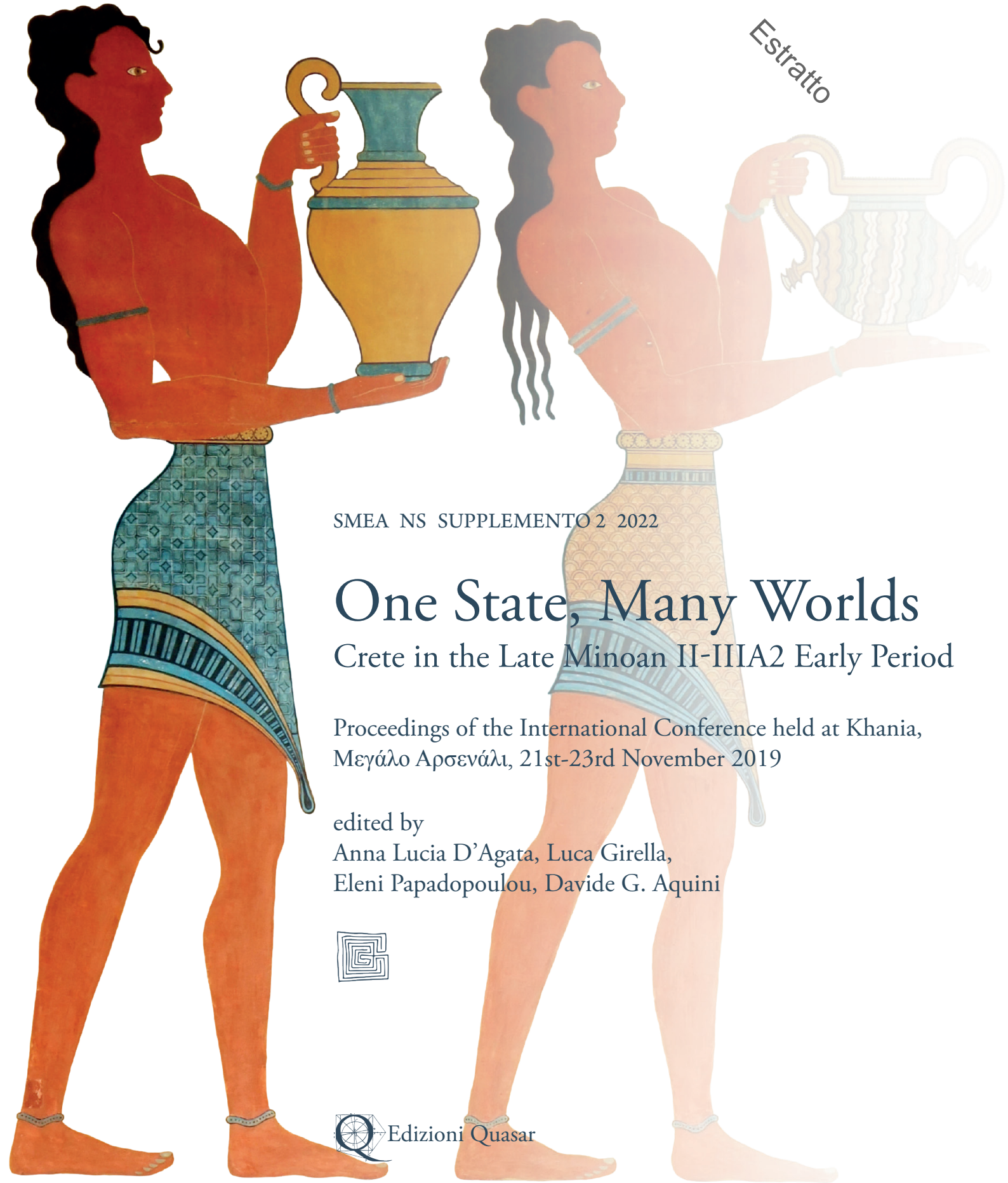

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One State, Many Worlds

Crete in the Late Minoan II-IIIA2 Early Period

Proceedings of the International Conference held at Khania,
Μεγάλο Αρσενάλι, 21st-23rd November 2019

edited by
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Re-elaboration by Laura Attisani of the reconstruction – carried out by Émile Gilliéron *fils* (1885-1939) – of figures of men carrying ceremonial vessels in the Procession Fresco of the South Propylaeum, attributed to LM II, in the palace of Knossos.

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SOMMARIO

CHAPTER 1

EVENTFUL ARCHAEOLOGY, LONG-TERM PROCESSES AND LM II-IIIA2 EARLY CRETE

Anna Lucia D'Agata, Luca Girella

Summary

The aim of this article is to delineate the substantial transformation of political institutions and social organization that Crete experienced in LM II. In order to detail the historical process that occurred in the island in the 15th century, a brief outline of the relevant archeological evidence for the period is given, along with the theoretical assumptions that can support the proposed interpretation. The latter is based on the notion of event regarded as equivalent to a structural change inherent to long-term processes, which intervened to reshape Cretan society permanently.

INTRODUCTION

This introduction to a short overview of LM II-IIIA2 early takes the lead from the requests addressed to the audience of the conference – whose proceedings are published in this volume – by Michael Galaty and Jerry Rutter, the two distinguished scholars of the Aegean Bronze Age who at Chania chaired the final discussion session (see Galaty, Rutter this volume). They gently urged us to ban the use of the terms Minoan and Mycenaean – regarded as theoretical constructs developed within our discipline in the 20th century (for the term Mycenaean, see Burns 2010, 41-72; for the term Minoan, see Galanakis this volume) – and to refer to dynamics of change in LBA Crete only with regard to long-term processes, refraining from the use of notions simply relating to events. This bold plea requests a discussion, which we intend to offer by proposing a more historically embedded vision of the social processes in act on the island in the 15th century.

First, we make the fundamental, if obvious, assumption that in the early LBA the material culture of the Greek mainland is basically different from that of Crete. Although this unequivocal evidence justifies the conventional use of the two aforementioned terms, we agree that they should be appropriately freed from the historical 'materialization' that they have suffered over time. Such a phenomenon finds correspondence in what has been observed about "archaeological evidence reified into chronologically and culture historically pre-defined entities divorced from the material basis" (Griffith 2017). The truism implicit in this point of view does not exclude the possibility that our terms may be used as "cultural labels of convenience" as defined by Myres in 1933 (Galanakis this volume; for the conventional use of the two terms, cf. Parkinson, Galaty 2007; Nakassis, Galaty, Parkinson 2010; Nakassis this volume). We agree, however, that a thoughtful usage of the language employed to describe the relationships between Crete and the mainland in the LBA would help to develop a deeper awareness of the challenges that archaeological recognition and interpretations face: adopting a geographical terminology instead of recurring to Minoans and Mycenaeans, will reduce the risks implicit in the use of our terms as ethnic identifiers (cf. for example Boyd 2016). So far, so good.

The issue concerning the use and meaning of the term 'event' is much more complex and requires more articulated consideration. It is well known that an eventful archaeology has always been dialectic with longer-term processes (cf. especially Bintliff 2010, 130). Adopting an *in toto* processualist, yet now traditional, perspective, prehistoric societies are generally depicted as almost immutable for centuries. Over the last decades, however, relatively fast historical processes – such as migrations, ethnic wars, pandemic diseases, collapse and renewal – have been invoked to explain prehistoric cultural dynamics, stimulated by the relatively new awareness that context-specific historical events may change the line of development of local societies. This perspective is deeply interwoven with the meaning to be assigned to the term 'event' in archeological explanation: a crucial point on which a vast literature,

and, similarly, clear-cut differences in opinion, exist (cf. especially Beck *et al.* 2007; Lucas 2008; Bolender 2010; Robb, Pauketat 2013; Gilmore, O'Donoughue 2015a; 2015b), and which deserves to be further investigated.

On this basis, we observe that:

1. the relation between event and long-term process can be seen in non-antithetical terms, provided that the event is regarded not as a simple contingent occurrence but as a structural change;
2. the LM II phase coincides with a rapid transformation of great social relevance, *i.e.,* the formation of the earliest state of networked-hierarchical type in the Aegean (Parkinson, Galaty 2007). It ends with the destruction of the administrative centre of the new state at the beginning of LM IIIA2, when the palace of Knossos lost most of its control over the rest of the island (Driessen, Mouthuy this volume). These circumstances justify the chronological limits that we have chosen for the conference (*pace* Whitelaw this volume) whose proceedings are published in this *SMEA* Supplement;
3. the social transformation visible at Knossos in LM II cannot be simply explained in terms of a development that occurred entirely within the Knossian society of the LM IB period (Bennet 1985; Driessen, Langohr 2007; Galanakis this volume; Whitelaw this volume), it must have included incomers from the mainland (cf. Driessen 1998-1999; 2019; this volume; Wright this volume) who significantly contributed to the formation of a new social system, a new economic and administrative organization, a new military apparatus, and a new cosmology, and to the diffusion of a different language: in other words, the new political order – ushered in by the *one state* of our conference title – that marked the final entry of Crete in the orbit of the Greek mainland.

Before tackling these questions in further detail, we have to explain the meaning of the term 'event'.

WHAT IS AN EVENT?

The relationship between history and archaeology has always been problematic (cf. Bolender 2010). Whilst processual archaeology rejected either the contingency of the event and the arbitrariness of the historical narrative, or the role of the individuals in the formation of social structures, the post-processual approach has included discussions of individual agency and alternative trajectories of interpretation such as historical reconstructions, and the connection between individual agency and historical event (cf. Hodder 1986; Harding 2005; Bailey 2007; Beck *et al.* 2007; Robb, Pauketat 2013; Gilmore, O'Donoughue 2015a; Foxhall 2018).

What is an event? "The iconic example of an event is that of the great battle: Hastings, Normandy, or the Little Big Horn. […] Informally, then, an event is where the immediate action is […] something that transpires quickly (or relatively so) and then passes" (Beck *et al.* 2007, 834). This concept of event does not apply to prehistoric archaeology because it cannot find a place within an archaeological framework in the absence of coeval written sources. On the contrary, adopting Sewell's notion of the event (2005; Beck *et al.* 2007), the term is made equivalent to a structural change that includes a reordering of social structures and the formation of a new order. Thus, the event turns out to consist of a number of small occurrences, which depend on the specific context, and of a series of fractures between resources and existing social structures that generates the necessity for a new order. In this way a historical event becomes the tip of the process that drives societal change: changes accumulate creating stress to the social structure, which resists until it is reformulated. To put it another way, all the social transformations must include specific events. It is opportune to reiterate that during an eventful change *only some* of the existent structures will disappear, and *only some* new structures will be created. It follows that for the understanding of an event it will be essential to explore through a long-term analysis the continuities with the preceding periods. Sewell's theory makes it clear that the tendency to split history into events and processes may be misleading: a change will usually affect one segment of the society, and not necessarily all of it will be transformed on the basis of a specific event. An event may be characteristic of a specific period of time of social change, and an analysis of events should include multiple temporal scales. Radical social transformations may be identified only within a wide context of trajectories of changes and continuities. This concept of the event also offers a way for human agency to fit in, regarding it as the ability to generate structural change: "it is during historical events that creative manifestations of agency realize their capacity for reshaping social structures" (Beck *et al.* 2007, 844).

The emergence of a new state – the first, apparently, in the Aegean of the networked, hierarchical and economic type – characterizes the second half of the 15th century (LM II-IIIA1) on Crete. A process of state formation that evolves from a corporate system of organization to a networked and economic one cannot be taken for granted. On the contrary, different kinds of states are regarded as derived from pre-existent conditions: "societies that began with larger corporate groups […] were more likely to develop heterarchical-specifically, corporate-systems of organization, whereas societies with smaller corporate groups […] were more likely to develop hierarchical, network-based systems" (Parkinson, Galaty 2007, 125). The same authors explain the peculiar characteristics of the Mycenaean states as derived from tendencies *already* present in the mainland since the EBA (*i.e.,* interest in the control and distribution of goods), associated to the adoption of foreign symbols and ideas, Minoan ones included (Parkinson, Galaty 2007, 124). Within a significant level of cultural continuities with the Neopalatial period (Brogan, Hallager 2011; Galanakis this volume; Macdonald this volume; Whitelaw this volume), the new social and political order of LM II sinks its roots in economic behaviours that can be observed in the cultures of the Greek mainland since the 3rd millennium. This may be considered the starting point of the period that marks the final stage of the Minoan civilization and its palace administration, the transformation of Linear A script for writing Mycenaean Greek, and the inclusion of Crete and the Aegean area, previously exclusively controlled by the Knossian Neopalatial state, in the political and cultural orbit of the Greek mainland.

It is difficult to deny that a contribution of mainland people is implicated in the new process (cf. for example D'Agata, Moody 2005; Langohr 2019, 34). It was probably a small number of prominent individuals who were instrumental in shaping the new way of thinking that in LM II became established in the island. Surely, future isotopic studies and ancient DNA research will tell us more about mobility between Crete, Kythera, and the mainland (cf. for example Nafplioti 2008). It is interesting, however, to note how an off-island contribution is especially denied by scholars working on Knossos, as if this possibility in some way deprived the local groups of their agency in the foundation of the new Mycenaean-type state. The formation of the latter seems to have been a very quick matter, which, for the first time, saw the appearance of one individual at the head of the only administration active on Crete, that of Knossos, and followed trajectories of social development similar to those already existing on the mainland at Mycenae with the Shaft Graves phenomenon, and at Pylos-Englianos with the extraordinary context of the LH IIA Griffin Warrior Tomb and coeval palatial remains (Davis, Stocker 2016; Stocker, Davis 2020; Nelson this volume). "The key point here is not […] to see such moments of transformation in opposition to long-term continuities or as ascribable only to 'external' forces, but rather to understand how they grow out of the historical interplay of multiscalar factors" (Robb, Pauketat 2013, 26).

LM II CRETE: BRIEF OVERVIEW OF THE ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVIDENCE

The new political system that takes on an archaeologically tangible form in LM II probably lasted no longer than 75 years. LM II occupation seems to be concentrated at just a handful of important sites, which appear functional to political and administrative control over a specific area of central and central-western Crete (Driessen 2001; Driessen, Mouthuy this volume).

Following the destructions that afflicted the island during LM IB, the only active palace on Crete is that of Knossos which, as embodied by the Linear B documentation, controls the central and western regions of Crete (Bennet 1985). Whilst the size of the LM IB city has been calculated as being around 120 ha, the LM II-IIIA city seems to have shrunk drastically to half this size, perhaps no more than 60 ha, indicating a significant contraction of the residential and administrative heart of the new Knossian state (Cutler, Whitelaw 2019). The only site, aside from Knossos and Chania, to present pure LM II deposits is Kommos, whilst Malia (Platon 1954; Karantzali 2019), and probably also Aptera/Kalami (Papadopoulou 2010; this volume), are among the few sites certainly occupied during this phase: all of them are key points of access to the north coast of the island. Jan Driessen's suggestion (2001, 103; also this volume), that "the administration of the Room of the Chariot Tablets was much more Knossos-centred than would be the case for the later tablets that show more interests in regional matters", might

confirm that, at the start of the new organization of the Monopalatial administration, the occupation of *individual sites* rather than circumscribed areas was pivotal.

Besides Knossos, Chania and Kommos, where primary deposits have been identified, the sites that have yielded LM II materials, including Tylissos, Archanes, Agia Triada and Phaistos, present mingled LM II and LM IIIA1 layers, and it is thus difficult to understand what sort of occupation – if we are in fact dealing with an occupation – we should ascribe these sets of materials to.

The case of Phaistos, for instance, is quite instructive in showing a settlement continuity after the destruction of LM IB, but with no clear occupation of the site during LM II as it is currently documented in the areas outside the palace, on the eastern slopes at Chalara and on the *Acropoli Mediana* (Levi 1967-1968, 138-141, figs. 92b, 93b; Borgna 2011).

The case of Agia Triada requires more detailed consideration here. As D'Agata pointed out (1999a; 1999b), Agia Triada has not yielded *occupation* layers that can be dated to the LM II period. Inside the settlement, LM II pottery, consisting largely of tableware (goblets and cups), is present in secondary contexts, in modest quantities and always in association with LM IIIA1 ceramics. The inventoried pieces include 70 sherds, most of which come from the LM IIIA1 layer excavated by La Rosa in the area to the north of the *Muraglione a Denti*: this layer rested on the bedrock and also contained LM I materials (D'Agata forthcoming).

As for the deposit excavated in room *d* of the West Building, an interpretative proposal was formulated some years ago by Puglisi. He associated the materials of LM IB to those of LM II, claiming that they were indicative of a homogeneous deposit dating to a phase following the destruction of the Agia Triada Villa (Puglisi 2003, 180; 2011) and belonging to LM IB Final. This reconstruction seems arbitrary. The strip of earth investigated inside the room, in the area of the threshold, corresponds to a *single* fill layer, considered unitary even during the excavation phase. It formed the foundation for the floor surface during the final phase of the room, and allows us to date the laying of the threshold to LM IIIA2 (Fig. 1) (La Rosa 1990, 417; 1997, 261; 2009, 1069). As for the platform brought to light outside the boundaries of the settlement, immediately to the north of room *o* of the *Complesso della Mazza di Breccia*, dated to LM II on the basis of a decorated cup (Cucuzza 2003, 204; La Rosa 2013), it must be more safely attributed to LM IB (see, for a LM IB comparison of the aforementioned cup, Hood 2011, fig. 16). It has also been suggested that the Neopalatial *Casa delle Sfere Fittili* was reoccupied in LM II, and that in the same period the west sector of the Village was transformed into an open-air sanctuary where a cult of the ruins was established (La Rosa 2013). This reconstruction must remain hypothetical: firstly, because LM II layers and materials unequivocally attributable to a post-Neopalatial frequentation of *Casa delle Sfere Fittili* are lacking, and secondly because no cult of the ruins is attested on Crete during LM II. A cult of the ruins also seems entirely antithetical to the evident desire to politically dismantle the previous regime taken by the new ruling group at Knossos.

By contrast, no building was constructed at Agia Triada before LM IIIA1, and, also, the reuse of the necropolis did not take place earlier than this date (for the southern buildings, see Cucuzza 2021). Ultimately, although it should be stressed that the majority of the LM II materials must be interpreted as residual within the LM IIIA1 layers in which they were found, we can suggest a *frequentation* (not an occupation) of the site during LM II: this frequentation must have been predominantly ceremonial in nature and marks the start – albeit tacit and partial – of the social role that came to characterize the function of Agia Triada during LM III (cf. D'Agata 2017).

A general dearth of unambiguously occupied sites is typical of Crete in LM II, and should be connected to the phenomenon of abandonment of settlements that took place on the island at the end of LM IB (Driessen, Macdonald 1997, 111). A quick comparison between the distribution maps for LM I and LM II shows the extent of the population decline occurring in the more recent phase. In the survey of the western Mesara, only nine LM II-IIIA1 sites are recorded, compared to 34 in the preceding phase (Watrous, Hadzi-Valianou, Blitzer 2004, 298-300). On the north-eastern coast of the island, important Neopalatial sites such as Gournia, Mochlos and Pseira appear deserted. No LM II materials were identified in the area of Galatas (Watrous *et al.* 2017, 75), nor in the regions of Gournia, Vrokastro, and Kavousi (Haggis 2005, 79-80; Hayden 2003, 4-5; Watrous *et al.* 2012, 65-68*).* A significant drop in settlement occupation is also recorded at Palaikastro and Zakros (Knappett, Cunnigham this volume; Zoitopoulos 2012; Platon this volume). Almost nothing of this phase is known in the regions of Rethymnon and Ierapetra.

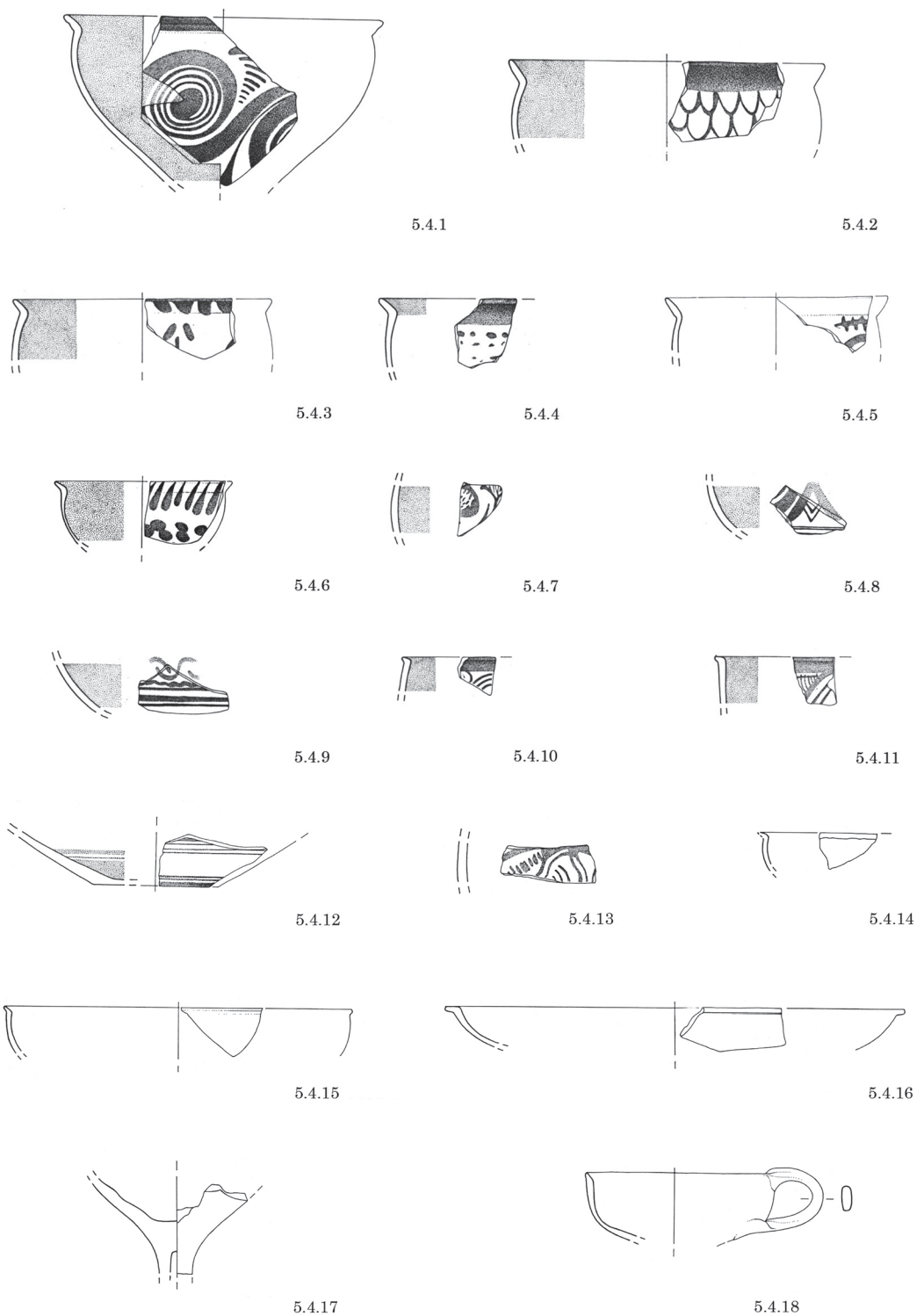


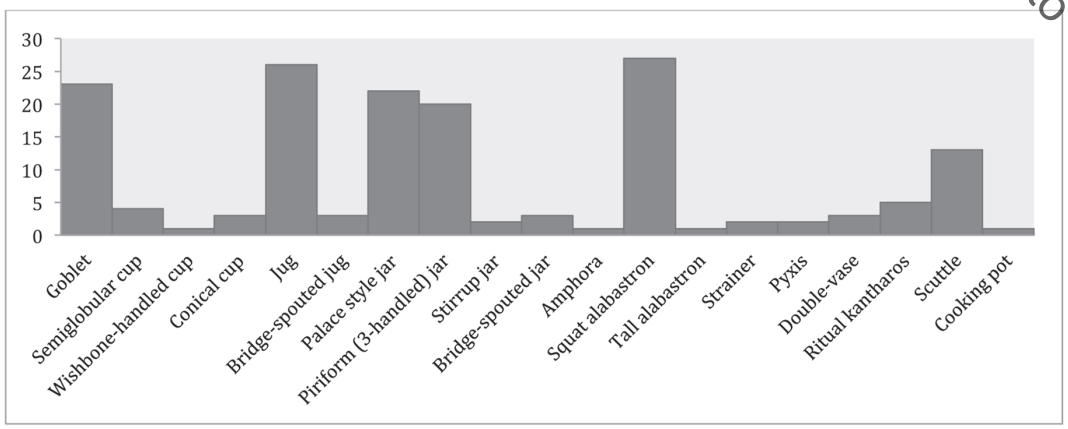
Fig. 1. LM II to LM IIIA2 material from Agia Triada, West Building, room *d* (Gruppo 5.4, cf. D'Agata forthcoming). 1:3.5.

A marked population displacement must have begun already in LM IB (as documented, for example, in the Malia region, cf. Müller-Celka 2007; Müller-Celka *et al*. 2014) and continued, at least in part, during LM II. A comparable phenomenon is the depopulation that took place on Crete many centuries later, during the 25-year siege of the Venetian city of Candia (1645-1669) by the Turks. It is estimated that by 1648, almost 40% of the Cretan population had perished of disease or warfare, and by 1677 the island's pre-war population of ca. 260,000 had dropped to about 80,000 (Pashley 1837, 326). Thus, great depopulations may be defined as phenomena documented at critical points in the island's history (*contra*, Whitelaw this volume).

The scarcity of burials attributable to LM II outside Knossos once again demonstrates the contraction in settlements that occurred during this phase, and that must have been associated with a sharp decline in population. To the two burials at Malia/Perivolia and at Kalami Aptera, both identified within later contexts, the tomb recently discovered at Sissi, which has been attributed to LM II or IIIA1 (Langhor this volume) must be mentioned, as well as the reuse of Tholos A at Kamilari, where some LM II vessels have been stylistically identified. Tholos A was the only burial place of the former cemetery that continued to be used after LM IB (Girella, Caloi 2019, 381-386). This is paralleled by what we could describe as a sort of 'colonization' or occupation of settlements judged to be territorially strategic that characterizes the start of the new Knossian regime. Interestingly, Kamilari shows the persistence of a traditional funerary locale imbued with a new pottery language (see also Girella 2020). However, the goblet is not documented at Kamilari, whereas the conical cup and the semiglobular cup remain the main drinking shapes.

The hypotheses recently proposed to explain the series of events culminating in the collapse of Minoan Crete and that underlie this significant depopulation do not agree with regard to the socio-political assessment of the related occurrences, but all support the idea that the destructions taking place during LM IB should be mostly attributed to human agency (Driessen 2019, 199). Todd Whitelaw (2019) has invoked the exceptionally large size of the Knossos-centred polity and its unsustainability, too complex and geographically extensive to be controlled. According to him, the LM IB collapse was an internal affair resulting from the tensions created by the excessive size of Knossos and the inherent difficulties in maintaining its urban population. The remarkably strong ties between Knossos and Mycenae in the Shaft Grave period have been stressed by Joseph Maran as a consequence of the importance that "a center like Knossos should have gained in the social imaginary of the ruling groups at Mycenae". On this basis, the existence of a coalition of the two centres of power against other Minoan palatial elites has been hypothesized as responsible for the destructions taking place around the mid-15th century, and that left only the palace of Knossos untouched (Maran 2011). Along similar lines, while emphasising a gradual process of disintegration of Minoan society following the Santorini eruption, Jan Driessen (2019, 197) favours the hypothesis of human aggression at the end of the LM IB period, noting the existence of "a state of anarchy that eventually paved the way for a Mycenaean intervention on Crete". Finally, all the available evidence in support of the traditional theory of a Mycenaean conquest of Crete, via Kythera, in LM II was summarized by Malcolm Wiener (2015; this volume).

In LM II Knossos there seems to have been a reduction in building activities and a fundamental change in architecture (Hatzaki 2004; Macdonald 2005, 208-231; this volume). The Palace, whose most significant element is now the Throne Room, was renovated (Galanakis, Tsitsa, Günkel-Maschek 2017), as were many houses in its vicinity (Little Palace with Minoan Unexplored Mansion, South-East House, Royal Villa). New, and more modest houses were constructed, like the Gypsum House and SEX South House, but these appear to have been demolished by LM IIIA1 to make room for public construction (Warren 1982-1983). It is also worth noting the assumption by Sinclair Hood in his last monumental work on masons' marks that "there is no evidence that any signs of the kind known as masons' marks were carved at Knossos during the period of Mycenaean occupation after LM IB" (Hood 2020, 44; but see also Macdonald this volume). The transition from sophisticated houses in which rooms were assigned special functions, to houses where, as in the centuries before the LM I period, buildings included all-purpose rooms is also documented. At the same time, the new administration seems to have actively discouraged the development of the Minoan *Houses*, a structural feature of Minoan society (Driessen 2010, 55), and favoured the construction of smaller architectural units.



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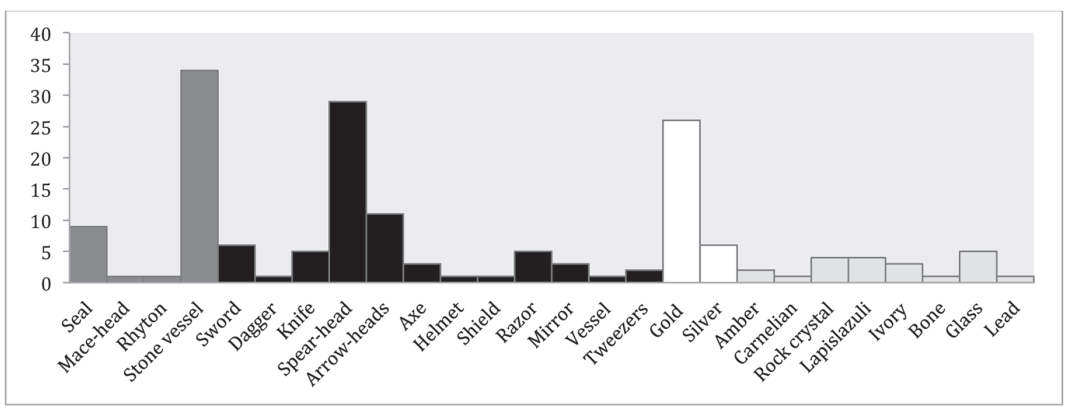

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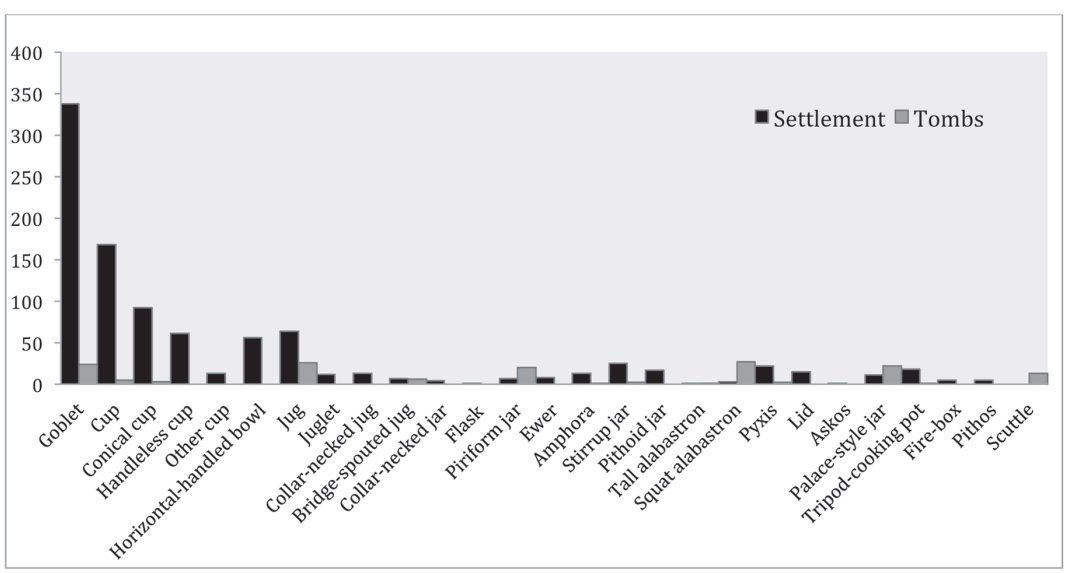

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Fig. 2. Distribution of LM II material from Knossos. a. LM II pottery shapes from Knossos and Poros/Katsambas tombs; b. LM II non-ceramic material from Knossos and Poros/Katsambas tombs divided in categories; c. distribution of LM II pottery shapes from settlement (Palace; SEX: Gypsum House and South House; Hogarth's House A; Royal Villa; South-West House; South House; Little Palace; Temple Tomb) and tomb contexts (Agios Ioannis; Gypsades/Silver and Gold Cup Tomb; Hospital I-III, V; Kephala tholos; Isolated Deposits; Isopata 1-7; Isopata Royal Tomb; Katsambas A, Γ-Z). Data after Hogarth 1900; Evans 1905; 1935; Hood, de Jong 1952; Hutchinson 1956a; 1956b; Hood, Coldstream 1968; Preston 1999; 2007; Alexiou 1967; Warren 1982-1983; Popham 1970; 1977; Mountjoy 2003; Hatzaki 2005.

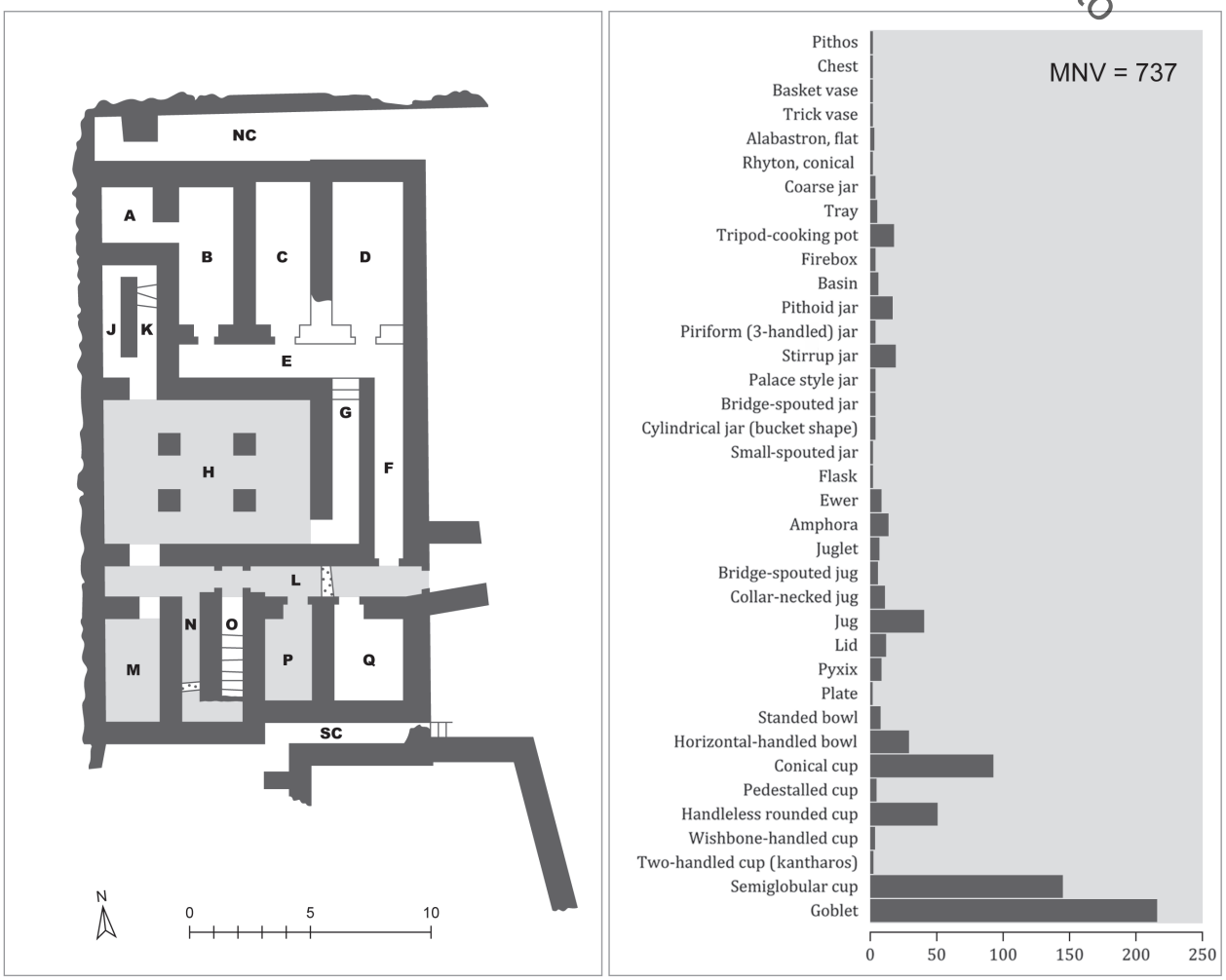


Fig. 3. The Unexplored Mansion at Knossos, plan and LM II pottery distribution by shapes according to catalogued vessels (re-elaborated after Popham 1984).

By contrast, the Knossian tombs constructed in LM II – Isopata Royal Tomb, Isopata 1, 2, 5 (Tomb of Double Axes), and Kephala tholos tomb – are among the largest known mortuary structures built in the Kairatos valley during the entire Late Minoan period. Galanakis in this volume counts around 37 tombs, out of *ca.* 200 LM II-IIIB tombs known at Knossos and in the harbour area at Poros/Katsambas, used in LM II (Evans 1905; Hutchinson 1956a; 1956b; Hood, de Jong 1952; Alexiou 1967; Löwe 1996; Alberti 2004; Preston 1999; 2007; Miller 2011). They appear rather suddenly in the LM II period, without architectural predecessors in the region (Preston 1999). The rich and unusual grave goods displayed by many of these, and the new mainland-oriented funerary practices documented by the burials with bronzes on the hills near the palace, indicate the formation of a rather narrow elite. The restriction of elite practices to a limited component of society can also be seen in the context of feasting activities, which become a funerary practice at Knossos and, slightly later, at Phaistos, Archanes, and Chania. These are the most significant manifestations of the formation of a ruling group, which already appears to be dominated by a *wanax* in whose hands the running of the administration and control over the territory is concentrated (Fig. 2).

The building that symbolizes LM II in Minoan archaeology, and not just at Knossos, is certainly the Unexplored Mansion which vividly illustrates how very different Knossos was after 1450 (Popham 1984) (Fig. 3). It was

originally designed to provide additional storage and accommodation for the Little Palace, the finest of the urban mansions of the town of Knossos. However, its construction was never finished, and it remained empty during LM IB for at least 50 years. In the LM II period it was reoccupied, or, perhaps more accurately, occupied in a rather hectic way. The purpose and nature of what had been a building of extraordinary refinement was significantly transformed and the structure was repurposed into something different: earth floors were laid on the ground floor, a fireplace was built up against one of the pillars of the Pillar Hall (H), its ashes thrown in a heap against the west wall and on the floor. Metal working activities seem to have been carried out within the building or in its vicinity.

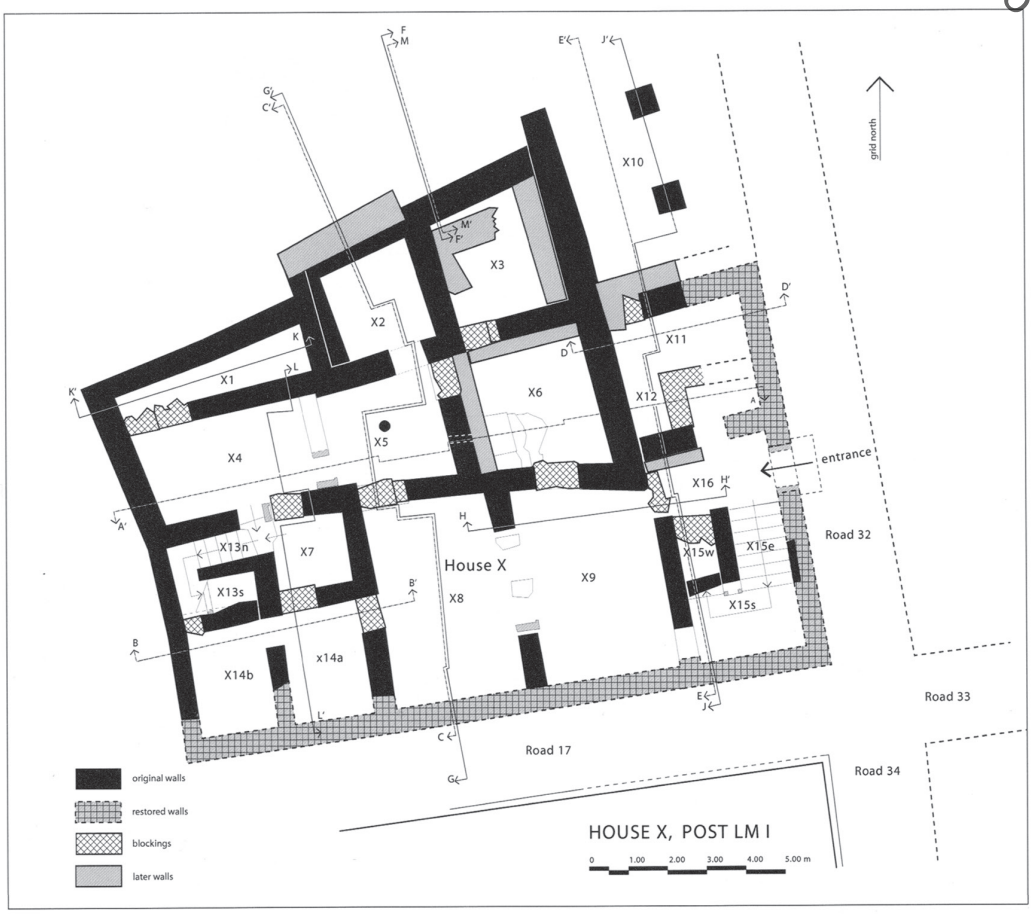
A similar construction history can be detected in the area west of the Stratigraphical Museum Excavation. The discontinuity of use of the South House is significant: built in LM IA, abandoned in LM IB, and completed in LM II with gypsum blocks. Meanwhile, in LM II, a new building with similar functions was constructed, dubbed the Gypsum House by Peter Warren (1982-1983, 63-69, figs. 1-18; 2017).

A biography comparable to that of the Unexplored Mansion has been reconstructed for House X at Kommos, by far the most significant of the Minoan houses excavated at the site, and the only building outside Knossos in Central Crete where LM II pure deposits were detected (Rutter 2017) (Fig. 4). Built in LM IA at the edge of the Civic Area, and used until LM IIIA2 early, the building underwent structural transformations during LM II (Shaw, Shaw 2012, 124-128, fig. 1.5). These included the abandonment of the north wing with its Pillar Room (X10) and the ceremonial Hall with a lightwell (X4-5), and the transformation of the southern terrace into a row of rooms, accessed to the east from Road 32, whose main use seems to have been ceremonial judging from the emphasis on the drinking and pouring activities brought to light in Jerry Rutter's highly detailed analysis of the pottery (2017).

To perform activities that must have had ritual purposes, then, the new inhabitants of Building X did not reuse the spaces that their predecessors had laid out in accordance with the canons in vogue in LM IA architecture, but preferred to adapt an area *without architectural connotations*, *i.e.* the unroofed areas to the south. Though the function of the house, connected to the port activities of the settlement, must have been essentially similar to that of its predecessor, as in the case of the Unexplored Mansion at Knossos, there appears to be a manifest intent to break with the Neopalatial tradition and affirm the creation of a new order through the abandonment of spaces consecrated by tradition.

Two incontrovertible facts emerging from what we have said must be highlighted. The first is that the continuous destructions marking the political cycle that saw Knossos controlling the Aegean in LM II-IIIA1, and the contradictions typical of the new Knossian regime, offer a picture of great distress throughout the Monopalatial phase: this is a period of continuous conflicts that ended with the destruction of the palace of Knossos. The second is that, partly in light of the rapid succession of the aforementioned destructions, it is certainly more likely that they were the result of human agency than repeated natural phenomena. In our opinion, it seems equally evident that the new rulers of Knossos wished to create political discontinuity with the preceding regime, giving material expression to a new authority that nonetheless makes ample use of the symbols of the Minoan past (Driessen, Langohr 2007; see also Burke 2005).

The existence of a strong cultural mingling with the Greek mainland, visible from the years following the explosion of the Thera volcano and already noted by Arthur Evans, has now also taken on anthropological connotations. In the 1990s the idea that incomers from the Greek mainland might have been responsible for the collapse of Neopalatial Crete and the establishment of a new system was rejected as a negative example of cultural diffusionism, and scholars exclusively supported interpretations that explained the changes on the basis of *purely local dynamics* (cf. especially Preston 1999; 2004; Whitelaw this volume). However, over the past ten years, it has become increasingly common to acknowledge the strong human mobility characterizing the Aegean in the years that saw the formation of the Mycenaean political entities. This change in cultural paradigm is especially due to the new focus on the cultural dynamics of the Mediterranean, which takes the lead from seminal works such as *The Corrupting Sea: A Study of the Mediterranean History*, by Nicholas Horden and Peregrine Purcell (2000), with its almost obsessive insistence on mobility and connectivity between the shores of the *Mare nostrum* (see also D'Agata, Introduction, this volume). Starting from LM IB, the impact of the mainland on the central and central-western



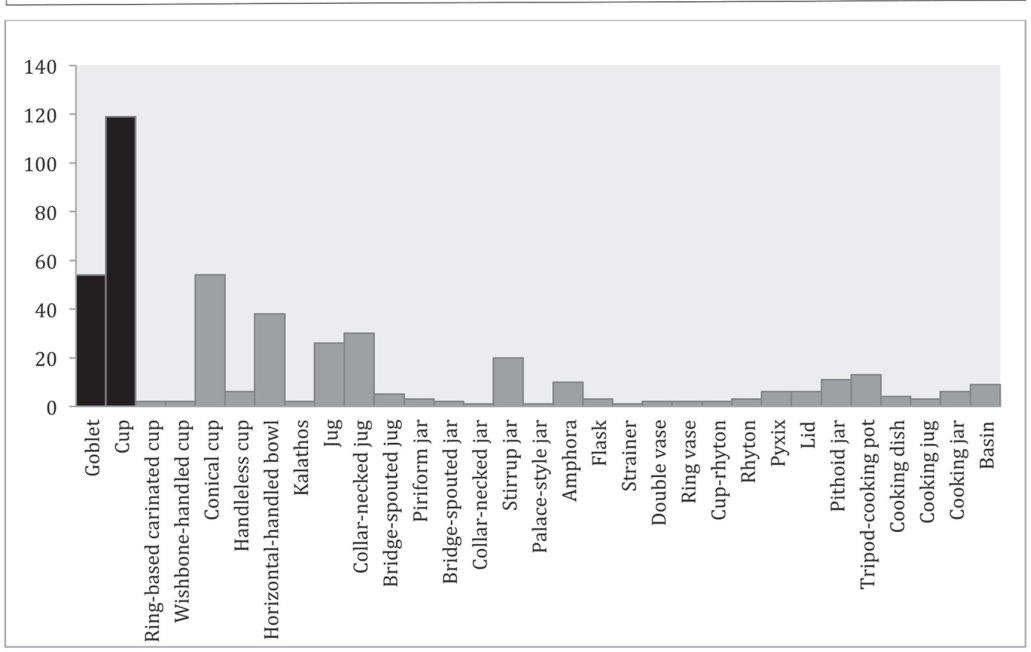


Fig. 4. Plan of House X at Kommos and LM II pottery distribution by shapes from House X, Building T and the settlement (after Watrous 1992; Shaw, Shaw 2012; Rutter 2006; 2017). Courtesy J. Shaw and M. Shaw and INSTAP Academic Press.

area of Crete now seems indisputable, as indicated, among other things, by the Argive connections of the 'warrior graves' in Chania (Andreadaki-Vlazaki 2010, 525-526; this volume). Equally incontrovertible is the cultural unity created between Crete and Mycenae in terms of "individual primary burials, monumental architecture, and the deposition of specific wealthy assemblage, that included an almost standardized collection of metal vases and weapons, seals, jewellery and exotica" (Driessen, Langohr 2007, 186): the blending of Minoan and Helladic elements is a feature that characterizes the material culture of the Monopalatial phase in central Crete and can be seen in the ceramic production of Knossos, on the one hand, and in the production of the Argolid, and above all of Mycenae, on the other (Rutter 2015). This is an intentional process that developed in LM II Knossos, whose material culture can be defined as an entangled culture emerging from diverse sets of traditions that transform it into a new entity.

CERAMICS AND POLITICAL BOUNDARIES

One of the most characteristic features of LM II is certainly the remarkably uniform nature of its ceramic repertoire in the central and central-western area of the island, followed by an even more accentuated homogeneity of the IIIA1 culture "when the island as a whole seems to have adopted that of Knossos as its model from pottery to architecture, from jewellery to the adoption of the chamber tomb" (Popham 1984; cf. also Driessen, Langohr 2007).

It has recently been stressed that, in the absence of a clear theoretical model, the distribution of material culture and the stylistic uniformity of ceramics cannot be interpreted as specific indicators of socio-political phenomena, whether we interpret these as political dominance or cultural hegemony (Whitelaw 2019, 88). On the other hand, it is undeniable that in the Bronze Age Aegean ceramics played a powerful political role in the display of the local power, considering that it was circulating in those environments where political role should be conspicuously affirmed (cf. Parkinson, Pullen 2014, 78; Mathioudaki, Girella forthcoming). Decentralized pottery production seems to be the norm in LM Crete, but this does not mean that *specific* pottery forms were not given, in *specific* contexts and in relation to *specific* forms of use, a *specific* political meaning. This appears even more plausible in light of the fact that in LM II Knossos, the organization of power was extraordinarily hierarchical: suffice it to recall the mass investment in the architectural renewal of the Palace compared to the modesty of reconstructions at the site (cf. Macdonald 2005, 208-215), itself an accurate indicator of the exceptional concentration of power at the very core of the newly-founded state. To provide a very well-known example, in the kingdom of Pylos in LH III, the emerging palatial elite attempted to control the production of kylikes (Galaty 1999; 2010), a highly symbolic shape whose distribution within the Mycenaean world was never universal. Similarly, the deposition of the goblet in some of the Knossian tombs with bronzes and weapons, and in the burials of Aptera and Malia, and the distribution of Knossian fine tableware at Malia and Kommos, to mention just two of the main sites, agree in suggesting that, from its very first formulation, the drinking vessel par excellence of Monopalatial Crete, shaped in imitation of a mainland form (French 1997), might have been controlled by the new regime. Indeed, recent petrographic analyses on LM II-IIIA2 early pottery indicate that Malia and Sissi (Liard 2019), Kommos (Rutter 2017) and Chania (Hallager, Hallager 2016), imported large amounts of Knossian pottery. Future petrographic research will clarify the Knossian ceramic system in more detail. However, it is beyond doubt that the goblet must have held a symbolic significance closely linked to the new administration, especially in opposition to 'traditional' drinking shapes.

Further support for the clear-cut symbolic dichotomy between Cretan drinking vessels, as suggested by D'Agata some years ago (1999a; 1999b), also comes from the instances of reuse of the LM II goblet as a cup recorded at Kommos (Rutter 2017, 231). Therefore, in LM II-IIIA1 Crete, the clay deep cup and goblet were not politically and symbolically equivalent objects. At Knossos the success of the goblet with respect to the other drinking shapes is quite clear (Fig. 2). At Chania and Kommos the semiglobular cup is much more common (Figs. 4-5). Therefore, the introduction and circulation of the goblet was not a linear process on the island but had more to do with the dynamics of resilience of traditional drinking sets and adaptations of the new shape. Following Galaty (2010) and Hodder (1986, 18), the new shape might have played a dynamic role in a political and economic realm by promoting a new drinking etiquette to further integration in the new Knossian state.

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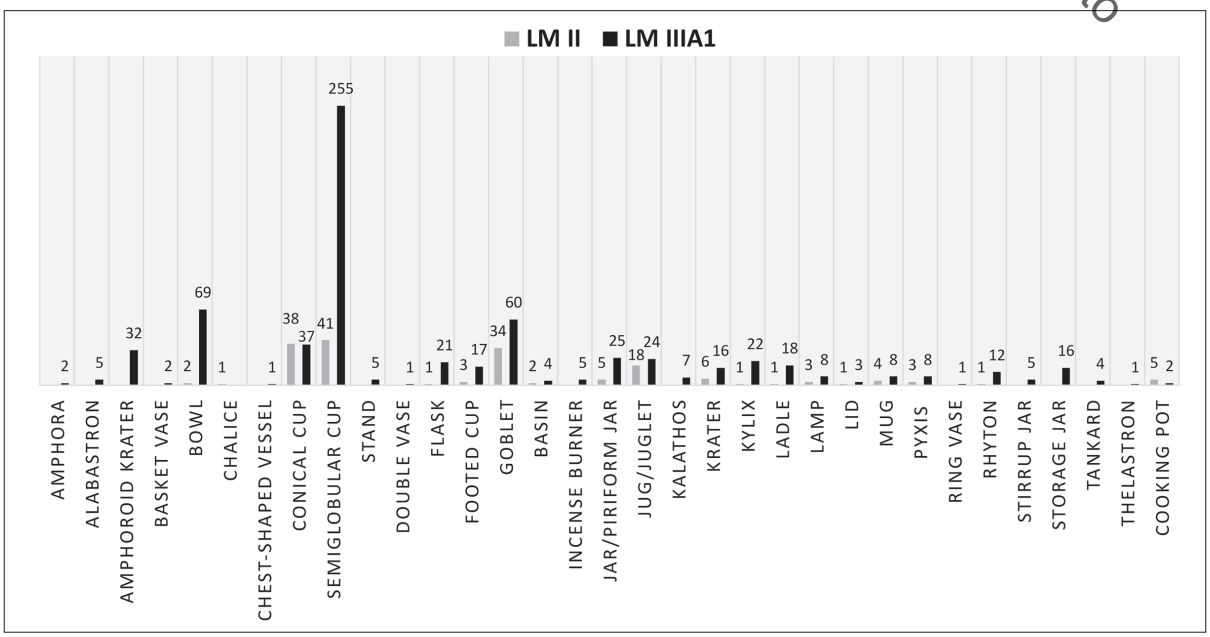

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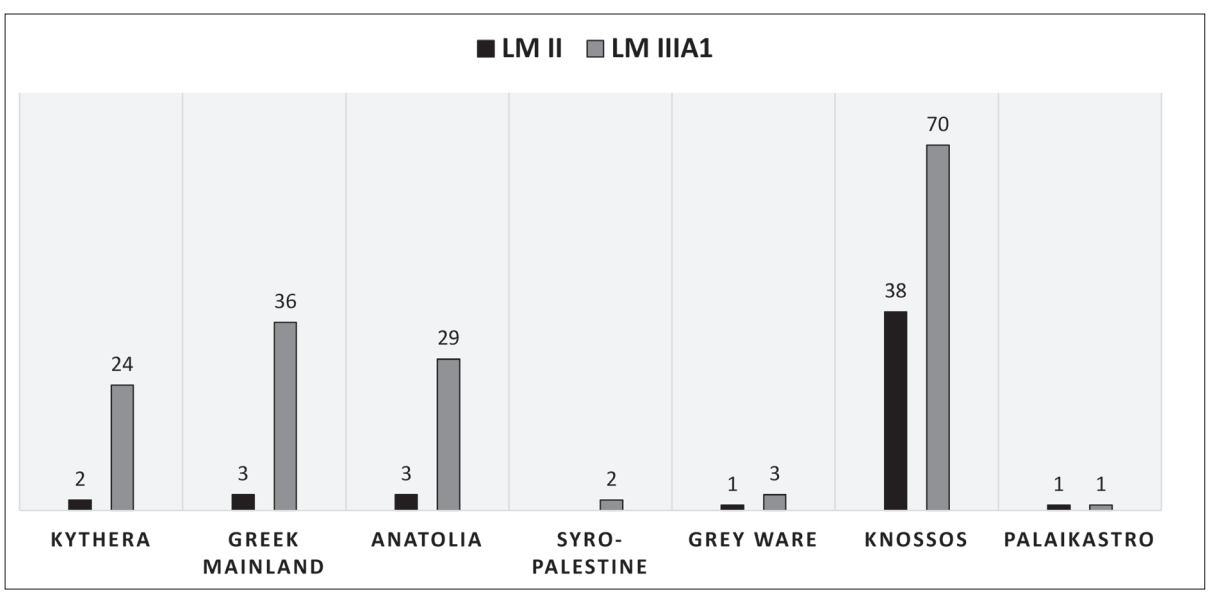


Fig. 5. a. LM II and IIIA1 pottery distribution by shapes at Chania; b. LM II and IIIA1 ceramic imports at Chania (after Hallager, Hallager 2016).

After the publication of the Minoan Unexplored Mansion by Popham and his colleagues (Popham 1984), the most significant contribution to the definition of LM II pottery has been made by Jerry Rutter's work on House X at Kommos (2017, 141-176, 225-228), the main building of the settlement with clear and abundant evidence referring to this period. On the other hand, LM II activity in the Civic Center (Building T) is sparsely represented by either gradual accumulations of fills representing continuous use or dumped fills marking sudden raisings of the ground level (see Deposits 45, 46a, 46b, 47, Rutter 2006). Thanks to the 9 deposits and 323 whole vessels identified within House X in floor accumulations and dump deposits, Rutter was able to offer a clear redefinition of the ceramic repertoire in central Crete. Its main features can be identified in the introduction of the goblet, as the

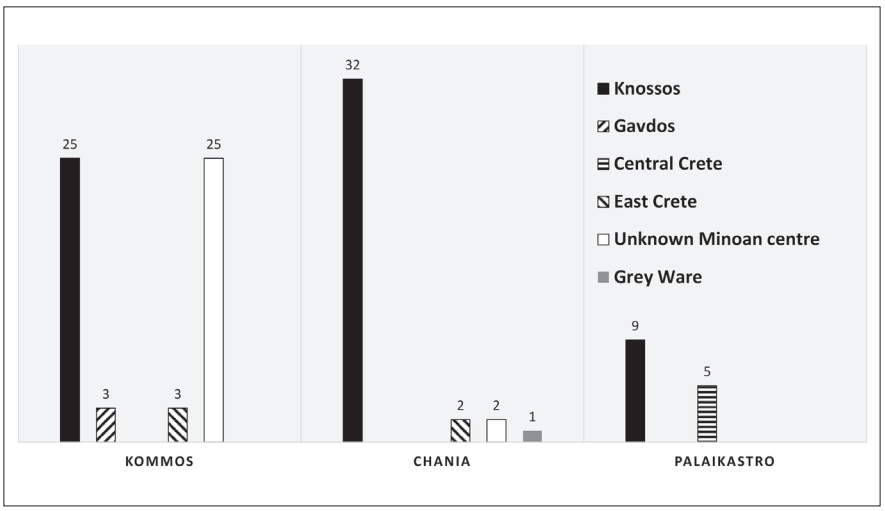
ceramic marker of the period, and in the emergence of forms of decorative standardization that became canonical, and more extreme, during LM III. In both cases, we are dealing with intentional processes taking place within the ceramic workshops of Knossos that derive from the merging of elements from the Cretan tradition and from the mainland: this is a phenomenon that characterizes Cretan ceramic production from this moment until the end of the Bronze Age. Produced in two main sizes, and displaying a restricted range of decorations, the Cretan goblet is adapted from an earlier, LH IIB mainland form (French 1997). It appears to be the only new form adopted in this period and also the only element on which a clear distinction between LM IB and LM II deposits can be made.

A second argument that might confirm the role of Knossos in centralizing and controlling specific segments of the new economic regime is raised by Jim Wright in this volume commenting on Rutter's study on LM II shipping and transport containers (2017, 168). The increase of these large vessels is indeed matched up with the diffusion of small stirrup jars used for carrying perfumed oils. After LM IB, a lucrative trade in olive oil – based on the massive agriculture resources of the Mesara plain – started up, projecting Knossos into the broad market throughout the Aegean and the Eastern Mediterranean. This picture, although meagre in LM II (Rutter 2017, 214 n. 75), might be the beginning of the powerful perfumed oil industry documented in the Greek mainland after the destruction of Knossos (Shelmerdine 1985).

Other features proper to the LM II and the whole Monopalatial phase are the strong stylistic dependence on Knossos of what is considered the local ceramic production of central and central-western Crete, and the significant number of Knossian ceramic imports in all the sites occupied during this period. At Kommos, out of 323 LM II inventoried vessels (from both floor accumulations and dump deposits), 56 are Cretan imports and almost half of them are of Knossian origin (Rutter 2017, 219, table 4.1); at Chania 38 out of 474 sherds are again Knossian (and they increase in number in LM IIIA1, *i.e.* 70 out of 1574) (Hallager 2016, 335, tables 10 a-b) (Fig. 5). However, these two features are not equally widespread throughout the island. At Kommos and Malia, the Knossian region turns out to be a supplier of decorated fineware and simultaneously exerts a heavy influence over the local production. At Palaikastro, despite the presence of Knossian imports, the local ceramic production is *not* dependent on Knossos and shows a strong conservatism, although the assemblages are too small to reveal any major variation (MacGillivray, Sackett, Driessen 2007; Cunningham 2011). In particular, the derivation from LM IB types is also visible in the conical and ogival cups of the LM II and IIIA1 period, when the two shapes continue to be produced with virtually few significant changes. The only major, local transformation is represented by the introduction in LM II of the pulled-rim bowl, not attested in LM IB.

The study of ceramic materials from Malia and Sissi has also shown the existence of a form of specialization in the production of fine ware, with specific pottery types being made in specific fabrics and perhaps by specific workshops. This would appear to imply some form of control over the ceramic production of the Malia region in the years of the Knossian dominance. Indeed, the immediate re-use of preceding Neopalatial structures at Malia during LM II, documented at Quartier Epsilon, Nu and Lambda, is complemented by the appearance of a new Knossian ceramic language (Pelon 1970; 1997; Farnoux 1997; Langohr 2009, 74-76; cf. also Langohr this volume). In addition, like Kommos and Chania, also Malia and Sissi imported large amounts of pottery from Knossos in LM II-IIIA2 (Liard 2009).

A contemporary phenomenon is the marked increase in imports of pottery and other goods from the regions of the Eastern Mediterranean, taking place in the same area of Crete controlled by Knossos. The starting point of this new trend must, however, be identified in LM IB, when, in various parts of the island, and with major concentration at Knossos, LH IIA pottery is documented (Cline 1994; Driessen, Macdonald 1997, 70) (Fig. 6). The picture presented in Fig. 6b, primarily based on Brogan, Hallager 2011, shows Knossos and Kommos as the two leading sites among others. Driessen (1998-1999, 97 n. 70) had counted "more than 50 mainland imports or imitations […] from palace centres and rich mansions with Knossos having about half of the cases" (see now Langohr this volume, and the list in Galaty, Rutter this volume, Table 3). Likewise, the distribution of non-ceramic imports in LM IB (Cline 1994) highlights a clear upsurge of Egyptian imports again with major concentration on Knossos. However, in this case, the evidence appears to be somehow different and concentrated in palatial centres. This



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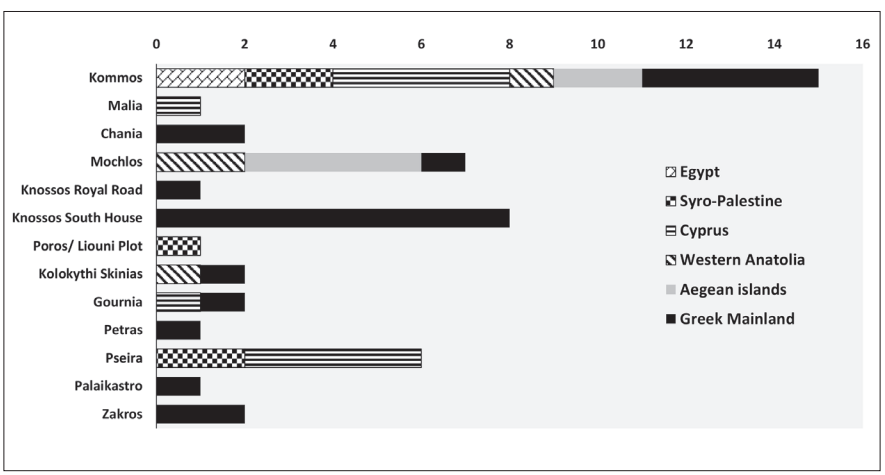

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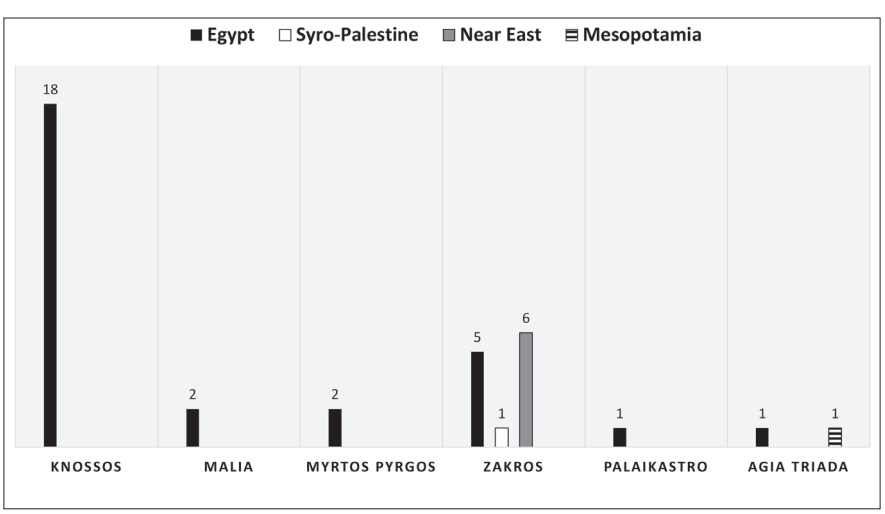

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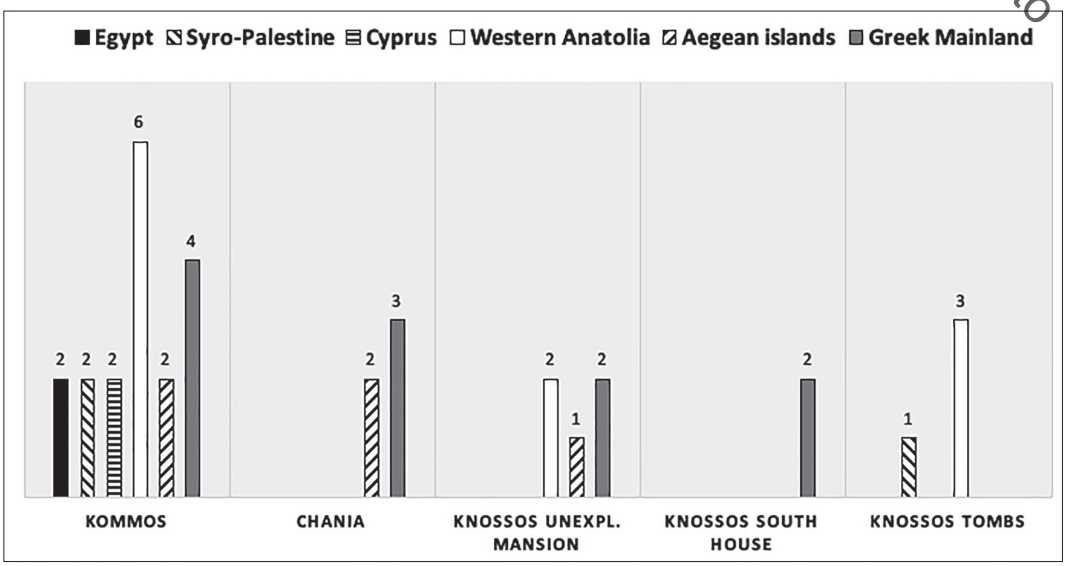
Fig. 6. a. Cretan ceramic imports in LM II; b. ceramic imports in LM IB; c. non-ceramic imports in LM IB (after Cline 1994; Rutter 2006; Brogan, Hallager 2011; MacGillivray, Sackett, Driessen 2007).



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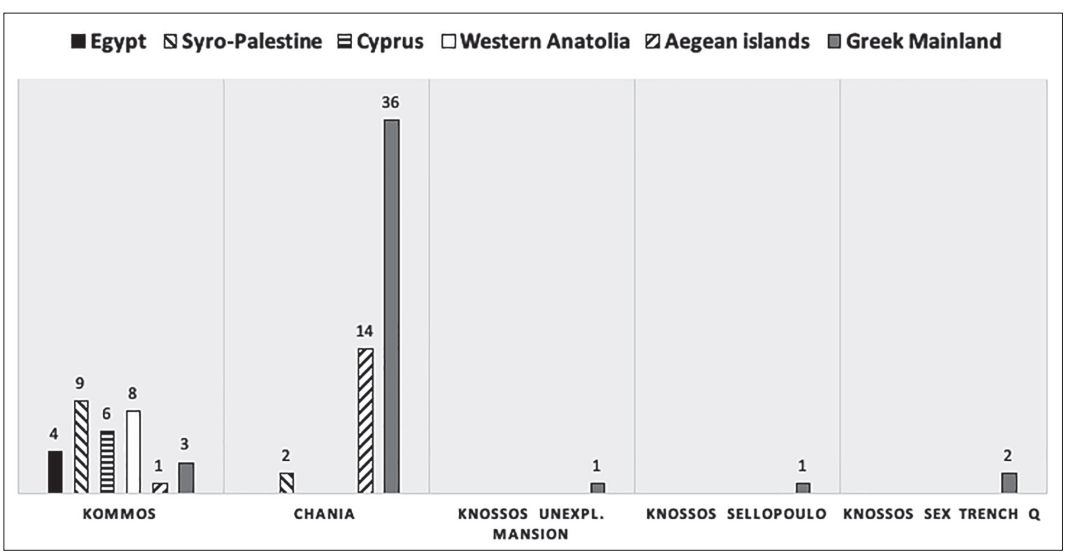

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Fig. 7. a. LM II ceramic imports from outside Crete; b. LM IIIA1 ceramic imports from outside Crete (after Popham, Catling, Catling 1974; Popham 1984; Warren 1997; Mountjoy 2003; Rutter 2006; 2017; Hallager, Hallager 2016).

variability in long-distance exchanges during LM IB indicates a pattern that works quite well with a peer-polity interaction model with palatial elites competing with each other (Parkinson 2010).

If we compare LM IB and LM II non-Cretan ceramic imports, half of them are with mainland provenance, although the exact provenance from the mainland needs to be verified by petrographic analyses, with a significant concentration at Knossos and Kommos. On the other hand, compared to LM IB, the LM II and IIIA1 evidence shows that ceramic imports are concentrated *only* at Knossos and centres under its control (*i.e.,* Chania and Kommos). Such a pattern suggests the existence of a centralized exchange framework (Figs. 5-7).

The gradual increase of Anatolian as well as Syro-Palestinian imports after LM IB indicates the entry of Crete into a Near Eastern and Levantine network. This different configuration of ceramic imports is confirmed in LM IIIA1, when a prevalence of material from the Greek mainland, and, secondly, from other Aegean islands

and Kythera in particular, is observed. Furthermore, in the same period, a drop in Egyptian imports in Crete can be detected. In this respect Galaty (2018, 84-85) has made an interesting observation noting that, whereas in the earlier periods Egyptian exotica reached Crete as part of a package, by the LBA they decreased and lost their prior symbolic value. Indeed, by LH IIIA, the majority of Egyptian imports are concentrated in the Greek mainland and at Mycenae in particular (Cline 1994; also, Galaty 2018).

In this context we can mention the unique stone vessel assemblage discovered in the Royal Tomb of Isopata which includes local Cretan vessels, Egyptian antiquities, and a 'sacred oil set' imported from Egypt (Bevan 2007, 158-159). This deposit is considered the largest ever assemblage of foreign stone vessels in the Aegean and the last main concentration of Egyptian exotica in Crete. The presence at Isopata of the stone vessel assemblage, whose acquisition and consumption was limited to few elite contexts, is contemporary with the appearance of a new costume worn by the Aegean figures in the Egyptian Theban tombs of the 18th dynasty and the emergence of the toponym Keftiu as the place of origin for these emissaries (Matić, Franković 2017). All this can be interpreted as the start of a political activity aimed at establishing diplomatic relations based on gift-giving between the new Knossian-based state and Egypt. This activity came to underlie the network of international trade based on an integrated pan-Aegean and Levantine system, into which Mycenae would soon insert itself and take the lead, and whose consequences would include the creation of elites in the main towns of the Mediterranean sharing a life style and holding comparable social values (Bevan 2007).

CONCLUDING REMARKS

This short outline of what we consider to be the main novelties in the material culture of LM II was aimed at highlighting the social and political transformation that can be discerned on Crete in the 15th century and marked a new course in the life of the island. A more appropriate definition of the term 'event' and the recognition of the social changes that took place at Knossos allowed us to delineate a more historical understanding of the processes in action on the island in the middle of the second millennium, where local agency and mainland contribution must both be considered instrumental to the shaping of new worlds. The new order established on Crete in the mid-15th century was the response to several single trauma occurrences that happened on the island at different scales and temporal levels in the course of LM I. First, the development of new political formations on the Greek mainland, with a deep impact in the Aegean and beyond (cf. in general Dickinson 1977; Rutter 2001; Wright 2004; Maran 2011; Girella 2017), then, the eruption of the Santorini volcano and its catastrophic consequences in the Aegean region (cf. especially Driessen, Macdonald 1997; Berg 2019, 259-273), finally, the many destructions that eventually dissolved the Neopalatial territorial organization (Driessen, Macdonald 1997, 74-78; Driessen 2019), must be considered as continuous sources of stress that were crucial to trigger alternative trajectories of growth within the island political system.

It can be also interpreted as the development of a globalization phenomenon (see also Knappett 2016, 202-203), based on a community of interest to the mutual benefit of the new regime based at Knossos and the sites under its control. The most fitting definition of the Knossos of those years is thus that, provided by Nakassis, of: "a locus of cultural and linguistic interaction between Cretans and mainlanders where hybrid identities could be formed" (Nakassis 2008; see also D'Agata 2018). In other words, this was a new society, pragmatic and trade-oriented, less subject to the power of belief in the supernatural and in which the initiative of single individuals (cf. Nakassis 2013) of varying provenance must have had a significant impact on the creation of the new system that emerged on the island after LM IB. This is a society that, the political sphere aside, brings to mind the open society "which sets free the critical power of men" outlined by Karl Popper more than 70 years ago (1945). Paraphrasing what Rebecca Sweetman (2007) has written on the process of the formation of Roman Crete starting from the 1st century: the central administration provided the infrastructure, single sites were subjected to forms of taxation, and it was a small elite initially including Cretan and mainland individuals – installed at Knossos, then spread over part of the island – that entrenched the central power of the new Knossian state.

Acknowledgements

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