fig. 5). It is not by chance that Evans' architects have drafted isometric plans for the same architectural areas and buildings.

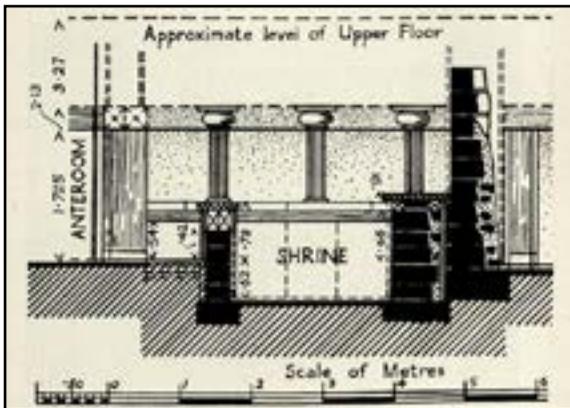


Figure 3: Section showing the Later 'Fetish Shrine' (Evans 1928, fig. 322).

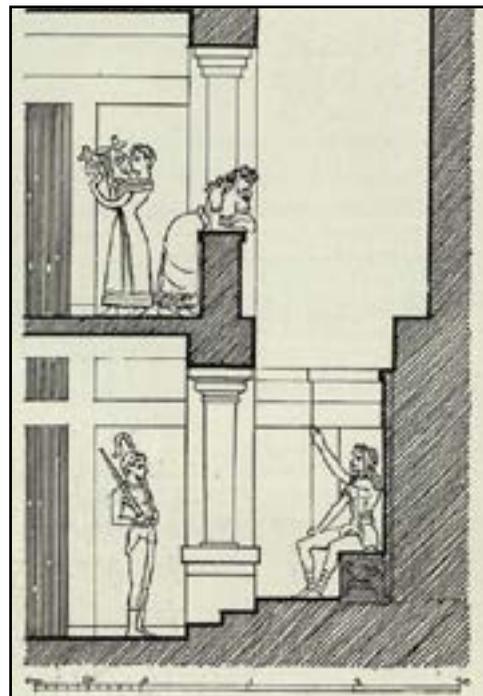


Figure 4: Section of West Light Area of 'Royal Villa' showing Hood above and Niche with Seat of Honour below (Evans 1928, fig. 238).

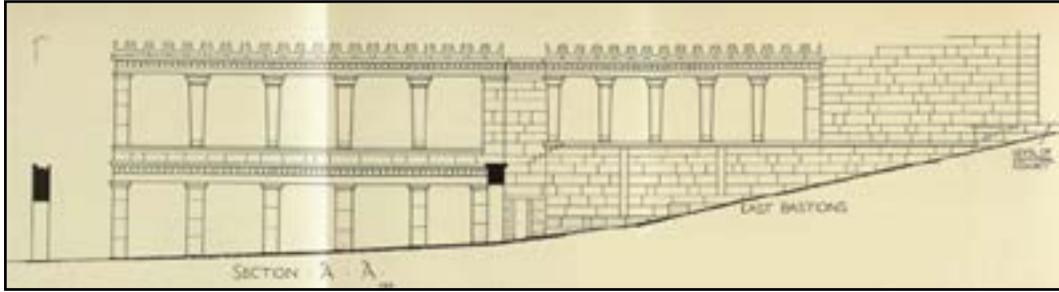


Figure 5: Elevation of Northern Entrance System (Evans 1930, fig. 106).

Isometric plans

Isometric plans are another category of architectural drawings incorporated by Evans in PM. They are three-dimensional technical drawings in contrast to sections and elevations which are two-dimensional plans. Like elevations, they entail a higher degree of interpretation than ground plans and sections because they illustrate the whole edifice including both extant and missing parts. Isometric plans contribute to the study of *Form* and *Function* but they may extend to *Meaning* according to the degree of restoration they entail. At this point it should be noticed that PM's isometric plans are highly detailed. In addition, they constitute, as do the elevations, technical drawings of identical character to the ones architects draft in order to guide new building projects.²⁸ The architects of Knossos produced isometric plans for the Hall of the Double Axes, the Little Palace, the East Bastion, the Temple-Tomb and other areas; Evans incorporated them in PM. Isometric plans exist only in the final publication of Knossos while elevations are almost absent from its contemporary publications.²⁹ It has been argued that the drawings under consideration were part of Evans' aim: that of the "reconstitution" of the Knossos architectural remains.³⁰ These were not simply drawings that illustrated Evans' interpretation of the architectural remains, but working drawings which were meant to practically enable and guide the restoration

works at Knossos.³¹ It is not by chance that almost all architectural parts of the Palace and buildings for which the above group of architectural drawings were drawn have been "reconstituted." Evans was led to the restoration mainly by his will for the best possible excavation documentation of the architectural remains. This, combined with the exceptionally well-preserved architectural remains of Bronze Age Palace at Knossos,³² formed the base upon which the Knossos' restoration program began. So, such a specific group of architectural drawings was of multi-purpose: it aimed to record the architectural remains as best as possible, it interpreted architectural remains by presenting a restored view of the missing parts, and, finally, it guided the restoration work.³³ Thus, in the case of PM, documentation in the field and excavation recording are entangled with archaeological interpretation.

Free Perspectives

We can point to one more category of architectural drawings incorporated in PM, that of free perspectives. Free perspectives are three-dimensional drawings which, contrary to the aforementioned categories, are not technical drawings in the sense it is not possible to measure off dimensions of them. They are usually connected to archaeological interpretation, rather than the recording or the analysis of excavation data. Free perspectives are strongly related to *Meaning* and entail the highest degree

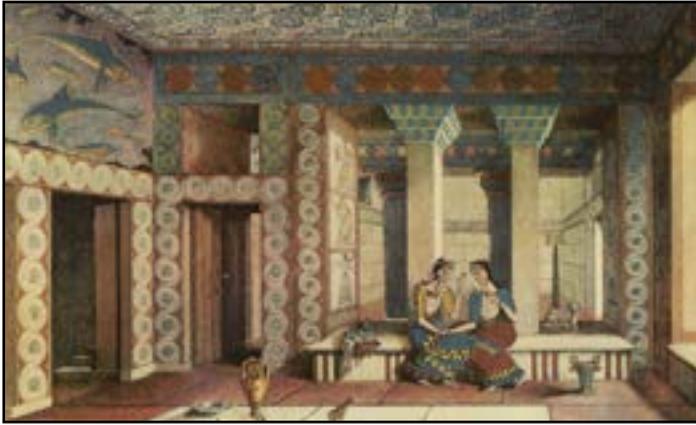


Figure 6: The free perspective of 'Queen's Megaron' (Evans 1930, pl. 26).

of interpretation.³⁴ In this respect they are representative of PM's overall character as a narrative synthesis, rather than an account of assumingly neutral archaeological data, independent from archaeological interpretation. The final publications of Phylakopi, Phaestos and Korakou lack such free perspectives, which feature only in the publication of Knossos.³⁵

PM's free perspectives depict finds from different archaeological contexts together,³⁶ placing them in specific rooms whose *Function* and *Meaning* were previously determined by Evans. Their ultimate goal is to strengthen Evans' interpretation for such architectural spaces. The free perspective which illustrates the interior of the Queen's Megaron is a characteristic example (fig. 6). It depicts a squat stone *alabastron*, identical to that found in the Room of Throne,³⁷ and the characteristic two-handed goblets which have been found in a tomb at Isopata, near Knossos.³⁸ Evans dated the ceramic assemblages of Isopata tombs and the squat *alabastron* to the Late Minoan (LM) II period. If we consider that Evans believed that Minoan Civilization reached its peak during LM II period,³⁹ then it is not by chance that he integrated LM II finds in a free perspective depicting the Queen's Megaron. Moreover, PM includes free perspective drawings for architectural spaces such as the Hall of the Double Axes, the Room of Throne and

the Bathroom; architectural spaces which Evans correlated, among other things, with the residential areas of Homeric elites.⁴⁰

Evans has incorporated in PM three free perspectives which were drawn by Newton. These three drawings depict, among other things, fluted columns (fig. 7).⁴¹ Such columns are not of Minoan kind and have not been recovered in Minoan contexts. Instead, the depicted columns are typical architectural elements of classical Greek architecture. It has been observed that "Evans saw the Minoans as the source of all future Greek civilization."⁴² An interesting point of Evans' statement is that he ignored any original Mycenaean contribution, considering the latter as a provincial variant of Minoan Civilization.⁴³ It can be argued that Evans incorporated these three free perspectives in PM in order to visualize his above statement. Having integrated fluted columns in Minoan architecture, PM directly bridges the gap between classical and pre-classical (Minoan) Aegean antiquities, thus legitimizing a specific cultural and historic succession: from Minoan to classical Greek Civilization without taking into account Mycenaean Civilization. Visualization legitimizes such a belief and, as a result, transforms it into information. Moreover, someone can argue that Newton's free perspectives are interrelated with Evans' opinion that the historical significance of Minoan

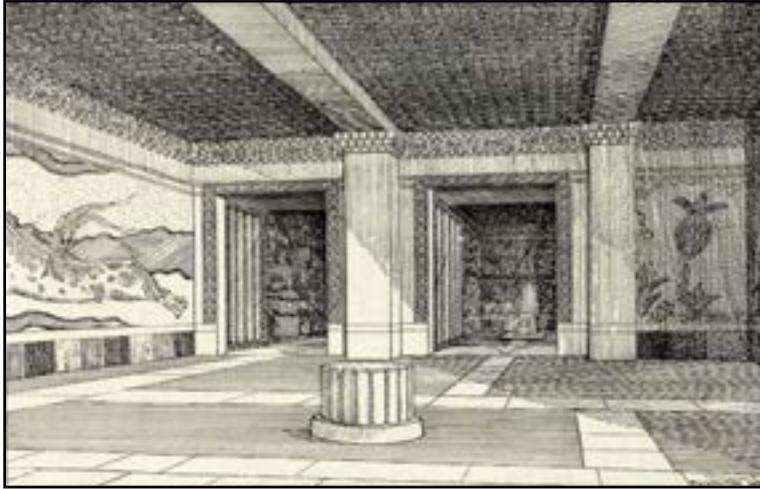


Figure 7: The free perspective of West Porch (Evans 1928, fig. 429).

Crete was the pivotal role it played in the transmission of High Civilization from the ancient Near East to Europe, transforming *Ex Oriente Lux* into the European spirit of Minoans.⁴⁴ Minoan Crete as the “cradle of European civilization.”⁴⁵ Considering that classical Greek Civilization has been integrated in the narrative of European modernity as the source of European spirit since the beginnings of the 19th century,⁴⁶ the integration of elements of classical Greek architecture in Minoan architecture establishes a more ancient civilization, Minoan, as European. One of the main reasons that Evans and modernist European archaeology wanted to demonstrate the Minoan as European civilization is not unrelated to the wider political condition of Crete at the beginning of the 20th century. Crete had just become independent from the Ottoman Empire and, as a result, had a considerably diverse population both in ethnic and religious terms, suspended between East and West.⁴⁷ Thus, modernist archaeology made an effort to demonstrate that Crete had been ‘European’ since the Bronze Age.⁴⁸ It is not by chance that Evans argued that Minoan society was peaceful and flourishing, governed by a stable monarchy and aristocracy,⁴⁹ that was based upon its naval superiority. Evans builds his narrative for the Minoan Civilization upon

a “Victorian model”⁵⁰ with ‘Edwardian’ elements⁵¹ attributing to it features of the 19th–early 20th century Great Britain.

Conclusion

Since the late 19th century, Aegean archaeology featured trained architects in charge of the production of architectural drawings of archaeological remains. Evans worked with four architects at Knossos with the majority of the architectural drawings they produced being in the final publication of Evans’ excavations, ‘The Palace of Minos’. This resulted in a considerably higher number of architectural drawings than contemporary Aegean publications.⁵² Apart from his illustrative zeal, Evans deviated in the use of standard types of architectural drawings, such as ground plans and sections, from commonly accepted practices of Aegean archaeology at the time. Also, he employed novel types of drawings, such as isometric plans. The examination of PM’s architectural drawings based on the triptych *Form – Function – Meaning* indicates that, on the first level, the architectural drawings, which normally contribute to the excavation record, are imbued with more archaeological interpretation, while, at a second level, examining PM as a whole, we notice a

considerably high number of interpretative drawings (isometric, elevations, free perspectives). PM's architectural drawings are characterized by a distinctive lack of empiricism, constituting more than the recording of excavation data or the documentation of the architectural remains. This can be inscribed in Evans' wider aim, that is to say, his will to compose a narrative for the Minoan Civilization rather than an excavation report about his excavations at Knossos.⁵³ PM is not based on an empiricist approach in order to examine the finds, via distant observation and description, as neutral scientific data independent from archaeological interpretation.⁵⁴ Despite the fact that the annual excavation reports published by Evans⁵⁵ in the first six years of fieldwork at Knossos were more empiricist than the subsequent PM, the latter broke away both from the style of the preliminary reports and the wider empiricist tradition that dominated final excavation reports. Instead of descriptive observations and finds catalogues, PM forms a narrative of the Minoan Civilization and the architectural drawings contribute to this direction. This characteristic, radical, and exceptional assemblage of architectural drawings in terms of Aegean archaeology played a significant role in the composition and legitimization of a narrative for the Minoan Civilization composed by Evans; a narrative based on his vision of prehistoric Crete. A significant part of Evans' vision was the correlation between the archaeological remains of Knossos and the narratives of Homer and Herodotus while emphasizing the belief that Minoan Crete played a pivotal role in the transmission of High Civilization from the ancient Near East to Europe, considering it as the "cradle of European civilization". Evans saw the Minoan as the first "European" civilization⁵⁶ and the source of classical Greek Civilization, ignoring any original Mycenaean contribution.⁵⁷

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Endnotes:

- 1 See Trigger 1989.
- 2 Conze 1875.
- 3 Curtius und Adler 1892.
- 4 Trigger 1989, 196-7.
- 5 Evans 1927, 258; see also Farnoux 1993, 35-93.
- 6 German 2005.
- 7 Klynne 1998.
- 8 See Preziosi 1983.
- 9 The first two points, *Form* and *Function*, are examined by architecture. Nevertheless, architecture defines *Function* as the final stage and, in other words, as the aim of its study, drawing upon the tryptich Structure – Form – Function (Palyvou 2003). The pivotal difference between an archaeological and an architectural view on a building lies on the point of *Meaning* (see Preziosi 1983).
- 10 Schliemann 1885.
- 11 Atkinson et al. 1904.
- 12 Pernier 1935.
- 13 Blegen 1921.
- 14 A small-scale architectural drawing is that presenting a large architectural area.
- 15 Vavouranakis 2008, 77. Something observed for the final publications of Tiryns, Phaestos, Phylakopi and Korakou.
- 16 Palyvou 2003, 216; Vavouranakis 2008, 76-7.
- 17 Evans 1921, fig. 240.
- 18 Evans 1921, fig. 306.
- 19 MacEnroe 1995, 13-4.
- 20 Evans 1921, fig. 239.
- 21 Schliemann 1885, pl. 3; Atkinson et al. 1904, fig. 59; Pernier 1935, pl. 3.
- 22 Evans 1928, fig. 362.
- 23 Palyvou 2003, 210.
- 24 See figure 1.
- 25 Vavouranakis 2008, 76-7.
- 26 Forsdyke 1952, 13.
- 27 Evans 1928, 790-2.
- 28 Palyvou 2003, 211.
- 29 See figure 1.
- 30 Palyvou 2003.
- 31 Palyvou 2003, 214-6.
- 32 Some architectural elements of the first level have been preserved in situ (Shaw 2011, 383). So, Evans saw restoration as the best way to record such an excavation data (Evans 1927, 258; see also Palyvou 2003, 208; Vavouranakis 2008, 83).
- 33 Palyvou 2003, 216.
- 34 Vavouranakis 2008, 79.
- 35 The only exception is a small number of free perspectives in Tiryns publication; see figure 1.
- 36 Farnoux 1993, 69-71.
- 37 Evans 1935, 939.
- 38 Evans 1914, 27, 51-2.
- 39 Evans 1935, 297.
- 40 Zois 1995, 11-7, 222-6, 286-7.
- 41 Evans 1928, fig. 429; Evans 1928, fig. 532; Evans 1930, fig. 255.
- 42 Bintliff 1984, 36; see also Evans 1912, 278.
- 43 Bintliff 1984, 36; see also Evans 1912, 282.
- 44 Hamilakis and Momigliano 2006, 27.
- 45 MacEnroe 1995, 8; see also Evans 1921, 24.
- 46 Shanks 1996, 55, 80.
- 47 Carabott 2006.
- 48 Hamilakis and Momigliano 2006, 27.
- 49 Bintliff 1984, 35.
- 50 Zois 1995, 36.
- 51 MacEnroe 1995.
- 52 See figure 1. The number — and sometimes the types — of the architectural drawings in a final publication are also interrelated with the extent of the excavated site and the nature of its architectural remains. Nevertheless, this is not enough to explain the case of Knossos excavations conducted by Evans and their final publication, ‘The Palace of Minos’.
- 53 MacGillivray 2000, 271.
- 54 MacEnroe 1995, 14.
- 55 Evans 1900; Evans 1901; Evans 1902; Evans 1903; Evans 1904.
- 56 MacEnroe 1995, 8; see also Evans 1921, 24.
- 57 Bintliff 1984, 36; see also Evans 1912, 278, 282.

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Etruscan Genucilia Ware: A Discussion on Its History and Past Scholarship

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*Etruscan Genucilia plates were first discussed and classified by Sir John Beazley in his 1947 work *Etruscan Vase-Painting*. A decade later, Mario A. Del Chiaro established a typology for this family of ceramics, in addition to charting their distribution, identifying production centers and providing a chronological sequence (*The Genucilia Group: A Class of Red-Figured Plates*. Los Angeles 1957). Fifty seven years later, Del Chiaro's publication remains accurate in most of its conclusions and well-respected by scholars of ancient ceramics; however, since his publication, significantly more Genucilia plates have been discovered due to the rise of greater systematic excavations along with the increased documentation of artifacts in their context.*

This paper aims to shed greater light onto the function of Genucilia plates, and also to revisit Del Chiaro's proposed typology, centers of production and chronology. Emphasis is placed not only the Genucilia plates themselves, but their overall provenience and the artifacts found alongside them. Attention is paid to the excavations that occurred after 1957 and the Genucilia plates discovered as a result. Genucilia plates discovered after this date have been well-published in their respect site monographs, but rarely have they been related back to Del Chiaro's seminal work.

Introduction: What is Etruscan Genucilia Ware?

Etruscan Genucilia ware was first classified by Sir John Beazley, a pioneer in the field of ancient pottery, in his work *Etruscan Vase-Painting*.¹ Beazley's name for this class of pottery was determined by the dipinto, *P. Genucilia*, applied before firing and located beneath the foot of an individual red-figured plate (fig. 1). With a diameter of 15.6 cm and height of 5.1 cm, it contains a carefully painted female head in profile within the medallion-shaped field. She looks towards her right and wears a cross-hatched half-sakkos, diadem, an earring and a beaded necklace (fig. 2). This is one of the two principal iconographic schema that typically adorn Genucilia plates. Surrounding the tondo, on a flared rim, are 11 finely painted waves. This name plate of the Genucilia group is now situated in the Rhode Island School of Design.² The dating of Genucilia pottery remains the subject of debate, but safely ranges from the first half of the fourth until the early third century B.C.E. This ware was distributed throughout the Mediterranean and has been found in larger quantities in Caere, Falerii and Rome in funerary, religious and domestic contexts.

Other examples of Genucilia contain a geometric star pattern in the medallion, although atypical decoration does exist as well (fig. 3). The shape of Genucilia tends to consist of a shallow bowl, a flared rim, and projecting lip supported by a short stem and widened foot. The number of painted waves and their quality tend to decrease over the history of Genucilia ware. The earliest examples of Genucilia plates, such as those Mario Del Chiaro associates with the Berkeley Genucilia Painter, have around 14 waves per plate and each are carefully rendered.³ Later Genucilia plates, in both the Caeretan and Faliscan branches, tend to only have five, or at minimum four waves.⁴ The painted waves in these later examples lack consistency with one another and often scarcely resemble waves at all.

This paper will build on past studies to analyze more recently uncovered Genucilia. This will include a discussion of past scholarship on Genucilia ware, its shape, evidence of writing, and the meaning of its iconography all to determine the most likely function of this class of pottery.

History of Scholarship of Genucilia Ware

Comparable to most early studies of ancient Greek and Etruscan vase-painting, the history of Genucilia ware can be traced back to the scholarship of Sir John Beazley. Beazley's study classified only 43 Genucilia plates that he saw and studied in person. Although 27 of his examples have a listed find spot of a town or city, none contain a record of the precise archaeological provenience; however, Beazley's brief classification of this ware, introduced scholars to this interesting group of pottery. Early scholarship primarily examined the origin and production of Genucilia.⁵ Beazley believed that all examples of Genucilia plates were of Faliscan origin and manufactured in central Italy at Falerii.⁶ Inez Scott Ryberg, an expert of Roman religion, considered Falerii to be the main center of production, but admitted that imitation in other areas of Italy was a possibility.⁷



Figure 1: Name plate of the Genucilia ware with the dipinto P. Genucilia. Gift of E. P. Warren 27.188. Courtesy of the Rhode Island School of Design Museum.



Figure 2 - Name plate of Genucilia ware with a cross-hatched sakkos and belonging to the Caeretan branch. Gift of E. P. Warren 27.188. Courtesy of the Rhode Island School of Design Museum.

Mario A. Del Chiaro, in his seminal work *The Genucilia Group: A Class of Etruscan Red-Figured Plates*, was the first to examine in depth this category of ceramics.⁸ Through an examination of roughly 600 Genucilia plates, Del Chiaro established a typology for this group of pottery, in addition to charting its distribution, identifying production centers and providing a chronological framework.⁹ Del Chiaro takes a traditional typological approach by closely examining iconographic trends and details of Genucilia ware. The goals of his typology were fourfold: first, to determine the location of centers of Genucilia production; second, map the distribution of this pottery; third, to date the wares; and fourth to organize them in stylistic groups based on iconography and shape.¹⁰ In his discussion of individual specimens of Genucilia, Del Chiaro touched upon the question of the pottery's function, but this topic was not of prime importance in his study.

Del Chiaro's hypothesis that there were two major production centers of Genucilia at Falerii and Caere still remains accepted today and serves as the basis of his typology.¹¹ His typology divides Genucilia plates into three groups based on manufacture center: Falisco-Caeretan, Caeretan and Faliscan.¹² He defines

only five plates as Falisco-Caeretan. This identification is based on their early date and provenience in the area of the Ager Faliscus, which he sees as the original production site of Genucilia ware, before vase painters migrated south into the region of Etruria, specifically Caere.¹³ He does admit that Falisco-Caeretan Genucilia hold close resemblance in its iconography to examples in the Caeretan class. Contemporary scholarship on Genucilia plates tends to only differentiate between the Caeretan and Faliscan classes, based on the typological observations described by Del Chiaro.¹⁴

The two predominant iconographic motifs – a female head in profile and geometric star pattern – adorn both Caeretan and Faliscan Genucilia. Del Chiaro observed that each branch of Genucilia plates contained unique decorative elements as part of the overall iconographic design.¹⁵ In plates adorned with a woman's profile head, the most accepted and easiest way to differentiate between the classifications is to examine the design of the sakkos (plural sakkoi), a head covering worn by Greek women. The sakkos of the Caeretan Branch contains a cross-hatched, almost net-like pattern, or in rare occurrence, a star motif. Painters of Faliscan Genucilia tend to depict the sakkos with palmettes, although some early versions still are adorned with a net pattern (fig. 3).¹⁶ Differentiating between the Caeretan



Figure 3: Genucilia plate adorned with a marine creature. Evan Gorga Collection. Museo Nazionale Romano: Palazzo Altemps.

and Faliscan Branches, when the iconography depicts a geometric motif, is more challenging. Caeretan Genucilia have a geometric star (a central dot with four lines coming from it), either with a dotted chevron (literally a three dotted triangle), dot rosettes, or chevrons, painted in the quadrants (fig. 4).¹⁷ The Faliscan Branch is more varied in its geometric design. A Faliscan Genucilia plate either includes a rosette, quatrefoil, or cross in the medallion, with a variety of shapes acting as filler within the quadrants.¹⁸

The vast majority of Genucilia plates analyzed by Del Chiaro come from museum collections, lack proper context and come from the Italian mainland. Since the publication of his study, there have been significantly more Genucilia plates recovered because of the rise of more systematic excavations, along with the increased documentation of artifacts in their context. It is not my intention here to conduct an analysis comparable in scope to Del Chiaro's, but rather to examine Genucilia discovered in excavations that took place after 1957. On the Italian mainland this has been the case at Artena, Alba Fucens, Caere, Rome and Tarquinia.¹⁹ Of particular interest, however, are the Genucilia uncovered at sites



Figure 4 – Faliscan Genucilia plate. Museo Nazionale Romano: Terme di Diocleziano. Courtesy of Daniel Diffendale.

outside Italy proper at Elba, Aleria, Carthage and Cyrene.²⁰ An analysis of more recently discovered Genucilia, will shed greater light onto a variety of topics addressed in detail by Del Chiaro such as distribution, but also onto less touched upon subjects such as writing on Genucilia, and the origin of its iconography. In doing so, this paper aims to better determine the previously under addressed function of this pottery.

Function Based on Form

The unique shape of Genucilia plates have introduced questions concerning the vessel's function, whether utilitarian or ritualistic. While the size of Genucilia slightly vary from piece to piece, on average the diameter is between 13.5 and 15.5 cm, with a height of 4.0-6.5 cm. At first glance, the shape of Genucilia ware resembles a kylix, an ancient Greek wine cup, especially in the base and foot.²¹ An obvious difference between them is the lack of handles on Genucilia ware and the shallow depth of the bowl, a trademark of Genucilia ware, in comparison to the deep bowl of the kylix. The shallow nature of the bowl and flared rim make it nearly impossible for Genucilia to hold any form of liquid without spillage. It would simply be impractical for Genucilia to have served as a holder of liquids, either in a ritual or everyday setting.

What is more probable is that this class of pottery was intended to hold a solid foodstuff of small quantity, since the diameter of these plates dictates the amount they could contain. Scholars have proposed a variety of foodstuffs that could have been used in conjunction with Genucilia, ranging from raw meats and fishes to cereals, plants, and cooked items.²² The significance and purpose of whatever item, if any, was placed on Genucilia ware, cannot be determined based solely on form, but rather is reliant on further research, such as residue analysis. The shape of Genucilia, unfortunately, can only provide a limited amount of certainty concerning function before descending into pure speculation.



Figure 5 – Caeretan Genucilia plate with geometric star design. MS2820. Courtesy of the University of Pennsylvania Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology.

Function Based on Graffiti and Dipinti

Most Genucilia plates lack writing; however the rare instances where graffiti or dipinti exist provide scholars greater clues as to the functions of these plates. In 1913, Raniero Mengarelli discovered three Caeretan Genucilia plates with the Greek dipinto HPA written on the rim amongst the traditional wave pattern.²³ These pieces were discovered at Caere in the area of Vigna Parrocchiale, located on the urban plateau. All three plates contain a version of a geometric star motif. Mengarelli believed the dipinti referred to Hera and the context of these plates identified a sanctuary to her.²⁴ Del Chiaro also adopted this hypothesis and proposed that Genucilia, in this case, served a votive function in a sanctuary of Hera.²⁵

In 1985, Mauro Cristofani proposed a new hypothesis concerning these dipinti. He suggested that the dipinti, HPA, did not identify a temple to Hera, but rather a sanctuary to Herakles.²⁶ These three Genucilia plates are not the only examples of pottery bearing these dipinti. Discovered amongst them were Caeretan black-glazed cups painted with either the exact same dipinto (HPA), a digram (HP) or an abbreviation (H).²⁷ If Mengarelli's hypothesis is accepted, that the dipinti referred to Hera, why do all the specimens lack her full

name? The most peculiar instances are the ceramics with HPA dipinti, since a dedicatory votive would either have Hera's name in the genitive (HPΑΣ) or the dative case (HPAI). Since the Genucilia plates and the Caeretan black-glazed cups contain sufficient space for a proper dedication to Hera to have been inscribed, perhaps these dipinti do not refer to this goddess at all, but another deity, whose longer name needs to be abbreviated, such as Herakles.

This trio of Greek markings resembled the Latin dipinti that adorned a series of black-glazed cups from Rome. These cups, excavated in the foundations of the Mitræo near the Circus Maximus, contain the dipinti H, HV or HVI.²⁸ The context of this discovery was recognized in ancient times as a space devoted to the cult of Hercules.²⁹ This provenience aided Pietrangeli's interpretation that the dipinti served as abbreviations for *H(erculi)*, *H(erculi) V(ictori)*, and *H(erculi) V(ictori) I(nvicto)*, and likely were dedicated in the third century B.C.E.³⁰ The function of the plates adorned with this dipinti likely served a votive function in the cult of Hercules Victor, whose temple still stands in the Forum Boarium. This cult certainly was not restricted to Rome at this time, as pottery with the dipinto H has been discovered in Ostia, Alba Fucens and Ariminum.³¹

Etruscan worship of Herakles, which has been linked to sources of water,³² is made visible by bronze votive statuettes of Herakles found at Mount Falterona, Poggio Castiglione and Villa Cassarini in Bologna.³³ Objects related to Herakles from Caere extend beyond Genucilia plates and black-glazed cups. At the necropolis of Banditaccia, in Tomb 155, archaeologists discovered a libation cup containing a stamp with an image of Herakles.³⁴ Furthermore, during the 1984 excavations of Caere, in the area of the so-called Temple of Hera, archaeologists discovered a fragmentary clay statue that they associated with Herakles because of the lion skin wrapped around its shoulders.³⁵ These finds help to establish that worship of Herakles existed not only at Caere,

but in other Etruscan settings. It seems likely that the Genucilia plates discovered at Caere, adorned with HPA, functioned at one point as votive offerings to Herakles, a god whose many followers were soldiers, veterans, or perhaps even Greek mercenaries.³⁶

Another example of Genucilia containing writing suggests that this pottery was not restricted as votive gifts to one deity. Excavations from the Temple of Castor and Pollux in Rome yielded a fragment of a Caeretan Genucilia base that Birte Poulsen believes has no less than three inscriptions, which were scratched on after the piece was fired.³⁷ The smallest graffiti consists of three forward slashes (///) near the edge of the base, perhaps some sort of inventory mark. The other two graffiti are of Latin letters. The shorter inscription contains three characters, but due to the fragmented nature of the base there is no certainty as to what word it might represent. The first two characters might be either an I or an L and the last one the top of an A. It is only the third and longest graffiti that informs us about the function of this Genucilia plate.

The longest inscription on this same Caeretan Genucilia base consists of six Latin characters, of which the first four are clearly MATR. Only a small vertical line appears for the fifth letter, but it is likely an I, and the last letter a poorly written T. If these letters are read as one word it would be MATRIT, but Poulsen argues that it should be divided to make the dative MATRI, “to the mother” and T, an abbreviation of the object dedicated to the mother goddess, emphasizing the votive function of this Genucilia plate.³⁸ The cult of the Magna Mater, the most well-known Roman mother goddess, was not introduced into Rome until 205/204 B.C.E., in the midst of the Second Punic War.³⁹ Livy accounts for why the cult of the Magna Mater was brought to Rome: “At that time religious scruples had suddenly assailed the citizens because in the Sibylline books, which were consulted on account of the frequent showers of stones that year, an oracle was found that, if ever a foreign

foe should invade the land of Italy, he could be driven out of Italy and defeated if the Idaean Mother should be brought from Pessinus to Rome” (Livy 29.10.4-6).⁴⁰ Even the latest examples of Genucilia ware in Italy predate the introduction of the cult of the Magna Mater by nearly 100 years.

The only mother goddess who was worshipped in Rome at the time that Caeretan Genucilia plates were being manufactured (mid fourth to early third century B.C.E.) was the Mater Matuta.⁴¹ Her festival, the Matralia, took place on July 11 and only wives of Roman citizens could partake. Dedications to the Mater Matuta could take place both publically at her temple located in the Forum Boarium and privately in domestic contexts.⁴² The primary votive offering given to the Mater Matuta was a small cake called a *testuacium* that was baked in earthenware vessels called *testu*.⁴³ What is known about these cakes comes from Varro’s and Ovid’s description of them (Varro, *De Lingua Latina* 5.106. Ovid, *Fasti* 6.475). Poulsen suggests that the T on the Caeretan Genucilia base could stand for *testuacium*.⁴⁴ Perhaps Genucilia plates, whose size remained relatively consistent, served both a ritualistic and utilitarian function by holding these dedications. The discovery of Genucilia plates not only in Roman domestic contexts, but also in the area of Sant’Omobono, the supposed location of the Temple of Mater Matuta, further hint at a relationship between this pottery and its use during the Matralia.

Although the examples of Genucilia containing graffiti or dipinti are few and far between they suggest this class of pottery served primarily a ritualistic function, but not for a single deity alone. The fact that the graffiti MATRI T was scratched on, indeed rather haphazardly, after the Genucilia plate was fired suggests this class of pottery was not used solely for this purpose. This fact is made clear by the wide distribution of Genucilia outside of areas where the Mater Matuta was worshipped. It still remains unclear whether the Genucilia plates from Caere with the dipinti HPA held a votive offering, but the context and dipinti safely associates them

with a votive function, likely to Herakles. Determining what Genucilia plates held, if anything, will remain an uncertainty since any food item dedicated and placed upon Genucilia plates would have been removed quickly once the dedication was concluded.

Origin and Explanation of Iconography

The iconography of Genucilia ware has led to questions concerning this pottery's function, but also the origin and meaning behind the decoration itself. Although examples of Genucilia with unusual decorations in the medallion do exist, the female profile head and the geometric star motif are by far predominant.⁴⁵ Iconography of a female profile head was certainly not restricted to Genucilia, but rather was a common decorative motif in south Italic, specifically Apulian, pottery. This decorative motif dates back to the seventh century B.C.E. in Greece, before it reached popularity in Apulia in the late fifth and fourth century B.C.E., where it adorned bell-kraters, pelikai, lekanides, and skyphoi.⁴⁶ Connections have been made between this iconography and the female heads seen on Attic vases that portray the *anodos* of Aphrodite⁴⁷ or Kore,⁴⁸ but such significance likely disappeared by the fourth century B.C.E. The question of whom the female profile head represents, whether a specific deity or personification, still lacks a definite answer. Most Apulian pieces with female heads lack distinguishing features and contain varied treatments of the hair and headgear, which suggests the unlikelihood that one deity is being depicted. Furthermore, it appears unlikely that the female head represents only one goddess, since the distribution of Genucilia ware extended throughout Italy and outside the mainland, where religious beliefs never were identical. Perhaps such iconography was simply a recognized religious symbol, whose presence on Genucilia plates emphasized that this pottery had a sacred function.

The geometric decoration of Genucilia plates rarely appears on any preceding branch of pottery. The geometric star motif sometimes appears as the decoration on

the sakkos adorning the profile of a female head. Examples with this iconography are uncommon and Del Chiaro groups them under the work of the Copenhagen Genucilia Painter.⁴⁹ Vincent Jolivet suggested that the geometric star decoration could be interpreted as a synecdoche, representing a small part of the entire female profile head.⁵⁰ His is an intriguing analysis, but the significant lack of sakkoi on pottery adorned with this star pattern hinders one's ability to read more into it.

The medallion of a plate might bring to mind the round shape of a coin. Mario Torelli and Del Chiaro both suggested that Roman coinage perhaps served as inspiration for the geometric motif found on some Genucilia plates.⁵¹ There are certainly iconographic similarities between the geometric star motif that adorns the medallion of Caeretan Genucilia plates and that of *aes grave*, a third century B.C.E. bronze cast coin used in Italy. Torelli sees parallels with *aes grave* from Luceria that are of a six rayed star. But, I believe that closer iconographic similarities exist between the geometric pattern of Genucilia ware and the four-spoked wheel, seen on *aes grave* from Etruria.⁵² Although iconographic parallels exist, it appears highly unlikely that *aes grave* could have influenced the decoration of Genucilia plates, since this class of coinage dates to the early third century B.C.E., after most, if not all, Caeretan Genucilia had already been manufactured.

The geometric star found on Faliscan and Caeretan Genucilia could also have served as a religious symbol. The poet Martianus Capella describes how the Etruscans believed that the sky was divided into 16 parts, with each region watched over by a deity.⁵³ The star motif of Genucilia ware with its four rays divides the medallion into quadrants, which parallels the four basic divisions of the sky: *regiones summae felicitatis*, *regiones minus propserae*, *regiones minus dirae* and *regiones maxime dirae*.⁵⁴ This symbol, which recalls the act of taking auspices, perhaps stood as an alternate and simpler way to contact a god. Furthermore, this image, when paired with a votive food offering (as appears to be the case

with the *testuacium*⁵⁵) could have established a link between the dedicant and the deity. The act of burying Genucilia plates along with the deceased, which is apparent from excavations at many sites and in the greatest magnitude at Aleria, aided in continuing that link between mortal and immortal beyond life and into death.⁵⁶ Therefore, both the predominant motifs of the female profile head and geometric star draw connections with the divine realm and subsequently link it to a religious and votive function. Ultimately, the primary method to better understand and perhaps determine with certainty whether the function of Genucilia ware was utilitarian or ritualistic is to examine the context of the plates themselves.

Function Based on Provenience

The majority of Genucilia plates with precise provenience were discovered in funerary contexts such as at Aleria and Tarquinia.⁵⁷ The Etruscan colony of Aleria, located on the island of Corsica, alone yielded 118 Caeretan Genucilia plates from 22 tombs.⁵⁸ The high quantity of Genucilia plates at Aleria shows that as the Etruscans colonized outside of mainland Italy, their pottery followed. There are a handful of instances where Genucilia have been discovered in non-funerary contexts such as at Ostia,⁵⁹ Artena,⁶⁰ Cori,⁶¹ and Locri.⁶² At Ostia, Genucilia plates were discovered during excavations of the Castrum, the oldest settlement at the site, in the fill material. Thirteen total Genucilia plates were found during excavations at Artena inside two wells, which were traditionally a place where votive offerings were deposited. The Genucilia found at Cori and Locri were attributed to sanctuaries of Hercules and Persephone, respectively. At Rome only Caeretan Genucilia plates have been found. This pottery has been discovered at the Temple of Castor and Pollux,⁶³ in Forum Boarium⁶⁴ and in the area of the Regia.⁶⁵ All these areas served as religious spaces and the function of the Genucilia discovered here likely reflected that nature.

At Elba, a group of Genucilia plates were found in situ within a cellar of a house in what was identified as a food deposit.⁶⁶ This context has suggested that Genucilia plates might have also served a domestic utilitarian function. And while it is possible that Genucilia could have held some food items for a meal, this location does not rule out the possibility of them having a ritualistic function unto themselves. There are cases where Genucilia have been found in places that lacked a public cultic center, such as at the Etruscan fortress of Rofalco.⁶⁷ In these instances, Genucilia were likely utilized inside homes for private domestic worship either to deceased ancestors or the Lares. The rise of more systematic archaeological excavations has resulted in better understanding of the contexts in which this pottery was employed.

Conclusion

Genucilia plates are among the most common type of pottery in Italy during the mid-Republican period. Although it appears that only two production centers existed, at Falerii and Caere, this class of pottery spread throughout the Italian mainland, into cities in Africa, Corsica, Greece, France, and even Spain. The few examples of Genucilia that contain dipinti or graffiti utilize writing to help invoke a god, whose sanctuary often lay in close proximity to the provenience of the plate. When no writing existed, the iconography of the female head the geometric motif served to impart a sacred quality to the piece, whether it was dedicated in a sanctuary, used for household worship or buried with the deceased. With the continuation of more detailed excavations and the subsequent publication of excavation reports, greater understanding concerning the chronology, distribution, production, and significance of Genucilia ware will follow; however, based on the current research available this pottery appears to be of ritualistic function.

Endnotes:

- 1 Beazley 1947.
- 2 Providence, Inv. 27.188.
- 3 Del Chiaro 1957, 246, pl. 18.
- 4 Del Chiaro 1957, pl. 22.
- 5 Del Chiaro 1947; Del Chiaro 1975; Ryberg 1940.
- 6 Beazley 1947, 175.
- 7 Ryberg 1940, 101-2.
- 8 Del Chiaro 1957.
- 9 Del Chiaro 1957.
- 10 Del Chiaro 1957, 244.
- 11 Del Chiaro 1957, 244.
- 12 Del Chiaro 1957, 244.
- 13 Del Chiaro 1957, 246.
- 14 Del Chiaro 1957, 246-50.
- 15 Del Chiaro 1974, 63.
- 16 Del Chiaro 1957, 247.
- 17 Del Chiaro 1957, 283-7.
- 18 Del Chiaro 1957, 288-92.
- 19 Jolivet 1982, 164; Pianu 1985, 79.
- 20 Jolivet 1982, 164; Pianu 1985, 79.
- 21 Ambrosini 2014.
- 22 Torelli 2014, 417; Poulsen 2002, 88.
- 23 Mengarelli 1936, pl. XXVI, 4.
- 24 Mengarelli 1936.
- 25 Del Chiaro 1957, 295-6.
- 26 Cristofani 1985.
- 27 Mengarelli 1936.
- 28 Cristofani 1985, 22.
- 29 Ziolkowski 1988.
- 30 Pietrangeli 1940, 144; Chelotti, Morizio and Silvestrini 1990, 80.
- 31 Morel 1965, 94; Gaurducci 1981, 233.
- 32 Pfiffig 1975, 342.
- 33 Cristofani 1985, n. 15.
- 34 Morel 1965, 94-95; Morel No. 1534.
- 35 Cristofani 1985, 24.
- 36 Cristofani 1985, 23-4.
- 37 Poulsen 2002, 87-8; Bilde, Poulsen, et al. 2008, 50-1, fig. 77, pls. 9.1-2.
- 38 Poulsen 2002, 88.
- 39 Beard, North and Price 1998, 83.
- 40 Translation of Livy is by Frank Gardner Moore 1949.
- 41 For information the cult of the Mater Matuta see Turcan, 2001, 34; Heldring 1985, 68-75.
- 42 Beard, North and Price 1998, 50-1.
- 43 Turcan, 2001. 34.
- 44 Poulsen 2002, 88.
- 45 As far as I am aware, there are 11 Genucilia plates whose medallions are not of a female profile head or a star motif. For a brief description of them see Torelli 2014, 419 and Ambrosini 2014, 430.
- 46 Apulian pottery with iconography appears throughout Trendall, 1978 V.2. See specifically Chapter 22, which examines pieces within the circle of the Darius and Underworld Painters and 24, which deals with the Amphora Group.
- 47 Trendall 1978 V.2, 648.
- 48 Torelli 2014, 420.
- 49 Del Chiaro 1957, 261-2.
- 50 Jolivet 1984, 89.
- 51 Torelli 2014, 421; Del Chiaro 1974, 67.
- 52 Sydenham 1926, 123-5, pl. 21-2.
- 53 Edlund-Berry 2006, 118.
- 54 Maras 2014, 484-5.
- 55 Turcan, 2001. 34.
- 56 Jehasse & Jehasse 1973, 86-7; Poulsen 2002, 90-1.
- 57 Jehasse & Jehasse 1973, 86-7; Pianu 1985.
- 58 Jehasse & Jehasse 1973, 86-7.
- 59 Roma 1973, 355-6; Lauro 1979.
- 60 Lambrechts 1983, 88-91, pl. LII-LIII; Lambrechts 1989, 47-63, pl. 9-13, 31.
- 61 Enea 1981, 29-34, 202-3.
- 62 Pietilä-Castrén 1999, 93-110.
- 63 Bilde, Poulsen et al. 2008, 48-53.
- 64 Roma 1973, 105-7, 111-12.
- 65 Roma 1973, 380-381, nos. 558-592; Del Chiaro 1974,66-67; Jolivet 1985,63-64.
- 66 Poulsen 2002, 85.
- 67 Cerasuolo, Pulcinelli, et al. 2010.

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Hidden Treasures in Forgotten Archives: Exploring the Archaeology of Greek Caves into the archives and the bulletin of the Hellenic Speleological Society

Konstantinos P. Trimmis

The Hellenic Speleological Society was founded in 1950 with the aim of exploring and studying the cave forms of Greece. In these 65 years of research more than 10,000 caves have been recorded in the H.S.S. archive. The H.S.S. has also been publishing an annual bulletin on Greek caves since 1950. The archives of the H.S.S. and the Bulletin volumes have been thoroughly researched in order to highlight the archaeological data from the caves from the Neolithic to the Middle Ages. A spatial analysis of the data has provided information about the geographical distribution of the archaeological cave sites in Greece, the type of their uses and the type of the caves that people seemed to prefer to exploit. The main focus is how the caves showcase the different lifeways of their users. Additionally, it demonstrates the actual number of caves that were used in a specific area during a specific era.

Introduction

The speleological research in Greece started systematically at the end of the 1930s when Ioannis Petroheilos surveyed and studied caves on the islands of Kythera and Andros after his geology studies in Paris.¹ His activity was interrupted by the Second World War and the Greek civil war that followed.² Right after the end of the wars, Petroheilos founded the Hellenic Speleological Society H.S.S. in Athens together with his wife Anna and about 30 more people with the aim of recording, exploring, surveying, and scientifically studying the Greek caves.³ In its 65 years of activity, the H.S.S. recorded 11,500 caveforms in its file in every area of the country while an estimated 7,200 recordings were published in its scientific magazine, the Bulletin of the H.S.S. (fig. 1), which was systematically published from 1950 till 2000, as well as in various other nature and scientific magazines.⁴

Due to the fact that the H.S.S. consisted and consists of various scientific experts as well as businesspeople, employees and people who share a passion for caves, the quality of the information on the uses of the caves varies from recording to recording. As a result the obvious uses are recorded more thoroughly than the not so obvious ones. Consequently, the medieval churches, the contemporary sheepfolds, the fortress caves, the houses or even the taverns are almost always noted. On the other hand, uses that concern the prehistoric, the classical and the Roman periods, which require more observation and attention to detail, escape the attention of the exploratory teams most of the time. Another factor which affects the quality of the archaeological research of the H.S.S. is the age that research took over. The recorded information is more analytical and precise as the research and the technology develop over time.

The question, then, is why attention should be paid to a piece of information that is fragmented and not systematic. The first recorded archaeological research in a cave in

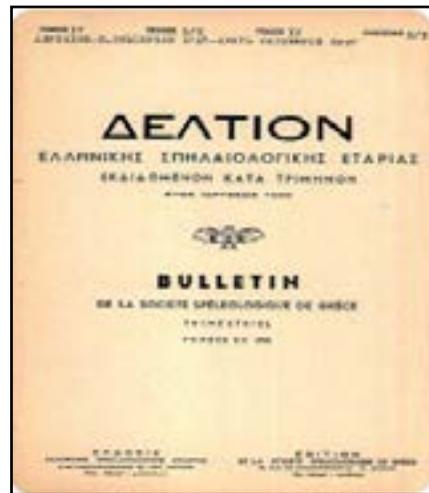


Figure 1: Cover page of the Bulletin of the H.S.S. volume 4 1957.

Greece took place in the cave of Pan in Athens in 1842-1844 by K. Pittakis under the auspices of the Archaeological Society at Athens.⁵ The results of this excavation were published in “*Praktika*,” the Journal of the Archaeological Society (PAE).⁶ The next milestone of the archaeological research in caves in Greece occurred in 1925-1940 when the Austrian doctor and anthropologist A. Markowitz⁷ toured almost all the areas of south Greece and conducted speleological and prehistoric research. Markowitz was killed in a plane accident on the 28th of October, 1941 and as such, the biggest part of his research has not been published. However, Markowitz himself had provided the Anthropological Museum of the University of Athens with a part of his file.

Research in Greek Archaeological caves didn't accelerate from Markowitz attempts to the end of the Second World War. This change is connected with two scientific programs: the excavations of the American Archaeological School and the University of Indiana in the cave of Franchthi in Ermioni⁸ and the systematic research of Paul Faure in the Minoan caves of Crete.⁹ These two research

projects and their significant results introduced caves to the archaeological discussion on Aegean prehistory in a dynamic new way. The predominant need for their protection and study led to the foundation of the Ephorate of Paleoanthropology and Speleology (EPS) by the Ministry of Culture in 1977.¹⁰ The foundation of the EPS immediately resulted in the increase of archaeological research in the caves of the country. According to the official websites of both EPSs,¹¹ 87 caves with archaeological evidence are published online on the EPS database today.¹² In the online database are presented a short description of the cave along with the archaeological data and the occupation dates. However, only the excavated caves have been added on the database. The information about caves that have been visited and evaluated from the EPS archaeologists are in an unpublished report format. As a result, the number of the caves of archaeological interest, as noticed by the archaeologists of the Ephorates, is far greater.¹³

The Hidden Treasures project

The idea and the objectives

While observing the gap that exists in the knowledge of the use of caves in Greece through time and having established the archaeological information that was never fully exploited¹⁴ in the Bulletin and in the Archive of the H.S.S., it has been decided by the Hellenic Speleological Society Department of Northern Greece and the Cardiff University, to study the published caves and to quantify the archaeological information that could be found.

The research was conducted during the period between March and July 2010 and the data analysis on January 2014. Initially 5,391 caveforms were recorded in a single database. Of these, 5,323 were published in the 22 volumes of the Bulletin of the H.S.S., which are available online either on the website of the H.S.S. in a pdf format¹⁵ or indexed on the website of the library of the Aristotle

University of Thessaloniki, “*Theophrastos*.”¹⁶ The remaining 78 caveforms have been published in various international magazines¹⁷ as well as in Greek magazines.¹⁸ In an attempt to examine the quality of the information that was eventually published, 150 published caves, which seemed not to have any archaeological evidence, were researched as a sample. None of the 150 randomly chosen cases indicated any uses of the cave that had not been included in the published files in their primary archive material. This was particularly encouraging for the outcome of the research since any piece of information that was recorded in the field was at least included in the published forms concerning the respective caves.

The objectives of the project were: a) to record the uses of the caves in Greece over time and to enrich the number of the caves that were used in every period, b) to outline the density of uses in the caves of each prefecture of the country and to observe how it alters through the centuries, and c) to notice quantitative differences in the caves that were used in different environments, such as islands, mainland, and mountains.

The analysis

Three large fields were created for the analysis of the uses of the caves in the database, which included the 5,391 recordings. One field included in general all the caves that had been characterized as caves of archaeological interest when they were published, a second field that included the caves that had been characterized as caves of “Christian worship,” and the third field included the caves that had been characterized for the contemporary uses. Obviously one cave could belong to more than one field. Afterwards, more specific characteristics were indexed, such as caves that had been used prehistorically, caves with indications of usage in the classical and post-classical/Roman period, church-caves, barn-caves, caves that had been turned into wineries, olive mills, creameries, or storage areas, as well as a last category for any other use.¹⁹

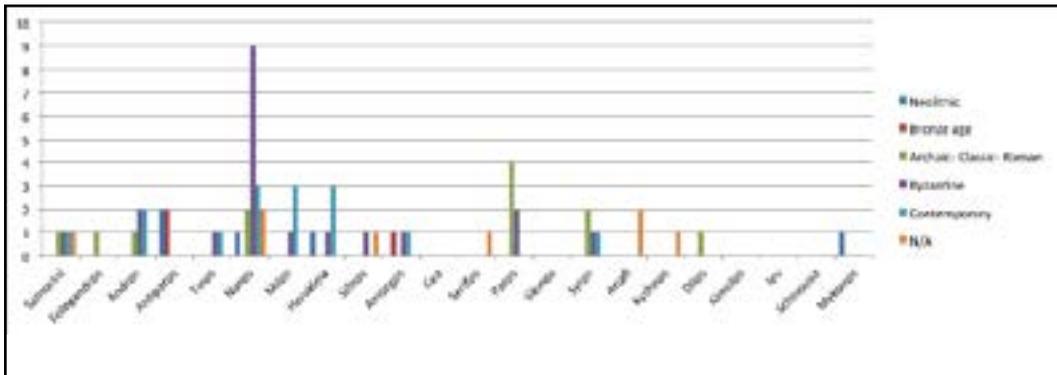


Table 1: Histogram presenting the distribution of the archaeological caves in Cycladic islands.

An attempt was made to map the data that was derived from the quantification of the uses of the caves initially with reference to the 12 districts of the country and then, in the case of the Cyclades, with reference to the uses per island (table 1). The data is not entirely representative in the case of the spatial distribution of uses. Southern Greece features many more recordings than the districts of Thessaly, Epirus and Macedonia-Thrace. The main reason for this is that until 1990 and the foundation of the Department of Northern Greece, the H.S.S. did not maintain a team based in northern Greece, and as a result the speleological expeditions were limited mostly to Sterea Ellada, Peloponnese, the Aegean islands and Crete.

The indexing revealed 397 caves with indications of human uses, which constitute the largest database in Greece. The second largest database is the one by the Ministry of Culture with eighty-seven caves. It is the first time that information has been collected from caves with modern and contemporary uses in a general recording and a comparison has been drawn between these uses and the caves that were respectively used in the historic and prehistoric period.

Plotting the archaeological evidence

The caves were then categorized according to the period of time in which they were used

and the use that was recorded, in each case this information could be verified with the publication or the archive information. As such the following categories were created: Paleolithic, Neolithic, Bronze Age, Classical, Roman and Late Antiquity, Byzantine and Post-Byzantine period, more recent and modern uses (table 2). Furthermore, the type of the cave,²⁰ the kind of the use (table 3), and the geographic region where the cave is located were recorded as well. Finally, a comparative analysis was conducted in order to observe whether there was some connection between the use of the cave and its type, the use per period of time and the use per geographic region.

Unfortunately, in many cases while the research teams observed the traces of human uses and recorded the presence of *surface ceramics*, they did not add the dating of these uses and/or the type of the uses to the published work. Consequently there is only some dating for 290 out of the 397 recordings whereas there is information on the type of use only for 216.

Prehistory

Out of the 397 recordings, only one of them dates back to the Paleolithic. It is the rock shelter in Kleidi. On the contrary there are twenty caves whose uses date to the Neolithic and one cave whose use dates to the Bronze Age.²¹ Although the caves Franchthi in Argolida

and Theopetra in Trikala feature Paleolithic deposits, they are recorded only with reference to the Neolithic. At the same time the absence of more caves with evidence from the Bronze Age, particularly because of the intense activity of the teams of the H.S.S. in Crete, where the caves with Minoan indications are quite common,²² is striking.

Classical, Roman and Late Antiquity

The recordings of the historic period are clearer. Forty-six recordings, including some of the most famous archaeological caves and rock shelters in Greece,²³ indicate use during the Classical and Roman eras. Moreover as far as dating is concerned, they are the first caves whose use is recorded. In fact six of them were characterized as “oracles.”²⁴

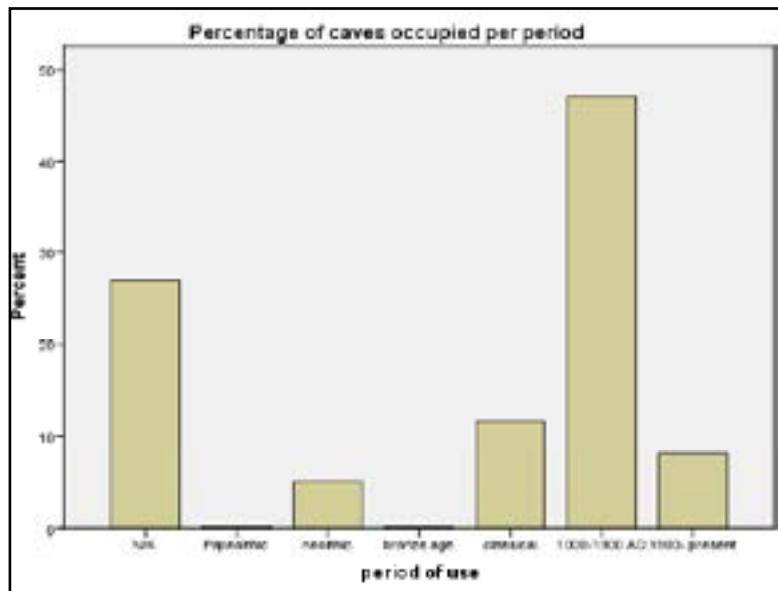
Byzantine and Ottoman

The majority and most complete information derive from the recordings with regard to the caves of the Byzantine, Post-Byzantine and Ottoman eras. In particular, these are caves that have been turned into churches since the 11th century C.E. This practice is common in every region of the country and it presents some specific characteristics. Unfortunately,

complete studies have not been conducted. Only some research with a local interest has been carried out, such as the research in the caves of Megali Prespa and the church caves in Kythera.²⁵ In the Bulletin of H.S.S., 187 caves were published which indicate uses that were related to the Christian worship and cover the period between 1000 C.E. till 1800 C.E.. 175 out of these include buildings and constructions that could be just an altar or even whole complexes of churches.²⁶

Three architectural types of churches are identified in the caves; the Independent one where the church is a separate construction that is just an extension or the whole of the interior of a cave, the Semi-Independent one where the church uses a part of the cave as a wall or a ceiling or both and finally the Dependent one where there is no construction and the cave itself is the church with an addition of a High Altar and in some cases of a Templar. Ninety-three out of the 178 caveforms that have been turned into Christian churches are caves and 71 of them are rock shelters, eight of which are recorded as artificial caves and five as marine caves. Even in the cases when the sacred churches are in caves, only the area close to the entrance is used as opposed to the entire cave.

Table 2. Percentage of caves occupied per period.



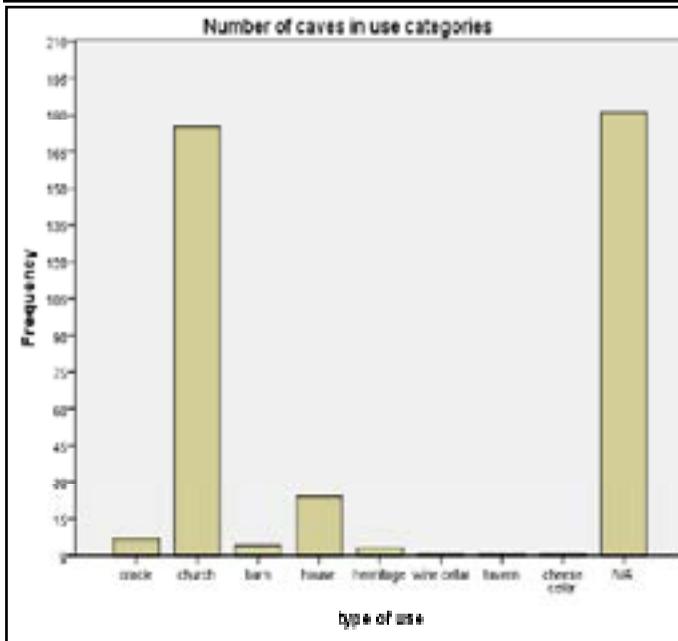


Table 3. Numbers of caves per type of use.

Contemporary uses

Perhaps the most significant contribution of the caves published in the archive of H.S.S. is the recordings that regard modern uses of the caves. At this point it is worth mentioning that the research teams often omitted uses that could not be considered as archaeologically important.²⁷ Taking this into account, many caves that had been turned into barns, for instance, were not recorded. As such, only when we visit these caves today do we observe that even now they are being used periodically or seasonally by shepherds for animal housing. On the whole, 32 caves with modern uses were recorded for the first time. Twenty-four are referred to as residences, four as barns, one as a wine cellar, one as a cheese dairy and one as a tavern; there is one more cave in the area of Perissa in Santorini whose use has not been recorded.

Type of recorded caveforms

After the indexing, 246 out of the 397 recordings concern horizontal caves and 116 concern rock shelters. Nine recordings present activities in marine caves and 16 in artificial caves. Moreover there are 10 potholes in which human uses are recorded.

Discussion

The first significant contribution of the present research is the increase of the known caves with evidence of use in Greece. By adding the 397 caves to the eighty-seven that are available through the Ephorate of Speleology and by subtracting the double recordings, a total of 452 caves with an archaeological interest in Greece is produced. In a country with approximately 10,500 recorded caveforms, the 452 caves represent 4.3%. This percentage rises to 8.3% if it is calculated in the ensemble of 5,391 published caves. However the actual number of caves that are used by humans in Greece in various periods seems to be larger. By examining this data as compared with the data that has been produced by field research in order to locate archaeological caves, it is observed that the actual percentage of the caves that were used in some way in relation to the absolute number of the recorded caves varies from 35% to 45% in the case of the Cerigo Speleological Project and in some cases it reaches an impressive 85-90%.²⁸ Generally, the speleological field research with an archaeological orientation are often absent in Greece and as such it is not possible to reach solid conclusions from the fragmentary research mainly on islands.

The examination of the recordings of the uses of caves that are published in the Bulletin of H.S.S. may not contribute information on prehistory but add caves that are not known in the archaeological research nowadays. The continuity of uses in Greek caves can be easily observed by comparing the modern uses for productive procedures, animal housing, storage and Christian worship with historic and prehistoric uses over time, it can be noticed that little has changed with regard to the uses of caves since the Neolithic period.²⁹ In the Neolithic, caves seem to have been preferred to rock shelters, since there are three cave sites for every rock shelter site. Whether there is a correlation between cave use and the type of cave formation and whether there are environmental factors that influence this choice³⁰ are two questions that are still open for discussion.

The research has advanced our knowledge a lot as far as the Classical and Post-Classical periods are concerned. More specifically, about 120 caveforms are considered to present uses according to the catalogue published by Katja Sporn.³¹ However, three of the caves that are published in the Bulletin of H.S.S. as oracles are missing from the Sporn's catalogue.³² Another conclusion that can be drawn by the caves that are published in the Bulletin of the H.S.S. is that in the Classical period there seemed to be a preference for the use of caves over rock shelters.³³ Since most of the caves in the Classical period were considered to be sacred, this might be related with the choice of caves and the feeling of transcendence and spirituality that is caused by the dark, humid and cold environment of the cave.^{34 35}

The actual contribution of the indexing of the caves with archaeological evidence is the recording for the first time of 178 caveforms that had been turned into churches or hermitages. Only fragmented attempts had been made so far in order to study cave churches in context such as the cases of the studies in Kythera or in Santorini.³⁶ On the other hand, the use of the caves in the Middle

Ages and in more recent years is absent from the complete volume of cave archaeology in Greece.³⁷ If someone travels in Greece, they may easily notice that churches in caves are a common sight and that in most cases they are still being used. For instance, Mass takes place once or twice a year while at the same time wedding ceremonies and christenings take place in the interior of the caves in many cases. The beginning of this phenomenon dates back to the 11th century C.E. with the simultaneous development of monasticism.³⁸ However, even researchers who identified the continuity in cave using³⁹ did not study the modern uses accordingly.

The fact that there is no emphasis on the use of a particular type of cave as opposed to another one (rock shelter instead of a cave for instance) possibly highlights a practice of cave use mainly on the grounds that it offered concealment and economy of structural material. In the case of the use of caves with a dark micro-environmental zone, it can be assumed that people consciously chose to utilize the distinct characteristics of this zone: stable temperature, high humidity and absolute darkness.

A simple indexing cannot lead to conclusions concerning the reasons why people chose to build churches in caves after the 10th century C.E. Excluding the cases of hermitages, where isolation is a priority,⁴⁰ the concealment from possible enemies, the fact that the interior of the caves could easily be structured, as well as the spirituality of the caves with the mystical twilight are perhaps some of the reasons that urged people to use the caves for their ideological expression and for worshipping during troubled times. What is absent from the medieval and more recent uses is the recording of uses related to economy and production. The simplest explanation is that the research teams only recorded the churches that could be easily identified and did not record the uses that required study of ceramics and other finds.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the indexing offers significant information for an initial overview of the use of the caves from the prehistory till today in the Helladic area. The continuity of the uses of the caves is noted for the same reasons (production, residence, worship, ideological expression) with similar strategies (choice and layout of the space according to the needs that should be met). It is worth mentioning that even the simple recordings showcase the role that the cave itself plays in these uses. The number of the caves that are known for their human uses has been quadrupled and new opportunities have been born for a more intensive field research. This research attempt requires a large-scale in-cave surface research in order to identify the occupation sequence of the caves, the current use of the place and the different micro-environmental characteristics of each site. Although no new uses have been brought to light, it is the first time that the already known uses has been categorized and a long-term picture of the uses of Greek caves and how they alter over time has been revealed.

Acknowledgements

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Endnotes:

- 1 Ioannou 2000; Trimmis & Karadimou 2013
- 2 Ioannou 2000
- 3 Ioannou 2000
- 4 e.g. Ekdromika Chronika, Archaeologiko Deltion
- 5 Trimmis 2013
- 6 Trimmis 2013
- 7 Ioannou 2000
- 8 Jacobsen 1969
- 9 Faure 1994
- 10 Trimmis 2013
- 11 http://www.yppo.gr/1/g1540.jsp?obj_id=2465 [accessed 10 November 2014] http://www.yppo.gr/1/g1540.jsp?obj_id=2466 [accessed 10 November 2014]
- 12 There is no data available about how often the EPS databased has been updated. Last update was on 2012.
- 13 Mavridis and Tac Jensen 2013
- 14 The most of the excavated caves in Greece, initially has been explored and evaluated from the H.S.S. and published at the Bulletin (e.g; Skotini, Saracenos, Aggitis, Alepotrypa).
- 15 http://ese.edu.gr/default.asp?V_DOC_ID=2132 [accessed on 11 November 2014]
- 16 <http://geolib.geo.auth.gr/> [accessed on 11 November 2014]
- 17 e.g. Spelunca [vols of 1911 and 1912], Annals de Speleologia [vols 1951-1962]
- 18 Pan [issues of 1949-1958] and Vouno [issues of 1936-1959]
- 19 For instance the cave Galaxidi in Galaxidi in Fokida [no 4460] that had been turned into a tavern during the decades of 80's and 90's
- 20 If the cave is horizontal, vertical, marine or artificial
- 21 The cave of Nestoras in Voidokilia in Messinia.
- 22 Faure 1994; Platon 2013
- 23 E.g. caves of Pan and Nympholiptos in Attica, Chrysospilia in Folegandros island.
- 24 Amphiarairo in Attica, Artemidos and Irakleous in Achaia, Trofoniou in Boeotia, Apollonos in Cyclades and Ieron Kleas in Lakonia.
- 25 Trimmis & Filippatou 2011
- 26 Semoglou 2000.
- 27 It was common in 20th century Greek archaeology do not take into account any evidence after the fall of the Byzantine Empire (1453).
- 28 Trimmis & Karadimou 2013
- 29 Trantalidou et al 2010; Similar uses have been identified from Neolithic to Modern eras. Caves used as shelters, barn places, storage areas, ritual sites or places for ideological expression.
- 30 temperature, humidity, light
- 31 Sporn 2013
- 32 Amphiarairo in Attica, Artemidos and Irakleous in Achaia
- 33 Thirty-one out of the forty-six recordings, or 67.4% referred to as caves)

- 34 Ustinova 2009
35 For the geological difference between a cave and a rock-shelter refer on: Romero 2009. *Cave Biology*. Cambridge University Press.
36 Semoglou 2011; Demaria 2001
37 Mavridis and Tae Jensen 2013
38 Semoglou 2011
39 Such as Trantalidou et al 2010; Sampson 2007
40 Semoglou 2011

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Bronze Age Flower Power: The Minoan Use and Social Significance of Saffron and Crocus Flowers

Rachel Dewan

While iconography of the natural world abounds in the art of the Bronze Age Minoan culture, one plant seems particularly prevalent; represented on ceramics, in wall-paintings, and on votive objects are numerous depictions of the crocus flower. The saffron spice, a product of the flower, was carefully recorded in Linear B texts, testifying to its importance as a valuable economic commodity, but its inclusion in highly detailed iconographic representations and the contexts within which they were found attest to a significance that extended beyond commercial import. Particularly associated with women in the spheres of Minoan industry, medicine, and religion, the pervasive importance of saffron and the crocus flower made it not only a valuable commodity throughout the Bronze Age Mediterranean world, but also an integral part of culture and identity for Minoan women.

Introduction

With floral scrolls, marine motifs, animal iconography, and vast landscapes evident in much of Minoan art, a connection between Minoan art and nature has been noted by scholars since Sir Arthur Evans first uncovered the remains of this Bronze Age culture in 1900.¹ Indeed, the interpretation of the natural world's significance to the Minoans has been perpetuated by the numerous depictions of Aegean flora and fauna, even exaggerated to the extent that the Minoans are sometimes referred to as the “hippies of the ancient world.”² As overstated as this characterization may be, the natural world was clearly of great significance for the Minoans, and further investigation reveals that specific plants and animals were regarded with particular esteem.

The crocus flower is an intriguing example of one of those plants. The crocus and the saffron spice derived from this flower appear in a myriad of contexts within the archaeological record of the ancient Aegean. Each one held meaning for Bronze Age peoples, and “it is the specific social context in which this meaning operate[d] which is important,”³ from iconographic representations to Linear B texts. This evidence sheds light on saffron's status as a substance particularly revered by Minoan women, employed in the creation of a female social identity. Celebrated for its medicinal benefits, used in the dyeing and perfuming industries, and traded throughout the Mediterranean, the versatility of the plant led to the inclusion of saffron and crocus iconography in ritual and symbolic contexts, becoming a distinct symbol of Minoan women and the feminine sphere. By exploring its presence in the decorative iconography of ceramics, wall-paintings, and votive objects, amongst others, the prominence of the crocus plant within the industrial, medicinal, and religious realms of Minoan society can be revealed.



Figure 1: Map of the Aegean with significant Late Bronze Age sites. Inset highlights the important sites of the Argolid (courtesy of the Ashmolean Museum, Oxford)

Terminology and Chronology

Before embarking on discussions concerning Aegean cultures, it is pertinent to note the challenges inherent in the nomenclature. “Minoan,” in its proper sense, refers only to the Bronze Age peoples of Crete.⁴ The chronological period of Late Minoan (LM) IA, however, saw a spread of Minoan cultural traits and objects throughout many previously-independent Cycladic islands. Given the heavily Minoanized nature of sites such as Akrotiri on Thera and Ayia Irini on Kea, it is tempting to consider the effect that a “Minoan thalassocracy” may have had on Crete's island neighbours (fig. 1).⁵ While emulation does not necessarily imply political control,⁶ the discovery at Akrotiri of approximately seventy sealings made of Knossian clay and stamped with a Cretan seal suggests an administrative connection between the two islands, one which may have extended to other Minoanized Cycladic sites.⁷

“Mycenaean” is a similarly difficult term. Though named for the central site of the period, the heartland of the Mycenaean world is considered to be the mainland of Greece, specifically the Argolid (Fig. 1 inset).

Mycenaean material culture, however, can be found throughout the Mediterranean, and its dominance on Crete from LMII to LMIIIB is termed the “Mycenaean period.”⁸ Although Crete’s political situation at this time is unclear, it is likely that mainland Mycenaeans exerted authority over the island, contributing to a decrease in traditionally “Minoan” culture and a rise in mainland trends.⁹

With these terminological problems acknowledged, this paper will use “Minoan” to refer to the peoples of the pre-Mycenaean Aegean at large, and “Mycenaean” to discuss the mainland culture which dominated LMII-LMIIIB Crete when examining the evidence found in the textual and archaeological records.

Saffron in the Bronze Age Aegean

Today, saffron is familiar as a spice with a subtle yet distinctive flavour, produced by drying the stigma of the crocus plant. As the fragility of the crocus flower and the fine-motor work required to separate the stigmas demand that

this process be done by hand, saffron continues to be one of the few crops in the world whose manufacture is non-mechanized.¹⁰ Estimates hypothesize that about 400 hours of labour is needed to produce just one kilogram of saffron.¹¹ The visual motifs and detailed written records of Bronze Age crocuses and saffron, however, indicate that such labour was deemed to be a worthwhile endeavour.

The earliest representation of a crocus flower can be seen on an Early Kamares cup from Knossos dating to MMIA-IB (fig. 2).¹² Trifoliate became more popular as a decorative motif in MMIB-II, but it is the prominently protruding stigmas of the crocus



Figure 2: The earliest depiction of a crocus in the Bronze Age Aegean, painted on a Kamares Cup from the Town Drain at Knossos (Negbi and Negbi 2002:269, Fig. 2).



Figure 3: Conical rhyton from Palaikastro decorated with the ‘Crocus and Festoon’ LM IB Floral Style motif (Betancourt 1985:143, Fig. 108).

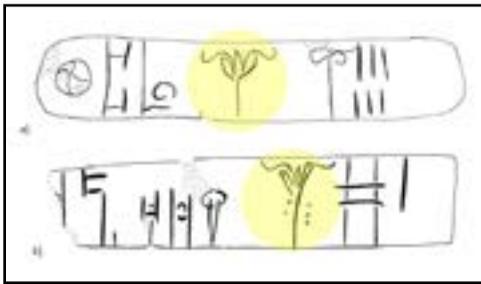


Figure 4: Linear B tablets Np 85 from the Room of the Chariot Tablets (a) and Np 856 from the North Entrance Passage (b) at Knossos. The saffron ideogram is highlighted in yellow (after Day 2011a:374, Fig. 2 and 375, Fig. 3).

which allow for its specific identification.¹³ Perhaps more than a visual cue, this emphasis may reflect the importance of the stigmas to those who harvested the crocus flower, for it is the stigmas which are made into saffron.¹⁴ By LMIA, the crocus appeared in naturalistic ceramic motifs that bore similarities to its synchronous appearance in frescoes, particularly the exaggeration of the stigmas.¹⁵ In LMIB, crocus iconography reached its peak, its artistic height visible in the detailed ‘crocus and festoon’ motif found on *rhyta* and vases in Crete and Cycladic islands (fig. 3).¹⁶ The flower shapes themselves are strikingly similar to crocus forms in contemporaneous wall-paintings, revealing the interconnected relationships between artistic media.¹⁷

By LMIII, the crocus flower became less popular as a decorative motif, but continued to be represented iconographically in the ideograms of Linear B, the written language of the period. The appearance of the saffron ideogram (CROC) on 59 whole or partial tablets like those in Figure 4 is therefore indicative of its economic and, as the evidence below reveals, industrial importance. The additional fact that it was the only spice to be measured by weight, in the same small, intricate values used for gold, suggests that it was considered to be a valuable commodity, carefully monitored by the palace.¹⁸ Why, however, was saffron so valuable? Although its

use continued into the Mycenaean period, its value appears to have been rooted in the social significance assigned to it by the Minoans. Artistic and archaeological evidence suggests that saffron came to be a prominent feature in Minoan industry, medicine, and religion, and that its pervasive importance made it and the crocus flower particularly integral aspects of culture and identity for Minoan women.

Saffron in the Dye and Perfume Industries

Saffron’s function as a dye is immediately apparent when handling crocuses, for when contact is made with the pollen and stigmas, a brilliant yellow colour is left behind. The powerful yellow pigment of the styles is both water-soluble and resilient to light, colouring up to 100,000 times its volume when diluted.¹⁹ Although the lack of written evidence from the Bronze Age Aegean and the near-impossibility of textile preservation in this period render conclusive evidence non-existent, historical and iconographic evidence can shed light on what must have been an important industry for the Minoans.

Saffron-coloured clothing is well-attested in Classical Greece where the plant was the primary dye used to produce yellow cloth and pigments. It was, however, an expensive luxury because its time-consuming manufacture was set against its popular demand. As such, yellow came to be regarded as a symbol of wealth and power, undoubtedly due to the ability of the wearer to purchase such an expensive dye.²⁰ The epithet “*kroko-*,” popular in describing various Greek heroes and heroines, may reflect this connection, conferring authority and status upon the wearer. Homer uses the epithet in relation to a divine being; by describing Eos’ garment as a “*krokoeplos*,” he connects the yellow-red garment of the goddess of dawn with the colours of her personification (*Iliad* 8.1). Indeed, this symbolism seems to have extended beyond the Greek world, and in Mesopotamia, yellow was regarded as a colour of divinity.²¹



Figure 5: The 'Saffron Gatherers' fresco from the upper storey of Xeste 3 at Akrotiri (Doumas 1992:152, Fig. 116).

In the Bronze Age, saffron-dye and the textile industry as a whole appear to have had particular connections with the Aegean, specifically Thera.²² Theran textiles were especially prized in the ancient world, and Pliny verifies that the island's saffron was thought superior to all others.²³ The plausible existence of a dye and textile industry at Akrotiri is supported by the discovery of more than 950 loomweights and many broken murex shells.²⁴ The concentration of these finds within specific houses and their absences in others suggests that residents of Akrotiri were engaged in localized craft specialization.²⁵

The specific connection between Thera and a saffron-centred industry is particularly interesting in light of the wall-paintings preserved at the island's main town of Akrotiri. One particular scene from the upper storey of the Xeste 3 building, aptly named the 'Saffron Gatherers' fresco (fig. 5), depicts two girls picking crocuses amongst a rocky landscape. Though interpretations vary, the painting could represent a potentially female-dominated dye industry in which women were the designated manufacturers.²⁶ This interpretation is corroborated by the fact that the figures shown in Aegean scenes with crocuses and saffron are predominantly female. Furthermore, while women are often depicted wearing yellow clothing in frescoes, the colour is absent from depictions of male attire.²⁷

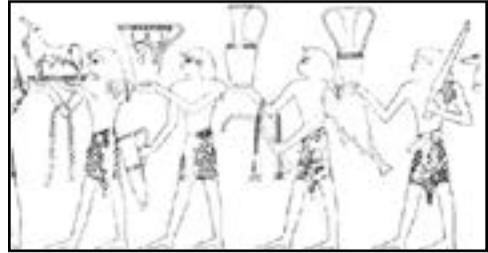


Figure 6: Drawing of Register I in the foreign tribute scene from the tomb of Mencheperresonb at Thebes (Wachsmann 1987, Plate XXXVI, Fig. A).

Though not particularly famous for its saffron, Crete was home to a thriving textile industry. Knossian wall-paintings from the Minoan period reveal images of striking garments with complex woven patterns,²⁸ and by the Postpalatial period it is clear from Linear B documents that Cretan palaces were concerned with breeding sheep for wool to use in textile manufacture. Indeed, the largest group of Linear B tablets from Knossos, Series D, relates to the tallying of sheep and their yields.²⁹

Textiles, it seems, were a major export for the Aegean, valued and desired as they were by neighbouring cultures throughout the Mediterranean. In Egypt, Theban tomb reliefs depict Aegeans in procession carrying textiles to be presented as tribute (fig. 6),³⁰ while Aegean-style wall-paintings reflect artistic motifs derived from Minoan textiles.³¹ In similar fashion, Assyrian kings had Phoenician traders supply their courts with saffron-dyed materials, presumably taking pride in both the quality of the fabric and the implications of its valuable colour.³² Supported by this widespread market, the Aegean was able to tap into a profitable industry.

It is interesting to note that a product as seemingly ordinary as cloth could hold such economic importance, but Peregrine Horden and Nicholas Purcell remind us of the unique position held by textiles as a commodity that sits on the threshold of luxury and necessity, enabling it to become a coveted product subject to the perceptions of external markets.³³ The presence of dyed animal hairs and textile fibres



Figure 7: The ‘Young Priestess’ from the east door jamb of the West House at Akrotiri (courtesy of The Thera Foundation).

alongside valuable materials such as faience and copper ingots in the LBA Uluburun shipwreck demonstrate the commodity’s importance and attest to the inclusion of textiles within pan-Mediterranean trade networks.³⁴

Most discussions surrounding the use of saffron as a dye have restricted themselves to textiles, but Joanna Day believes that further investigations into its cosmetic uses are warranted. Near Eastern cuneiform tablets attest to the use of saffron, turmeric, and sumac as decorative stains for hands,³⁵ and many of the females depicted in the frescoes from Akrotiri, including the “Priestess” from the West House (fig. 7), are shown with red and orange-tinted body parts, suggesting that they perhaps applied a dye such as saffron or henna for cosmetic or ritual reasons.³⁶

Saffron was also an important component of perfume manufacture. When dried, the spice emits a pleasant aroma described by Aristophanes as a “sensuous smell” (*Clouds* 51) admired by the Greeks.³⁷ The scent was undoubtedly used in Classical perfumes, for Dioscorides’ description of an ὀλμός vessel references its use in the mixing of saffron perfume with myrrh (*De Material Medica* I.54).³⁸ From her study of the perfume industry at Pylos, Cynthia Shelmerdine has observed close correlations between Classical and Bronze Age perfumery, supporting the probability that saffron was used in earlier periods of this industry as well.³⁹

Saffron’s powerful pigment would also have served as a natural colouring for the perfumes. Indeed, it seems to have been common in antiquity to enhance perfumes with both colour and scent, and the inclusion of *po-ni-ki-jo*, or alkanet, as a red perfume dye on Linear B documents indicates that this was common practice in the Bronze Age Aegean.⁴⁰ The appearance of ἐρτις within Mycenaean texts lends additional support; usually translated as henna, ἐρτις appears in contexts which indicate that it may have been added for both colour and smell. The henna flower was, however, foreign to Greece and must therefore have been imported from its native lands of Southeast Asia or North Africa,⁴¹ implying the trade of dried plants throughout the Mediterranean.

Evidence for a perfume industry is difficult to uncover without written documentation because of the organic materials used in manufacture, but the many *askoi* (flasks) and stirrup jars found decorated with crocus iconography at Akrotiri are suggestive of such an industry. Further chemical analysis may help to identify perfumed substances, but at present it seems likely that saffron was a useful ingredient in both textile and perfume manufacture.⁴²

Saffron in Medical Treatments

Saffron's function as a panacea was certainly not unknown in the ancient world. In Assyria it was used as a treatment for a wide range of ailments and diseases, from stomach aches to urinary disorders.⁴³ Likewise, Egyptian *djaret* seems to have referred to saffron with which it shared many similarities, including its medicinal use as a treatment for infections and inflammations, a remedy for diarrhea, and as a contraceptive.⁴⁴ Classical Greek writers also recognized the benefits, including saffron in various remedies from antiaging treatments to aphrodisiacs.⁴⁵ Pliny believed saffron to be beneficial overall, noting that it improved the efficacy of medicines: "All these perfumes are rendered still more pungent by the addition of *costus* and *amomum*...and saffron makes them better adapted for medicinal purposes" (*Naturalis Historia* 13.2.62). Even the ancient belief that saffron could treat ailments of the eyes has been upheld by modern scholars, for its high levels of carotenes and Vitamin A may benefit ocular health.⁴⁶ These treatments would undoubtedly have been shared amongst the interacting cultures of the Mediterranean, as they exchanged medical knowledge and remedies.⁴⁷

Amongst medicinal plants known in the Near East and Mediterranean, saffron can claim the largest number of applications, with 90 ethnomedical parallels.⁴⁸ Of these applications, 14% are obstetrical-gynecological, supporting the validity of the spice's most common ancient reference as a pain-reliever for menstrual cramps and childbirth.⁴⁹ Also known to be an

emmenagogue, saffron can act as an abortive in high doses, and may have functioned as an early form of birth control.⁵⁰ Indeed, Robert Arnott notes the prominent role that herbal healing would have played within the ancient Aegean, particularly amongst ancient midwives and female healers.⁵¹ The fact that women, rather than men, are shown in scenes involving crocuses and saffron has led many scholars to suggest that the Minoans were aware of the gynecological benefits of saffron, and thus exploited the plant's medicinal properties.⁵²

One of the most notable examples of the relationship between women and crocuses is found on the walls of the Xeste 3 building at Akrotiri. Known as the 'Adorants Fresco,' this painting originally decorated the walls surrounding a lustral basin on the ground floor (fig. 8). Three girls are depicted along the north wall, seemingly headed toward a possible shrine on the east wall.⁵³ Crocuses and saffron stigmas are conspicuous symbols in the scene, represented on the colourful garments of all three females. The mature woman on the left side of the scene walks in the direction of the shrine wearing a blue blouse emblazoned with crocus flowers and a garland of crocus stigmas around her neck and shoulders (fig. 8).⁵⁴ Beside her, the seated figure wears a belt embroidered with crocus flowers as she nurses a wounded foot.⁵⁵ The young figure on the right is the most enigmatic, partially covered by a translucent yellow veil sprinkled with red, and wearing a crocus-decorated bodice.⁵⁶



Figure 8: The 'Adorants Fresco' from the north wall of the ground floor lustral basin in Xeste 3 at Akrotiri (Doumas 1992:136, Fig. 100).

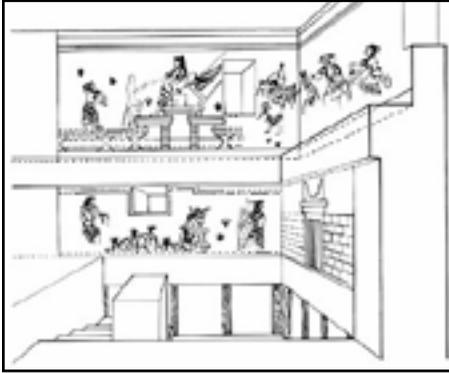


Figure 9: Reconstruction of the artistic program on the ground and upper storeys of Xeste 3 at Akrotiri (Immerwahr 1990:60, Fig. 20).

Speculative theories regarding the interpretation of the overall scene, ranging from the depiction of a female initiation ceremony to a mythological narrative, are thus far inconclusive.⁵⁷ The conflation of saffron's gynecological benefits, the crocus imagery seen in the Adorants' costumes, and the prominence of women does, however, suggest more than mere coincidence. Ellen Davis' astute observation that shaved hair was a symbol of youth in the Bronze Age Aegean makes it possible to identify the differing ages of the figures, decreasing in maturity from left to right.⁵⁸ Nanno Marinatos has therefore suggested that initiatory rites took place in the lustral basin, with the frescoes providing a visual metaphor for the maturation of initiates.⁵⁹ This theory, however, remains conjectural; instead it is Paul Rehak's hypothesis that the figures represent stages of female development which seems more reasonable.⁶⁰ This notion that the figures embody the celebration of womanhood, the pain and bloodshed which accompanies female maturation, and the transition from girlhood to womanhood, is particularly persuasive given the scientific evidence for the health benefits of the plant, the textual evidence regarding its use in early medicine, and the ancient tendency to conflate health and religious intervention, represented here by the shrine painted on the east wall.⁶¹ Indeed, Susan Ferrence and Gordon Bendersky believe the medicinal

benefits of saffron to have been the primary focus of its use in Xeste 3, suggesting that the building may have housed therapy rooms concerned with medical treatments.⁶² Although it is impossible to know for sure, the frequent connections made between health and divine intervention in the ancient world does suggest that the Adorants Fresco reflects the beliefs of the time, interweaving female health and sexual development with spiritual convictions.

Saffron in Religious Contexts

The appearance of crocus and saffron iconography in religious contexts has prompted many scholars to speculate on the connection between the plant and Aegean religion.⁶³ Without an understanding of the science behind agriculture, medicine, biology, and nutrition, all spheres which saffron was capable of affecting, it is likely that the Minoans "made less of a distinction between secular and religious spheres than we do today."⁶⁴

The most common references for the meeting of these spheres are the wall-paintings from Xeste 3 at Akrotiri. While the Adorants discussed above graced the walls of the ground storey, the adjacent upper storey was similarly decorated with detailed frescoes, creating an extensive artistic program spanning the two levels of the structure (fig. 9). Given the iconography, symbolism, and themes shared by the scenes, the ritual connections of the images are understood to extend throughout the building.

The scene on the eastern wall has been identified above as the so-called 'Saffron Gatherers' fresco, in which two girls undertake the time-consuming task of handpicking crocus flowers. The connection between this activity and the finished product, saffron, is reinforced by the continuity of the scene from the east wall onto the north, where a third girl carries a basket towards the central figure.⁶⁵

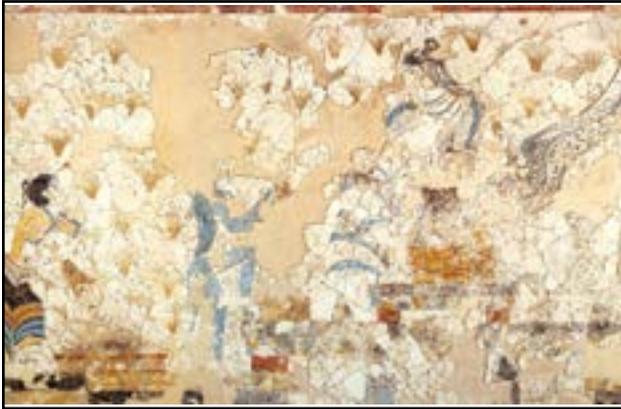


Figure 10: The enthroned goddess and young worshipper from the north wall of the upper storey of Xeste 3 at Akrotiri (Doumas 1992:158-159, Fig. 122).

Although the representation of this activity may reflect aspects of an important industry within the Minoan world, the north wall's fresco advocates for an additional ritual element to be considered in its interpretation. Here, enthroned on an elevated, tripartite structure and flanked by a heraldic griffin, sits an ornately adorned goddess (fig. 10), identified as such by her iconographic affinities with other Minoan deities.⁶⁶ Though her back is to the saffron gatherers, she is involved in the harvest through the gift she is being offered; at the far left, a young girl wearing brilliant yellow garments empties a basket of crocuses into a receptacle.⁶⁷ The laborious stigma-separation and drying processes are not shown, but the significance of the final product, saffron, is emphasized by the presentation of red crocus stigmas to the goddess by a blue monkey, commonly seen as a divine attendant in Minoan art.⁶⁸ The invocation of a deity in order to enhance the potency of a medicine was common practice in the Eastern Mediterranean, and supernatural touch was thought to imbue worldly materials with divine powers.⁶⁹ Thus it may have been believed that the goddess' acceptance of the saffron enriched the potency of the medicine.

The religious contexts of saffron at Akrotiri are not limited to Xeste 3. The West House features a prominent depiction of a woman usually regarded as a priestess because of her ceremonial dress and the incense-burner or brazier she holds before her (fig. 7). Scholars have suggested that the substance she burns is saffron,⁷⁰ and indeed, such a religious context

would make sense, given not only Xeste 3's depiction of the plant as an offering, but also the priestess' yellow robe and dyed eyes, lips, and eyebrows.⁷¹ The religious function of the flower is further corroborated by its appearance on offering tables and altars, at Akrotiri and throughout the Mediterranean. This religious tradition continued even to the 7th century BCE, when the altar to Apollo Karneios at the Thera colony of Cyrene was decorated with a crocus motif.⁷²

The depiction of the priestess is not the only connection between this particular building and saffron; the West House's impressive



Figure 11: Drawings of the faience models of two female dresses and one girdle, all decorated with representations of crocus flowers, found in the Temple Repositories at Knossos (Rehak 2004:95, Fig. 5.9).

artistic program includes the elaborate Miniature Fresco, a painted frieze which wraps around the upper walls of Room 5. This scene depicts a vibrant maritime expedition, and amongst the many ship decorations rendered in colourful detail are crocus-shaped festoons hung from one of the largest ships. Similarly, crocus decorations appear on one of the *ikria*, or ship cabins, painted on the walls of Room 4. It is significant that, when represented elsewhere, *ikria* are always shown in ritual contexts.⁷³

In the early 20th century CE, Arthur Evans made an illuminating discovery at Knossos when the Temple Repositories were unearthed and dozens of objects were found in a ritual context. Within this collection of MMIIIB faience objects were faience crocuses and models of female garments decorated with crocuses (fig. 11).⁷⁴ The garment models are particularly significant because they support a connection between the flowers and female dress, and if Evans' interpretation of the faience models as votive offerings is correct, then here again is evidence for significant links between women, textiles, crocuses, and the divine.⁷⁵

Conclusion

It is clear from the iconographic evidence that crocuses and saffron were regarded as more than mere crops by the inhabitants of the Bronze Age Aegean. As a functional ingredient within the dyeing and perfuming industries, an effective medical treatment, a meaningful cultural symbol most likely used in cultic activities, and a profitable commodity, the plant was revered by the Minoans as a multifunctional resource engrained within many facets of their society. The numerous correlations between the valuable plant and Minoan females, seen both in iconographic representations and archaeological find contexts, suggests that saffron was held in particularly high esteem by women of the time who utilized its pharmaceutical benefits and embraced it as a symbol of female identity and culture.

By the Mycenaean period, saffron's value and versatility were well-established, and its detailed recording in Linear B documents reflects its status as a treasured commodity worthy of palatial attention. Interestingly, however, crocus imagery became a rare motif in Mycenaean art throughout the Aegean, suggesting that the plant lost some of its symbolism in this later period, even as its economic importance remained. The Mycenaean use of saffron and crocuses lies beyond the scope of this paper, but it is worthwhile to note that its disappearance from the artistic record appears to reflect its corresponding loss of social and religious significance within Mycenaean society.⁷⁶

Today, the Minoan legacy lives on. In modern Greece, saffron continues to be manufactured by the Cooperative of Saffron Producers of Kozani, an association of 40 northern villages which maintains exclusive rights for the harvesting and distribution of Greek red saffron.⁷⁷ Krocus Kozanis Products now offers at least seven types of saffron herbal teas, marketing the traditional health benefits of the plant,⁷⁸ as well as newly discovered attributes such as its antioxidant properties, ability to neutralize free radicals, and memory improvement.⁷⁹ While there is far more to the Minoans than their stereotype as peaceful, flower-loving hippies, it seems that their belief in the 'flower power' of the crocus was well-founded, creating a legacy that has lasted across the millennia.

Endnotes:

- 1 cf. Evans 1928, 468-512.
- 2 Gere 2009, 16.
- 3 Hamilakis 2000, 57.
- 4 Shelmerdine 2008, 3.
- 5 Hägg and Marinatos 1984, 221-222; Wiener 1990, 152.
- 6 Wiener 1984, 17.
- 7 Karnava 2010, 87.
- 8 Preston 2008, 311.
- 9 Preston 2008, 311-312.
- 10 Day 2011a, 377.
- 11 Day 2011a, 382.
- 12 Walberg 1992, 244.
- 13 The stigmas are the long, delicate pollen receptacles which protrude from the centre of the flower. Negbi and Negbi 2002, 268; Day 2011b, 342.
- 14 Porter 2000, 618; Day 2005, 51.
- 15 Day 2011b, 354.
- 16 Furumark 1941, 181.
- 17 Betancourt 1982, 34; 1985, 146.
- 18 Ventris and Chadwick 1973, 51; Driessen 2000, 207; Day 2011a, 371.
- 19 Sarpaki 2001, 204; Day 2011b, 365.
- 20 Douskos 1980, 141.
- 21 Sarpaki 2001, 236.
- 22 Young Forsyth 1997, 49.
- 23 Negbi and Negbi 2002, 268.
- 24 The hypobranchial gland of the *Murex* species was used in the Aegean and Eastern Mediterranean from the Early Bronze Age to the late Roman period to create a purple or deep blue dye for textiles. Similar to saffron, the immense effort and length of time needed to create this dye, as well as its great market demand, contributed to high costs. Purple therefore came to be considered a colour of wealth and royalty. Ruscillo 2005, 100 and 105; Douskos 1980, 144; Tzachili 1990, 381.
- 25 Tzachili 1990, 385.
- 26 Marinatos 1984b, 175; Amigues 1988, 241-242; Sarpaki 2000, 661-662.
- 27 Day 2011b, 364.
- 28 Tzachili 1990, 387.
- 29 Killen 1964, 1.
- 30 Wachsmann 1987, 75; 1998, 85-86.
- 31 Shaw 1970, 28-30.
- 32 Basker and Negbi 1983, 230.
- 33 Horden and Purcell 2000, 354.
- 34 Haldane 1993, 349.
- 35 Campbell Thompson 1924, 109; Day 2011b, 366.
- 36 Rehak 2004, 92; Earle 2012, 771-72; Day 2013, 9.
- 37 Basker and Negbi 1983, 230-231.
- 38 Shelmerdine 1985, 47.
- 39 Shelmerdine 1985, 17.
- 40 Foster 1977, 61-65; Shelmerdine 1985, 29.
- 41 Shelmerdine 1985, 28-31.
- 42 Young Forsyth 1997, 49; Porter 2000, 615.
- 43 Campbell Thompson 1949, 160; Young Forsyth 2000, 150.
- 44 Young Forsyth 2000, 161-162.
- 45 Celsus *De medicina* 5.11; Pliny *Nat.* 21.81; Young Forsyth 2000, 152-153.
- 46 Pliny *Nat.* 21.81; Young Forsyth 2000, 159; Rehak 2002, 48; Bisti, Maccarone, and Falsini 2014, 360-361.
- 47 Arnott 1999, 265.
- 48 Ferrence and Bendersky 2004, 206 and 211.
- 49 Ferrence and Bendersky 2004, 214.
- 50 Young Forsyth 2000, 153; Rehak 2002, 48.
- 51 Arnott 1997, 277-278.
- 52 Marinatos 1987, 132.
- 53 Marinatos 1984a, 74.
- 54 Porter 2000, 623; Rehak 2002, 41.
- 55 Rehak 2002, 40.
- 56 Rehak 2004, 90.
- 57 Chirassi 1968, 5; Marinatos 1984a, 65.
- 58 Davis 1986, 399-406; Rehak 2004, 87.
- 59 Marinatos 1984a, 79-84.
- 60 Rehak 2004, 86.
- 61 Ferrence and Bendersky 2004, 211.
- 62 Ferrence and Bendersky 2004, 205 and 220.
- 63 Marinatos 1984a, 1987; Rehak 2004, 85-100.
- 64 Rehak 2002, 47.
- 65 Marinatos 1987, 123.
- 66 Marinatos 1987, 123; Rehak 1995, 104-105.
- 67 Marinatos 1987, 123.
- 68 Marinatos 1987, 125-127.
- 69 Ferrence and Bendersky 2004, 212.
- 70 Marinatos 1984a, 46; Wachsmann 1998, 86.
- 71 Young Forsyth 1997, 79.
- 72 Chirassi 1968, 125.
- 73 Betts 1973, 334; Wachsmann 1998, 118.
- 74 Evans 1928, 469; Day 2011b, 358.
- 75 Rehak 2004, 95.
- 76 Day 2011a, 381.
- 77 A short history of the Cooperative and its work can be found on the official website for *Krocus Kozanis Products* (2014, <http://www.krocuskozanis.com/>).
- 78 A brief overview of the beneficial properties of saffron can be found on the official website for *Krocus Kozanis Products* (2014, <http://www.krocuskozanis.com/>).
- 79 Abdullaev 2004, 433; Akhondzadeh et al. 2010, 582.

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The politics of currency and the use of images of the past in the formation of the Cypriot national identity

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This paper examines the politics of currency and the use of certain icons contributing to the formation of the Cypriot national identity. This investigation takes under consideration the coins and banknotes issued after the independence of the island until the present day. The island's rich history is one of the most popular sources for imagery on the coins and banknotes. Therefore, this article focuses on the use of images of the past in the creation of the Cypriot identity. The focus on icons from various periods of time seems to be shifting according to the current political events and ideologies promoted by the state. Through the adoption of the euro these ideologies are communicated in both local and European level.

Introduction and Historical Background

When Cyprus gained its independence, after centuries of foreign sovereignty, Cypriots began a “quest” to determine their national identity. The selection of specific icons¹ to be depicted on their coins and banknotes encapsulates these efforts. The icons chosen for each issue of currency shifted according to the political changes and ideologies of the state. Thus, a reference to the political background of Cyprus during the period under study is necessary.

Briefly, during the period of 1955-1959, Cypriots led by the National Organization of Cypriot Fighters struggled for national liberation against the British, under whose administration the island had been since 1878. Their goals were to remove the British troops and unite the island with Greece. From hereafter, the idea of uniting the island with Greece will be referred to as *enosis*. The conflict ended in 1959 with all parties involved (Great Britain, Greece and Turkey) coming into an agreement, known as the “Zurich and London Agreement.” Through this agreement the constitution of Cyprus was established and treaties of alliance and guarantee were signed. Finally, Cyprus gained its independence on 16 August 1960 when Archbishop Makarios was elected the first president of Cyprus, representing the Greek-Cypriots, and Kutchuk the Vice-President, representing the Turkish-Cypriots.²

In 1963, inter-communal violence broke out between the Greek-Cypriots and Turkish-Cypriots, lasting for 11 years. On 15 July 1974, the Greek military junta carried out a coup d'état aiming to unite the island with Greece. Five days later, Turkish troops invaded Cyprus in response to the coup. This invasion resulted in the occupation by the Turkish troops of around 37.5% of the island's territory and the ousting of approximately 142,000 Greek-Cypriots from their ancestral homes.³ Thus, problems of absorption, re-housing and perhaps eventual resettlement had to be faced. In a series of Emergency Action Plans (1975-

1986) the government managed to successfully rebuild the shattered economy. Finally, on 1 May 2004, Cyprus became a full member of the European Union.⁴ Four years later, it entered the Eurozone.

The currency of 1960-1974

One year after the island's independence, the government issued a new set of banknotes while two years later, in 1963, the Royal Mint in London issued a new set of coins on behalf of the new born Republic of Cyprus. These series of currency were gradually replaced after the invasion of the Turkish in 1974. The Royal Mint not only issued the new series of coins but their design was also assigned to a British artist, William M. Gardner.⁵ It seems that the “co-operation” between Great Britain and its former colony was still alive. Even after the recognition of the Cypriot independence, measures were taken by the British in order to foil the Greek-Cypriots' suggestion that the new currency might include motifs from the specifically Greek past of the island. Since 1930 the British had adopted a policy, as a reaction to the mounting *enosis* movement, which promoted the creation of a new Cypriot identity that was neither Greek nor Turkish.⁶ Therefore, only symbols representing the flora and fauna, folk life and regions and landscapes of the island were deemed acceptable for the new sets of coins and banknotes.⁷ These motifs were probably chosen because of their abstract character but also because they were related to a clearly Cypriot identity. The only reference to the past of Cyprus on the coins is made through the ancient sailing ship which was inspired from the painting of an ancient jug. This was depicted on the 5-mils coin.⁸ This representation, however, does not provide any evidence for the period in which the ship is dated.

On the banknotes, the only clear reference to the past of Cyprus is seen on the reverse side of the one-pound note. It presents the Ottoman aqueduct built by Bekir Pasha near Larnaca and one of the colonnades of the Roman palaestra (reconstructed from the Hellenistic



Figure 1: The reverse side of the one-pound note of the 1961 series decorated with the Ottoman aqueduct; opposite, the colonnades of the Roman palaestra in Salamis (photo: C. Alexandrou).

palaestra) of the gymnasium at Salamis⁹ (fig. 1). These buildings are presented opposite to each other. Even though the palaestra dates to the Roman period, its architecture derives from the Greek models and it could have served as a subconscious connotation of a Greek past. The placement of the two monuments together on the banknote may have served as symbols of the co-existence of the two communities of Cyprus, the Greek-Cypriots and Turkish-Cypriots. They are also monuments that confirm their roots on the island. These icons may have been a message to both sides since their relationships had been tense since 1955 and became worse in 1963 when there was an outbreak of inter-communal violence.

The currency of 1977-1997

As mentioned above, the next series of coins and banknotes were issued after the invasion and occupation of almost half of the island by the Turkish, which also characterizes Cyprus' present state. For more than a decade, Cyprus fought to overcome the results of this dramatic event. In 1983, the Turkish-Cypriots declared the northern part of the island as independent which was rejected by the United Nations Security Council. This move is now only recognized by Turkey and condemned by the rest of the international community.¹⁰ In the meantime, negotiations for a peaceful solution between the two sides have started and are still in progress.

During this period, and more precisely, between the years of 1977-1979 the previous issue of banknotes was gradually replaced while in 1992 the 20-pound note was introduced. Modifications on the icons depicted on the majority of the banknotes occurred in 1997. The new coins were issued later, in 1983 with minor changes occurring on the 20-cent coin in 1989 and the introduction of the 50-cent coin in 1991.¹¹

Starting from the coins, Clara Zacharaki-Georghiou was selected by the Central Bank of Cyprus to design the 1983 issue.¹² Although she was born in Greece, she lived most of her adult life in Cyprus.¹³ The 20-cent coin of 1989 and 50-cent coin of 1991 were designed by two Cypriots; Theodoulos Theodoulou and Antis Ioannides, respectively.¹⁴ Although the denominations, inscriptions, form, material and other characteristics are determined by the Central Bank of Cyprus and approved by the Council of Ministers, collaboration with the artists was expected in terms of the choice of the icons. Thus, it is reasonable to expect that the themes decorating the coins would have had different sources of inspiration from those issued in the 1960s.

Indeed, in contrast to the previous series of coins, the artists were mostly inspired by the ancient past of the island and more precisely from the Late Bronze Age, Archaic and Classical periods. Two heraldically arranged goats depicted on a Late Bronze Age ceramic bowl are seen on the two-cent coin while a bull illustrated on a Late Bronze Age silver bowl from Enkomi¹⁵ is depicted on the five-cent piece. In addition, a bird perched on a branch illustrated on a Cypro-Archaic jug is depicted on the one-cent coin while a portrait of Zenon of Kition, founder of the Stoic Philosophy, is seen on the 20-cent coin of the 1989 issue.¹⁶ Moreover, the 50-cent piece bears a composition based on a fourth century B.C.E. Cypriot coin of the kingdom of Marion depicting the abduction of Europa by Zeus transformed as a bull. Both coins have the inscription "King Timocharis" in Cypro-Syllabic script.¹⁷

Regarding the banknotes of the 1977-1979 issue, again the majority of the themes are inspired from the island's history, and more precisely, from the Archaic to Roman periods. A nymph from the Hellenistic pavement of the House of Dionysus in Nea Paphos¹⁸ (fig. 2), a limestone portrait head from Arsos¹⁹ (fig. 3) and an athlete's head of the Archaic period (fig. 4) were represented on the obverse sides of the 1, 5 and 10-pound notes, respectively. The Bellapais Abbey of the Medieval period and the Roman theatre of Salamis²⁰ (fig. 5) decorated the reverse sides of the 1 and 5-pound notes. In 1992, the 20-pound note was introduced which had in its obverse side a first century sculpture of Aphrodite from Soli²¹ along with a bird depicted on an Archaic jug (fig. 6). Its reverse side was decorated with a composition of the Kyrenia ship of the fourth century B.C.E.,²² the birthplace of Aphrodite, Petra tou Romiou and two amphorae²³ (fig. 7).

In 1997 changes occurred in the character of the themes decorating a number of the banknotes of the previous issue. The themes related to the Cypriot past are now balanced by themes inspired by the folk life, flora and fauna and the various regions of the island. The nymph from the mosaic pavement depicted on the one-pound note was replaced by an icon of a Cypriot girl dressed in the traditional costume, while the Bellapais Abbey was replaced by a representation of the village Kato Drys. The limestone portrait of Arsos on the obverse side of the five-pound note was replaced by the limestone head of a young man dating to the fifth century B.C.E. found in the area of Potamia village. The Salamis theatre on the reverse side of the five-pound piece was replaced by the Greek-Orthodox church and a Turkish mosque from the village of Peristerona. Moreover, the Archaic athlete's head on the obverse side of the 10-pound note was replaced by the marble head of Artemis of the Roman period found in Paphos. It is significant to note that apart from these modifications, the rest of the symbols and icons on the 1997 banknotes remained the same as in the previous issue.²⁴



Figure 2: The obverse side of the one-pound note of the 1979 series decorated with the nymph from a mosaic from the House of Dionysus in Nea Paphos (photo: C. Alexandrou).



Figure 3: The obverse side of the five-pound note of the 1979 series decorated with a limestone portrait head from Arsos (photo: C. Alexandrou).



Figure 4: The obverse side of the 10-pound note of the 1977 series decorated with an athlete's head of the Archaic period (photo: C. Alexandrou).

The replacement of some designs deserves further discussion. Arsos, Bellapais and Salamis represented by monuments or objects of material culture were replaced by equivalent figures illustrating the villages of Potamia, Kato Drys and Peristerona; the former are located in the occupied part of the island while the latter in the government-



Figure 5: The reverse side of the five-pound note of the 1979 series decorated with the Roman theatre of Salamis (photo: C. Alexandrou).



Figure 6: The obverse side of the 20-pound note of the 1992 series decorated with a first century sculpture of Aphrodite from Soli (photo: C. Alexandrou).



Figure 7: The reverse side of the 20-pound note of the 1992 series decorated with the Kyrenia ship, two amphorae and Petra tou Romiou in the background (photo: C. Alexandrou).

controlled Cyprus. Although the occupied regions were replaced, there are some indirect references to the northern part. For example, Potamia and Peristerona villages are located close to the Green Line which separates the government-controlled Cyprus from the area under the Turkish occupation. In addition, the monuments chosen to serve as indices for the Peristerona village are a Greek-Orthodox church and a Turkish mosque; this might

have also served as a reference to the Turkish element on the island or even to a period when Greek-Cypriot and Turkish-Cypriots were living peacefully together. In conclusion, it seems that the reference to the occupied part of Cyprus on the 1997 banknotes is more indirect than on the previous issue. This might have come as a result of the passage of approximately two decades and/or the beginning of the negotiations for a peaceful solution between the two sides.

The promotion of the Greek past through currency

As Child argued “well-designed postage stamps are a natural semiotic vehicle for circulating symbols and icons of national identity and unity. Because they are so ubiquitous, they are seen and handled by the general population, along with money, more than any other instrument of government.”²⁵ Consequently, matters of identity can be reflected but also promoted through currency.

This examination has shown that particular attention was given to the promotion of certain periods of the ancient past of the island; especially, through the coins and banknotes issued during and after the 1970s. Discussions of the politics of the past in different societies have increased over the last years.²⁶ Interest has focused on the uses/abuses of the past in constructing national identity. Most of these studies have illustrated a feature common in most societies, that is, the use of the past to legitimize a community’s existence which is also perceived as a vital element for the political integration of a country.²⁷

It seems that once nations dominated by colonial powers for many years gain their independence, they look for their roots in their ancient past.²⁸ As this investigation has shown, Cypriots focused mostly on the Archaic to Roman periods and less on the prehistory or other periods of the island’s history. During the Archaic to Roman periods, Cyprus underwent a process of Hellenization that affected all

aspects of the society. It is significant to note that when the prehistory of the island is represented, objects from specifically the Late Bronze Age are used which was widely considered to have been the period of the first colonization of the island by the Greeks.²⁹ In fact, the Late Bronze Age icons represented on the 1983 issue of coins are considered as Aegean in derivation.³⁰

The focalization on specifically the Greek past of the island constitutes an attempt to promote and foreground their Greek identity, origins and roots. Even the use of their Roman past could promote the same idea since in terms of the material culture they are considered by people to be the inheritors of the Greek civilization. As Gounaris has stated, “nationalism can be traced in the search for golden ages and landscapes to evoke the much needed feelings of community and pride.”³¹ The fact that Cypriots were part of this great civilization creates feelings of pride and strengthens their bonds.

Another possible reason for promoting their Greek past and roots could have been their representation as quintessentially European since modern Greeks are considered the cultural descendants of the people who set the foundations for European civilization.³² By presenting themselves as part of this past, Cypriots are automatically considered descendants of the founders of European civilization and, therefore, also claim their rightful place among the other European countries.

The projection of the Cypriot national identity in Europe

The acceptance of Cyprus in the European Union in 2004 was followed by the adoption of the euro in 2008. While the euro banknotes and the reverse side of the coins are identical for all the participating countries; the obverse side of the latter bears symbols selected by each state. The designs chosen for the Cypriot euro coins were the decision of the Central Bank of Cyprus; they initiated a competition where

guidelines were given to the artists who were interested in participating. These guidelines contained the three themes that are now depicted on the coins. The three depictions reflect the special character of Cyprus in the sphere of culture, nature and sea.³³

The small denominations one, two, and five cents, carry the moufflon, one of the most characteristic species of Cyprus. The middle denominations 10, 20 and 50 cents illustrate the fourth century B.C.E ship of Kyrenia. The shipwreck was found close to the coast of Kyrenia located on the north of the island and it was of Greek origin.³⁴ This icon was chosen because it projects the importance of Cyprus in ancient trade and its relations with the Aegean and the sea; it also expresses the importance of the sea and shipping in the history of Cyprus. The relations with the Aegean are stressed specifically in the publication of the guidelines which shows the government’s efforts to promote the island’s connection with Greece since antiquity.

The high denominations one and two euro carry the so-called “Pomos idol,” a cross-shaped picrolite figurine³⁵ (fig. 8). It dates back to the Chalcolithic period and it is considered a characteristic sample of the prehistoric art of Cyprus.³⁶ Contrary to the symbols used on earlier issues, the choice of this topic derives from the prehistory of Cyprus. It not only represents the long history of the island but, more importantly, promotes a clear, Cypriot identity.



Figure 8: The obverse side of the two-euro coin decorated with the so-called “Pomos idol” (photo: C. Alexandrou).

Conclusion

In conclusion, the first coins and banknotes of the independent Cyprus were devoid of any depictions connected with the Greek past as a result of the measures taken by the British. It is reasonable, though, to conclude that this policy was pursued also by the state since any connection with Greece could have constituted a reference to the idea of *enosis* which was still alive even after independence. The British, through their “divide and conquer” policy, turned the Turkish-Cypriots against the Greek-Cypriots and against the idea of the *enosis* with Greece during the fight for liberation. This policy resulted in the creation of tension between the two communities which was still obvious after independence and became worse after 1963. Thus, any imagery that could be perceived as alluding to *enosis* could have aggravated their relations even more.

After the invasion of the Turkish troops, the majority of the coins and banknotes issued were decorated by themes deriving from the Greek past of Cyprus. The promotion of the material culture deriving from these periods is of particular interest in terms of the formation of the national identity; not only because the consciousness of sharing a common past contributes to the country’s political integration but because there is an attempt to prove and emphasize their “Greekness”. It is possible that one of the aims of this attempt was to overcome the confusion of identity which must have prevailed in Cypriot society after the coup and invasion. Their connection with a glorious past would have also created feelings of pride which would have brought people together; that was much needed in order to overcome the results of the invasion and work together for the island’s development. The connection with classical antiquity, which was characterized as a period of victories for the Greek nation over great powers, would have given them the strength to keep fighting.

Finally, the selection of the cross-shaped figurine deriving from Chalcolithic Cyprus to be represented on the euro coins was rather interesting since it had no connotations with the Greek past of the island, but rather constituted a characteristic example of Cypriot art. One could say that through the euro coins, Cyprus was promoting a clearly Cypriot identity. An indirect reference, however, on the relations between Greece and Cyprus is made through the depiction of the Kyrenia ship. This paper has shown that from a period when no icons of the past were used on the currency of Cyprus, we moved to a period where its Greek past was overrepresented, passing to a period where these themes were balanced by icons representing a clearly Cypriot identity; all influenced by the current political events.

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Endnotes:

- 1 Icons are identified as any graphic pictorial representation such as a picture, a design or a photograph (Child 2005, 114).
- 2 Panteli 2005, 182-210.
- 3 Panteli 2005, 264-9.
- 4 Panteli 2005, 268-9.
- 5 Hatzopoulos 2005, 197.
- 6 Given 1998, 4; Hatzopoulos 2005, 200-1.
- 7 Hatzopoulos 2005, 201; Pridmore 1974, 66-7; Michaelidou and Zapiti 2008, 233-4.
- 8 Pridmore 1974, 66-7; Michaelidou and Zapiti 2008, 233.
- 9 Karageorghis 1969, Pl. 108.
- 10 Panteli 1984, 407-8.
- 11 Michaelidou and Zapiti 2008, 230-1.
- 12 Fitikides 1996, 123-9; Michaelidou and Zapiti 2008, 235-7.
- 13 Hadjiadamos in her online article (2010, 27 February, <http://www.beachnewsonline.com/artists/clara-zacharaki-georgiou/>) interviews the artist Clara Zacharaki-Georgiou.
- 14 Fitikides 1996, 130-1, 141-2; Michaelidou and Zapiti 2008, 238.
- 15 Schaeffer 1952, 381-9.
- 16 See Michaelidou and Zapiti (2008, 236-8) for the icons represented on the 1, 2, 5 and 20-cent coin.
- 17 See Michaelidou and Zapiti (2008, 86) for the ancient coin; Michaelidou and Zapiti (2008, 231, 238) for the modern coin.
- 18 Kondoleon 1995, fig. 111.
- 19 Gjerstad et al. 1937, Pl. CXCIV.
- 20 Karageorghis 1969, Pl. 109.
- 21 Westholm 1936, Pl. XXXII.
- 22 Nicolaou 1968, 76; Nicolaou 1969, 398.
- 23 The Central Bank of Cyprus (2007-2013, <http://www.centralbank.gov.cy/fromPoundtoEuro/euro.html>) illustrates the icons represented on the obverse and reverse sides of the 1, 5, 10 and 20-pound notes of the 1977-1992 series.
- 24 The Central Bank of Cyprus (2007-2013, <http://www.centralbank.gov.cy/fromPoundtoEuro/euro.html>) illustrates the icons represented on the obverse and reverse sides of the 1, 5, 10 and 20-pound notes of the 1997 series.
- 25 Child 2005, 119.
- 26 Daniel 1963, 122-3; Clark 1964, 251-64.
- 27 Hamilakis and Yalouri 1996, 118; Gounaris 2003, 70; Anderson 2006, 68-9, 72, 80.
- 28 Child 2005, 121.
- 29 See Voskos and Knapp (2008) and Iacovou (2013) for a review and references on this subject.
- 30 Karageorghis 1982, 80.
- 31 Gounaris 2003, 78.
- 32 Mackridge 2008, 297.

- 33 The Central Bank of Cyprus (2005, 14 September http://www.centralbank.gov.cy/nqcontent.cfm?a_id=8592) publishes a revised announcement for the competition for the selection of the design of the national sides of the euro coins.
- 34 Nicolaou 1969, 398.
- 35 Vagnetti 1991, 141.
- 36 The European Central Bank (2009-2014, <http://www.ecb.int/euro/intro/html/index>) illustrates the icons used on the Cypriot euro coins.

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Images of Horsemen in Battle on Works of Thracian Art

Mariya Avramova

Thracians is a common name given by the Greeks to the tribes inhabiting most of the territory of modern southeastern Europe. One of the most common and important figures is the horseman who is identified with the Thracian ruler or members of the aristocracy. The present paper reviews five depictions of battle scenes from two Thracian tombs – the Alexandrovo tomb and the Kazanlak tomb, situated in modern day Bulgaria. The images, though different, have some common elements such as the depiction of horsemen and that the soldiers do not wear armor, even though they are equipped with various weapons. The wall paintings are never found within the burial chamber itself but in the rooms leading to it. This, as well as the small number of such images, may suggest that even though battle was an important rite of passage in Thracian culture, it was not the most important element.

Introduction

This article seeks to introduce and interpret the repertoire of currently known representations of horsemen in battle in Thracian art as found within modern Bulgaria. *Thracians* is a common name given by the Greeks to the tribes inhabiting most of the territory of modern South-Eastern Europe. “Thracian art” is herein defined as the depictions found in buildings or on objects which functioned in a Thracian context though not necessarily created by local craftsmen.

Objects of art that are attributed to the Thracians are found primarily within graves, or other funeral structures, and treasure deposits. Both these categories of objects were intentionally deposited into the ground. The former allow, in most cases, a clear dating of the objects based on comparison with other findings in the same complex. On the other hand the treasure deposits are often discovered by chance and cannot be directly related to a particular settlement or cemetery.¹ Thus, their date is determined according to stylistic criteria and is usually quite broad and imprecise. Authorship of the mentioned works of art or the place of their manufacture is also, in most cases, impossible to determine, thus the only secure criteria is that the images functioned within a Thracian cultural context.

The nature of the preserved artefacts, objects of gold and silver as well as other luxurious items, indicates that the images were primarily created for the enjoyment of the wealthy. The little information we possess regarding the social structure of Thracian society indicates that within Thracian culture, the wealthy were the aristocracy.² Thus, at least some of the images were created with a political motive and not simply to satisfy esthetic needs.

All scholars studying ancient Thrace agree that the ‘horseman’ represents the ruler or members of the aristocracy.³ Riders appear on different type of artefacts, including golden or silver vessels, gold rings and wall paintings,

and present a variety of themes such as scenes of investiture, hunting and, what is most important for the current article, battle.

Only those scenes which are undoubtedly depictions of battle where both sides of the conflict are depicted will be taken into account in this paper. Only five works of Thracian art, where horseman are present, fit this criterion, all of which are found on wall paintings in Thracian tombs. They will be presented here chronologically according to the widely accepted dating of the tombs where they were discovered.

Wall Paintings in the Tomb near Alexandrovo

The Thracian tomb near the village of Alexandrovo, Haskovo province in Southeastern Bulgaria was discovered on December 17, 2000 in a mound called *Roshavata chukka* by the Bulgarian archaeologist Georgi Kitov. There were no ancient artefacts discovered in the tomb, which lead Kitov to suggest that it had been broken into before, most likely in antiquity.⁴ A piece of uniform from a Bulgarian soldier suggests that the tomb was also entered between 1943-1944⁵ as well as a few days before Kitov’s discovery.

The tomb consists of a corridor, antechamber and circular burial chamber (fig.1) built entirely with stone blocks without mortar. The corridor is 10 m long with E-W orientation, its height is 2.25 m and gradually lowers to 1.80 m at the entrance to the antechamber. The antechamber is rectangular in shape the long side being aligned to N-S axis. The room is 1.92 m wide and 1.50 m long. The diameter of the burial chamber is 3.30 m at floor level and the walls gradually arch forming a vault. Double doors, fragments of which were discovered during the excavations, blocked the entrance to the burial chamber.⁶

Kitov believes that it was built in the first half of the 4th century B.C.E. and assumes that it was used for mystery rituals.⁷ The adding of the wall paintings marks the second phase in

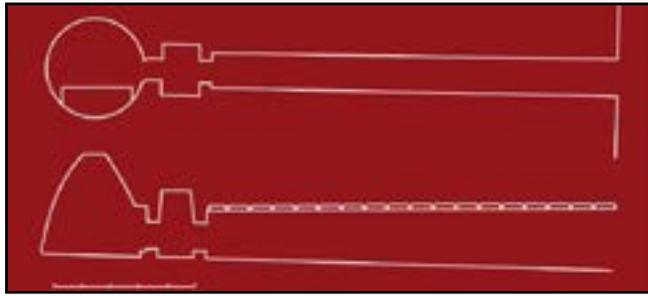


Figure 1: Plan of the Alexandrovo tomb (after Petrov 2009, оѡр. 2).

the usage of the structure which has been dated to the second half of the 4th century B.C.E.⁸ According to Kitov the tomb was sealed in the beginning of the 3rd century B.C.E. at the latest.⁹ Such an interpretation suggests that the building was not initially intended as a tomb and was only later adapted to serve this purpose. Nevertheless, we cannot rule out the possibility that the wall paintings were created for a specific burial.

Due to the multiple previous entries to the tomb, no objects that could have been part of the grave goods were recovered, as well as no physical remains. There are many problems with the interpretation of this building as a tomb based solely on the presence of a 'stone bed' situated by the north wall of the main chamber on the left-hand side of the entrance to the latter. This could have served a very wide variety of functions particularly with the evidence of fire on the bed.¹⁰

The stone blocks of the structure were flattened with a mixture of lime and sand, on top of which about 0.05 to 0.10 cm thick layer of plaster was implied.¹¹ The painter used tempera technique for the wall painting, i.e. that natural pigments were mixed with a binding agent such as egg, glue, water, etc. It is not established what the binding agent was in this particular case.¹² The wall paintings covered the walls of the corridor immediately adjacent to the antechamber, the antechamber and the main chamber, the walls of which were entirely covered with paintings from the floor to the ceiling.

Northern Wall of the Corridor in the Alexandrovo Tomb

The wall painting on the northern wall of the corridor in the Alexandrovo tomb is relatively well preserved and represents a horseman on the right-hand side with a naked figure in front holding a shield, obviously trying to escape. The image of the horseman has been severely damaged (fig. 2). The position of his right hand suggests that he is holding a weapon – a sword or a spear as suggested by Kitov.¹³ In my opinion, the position of the fingers points to a spear as the more likely of the two possibilities.

One of the central questions, which is directly related to the interpretation of the wall painting, is whether the preserved images were part of a larger scene. In the western part of the corridor, Kitov observed a smooth transition



Figure 2: Wall painting on the north wall of the corridor in Alexandrovo tomb (after Petrov 2009, оѡр. 18).

about 7-8 cm long between the thick plaster and the stone wall where no remains of plaster could be distinguished.¹⁴ Moreover he does not mention the discovery of plaster fragments on the floor of the corridor apart from the section near the entrance to the first chamber where the wall paintings are preserved. This suggests that the image in question was indeed not part of a larger scene and thus should be interpreted independently.

Of particular interest is the dress of the rider, though the image is severely damaged, trousers and shoes with pointed tips are clearly visible. Similar clothing can also be seen on other wall paintings in this tomb as well as in the tomb at Kazanlak. It is not certain whether the rider was wearing armor since the details on his torso are nearly impossible to distinguish. The nakedness of the other figure is quite peculiar. This may relate to the identification of a particular person or tribe, if this is perhaps a depiction of a real event. Interpreting the image as a typical battle scene is rather impossible as only two figures are shown, thus it seems likely that it presents a singular moment from a battle or a duel.

Kitov believes that the scene is a depiction of a ritual dance and that the person in front of the rider is actually a dancer.¹⁵ Xenophon in the *Anabasis* mentioned a dance imitating a battle during a feast in the court of the Thracian ruler Seuthes II (Xenophon *Anabasis* VI, 1.5-6), which led Xenophon to believe in the ritual meaning of the observed actions. However, Xenophon describes a “fight” between men without the participation of horses or horsemen. Kitov’s argument in support of the ritual dance interpretation is based on the position of the legs and toes of the person¹⁶ though this is not entirely convincing.

In order to achieve a credible interpretation, the function of the building must be taken into consideration. If we assume that the wall paintings were created on the occasion of a burial, we may presume that they represent significant moments in the life of the person

for whom the tomb became a final resting place. Another interesting observation made by Kitov may point in this direction. The archaeologist believes that three figures: one painted in the corridor, one in the antechamber and one on the lower frieze in the burial chamber,^{17 18} have a similar profile, and thus it is possible that this is a representation of the same person.¹⁹ Based on this observation, it is possible to assume that the images on the northern wall of the corridor in the Alexandrovo tomb represent real events.

Southern Wall of the Corridor in Alexandrovo Tomb

The wall-painting on the southern wall (fig. 3) of the corridor is situated opposite the image discussed above and is poorly preserved. Similar to the previous example, the figure of the horseman on the left-hand side of the image is more damaged than that of the figures on the right. In front of the horse there are two human figures, one of them stands upright and holds a round shield and attacks with a spear, while the other is kneeling. The latter is believed by Kitov to be a woman.²⁰

A small, though very important, element of the wall painting can be observed in its lower part consisting of red triangles with one of the points pointing down. These were obviously



Figure 3: Wall painting on the southern wall of the corridor in Alexandrovo tomb (after Petrov 2009, σφ. 17).



Figure 4: Wall painting over the entrance to the main chamber in Alexandrovo tomb (after <http://aleksandrovo.com/>).

part of the decorative frame of the image although no ground level is marked. The horseman and the infantryman are dressed in short *chitons*, the latter also wears trousers. Both of them hold spears, however, as in the first image, neither of them wears armor.

The third figure is dressed in a longer *chiton*,²¹ according to Kitov, with red dots visible along the neckline, which he interprets as jewelry.²² The scholar also describes a “strange position of the legs,” which according to him indicates that she is jumping²³ though it appears as if the person is simply kneeling on one knee. Closer observation of the clothing of this figure reveals it to be about the same length as those of the other two, thus the only argument that this is an image of a woman is that the legs and hands are thinner than those of the other figures. Kitov himself writes that it is very difficult to distinguish figures of women from men in the tomb and such a distinction is only hypothetical.²⁴

Kitov interprets this wall painting as a ritual dance as well based on the “jumping” woman.²⁵ However, it is more likely that the image represents a battle scene. The kneeling person is in front of, or even under the front legs of, the horse and looks as if they are begging for mercy. Irko Petrov suggests a similar interpretation with the kneeling figure holding a sword in their right hand.²⁶

The identification of the wall painting with a real event, though very likely, is not easy to prove, as we are not able to relate it to a particular historical fact. However, it is likely that this painting depicted an important moment in the life of the person who was buried in the tomb or of the community that used the building and had access to the images.

Wall Painting over the Entrance to the Main Chamber in the Alexandrovo Tomb

The wall painting in question (fig. 4) is situated in the antechamber on the triangular tympanum above the entrance to the main chamber. It is better preserved than the two wall paintings discussed above. The image has been damaged only in its upper part, where the face of the horseman and the horse’s head were situated.

The image is similar in composition to the one on the north wall of the corridor (fig. 2), a horseman is shown attacking, while another figure, naked from the waist down, is turned towards the rider and is protecting itself. Kitov interprets the presented scene as a ritual dance²⁷ and he suggests that the half-naked figure shows the mother goddess who is performing the investiture of the ruler.²⁸ These hypotheses are unlikely for two reasons. First, the position of the right hand of the rider looks as if he is holding a weapon, possibly a spear, which he is using to attack the person in front of him. Secondly, the horse is rearing and

the person in front of it is obviously trying to protect himself by holding an oval shield²⁹ in front of his body.

Further evidence against Kitov's theory is the clothing of the standing figure which is naked from the waist down. Such a depiction of a deity would be quite unusual as all representations of the mother goddess found on silver vessels from the Rogozen³⁰ treasure and on the wall painting in the Sveshtari tomb³¹ show her in a long *chiton*. In this context depicting the goddess half-naked may have been perceived as a lack of respect. Moreover, the painting strongly differs from the scenes of investiture shown on three gold rings discovered in Bulgaria. The said rings were discovered in three separate burials situated in Central and Southeastern Bulgaria near the villages of Rozovets, Brezovo and Malomirovo-Zlatinitsa. On all three of them the goddess is standing in front of the horseman (facing him or leading him forward with her back turned to him) and is holding a *phiale* or *ryhton*³² considered to be part of the royal regalia.³³ In addition, the notion of a fight with the goddess seems quite disturbing, especially when we consider that according to many written sources female deities were highly revered in Thrace.³⁴ As well, we are actually not sure whether this is a woman at all since the figure is turned with its back towards the viewer.

Kitov has also suggested another interpretation of the image as a dance,³⁵ however, he does not provide any explanation as to the meaning of such a depiction. This hypothesis as well seems quite unfounded. Perceiving the figures as "jumping" or "dancing" is potentially due to the lack of a background as well as a ground level. Therefore, it seems quite possible that this is a depiction of real events which we are unfortunately unable to identify.

The Corridor of the Kazanlak Tomb

The tomb was discovered by chance by Bulgarian soldiers on April 19, 1944 near Kazanlak, Stara Zagora province. The building is constructed of bricks, which is typical for late 4th century tombs in this area. The tomb consisted of an antechamber, a corridor and main burial chamber³⁶ (fig. 5). There were only a few objects discovered in the tomb, most of them in the burial chamber, which suggests that it was robbed. Vasil Mikov who was in charge of the excavations suggests that the robbery probably took place in antiquity.³⁷ In the antechamber, the skeleton of a horse was discovered with its bones in disarray.³⁸ Another archaeologist, Ivan Venedikov, writes about the discovery of two horse skeletons in the same place.³⁹ The entire building was covered by an earthen burial mound.

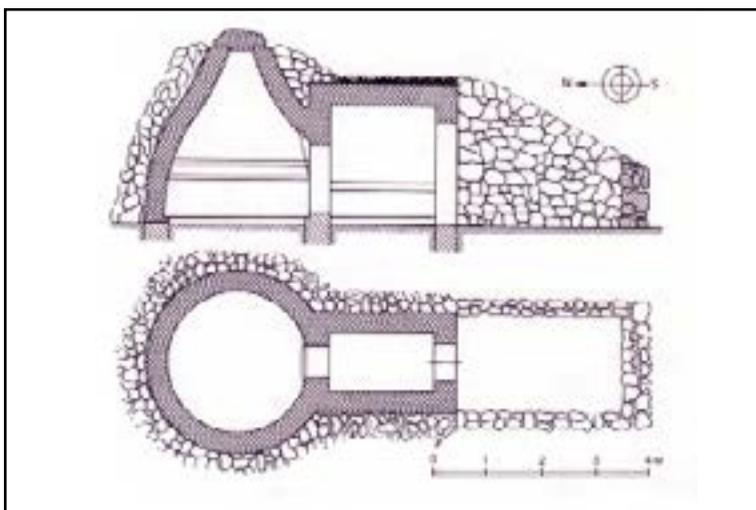


Figure 5: Plan of Kazanlak tomb
(after <http://traciantombs.blogspot.com>).

The tomb is the final resting place for two people – a man and a woman whom Mikov suggests were buried in wooden coffins due to fragments of burnt wood. He also believed that the two were buried simultaneously.⁴⁰ The high quality of the painted decorations as well as the burial ritual and especially the burial of a horse in the antechamber identify the couple as members of the aristocracy.

In the wall paintings both *tempera* and *al fresco* techniques were used.⁴¹ The depictions cover the walls of the corridor and the burial chamber and are organized into friezes – one on the ceiling in the chamber and two on the vault of the corridor. The latter two friezes show two battle scenes involving horsemen and infantry.

Eastern Frieze

The eastern frieze (fig. 6) shows a battle scene involving four infantrymen and six horsemen organized around two soldiers facing each other. Behind each of them, an army is depicted and the soldiers of both armies are not mixed. Venedikov believes that the soldiers are prepared to act in case of an attack from their adversaries.⁴² His main argument is the position of the spears, which are facing down, as well as the calm position of the horses.⁴³ He also notes the position of the sword of the soldier in the middle of the composition, which is not directed towards the enemy.

There are some significant differences between the right and the left side of the frieze. The horses of the two riders on the right-hand side are standing and the soldier between them is decisively advancing forward. On the left-hand side, two of the horses are rearing,

as if they were stopped by their riders. Based on this observation, I strongly disagree with Venedikov's conclusion that the figures are static.

Each of the figures wears a *chiton* while some also have a cape and pointed tip shoes which are also seen on the wall paintings in the Alexandrovo tomb. Some of the soldiers have a helmet or a hat. The diversified clothing may suggest that the artist wanted to portray specific individuals. On the other hand, the reason may be much more mundane, that this was done to create a more interesting and colorful image. It is quite possible that the facial features of each of the soldiers were different; however, due to the poor state of the wall painting in some parts these have been obliterated. Even though the horsemen are equipped with weapons and some of the figures wear helmets, none of the soldiers are depicted in armor. This bears a striking similarity to the wall paintings in the tomb near Aleksandrovo.

Mikov as well as Venedikov suppose that the scene presents a battle between Thracians and Macedonians.⁴⁴ However, the clothing of the figures on both sides of the frieze is quite similar, thus it seems likely that the depicted battle took place between different Thracian tribes. Mikov additionally asserts that the leader of each army is the first horseman behind the central group of two soldiers.⁴⁵

Bearing in mind the dynamics of the scene as well as the gestures of the figures, Venedikov believes that this is not a battle scene *sensu stricto* and tries to identify the scene based on information regarding historical events from the period when the tomb was built in the late 4th to early 3rd century B.C.E. He interprets



Figure 6: Eastern frieze in the corridor of Kazanlak tomb (after Mikov 1954, табл. XXVII).



Figure 7: Western frieze in the corridor of Kazanlak tomb (after Mikov 1954, табл. XXVI2).

the scene as the capturing of Agathocles, the son of Lysimachus by the Thracians and hypothesizes that the man buried in the tomb was responsible for this military enterprise.⁴⁶ Mikov on the other hand, thinks that since no dead or wounded are depicted, the image in fact represents negotiations.⁴⁷ An equally plausible interpretation is that the two armies are observing a duel.

Western Frieze

The western frieze in the corridor of the tomb near Kazanlak (fig. 7) is quite similar to the previously discussed eastern frieze. Once more, we see the clash of two armies whose composition is similarly organized around two infantrymen in the center of the frieze. In this case, however, one of them is kneeling. The image is much more dynamic with the horsemen shown in motion while one of the soldiers on the right-hand side is running. When it comes to clothing, we can observe the same characteristics typical for the wall paintings already described in which none of the soldiers are wearing armor and they are dressed in a similar manner.

Particularly noteworthy is that there is only one horsemen in both friezes that has a beard (the first rider on the right-hand side behind the central group in the western frieze). Lyudmila Živkova is the first to suggest that this is the image of the Odrussian ruler Seuthes III⁴⁸ which is also supported by Venedikov. The main argument in support of this hypothesis is the similarity between the faces of the horsemen and the portrait of the ruler that may be seen on his coins (fig. 8).⁴⁹ The supposed date of the building of the tomb does not contradict such a possibility since it matches the years of Seuthes III's reign (c. 330-302/302 or 297 B.C.E.). Moreover, ancient written

sources describe him as an active warrior who often took part in military campaigns thus it is only natural for him to be presented in battle scenes. In addition, the tomb near Kazanlak is situated not far from the capital of Seuthes III in Seuthopolis. As was mentioned above, the people buried in this tomb were likely members of the aristocracy, so it is possible that the buried man not only knew the ruler, but also took part in his military campaigns. The strong likeness between the “bearded horseman” and the known portraits of Seuthes III is in my opinion a strong argument in support of the theory that it was real events which were depicted in the Kazanlak tomb.

There are several theories regarding the interpretation of the western frieze. Mikov believes that the scene should be perceived as a duel⁵⁰ while Venedikov notes the dynamic movement in the wall painting and claims that this is a presentation of a ritual dance that imitated a battle.⁵¹ The theory of Venedikov that the friezes in the corridor of the Kazanlak tomb depict real events is quite plausible. The fact that each of the soldiers has individual features when it comes to clothing, weapons and facial features presents a strong argument in support of this hypothesis. However, we cannot rule out that this was not simply a result



Figure 8: Coin of Seuthes III, AE, obv.: bearded head of Seuthes right; rev.: Horseman riding right; wreath below (after <http://traciantombs.blogspot.com>).

of the imagination of the painter who wanted to diversify the image. Still, the latter cannot explain the resemblance between the “bearded horseman” and Seuthes III, which cannot be a mere coincidence. Unfortunately, the few iconographic and written sources do not allow us to identify each of the soldiers.

Conclusion

The wall paintings presented in the present article represent a small group, only five of approximately 40 known images of horsemen in Thracian art discovered within Bulgaria. It need be noted that a considerable number of depictions show a lonely horsemen without a counterpart, animal or special attributes. This is problematic when it comes to the interpretation of such images since it is quite hard, or even in some cases impossible, to reconstruct the idea behind the depiction. The archaeological context, which may provide a clue to the meaning and function of the images, is often quite uncertain as many of the objects have been found by locals and submitted to the museum or belong within a treasure deposit.

Some interesting observations can be made based on those five battle scenes. All of them are found on wall paintings in Thracian aristocratic tombs, situated in Central and Southern Bulgaria where tombs were more popular than in the north (fig. 9). Surprisingly, none of the horsemen or the infantrymen wears armor. The matter is further complicated by the fact that there are images of horsemen in armor, i.e. the silver appliques from the Letnitsa treasure.⁵² With the lack of written evidence it is hard to explain this phenomenon, however, this may have been a result of a certain belief or simply of esthetic preference.

Most important is to attempt to assess the function of the battle scenes in the context of the tomb. Ivan Marazov takes into consideration that war was one of the obligatory rites of passage in Mediterranean cultures.⁵³ He believes that the symbolism of war was more important than the depiction of real events. This is supported by the fact that these battle scenes are depicted solely within a funerary context within the corridor or antechamber, and never in the main burial chamber itself. In this sense, they are *en route* to the burial chamber, a symbolism reminiscent

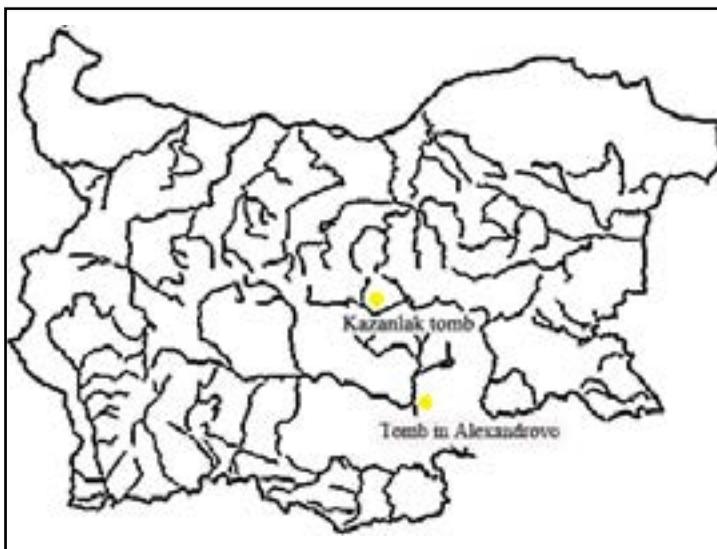


Figure 9: Map of Bulgaria showing Alexandrovo and Kazanlak tombs.

to rites of passage. Furthermore, we can hypothesize that being a warrior may not have been considered by the Thracians to be the most important characteristic but was rather a necessary element of their life. This may explain the lack of images of battle in the main chamber, which is believed by some scholars to be the most sacred place in Thracian tombs.⁵⁴

It is also important to clarify whether the images show real events or mythological concepts. Marazov assumes that the scenes in question cannot be representations of real events because they are found in a tomb, i.e. within a sacred context. He suggests that these are mythological scenes or the mythical biography of the ruler.⁵⁵ However, we cannot be certain who was buried in these tombs and in some cases whether they were really tombs. Only the rich could afford the cost of such a building project, however, this does not necessarily mean that it was commissioned by the ruler directly as aristocrats were also rich. However, it seems rather more probable that the images present real battles. A good argument to that are the differences between the presented scenes which although have common elements, are actually very different. The most convincing explanation of this phenomenon is that the wall paintings indeed depict real events.

The small number of wall paintings with images of horsemen in battle limits the possibility of thoroughly understanding them. The five wall paintings discussed in the present paper were discovered in only two aristocratic tombs located in more than 100 km from each other. This demonstrates that the popularity of this subject was not limited to one region. Furthermore, it makes it possible to believe that further archaeological research may uncover similar paintings could give us a deeper understanding of the topic as well as new insights into Thracian life and beliefs.

Endnotes:

- 1 A good example for this is the Rogozen treasure discovered in 1986 on what is presently a farm. Though archaeologists conducted field survey in the area, no archaeological remains of Thracian inhabitation were discovered (Tačeva 1987, 1-11).
- 2 Popov 2011, 46-9.
- 3 Popov 2010, 215-32; Marazov 2010, 237-8.
- 4 Kitov 2009, 11.
- 5 Kitov 2009, 11.
- 6 Kitov 2009, 20-4.
- 7 Китов 2003, 171-2.
- 8 Kitov 2003, 171-2.
- 9 Kitov 2003, 172.
- 10 Kitov 2009, 18-9.
- 11 Kitov 2012.
- 12 Kitov 2012.
- 13 Kitov 2009, 27.
- 14 Kitov 2009, 27.
- 15 Kitov 2009, 27.
- 16 Kitov 2003, 166.
- 17 The lower frieze is believed to be presenting an offering to the gods.
- 18 Kitov 2003, 159-62.
- 19 Kitov 2003, 166.
- 20 Kitov 2009, 29-30.
- 21 In Thracian art, usually women are shown in long dress.
- 22 Kitov 2009, 29.
- 23 Kitov 2003, 157-8; Kitov 2009, 31.
- 24 Kitov 2003, 168.
- 25 Kitov 2003, 158.
- 26 Petrov 2009, 24.
- 27 Kitov 2009, 35.
- 28 Kitov 2009, 35-37.
- 29 Kitov suggests that the oval object held by the figure may be a shield, even though there are no known analogues (Kitov 2009, 35). However, shields of similar type may be seen on the wall paintings in the tomb in Kaznlak.
- 30 Popov 2010, 57-9.
- 31 Popov 2010, 58-9.
- 32 More detailed information regarding the mentioned three rings as well as their interpretation can be read in Avramova 2015.
- 33 Marazov 2010, 240-1.
- 34 Thorough study on the matter may be found in Popov 2010, 55-127.
- 35 Kitov 2003, 166.
- 36 Mikov 1954, 1-3.
- 37 Mikov 1954, 1-3.
- 38 Mikov 1954, 24-5.
- 39 Venedikov 1986, 2-3.
- 40 Mikov 1954, 27-8.
- 41 Tsanova and Getov 1978, 17.
- 42 Venedikov 1986, 4.
- 43 Venedikov 1986, 4-5.
- 44 Mikov 1954, 15; Venedikov 1986, 5-8.

- 45 Mikov 1954, 15.
46 Venedikov 1986, 6-7.
47 Mikov 1954, 15.
48 Živkova 1974, 18.
49 Venedikov 1986, 8.
50 Mikov 1954, 15.
51 Venedikov 1986, 7.
52 Venedikov 1996.
53 Marazov 2010, 230-6.
54 Marazov 2005, 7-8.
55 Marazov 2005, 12-3.

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The Vandalism of the Mosaics in the Severan Synagogue in Hammat Tiberias

Rebecca Kasmin

In the third and fourth century CE, the ancient city of Hammat Tiberias, located in modern-day Israel, developed as a Jewish center. One of its synagogues, excavated in the 1960s, contains a remarkable floor mosaic, one of the earliest synagogue mosaics in the country. It is composed of several panels, depicting traditional Jewish religious objects, as well as a zodiac wheel, complete with personifications of the four seasons, plus the figure of the god Helios in the middle, riding in his chariot. The extraordinary nature and circumstances of the mosaic and synagogue make its recent vandalism all the more difficult to bear. This article analyzes the vandalism of the mosaics that occurred on May 29, 2012, which seems most likely to be attributable to the Haredim, an ultra-orthodox sect of Judaism. After a discussion of the history of the site, and an analysis of the mosaics themselves, I discuss the perpetrators and their motive, the physical damage, recent comparable acts, and what could be done to prevent future attacks of a similar nature. One can only hope that raising awareness of these acts will prevent them in the future.

Introduction

In 1920, the unsuspecting Jewish Labor Battalion was paving a road between the cities of Tiberias and Zemach in Israel. During construction, the workers came across a startling find that made them stop in their tracks – they had unearthed the ancient town of Hammat Tiberias,¹ part of the larger city of modern-day Tiberias, or in Hebrew, *Tverya*. It was, in antiquity, and remains to this day, a famed tourist attraction on the western shore of the Sea of Galilee, located in the Lower Galilee area of Israel. Upon its discovery, there began an excavation of the site by the Jewish Palestine Exploration Society, from 1920-1921, the organization's first excavation.² Digs have been steadily ongoing for the last decade or so, and archaeologists under the direction of the Israel Antiquities Authority, or IAA, are still uncovering the main area of the ancient town. A grand archaeological national park the Hammat Tverya National Park, was built around the site, and is maintained by the Israel Nature and Parks Authority, or INPA.

Hammat Tiberias

Hammat Tiberias is located south of the ancient city of Tiberias, and north of the el-Hamam springs, between the Sea of Galilee and the mountains, and it therefore functioned both as the southern suburb of Tiberias, and also as a center for therapeutic baths, because of the area's natural hot springs.³ Hammat Tiberias was the source of 17 hot mineral springs with a temperature of over 60° Celsius.⁴ Many

years later, the Romans, always quick to take advantage of such a sought-after commodity, erected beautiful spas and turned the town into a popular resort.⁵ Hammat is mentioned as a medicinal spring in the writings of Pliny the Elder and of Josephus from the first century C.E.⁶ The remains of the hot springs are also part of the Hammat Tverya National Park.

During the third and fourth century C.E., Hammat Tiberias developed as a Jewish center, as is evident by the remains of many Jewish monuments in the town. It housed 13 synagogues, and was the seat of the *Sanhedrin* (the Jewish court), the *Sidra Rabbah* (the great academy), and the Patriarchate, which acted as the official channel of communication between the Roman Empire and its Jewish subjects.⁷ The existence of these Jewish landmarks in Hammat Tiberias helped to create a national narrative for the modern Jewish state of Israel, as they were not only important in the history of the country, but also in the history of Judaism. The Jewish community remained a demographic majority in Hammat Tiberias, and the *Yeshiva* of Palestine remained there until moving to Jerusalem in the mid-10th century C.E.⁸

Of the thirteen synagogues that once stood in Hammat Tiberias, two have been excavated. The first was uncovered in 1921 by writer and translator Nachum Slouschz.⁹ The excavation of this temple was a watershed event in the history of Israeli archaeology, as it was the first synagogue excavation conducted under Jewish auspices.¹⁰ The number of excavations



Figure 1: The Greek dedicatory inscription in the mosaic floor on the Eastern side of the Severan Synagogue. (Modified from photograph by Shulamit Miller).



Figure 2: A floor plan of the Severan Synagogue, showing the location of the mosaic panels. Synagogue (Wikimedia Commons).

in Israel since this important moment in Israeli archaeology is a testament to the value placed upon the practice. Moshe Dothan, the Deputy Director of the Israeli Department of Antiquities and Museums,¹¹ directed the excavation of Hammat Tiberias and the second synagogue in 1960s.¹² This second synagogue turned out to be the remains of the Severan Synagogue from the fourth century C.E. It was identified as such by a mosaic inscription in Greek, found in the floor on the eastern side of the synagogue. The inscription is translated by the INPA as: “Severos disciple of the most illustrious patriarchs who completed [it]. Blessings on him and on Iouillos the supervisor” (fig. 1). Severos was a pupil of these “most illustrious Patriarchs,” who are most likely the Jewish religious leaders Hillel II and his father Jude II.¹³

The Severan Synagogue Mosaic

Within the Severan Synagogue, a remarkable floor mosaic was discovered, one of the most impressive in the country. The majority of mosaics found in Tiberias and Hammat date from the third through the mid-eighth century C.E., many of them inlaid into floors. Floors



Figure 3: The eight-panel Greek dedicatory inscription in the mosaic floor of the Severan.



Figure 4: The zodiac wheel in the mosaic floor in the Severan Synagogue (Moshe Dothan, Israel Exploration Society, 1983).

were predominantly treated as a carpet; an extensive surface on which scenes and motifs could be displayed.¹⁴ The main mosaic in the Severan Synagogue consists of three panels (fig. 2), and the bottom-most panel contains eight dedicatory inscriptions in Greek, flanked on either side by lions (fig. 3). The middle panel depicts a zodiac wheel, with images

of the four seasons in the corners, and the pagan god Helios in the center (fig. 4). The zodiac wheel itself consists of a double circle, divided into 12 voussoir-shaped segments, each depicting a sign of the zodiac facing outward, and accompanied by an Aramaic inscription labeling the sign. Subsequently, after the original construction of the Severan Synagogue, at least two reconstructions of the synagogue were built on top of it, and due to a change in orientation – to better face Jerusalem¹⁵ – a wall was built straight across the zodiac mosaic, partially obliterating some of the motifs. The signs of Cancer and Sagittarius have been completely destroyed by this wall's construction, Gemini and Scorpio are partially damaged, and the Helios image is half cut-off (fig. 4).

The zodiac signs have elaborate coloring, and are rendered in fine detail, an effect achieved through the use of small tesserae. The Aries sign is depicted as a ram, mid-leap, with a luxuriant tail (fig. 5a); the Taurus as a charging bull, tail upright (fig. 5b); one of the twins of the Gemini sign has been lost, but the preserved twin is a male youth with brown hair, standing nude (fig. 5c); the Leo sign is depicted as a roaring, pouncing lion (fig. 5d); Virgo as a maiden standing with a torch ablaze in her left hand, wearing a long, red tunic, with a gray mantle over it (fig. 5e); Libra is a young, standing male, nude, save for a gray cape over his shoulder, holding a scale in one hand, and a golden scepter in the other (fig. 5f); the Scorpio sign, though half-destroyed, remains as the posterior of a darkly-colored scorpion (fig. 5g); Capricorn is depicted as a creature with the head, torso, and front legs of a goat, and the rear haunches and tail of a fish (fig. 5h); the Aquarius is a standing, nude male youth, leaning back and pouring water out of a large golden jug from over his shoulder (fig. 5i); the Pisces is depicted as two similar-looking fish, swimming past each other in opposite directions (fig. 5j).

Figure 5a-d (top to bottom): Aries, Taurus, Gemini, Leo (Photograph by Shulamit Miller).





Figure 5e-f (top to bottom): Virgo, Libra
(Photograph by Shulamit Miller)

These mosaics are of particular importance as well because it is the first time that Jews are known to have used the zodiac in their synagogue decorations.¹⁶ The use of the zodiac wheel was quite common in ancient synagogues, as there are many examples, but less common was the representation of the pagan sun god Helios in the center (see fig. 4); to date, only seven zodiac panels incorporating Helios have been uncovered, all in synagogues, all within Israel.¹⁷ While every other element in the mosaic is labeled, Helios is the only element that is not, perhaps expressing some discomfort of the use of this borrowed iconography.¹⁸ The god is depicted as a magnificent figure, crowned with a halo, and protruding seven rays of light from his head. His right hand is raised, as if waving, and he holds in his left hand a globe and a whip. He is flanked on either side by the moon and a star, which, given the context, could be seen as either the Sun or just a star in general. He wears a long-sleeved blue



Figure 5g-j (top to bottom): Scorpio, Capricorn, Aquarius, Pisces
(Photograph by Shulamit Miller)

tunic, with a red cape draped over his shoulder. Although the depiction is cut off and damaged by the construction of the later wall, there exist the hints of horses' hoofs and a mane, as well as clouds and water, which may imply that the mosaic once showed Helios rising from the sea on his *quadriga*.

The spandrels between the outer circle of the zodiac and the framing square are occupied by four female busts, personifying the four seasons. Each season is accompanied by a Aramaic inscription identifying it, as well as by attributes representing the agricultural activities of the season, and the location of each bust corresponds with the appropriate signs of the zodiac that fall under each season. Spring is represented as a young brown-haired woman, wearing a red tunic and gray mantle, with part of her wavy hair put up, and the rest hanging down over her shoulders (fig. 6a). She also wears a wreath of flowers on her head, as well as a necklace and bracelet. She raised her right hand, holding a bowl of flower buds, and a budding flower grows up behind her. Summer is represented in a similar manner to Spring (fig. 6b), but depicted as holding a sickle, and with a sheaf of grain instead of a flower growing behind her. She wears a wreath of leaves, and her curly brown hair falls behind her shoulders. Autumn, dressed similarly to the other seasons, has her hair mostly covered by a large wreath, which, according to Shulamit Miller, contain figs and pomegranates (fig. 6c). She raises her hand up, holding a grapevine branch as well as another branch with leaves, which could be an olive branch.¹⁹ The panel that portrays Winter is partially damaged, but still depicts a woman wearing a gray tunic, whose head is covered by a mantle (fig. 6d). At her left shoulder is jar with an S-shaped handle, with water spurting out.

The mosaic floor at this synagogue was executed some time in the 360s C.E. by a workshop of the highest class, brought to Israel from one of the great metropolises of the Roman Empire, possibly Alexandria, Nea Paphos, Antiochia or Apamea.²⁰ According



Figure 6a-d (top to bottom): Spring, Summer, Autumn, Winter (Photograph by Shulamit Miller)

to Miller, the combination of these elements – the zodiac, the four seasons, and the pagan god Helios – is unique to synagogue mosaic pavements of the Byzantine period, though the use of pagan elements within the synagogue is not inconsequential. The reasons for these iconographic choices may likely be linked for the most part to the preferences of the mosaics' patrons, who were in turn subject to the changing fashions and tastes of the times. Perhaps the mosaic exudes a pagan mood just because Hillel II had nothing but pagan calendar models to choose from. Even with the appearance of pagan iconography, the mosaics contain a few minor modifications to symbolize

the new Jewish liturgical calendar, such as the introduction of the motif of the moon and stars, and choosing to use the 12 signs of the zodiac instead of the 12 months.²¹ However, it is possible that, given the geographic diversity, and the extended time period during which these symbols were used, the interpretations and ramifications varied from one community to the next, making it problematic to offer a single interpretation applicable for all cases.

The uppermost panel of the floor mosaic in the synagogue depicts a Torah ark with an ornamental curtain, flanked by two seven-branch candelabras, or *menorahs* (fig. 7a). This imagery appeared in both Jewish and Samaritan synagogue mosaics, and also in bas-reliefs and ritual objects.²² This part of the mosaic also contained other important Jewish symbols, such as a coal pan (fig. 7b), the *shofar* (fig. 7c) – a horn made from a ram’s horn used during the Jewish holiday of *Rosh Hashanah* – and a ceremonial palm frond, or *lulav* branch, with its accompanying citron, or *etrog* (fig. 7d), used during the holiday of *Sukkot*. These features commonly appeared together in imagery from Palestinian and diaspora communities, and distinguished representations of Jewish menorahs from Samaritan ones,²³ which were otherwise similar, due to the fact that there was a population of Samaritan Israelites.²⁴



Figure 7a: Torah ark and menorahs mosaic (Photograph by Moshe Dothan, Israel Exploration Society, 1983)



Figure 7b-d (top left going clockwise): detail of the coal pan, shofar, lulav and etrog (Photograph by Shulamit Miller)

The Vandalism

On 29 May 2012, severe vandalism of the Severan Synagogue was discovered by employees of the INPA.²⁵ The night before, vandals had sprayed graffiti and torn up the mosaic. Blue and black spray paint covered the floor mosaic, obscuring ancient Aramaic and Greek inscriptions (fig. 8), and slogans were scrawled along the rock walls of the synagogue (figs. 9-10). Some parts of the mosaic were smashed with a hammer, and ground to a fine powder, while other parts were badly scratched.²⁶ The zodiac wheel in particular appears to have been hit by a pickaxe, and Dror Ben Yosef of the IAA was quoted as saying, “the perpetrators drilled a hole in the drawing of the Holy Ark and damaged the menorah drawing as well. The Israeli newspaper *Haaretz* reported that the vandals “worked very hard trying to take apart the floor,” and “one corner of the mosaic was completely taken apart.”²⁷ Several holes were also gouged in the mosaic floor (fig. 11).²⁸ IAA deputy director Uzi Dahari said a fringe group of extremist ultra-Orthodox Jews, called the Haredim, were suspected of causing the damage.²⁹ However, as of the publication of this paper, there was no claim of responsibility by the Haredim, but they appear to tend not to do so after their attacks.



Figure 8 (left): Spray paint over the inscription mosaic (Photograph by Moti Dolev).

Figure 9 (below): Spray paint on the synagogue walls (Photograph by Moti Dolev).



Two of the slogans spray-painted onto the walls that night said, “a site for every grave [desecrated],”³⁰ and “a response over the years,”³¹ referring to the other, similar acts of vandalism that have been carried out at other archaeological sites in Israel.³² Another piece of graffiti said, “For Shuka,” most likely referring to Yehoshua “Shuka” Dorfman, the head of the IAA.³³ This targeting of Dorfman was just one occurrence out of a string of many, as he has repeatedly been the victim of attacks perpetrated by young Haredi Jews.³⁴ Besides the emotional tolls that this vandalism had on Dorfman and other members of the IAA, it had huge ramifications in both a historic-archaeological and religious context. As Ben Yosef said about the mosaics, “whoever vandalized it desecrated its holiness. These people damaged our historic heritage.”³⁵

Not only were these mosaics some of the best preserved of its period according to archaeologists,³⁶ they were also unique. According to Miller, the iconography and motifs found in these mosaics at Hammat Tiberias fit in to the repertoire of mosaic art in the region throughout the late Roman and Byzantine periods, but are distinctive in the combination of their elements. In some aspects, such as the appearance of Helios and the zodiac, the mosaic art in Tiberias may have been “trend setting,” since this is the first-known appearance not only of Helios in a synagogue setting, but also of the combination of Helios with the zodiac and the seasons in a single panel, and in conjunction with the adjacent panel of Jewish symbols.³⁷ Additionally, according to Gilad Kinamon,

an archaeologist for the IAA, the mosaic was also unique because it listed the names of the synagogue’s chief patrons in ancient Aramaic, Latin and Greek as well.³⁸

Haaretz reported that Ben Yosef posited that the synagogue was “probably the site where the Jerusalem Talmud was completed,” and Dina Avshalom-Gurney, the head archaeologist of the Eastern Galilee and Golan region of the IAA, stated that “it will never be the same mosaic that people prayed on 1,600 years ago... you can feel and learn here how people once lived, prayed, studied and talked. It will never be the same. We’re facing a vandalist drive against heritage sites that’s gaining momentum. Something has to be done to stop it.”³⁹ She goes on further to say that “the damage is irreversible, it’s doubtful we will be able to see the mosaic like it was before... the mosaic floor was here for 1,600 years until these vandals destroyed so many years of history.”⁴⁰ The site served as a center for research, and thus the vandalism of these mosaics not only takes away from the impact of the unique features of these mosaics, but also their importance in learning about the history of the various cultures that occupied ancient Israel.⁴¹



Figure 10: Spray paint on the synagogue walls (Photograph by Moti Dolev).

Figure 11: Hole drilled in Torah ark mosaic (Photograph by Moti Dolev).



According to Dahari, “It was the best of Jewish art of its time, of the late Roman and early Byzantine period,” and the perpetrators “destroyed what was in front of them without thinking.”⁴² The vandalism is most likely attributable to the Haredim – being the most theologically conservative stream of Orthodox Judaism – firstly because, for very religious Jews, the disturbance of Jewish graves is a deeply offensive act, and secondly because of the Haredi’s previous threats against the IAA and its employees, paired with the fact that the graffiti statement “a site for every grave” refers to the IAA’s excavation of Jewish graves from antiquity.⁴³ If perpetrated by the Haredim, their beliefs can be seen as at least a partial explanation of the severity of the damage to the mosaics, and why the vandals lashed out in such a manner. However, it seems strange that, of all the religious and ethnic groups to have attacked a synagogue, it was a group of Jews, and very devout ones at that.

According to Ben Yosef, the reason why they would attack this Jewish site is that “there are Haredim who believe that if a zodiac wheel is drawn there, it can’t really be a synagogue...the zodiac wheel, in this case, is actually a Judaized

Hellenistic motif.”⁴⁴ The vandalism is further attributable to the Haredim due to the fact that ultra-Orthodox Jews have frequently turned up to many of Kinamon’s archaeological sites in the past to demonstrate, sometimes violently, against his work that supposedly involved Jewish gravesites.⁴⁵ For instance, just a week before the incident at Hammat Tiberias, a similar case of vandalism was discovered at Tel Yavne, in which a kiln dating back to the sixth century C.E., used for making ceramic vessels, was spray painted with the question: “What’s more important – a kiln, or honoring the dead?”⁴⁶ The attack on the kiln was also attributed to ultra-Orthodox opponents of the archaeological excavations, and additionally, in the past two months, several other archaeological sites have been damaged as well, and the attacks attributed to the Haredim: another rare mosaic from the Byzantine era was smashed up and covered with Hebrew graffiti – reading “the magnitude of destruction equals the magnitude of desecration” – at Khirbet Hanut site in the Elah Valley just outside Jerusalem,⁴⁷ and a container holding artifacts was set on fire in the city of Afula in northern Israel.⁴⁸ Avshalom-Gorni added that “public servants who safeguard our historical heritage

have also been threatened recently...it's definitely a frightening situation."⁴⁹ Regarding the mosaics at Hammat Tiberias in particular, if opposition to archaeological work was in fact the motivation behind the attacks, experts bitterly noted that the vandals irrevocably damaged and desecrated the very site whose sanctity they purportedly wanted to uphold.⁵⁰

Haaretz reported that a police spokesman said that the Tiberias police are investigating the case, while the authority is trying to tally the damages and figure out if anything can be restored. After the discovery of the vandalism, one employee burst into tears when viewing the vandals' work, and another stated, "Afghanistan is right here."⁵¹ Though the specific vandals have not been identified, authorities are still investigating "the authors of the awful act of vandalism," according to Jacques Neguer, Head of Art Conservation at the IAA, whom I contacted in December 2014, and was kind enough to elaborate on the current situation at Hammat Tiberias. INPA Director General Shaul Goldstein stated that those at the organization "view the incident at Hammat Tverya in the severest light and will work to see that the offenders are punished. These are cultural and heritage sites that are hundreds of years old...this is millions' of shekels worth of damage, but as soon as we have an exact estimate we will begin the long restoration process."⁵² As of the publication of this paper, there have been no disciplinary actions taken regarding the vandalism. The individual perpetrators of the physical vandalism must certainly be punished if identified, as should any authority figure within any organization, religious or otherwise, responsible for suggesting or planning the attack at Hammat Tiberias and other ancient sites.

The vandals caused widespread and irreversible damage, and Goldstein says, "It's impossible to put a price on damage done to pieces of heritage from centuries ago... There is no

justification for such a cheap shot against the fundamental values of our culture," and added that he hoped the police would bring the culprits to justice for their crimes.⁵³ Avshalom-Gorni stated that conservation and restoration work on the mosaic would be carried out, but it would not be enough.⁵⁴ According to Neguer, the damage to the site and the mosaics was immediately repaired by the Conservation Department of the IAA, with one exception: the Northeast corner of the mosaic, which was completely destroyed. This part will take more time to be restored and the work will be done according to the existing documentation using the original stones of the mosaic. According to an announcement released by the INPA, the mosaics have been closed off to visitors since July 1, 2014, and will be until March 1, 2015, for conservation of the floor panels.

The Haredim

With all of the tension that has constantly been plaguing Israel of late, it is a great pity that such devastation might have been undertaken by the Haredim, within their own culture and religion. Though if the ideology of the Haredim is considered, one can begin to understand why they did what they did at Hammat Tiberias and elsewhere. What unites the Haredim is their absolute reverence for the teachings of the Torah, including both the Written and Oral Law. It is thus the central and determining factor in all aspects of life, and consequently, many Haredim are fundamentally opposed to a secular, modern, pre-messianic Jewish state. Though resistant to active participation and affiliation with Israel's mostly secular democracy, Haredi political groups function with the aim of aligning Israel's policies with *halakhah*, or Jewish law.⁵⁵ The Haredim's ardent and uncompromising devotion to their principles led to the formation of the *Atra Kadisha*, a small extremist ultra-Orthodox group, which in the 1950s, took upon itself the goal of protecting Jewish graves from disturbance. All ultra-Orthodox groups agree that exhuming graves is not legitimate, and

even if the graves uncovered contain the remains of gentiles, most ultra-Orthodox agree that they should be left untouched, lest their disturbance lead to the encouragement of the desecration of Jewish graves abroad. There is a feeling within the Haredi community that the *Atra Kadisha* are waging a controversial battle, which not everyone within the broader group supports.⁵⁶ Therefore, while the press has attributed the vandalism at Hammat Tiberias to the greater Haredi people, it may in fact just be the work of this outlying, smaller group of Haredim. Considering the stated goals of the *Atra Kadisha*, the group looks probable for the crimes, and so maybe the media should have put the official blame of this smaller faction as opposed to the Haredim in general, as was the case for most news sources.

Compromise between the Haredim and the IAA has been attempted in the past few years, with Dorfman beginning an ongoing dialogue with Rabbi David Shmidel, who heads the *Atra Kadisha*. He spoke to the Israeli newspaper, *Haaretz*, a month after the vandalism at Hammat Tiberias, saying, “There were confrontations, but we kept up the dialogue...I was criticized by archaeologists and secular Jews, but we managed to maintain a reasonable level of cooperation.” However, this dialogue ended with the Ashkelon affair, in May 2010, where Haredim opposed the construction of a new emergency room at Ashkelon’s Barzilai Medical Center over ancient graves. Dorfman told the paper that the ultra-Orthodox behaved in a matter that was “aggressive - the graves were not the real issue. I had a meeting with Shmidel and I proved to him that this was a pagan site that had nothing Jewish about it. But these people began to engage in acts of vandalism against my workers and against me personally. My wife was hospitalized. That is when I gave up trying to get them to cooperate with us. The real issue is not the graves; what is going on in fact is a power struggle within the Haredi community. Today, I am not in dialogue with them. I work with the religious establishment, with the Chief Rabbinate.”⁵⁷

A month after the incident at Ashkelon, the Haredim protested yet again at the IAA’s excavations of graves in Nazareth. The IAA made clear that they “gathered the bones with meticulous care for the respect to be paid to the dead,” and transferred them to the Religious Services Ministry. Even with these facts clarified Rabbi Eliahu Cauffman, who was asked by the *Atra Kadisha* to help mediate in the affair due to his experience in interfaith dialogue, said, “We have different standards than the Antiquities Authority for determining the identity of graves...all we asked was that the works at the site halt, to give us the opportunity to examine the graves.”⁵⁸ So it becomes evident that this is a delicate situation that requires give and take from both parties. Unfortunately, as of the time this paper was published, this balance could not be achieved, and with such differences in ideology and beliefs, it is difficult to say when, or even whether it ever will be.

Responsibility and Prevention

One must wonder if there was anything that could have been done to prevent this vandalism at Hammat Tiberias. Kinamon said the mosaic was located in a fenced-off enclosure, but that it was not guarded overnight.⁵⁹ However, of all of the desecrations of archaeological sites in Israel in recent months, this particular occurrence marked the first time that such vandals have broken into a closed site. “They just broke in. The site isn’t hermetically sealed, but there’s a fence. This is a national park and part of the mosaic is exposed – that was the section that sustained the most damage,” a spokesperson for the INPA said. The IAA and INPA seem to have taken the burden of blame for the incident, as Goldstein was quoted as saying, “the INPA and the IAA are charged with protecting the precious historic treasures of Israel and we will work together to fully erase the damage done to the artifacts and the ancient synagogue at the site.”⁶⁰ Though the INPA is directly responsible for the daily upkeep of the national park that contains the site, it is the IAA that has archaeological responsibility over the synagogue and its

mosaics. According to the “Law of the Israel Antiquities Authority” the IAA is “responsible for all the antiquities of the country, including the underwater finds. The IAA is authorized to excavate, preserve, conserve and administrate antiquities when necessary.”⁶¹ They are also responsible for enforcing the 1978 Law of Antiquities, which was enacted in order to protect the antiquities of the country, “i.e., any object, which was made by man before 1700 C.E., or any zoological or botanical remains from before the year 1300 C.E.”⁶² The IAA has gone through great lengths to ensure the safety of the antiquities in Israel, as one can tell from the aforementioned policies, but perhaps the problem does not lie with their enforcement of the safety protocols that protect antiquities.

Perhaps it should instead be considered that the Hammat Tiberias site is a very popular tourist attraction, both for visitors to the Northern Galilee region and to Israel in general, and frequently draws large crowds. Furthermore, due to the site’s location within a national park, many organizations related to Israeli tourism encourage visiting the site, which is open to the public year-round. However, perhaps this wide accessibility contributed to the targeting of the synagogue and its mosaics. If the site had been kept more private and secure, perhaps it would not have been targeted for the vandalism. Appreciating the mosaics *in situ* is important to understanding their context and significance, but perhaps the mosaics could have been transferred to a museum, where they could be stored indoors in a secure environment, with replicas of the panels inserted into the floor of the synagogue. Surely they would be safer from vandalism behind glass, guard and locked doors.

Take, for instance, the Lod Mosaic, a Roman work discovered in the city of Lod, in Israel, which was the ancient site of Lydda. Though the mosaic has been on a worldwide exhibition tour since 2011,⁶³ when the tour eventually ends, the mosaics will be moved to a permanent display venue in Lod: the Shelby White and the Leon Levy Lod Mosaic Archaeological

center.⁶⁴ This plan for display is clearly more secure than that of the mosaics at Hammat Tiberias, as the Lod Mosaic will always be inside a museum or other building dedicated to protecting it. While putting the Lod Mosaic in such a venue keeps it safe, it also deprives them of some of their its cultural value; the mosaics at Hammat Tiberias are at risk, but the site offers a more authentic experience. Judging by the sheer number of ancient mosaics located *in situ* in Israel, it becomes clear that the country encourages visitors’ exposure to the mosaic in its original, even when the safety of the mosaic is at risk, as seen at Hammat Tiberias and the other vandalized archaeological sites.

Another approach for the display of mosaics can be seen in the practices of the Good Samaritan Museum, located on the main road between Jerusalem and Jericho.⁶⁵ It is the only museum in Israel dedicated solely to mosaics, and one of only three such museums in the world,⁶⁶ and it is thus a crucial test case in the debate over how best to exhibit mosaics. It is well frequented, as it is conveniently situated on the route commonly traveled by pilgrims and tourists traveling from Jerusalem to the holy sites in the Galilee; plus, the museum itself is situated within the Inn of the Good Samaritan archaeological site, which has been an important site for Christians throughout the ages. The mosaics in the museum, taken from their sites in Judea, Samaria and the Gaza Strip in order to protect them, are divided into two groups: those on open-air display and those located inside the museum building.⁶⁷

Like the Lod Mosaic, many of the museum’s objects are taken from their original sites to protect them and to exhibit them more easily to the public, but interestingly, the museum has chosen to openly show reproductions of some mosaics,⁶⁸ perhaps to protect the originals, whether they are still *in situ* or being conserved or restored elsewhere. One must wonder, however, if putting all of these priceless mosaics together in one place is asking for trouble. If the Good Samaritan Museum were

to be attacked by vandals or other antagonists, there would be a high concentration of destruction of important mosaics from the region, and these irreplaceable parts of history would be lost. This is a risk that must be calculated when gathering a large number of a certain type of object in one place, but thus far, the Good Samaritan Museum has handled its monumental cargo well.

Unfortunately the kind of iconoclasm that occurred at Hammat Tiberias is not confined to Israel, or even to mosaics, as the religious extremism that causes it is a reality in many other parts of the world; works of art and architecture are often collateral damage when extremist actions are involved. For when great objects of cultural heritage are targeted, a piece of that culture's history is irrevocably destroyed, and thus the attacks have the most impact on the intended victims. Sites and objects with religious importance are even more vulnerable, due to the inflammatory nature of certain peoples' deeply embedded religious beliefs. Neutralizing the cause of these antagonistic actions by radical groups is an unthinkable difficult task for these reasons, but minimizing the opportunity for damage is a whole other problem entirely. As seen from the various pros and cons of other methods of displaying mosaics, the manner in which they are "best" exhibited is a dilemma that cannot be easily solved. Until it is, casualties like those at Hammat Tiberias will continue to occur, due to the vulnerable nature of ancient mosaics *in situ*. Society has charged archaeologists and art historians with the duty to avert damage to such artifacts to the fullest extent that is possible, and to protect their integrity for as long as possible. Looking forward, one can hope that one day, this will be a universally uncontested undertaking. By observing how other mosaics are displayed within the country, and comparing their situation to that at the Severan synagogue at Hammat Tiberias, prevention of further vandalism of this kind to mosaics in Israel and elsewhere will hopefully be achievable.

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Endnotes:

- 1 Shmulovich, "Vandals Cause 'irreparable Damage' to 1,600-year-old Mosaics in Tiberias Synagogue."
- 2 Fine 2005, 24.
- 3 Miller 2011, 8.
- 4 Hence the name, "Hammat," meaning "hot" in Hebrew.
- 5 Goldberg, "Ancient Tiberias reveals all her glory."
- 6 Miller 2011, 8.
- 7 Miller 2011, 5.
- 8 Miller 2011, 7-8.
- 9 Miller 2011, 124.
- 10 Fine 2005, 10.
- 11 The Israeli Department of Antiquities and Museums later became the Israel Antiquities Authority.
- 12 Miller 2011, 126.
- 13 Olszewski 2005, 18.
- 14 Miller 2011, 30.
- 15 Dothan 1962, 154.
- 16 Fine 2005, 90.
- 17 Miller 2011, 34-35.
- 18 Fine 2005, 90.
- 19 Miller 2011, 33-34.
- 20 Olszewski 2005, 18.
- 21 Miller 2011, 32.
- 22 Fine 2012, 102.
- 23 Fine 2012, 107.
- 24 Fine 2012, 102.
- 25 Ashkenazi, "Vandals Desecrate Ancient Tiberias Synagogue; Authorities Suspect Haredim."
- 26 Hadid, "1,600-year-old mosaic at Israeli synagogue damaged."
- 27 Ashkenazi, "Vandals Desecrate Ancient Tiberias Synagogue; Authorities Suspect Haredim."
- 28 Agence France-Presse, "Vandals Smash Mosaic in Ancient Galilee Synagogue."
- 29 Hadid, "1,600-year-old Mosaic at Israeli Synagogue Damaged."
- 30 Ashkenazi, "Vandals Desecrate Ancient Tiberias Synagogue; Authorities Suspect Haredim."
- 31 Shmulovich, "Vandals Cause 'irreparable Damage' to 1,600-year-old Mosaics in Tiberias Synagogue."
- 32 Ashkenazi, "Vandals Desecrate Ancient Tiberias Synagogue; Authorities Suspect Haredim."
- 33 Ashkenazi, "Vandals Desecrate Ancient Tiberias Synagogue; Authorities Suspect Haredim."
- 34 Hasson, "Great Excavations: Israel's Antiquities Authority Head Won't Cave in Just Yet."
- 35 Ashkenazi, "Vandals Desecrate Ancient Tiberias Synagogue; Authorities Suspect Haredim."
- 36 Hadid, "1,600-year-old mosaic at Israeli synagogue damaged."
- 37 Miller 2011, 43.
- 38 Hadid, "1,600-year-old mosaic at Israeli synagogue damaged."
- 39 Ashkenazi, "Vandals Desecrate Ancient Tiberias Synagogue; Authorities Suspect Haredim."
- 40 Shmulovich, "Vandals Cause 'irreparable Damage' to 1,600-year-old Mosaics in Tiberias Synagogue."
- 41 Shmulovich, "Vandals Cause 'irreparable Damage' to 1,600-year-old Mosaics in Tiberias Synagogue."
- 42 Hadid, "1,600-year-old mosaic at Israeli synagogue damaged."
- 43 Hadid, "1,600-year-old mosaic at Israeli synagogue damaged."
- 44 Ashkenazi, "Vandals Desecrate Ancient Tiberias Synagogue; Authorities Suspect Haredim."
- 45 Hadid, "1,600-year-old mosaic at Israeli synagogue damaged."
- 46 Reinstein, "Mosaic Floor of 4th Century Synagogue Vandalized."
- 47 Agence France-Presse, "Vandals Smash Mosaic in Ancient Galilee Synagogue."
- 48 Reinstein, "Mosaic Floor of 4th Century Synagogue Vandalized."
- 49 Ashkenazi, "Vandals Desecrate Ancient Tiberias Synagogue; Authorities Suspect Haredim."
- 50 Shmulovich, "Vandals Cause 'irreparable Damage' to 1,600-year-old Mosaics in Tiberias Synagogue."
- 51 Ashkenazi, "Vandals Desecrate Ancient Tiberias Synagogue; Authorities Suspect Haredim."
- 52 Reinstein, "Mosaic Floor of 4th Century Synagogue Vandalized."
- 53 Shmulovich, "Vandals Cause 'irreparable Damage' to 1,600-year-old Mosaics in Tiberias Synagogue."
- 54 Ashkenazi, "Vandals Desecrate Ancient Tiberias Synagogue; Authorities Suspect Haredim."
- 55 Weiss, "Haredim (Charedim)."
- 56 Fogelman, "Are the Ultra-Orthodox Digging Their Own Grave?"
- 57 Hasson, "Great Excavations: Israel's Antiquities Authority Head Won't Cave in Just Yet."
- 58 Mandel, "IAA Excavates Ancient Nazareth Graves despite Haredi Protest."
- 59 Hadid, "1,600-year-old mosaic at Israeli synagogue damaged."
- 60 Reinstein, "Mosaic Floor of 4th Century Synagogue Vandalized."
- 61 Israel Antiquities Authority, "About Us: IAA Law - Chapter Two: The Law and Its Foundations."
- 62 Israel Antiquities Authority, "About Us: Antiquities Law - Chapter One: Interpretation."
- 63 Matthews, "Exhibition Schedule"
- 64 Matthews, "Discovery and Context."
- 65 Israel Antiquities Authority, "Press Release - The Museum of the Good Samaritan Opens to the Public."
- 66 Israel Ministry of Tourism, "The Good Samaritan Museum."
- 67 Israel Antiquities Authority, "Press Release - The Museum of the Good Samaritan Opens to the Public."
- 68 Israel Ministry of Tourism, "The Good Samaritan Museum."

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Interview with Dr. Emily Holt, 2014-2015 IEMA Postdoctoral Fellow

Ryan E. Hughes

Dr. Emily Holt is currently the Postdoctoral Fellow at the Institute for European and Mediterranean Archaeology at the University at Buffalo, SUNY. She received a Master of Arts in Classical Art and Archaeology in 2006 and a Master of Arts in Anthropology in 2008 from the University of Michigan. She continued at the University of Michigan to work on her thesis on the relationship of the environment and the economy in Bronze Age Sardinia, earning her Ph.D. in Anthropology & Classical Art and Archaeology in 2013. Dr. Holt continues to conduct research on Sardinia as director of the the Pran'e Siddi Landscape Project.

Dr. Holt, what are your current research interests and projects in which you are involved?

My primary research interests right now are in cultural interpretations of climate change and natural resources in the past. This is interesting to me because I think we often feel intuitively like we understand natural resources. Everyone has a visceral experience of resources like water, soil, stone, and metal. I think it's easy for us to assume that those experiences are shared cross culturally or that we automatically know how people understand and respond to such "basic" materials. However, understandings of natural resources – their meanings, appropriate uses, and the amounts considered necessary for a comfortable life – are culturally constructed. We can't understand people's responses to changing natural resources in the past without trying to understand what those resources meant to the people using them.

I'm particularly interested in the cultural experience of water insecurity. Sardinia, where I work, isn't an area people would think of as water insecure. Although droughts do occur on Sardinia, the island regularly gets enough precipitation to support rainfed agriculture. Irrigation wasn't necessary in the past, and what we would think of as catastrophic lack of water probably rarely occurred. Still, climate change can alter precipitation patterns, and altered precipitation can affect things like aquifer recharge, which in turn affects the locations and flow strengths of springs and watercourses. The Nuragic culture of Bronze Age Sardinia relied heavily on springs as sources of water, so if the climate change that took place during the Bronze Age affected rainfall and therefore spring behavior, it could have been an uncomfortable and uncertain experience for the Nuragic people, even if water never really became scarce by our definition.

Currently, I'm co-directing the Pran'e Siddi Landscape Project, an archaeological and

geoarchaeological survey centered on the Siddi Plateau in south-central Sardinia. This project is designed to answer some of my questions about climate and environmental change, changing Bronze Age water sources, and the social and cultural reactions of both elite and non-elite members of Nuragic society. The project is planned in three stages. First, we'll carry out a survey of stream channels in the Siddi region. There's topographic evidence for about 50 major and 40 minor stream channels originating on the Siddi Plateau. The goal of our stream channel survey is to trace these channels on the ground and document and map any human interactions with them. Our preliminary fieldwork has already discovered architecturally elaborated springs, agricultural terraces, villages, and towers built in relationship to the channels.

The second stage of our project is to excavate geoarchaeological trenches that will allow us to reconstruct the local palaeoenvironment in detail using soil micromorphology and microfossil analysis. There has been very little research on the Sardinian environment during the Bronze Age, and we need a detailed reconstruction in order to link changing precipitation patterns to changing waterscapes. The third stage of the project is to conduct a survey of a stratified random sample of territory types in the Siddi region. This will allow us to document broader settlement and land use patterns that we'll be able to relate to the changing local environment.

Your work as the IEMA Post-doc centers on water and power in the ancient world, what led you to this interesting field of study and your focus on Bronze Age Sardinia in particular?

My focus on Bronze Age Sardinia came first. I've had a longstanding theoretical interest in the origins of complex societies, an interest I could have pursued almost anywhere in the world. However, my undergraduate background is in classical languages and my early excavation

experiences were on the Athienou Archaeological Project in south-central Cyprus and the American School's excavations of the Athenian agora, all of which led me to focus on a Mediterranean example. The development of the Nuragic culture on Bronze Age Sardinia offered an excellent case study, and one that hasn't been the focus of a lot of scholarly attention outside of Europe, which made it especially exciting since I thought I would be able to add scholarship with a new perspective to the discussion. The Nuragic culture first appeared on Sardinia in the beginning of the Middle Bronze Age (c. 1750-1365 BCE), when residential segregation and unequal access to labor appear in the archaeological record. As the Bronze Age progressed, the disparities between the powerful Nuragic leaders and the rest of society increased. Both my earlier work and my current work have been aimed at understanding the social, cultural, and economic relationships that allowed these increasing disparities to happen.

The environmental embeddedness of human economies has also been one of my longstanding research interests, and the Nuragic case study was particularly interesting to me because the Mediterranean environment has sometimes been found to be fragile and prone to environmental damage. Developing complex societies can put a lot of strain on the environments where they're located. The kind of overproduction that would-be elites engage in when they compete to establish and maintain their power may result in excessive land clearance, unsustainable soil use, soil erosion, nitrogen depletion, and other negative environmental effects. The fact that the developing complex societies of the Nuragic culture were located in a potentially fragile Mediterranean environment made Bronze Age Sardinia a fascinating place to explore all the concepts that interest me.

My current interest in water is a direct outcome of my earlier work on the early Nuragic environment and economy, though not in the way you might think. A major settlement shift took place in the Nuragic culture at the end of the Middle Bronze Age. The towers or nuraghi, for which the Nuragic culture is named, stopped being built on high plateaus and were instead built in the lowlands. My original hypothesis was that this was a result of overusing the thin soils of the plateaus, with the result that environmental degradation forced the Nuragic people to move to more productive areas. However, my research didn't identify any evidence of soil depletion or erosion. I went back into the field and made a new discovery: the early towers in my research area were built next to springs, none of which were still flowing anymore. This discovery prompted the hypothesis that my current project is investigating - that climate change altered the locations of springs, and that the powerful leaders of the Nuragic culture had a ceremonial relationship with water that they sought to maintain and strengthen in the face of unexpected changes in their water sources.

Much of your work deals with faunal remains. What role do you feel archaeo-zoological remains play in the development of our understanding of past environmental conditions?

I am going to take the liberty of putting In my experience, faunal remains are often underutilized in understanding past environments. The focus is more on food species, and though food species certainly have a relationship to the environmental conditions around them, people will also go a long way – sometimes literally – to obtain preferred food species or to create local habitats that will support them, despite adverse environmental conditions: think of going on extended hunting trips, growing fodder, and building artificial fish ponds. I would advocate for the collection and study of non-food species as a second

line of evidence, particularly microfauna. People often don't try to control very small animals like rodents, lizards, and amphibians to the same extent that they control and manipulate the domesticated and hunted species they use for food. As a consequence, the species of microfauna present on a site can be a more direct indicator of environmental conditions. Of course, these species come with their own interpretive problems. For example, many rodent species burrow, so it can be difficult to be certain that the stratigraphic layer you find rodent bones in represents the time when the rodents were alive. Still, the potential for using microfauna for environmental reconstruction is not usually fully exploited. Microfauna are not recovered on all excavations, and even when they are recovered, they may not be subject to the same level of detailed analysis that food remains receive. I both hope and expect this trend will change in the future.

Whose work has proven to be the most inspiring to you in your own research?

I've found many scholars' work to be inspiring, especially given the recursive relationships between political development, economic structures, and environmental change that my work strives to understand. It would be an impossible task to list everyone whose work has influenced mine, but here are a few of my major inspirations.

My thinking about the intersection of social and economic structures has been influenced a lot by Kent Flannery's work, especially on storage and the breakdown of sharing behaviors, as well as John O'Shea's work on storage and Timothy Earle's work on political economies. Mary Helm's work has been instrumental in shaping my thinking about the cultural construction of economic goods. My understanding of how political and social inequality are negotiated has been especially influenced by Robin Beck, Gerald Mars, and Brian Hayden.

Many great scholars have also influenced my thinking on human relationships with environments. Joseph Tainter's work on collapse has helped me develop a framework for thinking about environments, economies, and social structures. Karl Butzer and Paul Halstead have been major inspirations in my thinking on specifically Mediterranean environments and their sustainability issues. Richard Redding and John Speth have both influenced my understanding of how zooarchaeological data can be linked to human behaviors and ancient environments.

Reading ethnographic studies has also proved inspiring as I try to understand how people conceptualize natural resources, and some have provided vivid examples of the processes I identify as underlying resource manipulation in societies at various levels of complexity. One that I found especially useful is Janet Hoskins' *The Play of Time*. Recently, Amber Wutich's work on cross-cultural experiences of water insecurity has also influenced my thinking about cultural understandings of natural resources.

I want to conclude by saying that being in good scholarly environments has been as important as reading the work of particular scholars in challenging me to become a stronger analytical and creative thinker. I've been lucky enough to be surrounded by stimulating scholarly environments throughout my career. Early on, my undergraduate professors were incredibly supportive of my interests and pushed me to work hard and expand my thinking. Spending ten years with the graduate student community at the University of Michigan was undoubtedly one of the biggest challenges and influences on my thinking, and I owe a lot to my friends and colleagues in that setting. When I had my first postdoc at Oberlin College, I was part of two faculty reading groups that really expanded my understanding of archaeological and anthropological theory. And now, as the IEMA postdoc,

I'm challenged by colleagues and students in both anthropology and classics, which has been an amazing interdisciplinary experience.

What have been the most rewarding, and the most challenging, aspects of your time as the IEMA post-doc?

The IEMA postdoc has been a very rewarding experience all around, so it's tough to say what's the most rewarding aspect. One part of the postdoc I've especially enjoyed is making contact with so many exciting scholars as I've been organizing the conference. This year's speakers are a talented and influential group of researchers who have contributed to our understanding of water and its many relationships with unequal social structures in very different theoretical and methodological ways. I've learned a lot from reading their work and corresponding with them, and the opportunity to engage all of them in discussion at the 8th IEMA Invited Scholars Conference is truly a highlight of this experience.

Another aspect that has been very rewarding has been teaching my own graduate seminar on Water and Power In Human Societies. This is my first graduate seminar, and it has been some of the most exciting and challenging teaching I've done in my career. I try to build a mentoring relationship into my seminar. I have very recent experience of the kinds of things my students will need to accomplish to succeed, including applying for grants and strategizing about the job market. I incorporate these necessary professional skills into the seminar as assignments. For example, my students are interpreting water and power in their areas of interest by designing and presenting field research projects in the format of a National Science Foundation grant proposal. I hope my students can learn from my experiences. At the same time, my graduate students are talented junior colleagues, and I find my

own ideas about water and power changing in response to their observations and comments during class discussions.

It's also difficult to identify the most challenging part of the postdoc, since all of it has been pushing me to grow as a scholar and a professional, but one challenging aspect that I care deeply about is building bridges between archaeologists working from an anthropological perspective and those working from a classical perspective. I earned a joint PhD in anthropology and classical art and archaeology from the University of Michigan in 2013. I was the first Michigan graduate student to pioneer this joint degree, so communicating between the disciplines is a challenge I've been engaging with for a long time. This interdisciplinary challenge is part of what attracted me to the IEMA postdoc. The disciplinary histories of anthropology and classics are quite different, as are the goals and assumptions of both fields. At the same time, both disciplines are trying to understand important information about the human past, so being able to communicate has great potential for enriching both studies.

Having recently completed your doctorate, what advice would you give to current graduate students?

The market is really tough right now, and graduate students need to do more than write a dissertation to be successful when they graduate. It's important to leave graduate school with at least one peer reviewed publication. This is a major challenge, especially while you're also writing a dissertation, but it's become an essential of today's job market. Find a mentor you work well with and develop your senior honors thesis or master's thesis into a publishable article. Or take advantage of resources in your department or university. Many institutions have museums or small collections of artifacts that can be subjects for early publications.

Additionally, the level of professionalization required of recent graduates is very high, so take advantage of any trainings and opportunities your university provides. Don't forget to look outside the university as well. Professional organizations like the Society for American Archaeology and the American Anthropological Association provide online seminars and workshops at conferences; be sure to attend them. There's also a lot of good advice online. I highly recommend reading the Chronicle of Higher Education at least occasionally. There's also a blog called The Professor Is In that offers excellent advice on all kinds of professional situations and skills.

IEMA

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Conference 2015

WATER AND POWER IN PAST SOCIETIES

The Eighth IEMA Visiting Scholar Conference

April 11-12, 2015

As the effects of global warming and climate change are increasingly felt world-wide, the political ecology of water has become a major concern. But while the political ecology of water in the contemporary world has drawn much attention, water has always been an essential resource, offering possibilities for differential access and control in the ancient world as well as the modern.

The many ways in which water can be differentially controlled cannot easily be summarized. Water can be managed to increase agricultural production, substitute for labor, provide safety, improve trade and communications, affect health and wellness, and display power. Much of the time, water functions in several of these ways simultaneously, and all kinds of water management offer possibilities to build up inequalities in water access and the benefits that result from it. Flowing through the theme of water management is the fact that water, by nature, can be both persistent and changeable, requiring that the specific temporality of water sources must be mediated by anyone hoping to use them. Water's fluctuations may be highly predictable or totally unpredictable: dependable events like the annual Nile floods can be harnessed to exacerbate existing social inequalities, while unpredictable events like tsunamis can destabilize existing inequalities or create new ones.

Water and Power in Past Societies brings together archaeologists, anthropologists, and historians to offer theoretically-situated, data-rich studies of how water as a resource relates to the formation, maintenance, destruction, or prevention of social inequalities at both intra- and inter-group scales. Examining case studies from Europe and the Mediterranean to the New World, this symposium will explore the many complex relationships we humans have created with our most essential resource.

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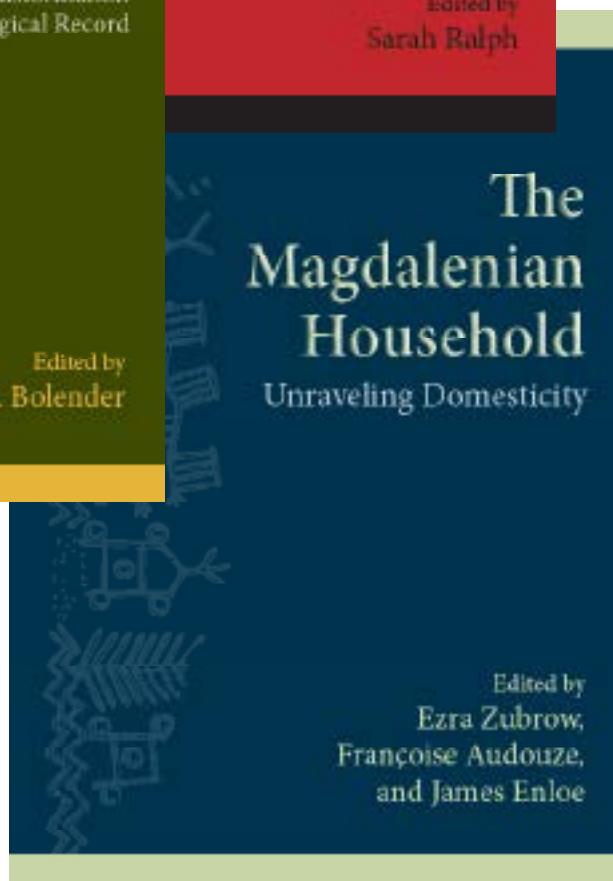
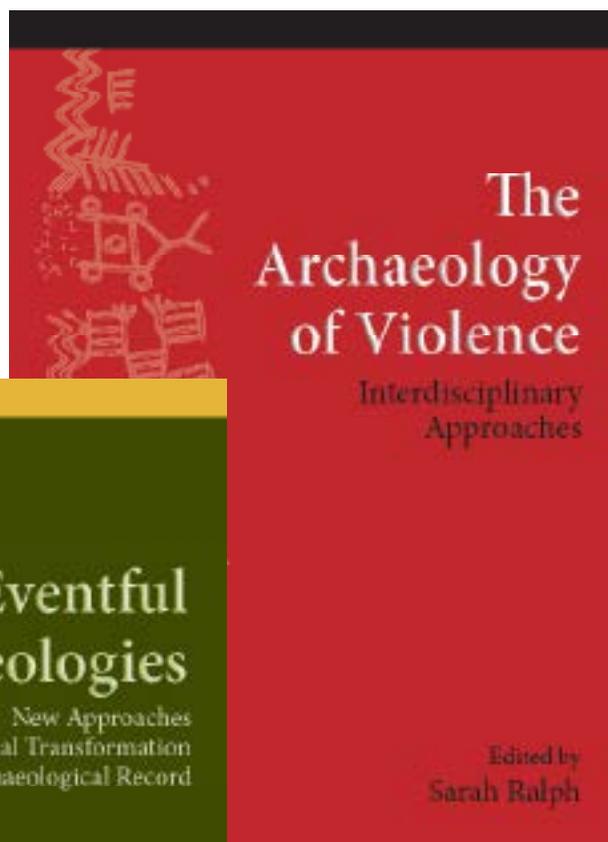
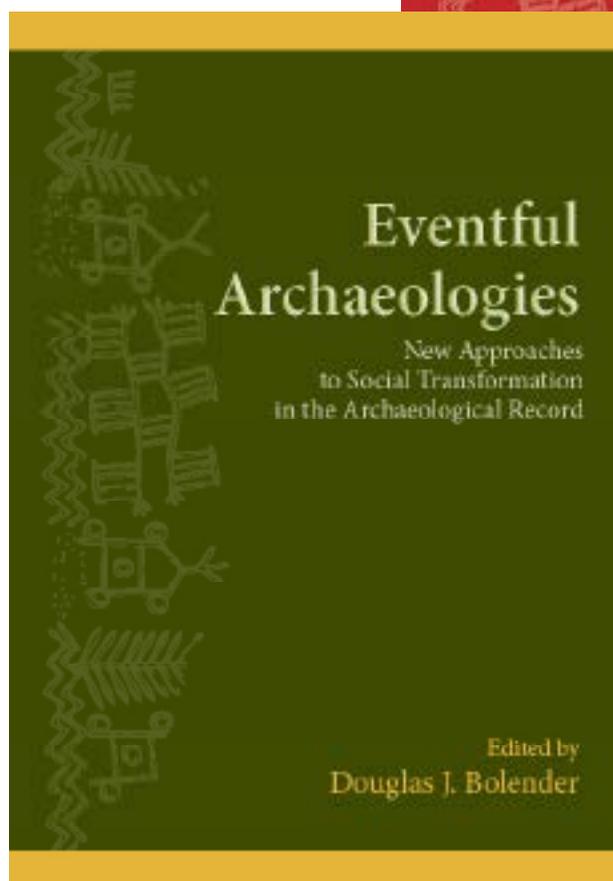
REGISTRATION INFO

All are welcome to attend the conference.
Please register through
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