

Chapter V:

Vrysinas: A Case Study

Introduction

This chapter presents the findings of my research on the ceramic assemblage from the peak sanctuary site at Vrysinas. It begins with a review of the history of research and excavation at the site, followed by summary of the ceramic assemblage and the methodology used in its analysis. It concludes with a comparison of these findings to the few other well-published extra-urban sacred sites and a discussion of my overall results. These conclusions are then considered in their broader socio-political contexts and for their implications regarding larger dynamic processes of change across Crete. Vrysinas presents an exceptionally interesting case study for several reasons. First, it represents one of the few peak sanctuary sites that was used in both Proto- and Neopalatial periods, so its assemblage provides a crucial perspective on change in peak sanctuary use. Second, the amount of pottery unearthed is both impressive and unusual; in fact, only Jouktas boasts a larger sample. The assemblage thus offers a good, large sample for analysis. Moreover, the circumstances of Vrysinas' chronological trajectory, and the material culture residue of these changes, provide a vantage point from which to assess traditional, now canonical ideas about change in peak sanctuary ritual over time.

Finally, and perhaps most importantly, this research contributes to the scant work that has been done on pottery from peak sanctuaries, despite their long history of exploration and research. Of the approximately two-dozen excavated Minoan peak

sanctuaries, the ceramic assemblages from only two other sites – Atsipadhes and Ayios Georgios – have been published in detail. Therefore, this research will add to the limited detailed studies of material culture from peak sanctuaries, which remain understudied despite the recent renewed interest in these sites as part of larger discussions of Minoan Crete (e.g. Kyriakidis 2005, Briault 2006).

History of the Site/Previous Work

Vrysinas was first identified as an archaeological site in the late 1930s when the modern chapel on the mountaintop, consecrated to Ayia Pnema, was expanded, uncovering clay anthropomorphic and zoomorphic figurines, along with two Classical statuettes (Faure 1963). Unfortunately, as a result of its location on the summit of a mountain close to the sea and a major port (Rethymnon), it was used by the Germans during World War II for stationing anti-aircraft artillery. This military activity significantly damaged the sanctuary's stratigraphy and there are also local reports of German soldiers returning from the site carrying material that was clearly ancient (Tzachili, pers. comm.). Paul Faure conducted the first archaeological exploration of Vrysinas in 1962, identifying it as a Minoan peak sanctuary (Faure 1963). Kostis Davaras subsequently carried out brief, though productive, excavations at the site in both 1972 and 1973. Currently, Iris Tzachili, from the University of Rethymnon, is directing a renewed program of excavation at the site, as well as conducting a survey of the Vrysinas massif as a whole.

The material studied for the research presented in this chapter comes from the excavations carried out by Davaras in the early 1970s. Although these excavations were

conducted over the course of only several weeks each year, as noted above, Vrysinas has produced more pottery than any other peak sanctuary on Crete with the exception of Jouktas (see Karetsou 1975-1985 for preliminary reports, although no analysis dedicated solely to the ceramic assemblage has yet been published). Tzachili (2003: 327) estimates the weight of the ceramics from Davaras' excavations to amount to roughly one metric ton, although it is very poorly preserved and extremely fragmentary.

It is not, however, only the pottery assemblage from Vrysinas that is noteworthy. Reporting on the finds from the 1972 season, Davaras mentions that the clay offerings included anthropomorphic and zoomorphic in unusual abundance, usually found in fissures between rocks. He also recovered many hundreds of fragments of clay models of cattle, fragments of stone vessels, and a bronze female figurine, wearing an ankle-length skirt, modeled in a posture of adoration (Davaras 1973).

In his 1973 campaign, Davaras again recovered unusually large figurines, a bull-shaped double rhyton, bird figurines, a number of boar's tusks, votive limbs, and, uniquely, a bronze male figurine, of which only the lower body was preserved.¹ Other noteworthy finds from this season include several miniature bronze knives, two miniature bronze double-axes, clay horns of consecration, and fragments of stone altars, one bearing an inscription in Linear A (Davaras 1974, Davaras and Brice 1977, for the Linear A-inscribed stone table of offering). The presence of a wide range of high status objects at the site is typical of peak sanctuaries used in the Neopalatial period, particularly in their close connection to an elite stratum of society.

¹ Comparanda for this figurine exist from Franchthi Cave in the form of lower half body pendants (Talalay 1993) as well as other contemporary Minoan examples.

Like most other peak sanctuaries, the surface of the site has been exposed to the elements, eroding its surface. Natural factors, however, were not the only post-depositional processes acting upon the site. In the 1970s, Davaras noted the heavy looting and degradation of the site, due to the early 20th century construction of A. Pneuma on the summit of the hill, its wartime use by the Germans, and more recent illicit digging. This has prompted the renewed excavations under the direction of Professor Iris Tzachili.

Vrysinas lies on the top of the mountain that is situated approximately eight kilometers southeast of the modern city of Rethymnon (Fig.5.1). The sanctuary is located on the conical summit of the mountain (at an altitude of 858 m) and on its adjacent terraces (Fig. 5.2). From the summit, there is a clear view in all directions, encompassing Rethymnon and the sea to the north, the Ayios Vasilios Valley to the south, the region of Atsipadhes to the southwest, and the eastern end of the White Mountains and specifically Mt. Ida, and the Gramvousa Peninsula to the west and northwest (Figs. 5.3, 5.4).



Figure 5.1 Map of western central Crete, with the peak sanctuaries Vrysinas and Atsipadhes marked in red, and the sacred caves at Patsos, Kamares, and the Idaean Cave highlighted in yellow.



Figure 5.2 View of the summit and western terraces of Vrysinas, the location of the peak sanctuary site.



Figure 5.3 View northeast from the summit of Vrysinas, toward the White Mountains

Below its summit, the mountain slopes gradually to both the east and west, forming low ridges or ‘arms’; these contain a number of upland orchards and fields, which in modern times as well as in antiquity are ideal for pasturing animals. The mountain is accessible on foot from all directions, although the ascent to the summit is more complicated on the steep eastern slope. Although ritual activity appears to have been confined to the summit and immediately surrounding terraces, it is likely that in antiquity these other areas were used for cultivation, animal pasturing, and perhaps even habitation. To ascertain the extent of such activities, a survey of the entire mountain is being conducted under the auspices of the project headed by Tzachili, as noted above.



Figure 5.4 View southeast from the summit of Vrysinas, toward the twin peaks of Mt. Ida.

Given the intrusion of the modern building on the mountain’s summit, excavations have been carried out mainly on the surrounding terraces. Traces of

architectural remains on the summit had been reported (Davaras 1974, mentions a temenos wall), but are no longer visible. This evidence reportedly consisted of the scattered remains of a wall, possibly enclosing a temenos area, ca. 9 m. long and 1.5 m. wide, built of small stone on the east slope near the summit (Rutkowski 1986:85).

Davaras' excavations were conducted primarily on the lowest terrace on the northern side of the summit, where the largest terrace is located (Fig. 5.5, 5.6).



Figure 5.5 View of the lowest eastern terrace, site of Davaras' main trenches.

By contrast, Tzachili's excavations are being conducted on the smaller slopes just above and to the south of Davaras' trenches (Fig. 5.6). According to Tzachili, the main evidence for ritual activity lies primarily on this northern slope, although there is some surface material apparent on the western slope as well. The southern slope is very steep and sheer, and the eastern slope gives way to a depression and a much lower terrace, not

associated with the sanctuary, that has produced evidence for pastoral activity (Tzachili, pers. comm.).

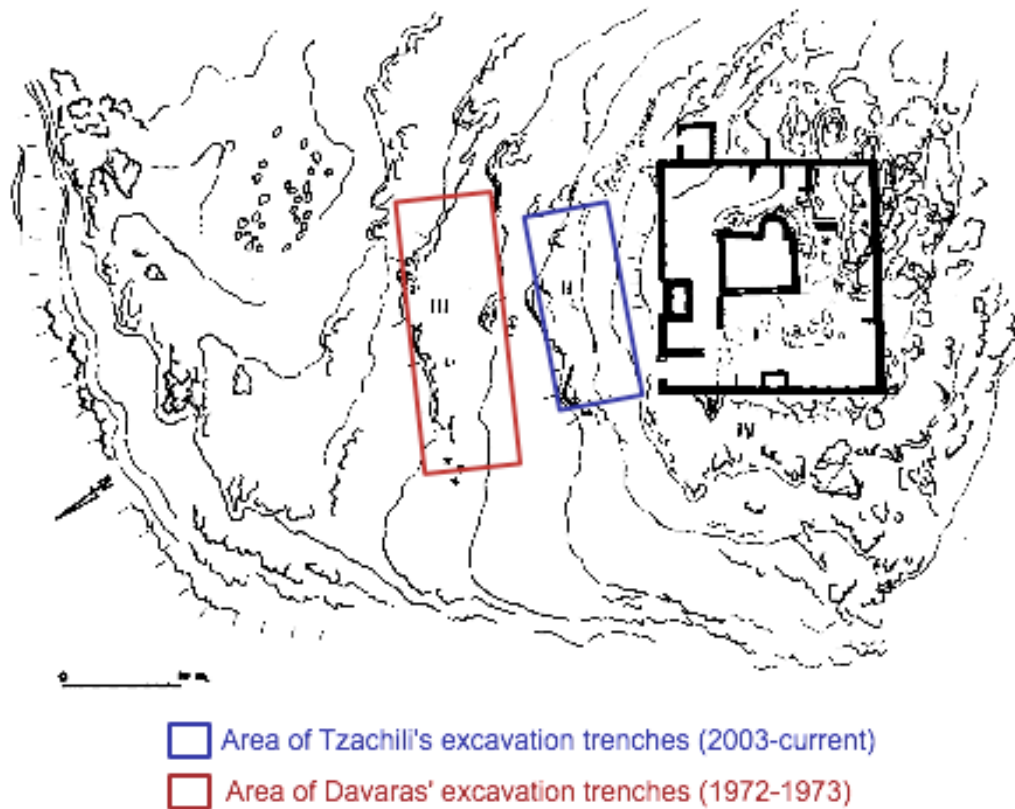


Figure 5.6 Plan of site of Vrysinas (after Rutkowski 1988), with church of A. Pneuma and excavation areas.

The Ceramic Assemblage

Publication of the material from Davaras' 1972 and 1973 excavations was limited to very short annual field reports in *Ergon* and *Praktika*; these primarily described the range of votive offerings found at the site, with only brief mention of the “unexpectedly abundant” amounts of pottery (Davaras 1973, 1974). Davaras also published one exceptional find; the stone vessel inscribed with Linear A writing (VRY Za1; Davaras and Brice 1977). In 2003, Tzachili published a short article in which she presented a

general quantitative analysis of the pottery assemblage, analyzing the material on the basis of fabric, size, and vessel shape.

The assemblage is comprised of approximately 50 crates of pottery, weighing roughly 1100 kg. The vast majority of the pottery is extremely fragmentary and badly worn. For this analysis, I studied in close detail 20% of the total ceramic assemblage, (comprised of approximately 17,000 sherds) represented by ten of the 50 crates stored in the Rethymnon Museum *apotheke*. This material appears to have been pre-sorted prior to Tzachili's project, to the extent that the sherds were placed in crates and numbered. Each crate contained varying proportions of all of the categories of fabric and a broad range of vessel forms. The ten crates selected for the sample were chosen at random. Two crates (#48 and 50), which formed part of my sample, consisted of sherds that were extremely small and fragmentary, and were perhaps a product of sieving.

No stratigraphic or contextual information was available for the material, and it remains unclear if individual crates represent a single trench or an excavation area. Further, I identified several joins between sherds from multiple crates in some cases. This, together with the broad distribution of date, form and function of the sherds in each crate, suggests that perhaps the crates themselves were randomly assembled, rather than attributable to a particular locus or trench from Davaras' excavations. If each crate did come from a specific context, this distribution may be the result of the mixed nature of deposits at the site itself. We know from the current excavations that there is little stratigraphic distinction discernible in the deposits, and Davaras (1973: 584) reported that most of the material he recovered came from fissures between rocks and shallow deposits.

Methodology

Most of the pottery from Davaras' excavations is undecorated, although some fineware sherds retain traces of slip, which may suggest that more were decorated. Again, the vast majority of the sherds are extremely small and worn, and the general nature of the material is exceedingly fragmentary. Only a few vessels were found intact, chiefly conical cups, and only two or three vessels have been partially or almost completely restored. The fragmentation of the pottery suggests that perhaps the vessels were ritually broken, but the history of the site also indicates that post-depositional processes could equally account for its current state. Both are common for assemblages from peak sanctuaries in general, and it is likely that the result is a combination of intentional breakage at the time of deposition, as well as processes of post-abandonment exposure, construction, and looting.

In order to explore the range of activities that occurred at Vrysinas, my analysis focused primarily on identifying vessel form and function. After a general initial survey of the material, and after consultation with Tzachili, I decided to separate the assemblage into seven broad functional categories based on general characteristics that signify the vessel function. The majority (95%) of the material was assigned to these categories, while about 40% was additionally attributable to specific vessel forms. The functional categories are:

- 1) **Cooking vessels**, or, more appropriately, kitchenware, as there is little evidence of actual burning on any of the sherds. This category was identified primarily by the coarseness of the fabric, the large number of inclusions, and the form of the vessel (Fig. 5.7).

- 2) **Pithoi**, or large storage vessels; the evidence for these vessels comes mainly from body sherds (Fig. 5.8).
- 3) **Transport vessels**, including large jars and jugs that could have been used for carrying liquids and other agricultural products up to the sanctuary. These vessels could also have been used for storage of those goods at the site. Attribution to this category was based on fabric as well as size and form (Fig. 5.9).
- 4) **Tableware**, or serving and pouring vessels. This category was represented in almost all fabrics, and consisted of smaller jars and jugs, and bowl-like forms, such as the *kalathos*, *skyphos*, and *lopas* (Fig. 5.10).
- 5) **Kyathia**, primarily conical cups, produced generally in coarse fabrics. Identification of these vessels was based on rim and base diagnostic sherds (Fig. 5.11).
- 6) **Finewares**, which was primarily constituted by thin-walled cups, sometimes with a slip. These sherds were most frequently produced in a fine, buff-colored fabric (Fig. 5.12).
- 7) **Special function vessels**, such as miniatures (e.g. of jugs, cups, kadoi, etc) or disks, and other forms that did not fit into one of the preceding six categories (Fig. 5.13).



Rims of cooking vessels (exterior)



Bases of cooking vessels (exterior)



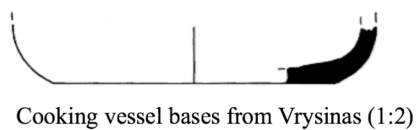
Legs and bases of tripod cooking vessels



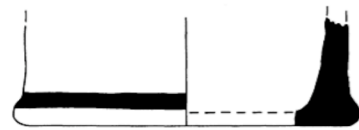
Rims of cooking vessels (interior)



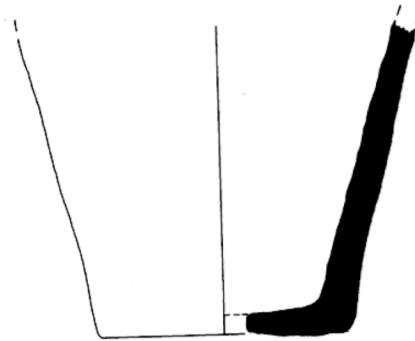
MM II tripod cooking vessel (Betancourt 1985: 93 fig. 68)



Cooking vessel bases from Vrysinas (1:2)



Kados base from Vrysinas (1:2)



Kados base from Vrysinas (1:2)

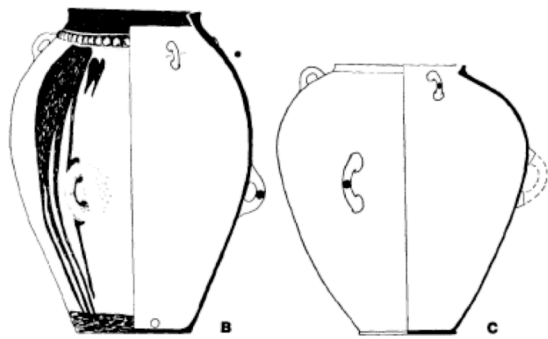
Figure 5.7 Cooking vessels: photographs & drawings from Vrysinas assemblage; figs Betancourt (1985).



Bases of pithoi (exterior)



MM III/LM I pithoi from Knossos (left) and Mallia (right) (Betancourt 1985 pl. 15A & B)



Large pithoi from Myrtos (Betancourt 1985: 50 fig. 30)

Figure 5.8 Pithoi: photographs from Vrysinas assemblage; figures and photographs from Betancourt (1985)



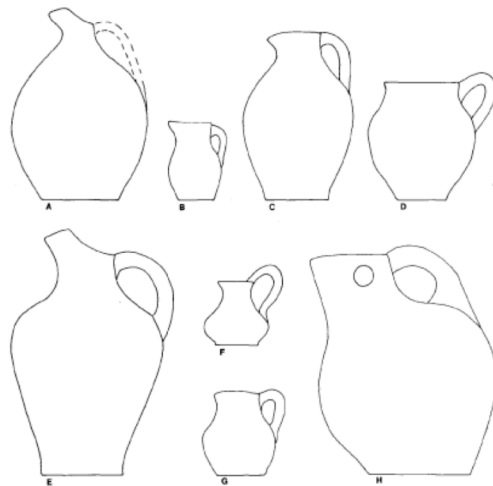
Rims of transport vessels (interior)



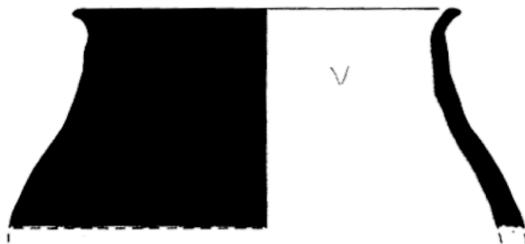
Handles (vertical) of transport vessels



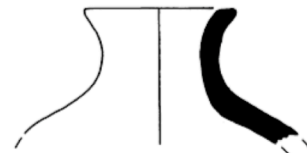
Bases of transport vessels (exterior)



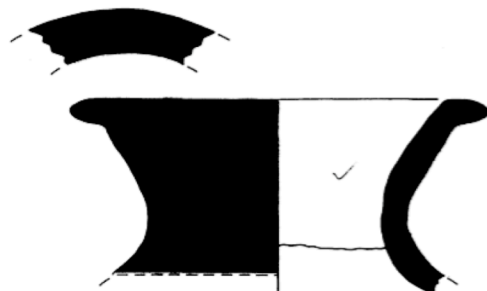
MM II jug shapes (Betancourt 1985: 107 fig. 79)



Jar rim from Vrysinas (1:2)



Jug rim from Vrysinas (1:2)



Jar rim and neck from Vrysinas (1:2)



MM III jar (Betancourt 1985: 106 fig. 77)

Figure 5.9 Transport vessels: photographs & drawings from Vrysinas assemblage; figs Betancourt (1985).



Rims of tableware vessels (exterior)



Handles of tableware vessels



Rims of tableware vessels (exterior)



Bases of tableware vessels (exterior)

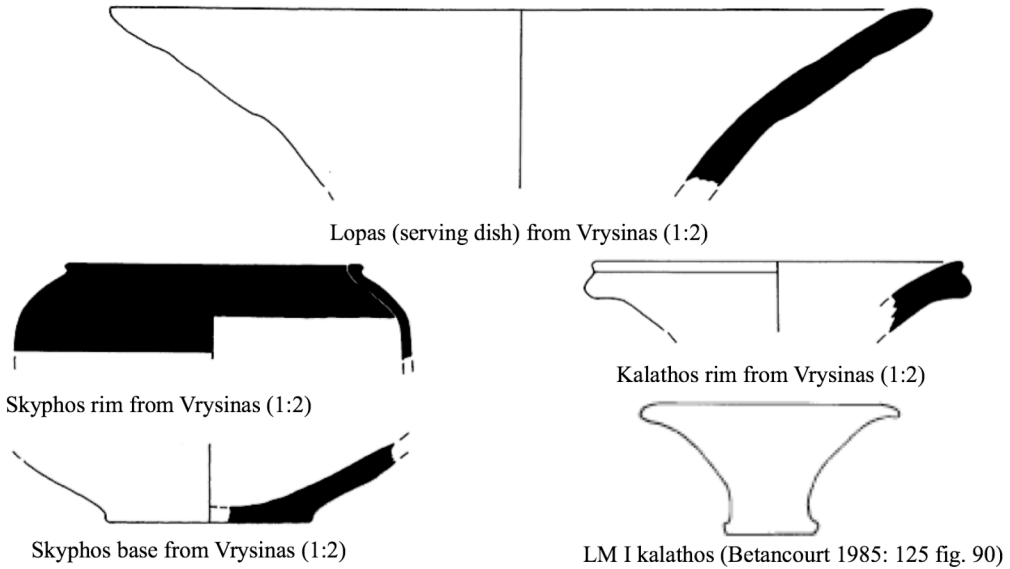
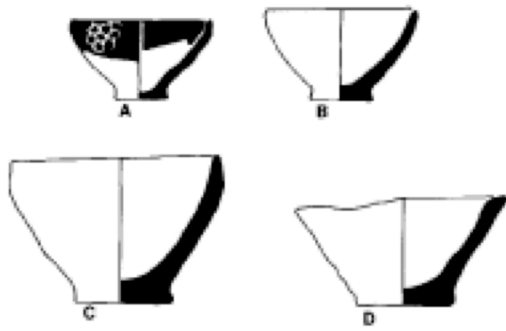


Figure 5.10 Tableware vessels: photographs & drawings from Vrysinas assemblage; figs Betancourt (1985)



MM II conical cup forms from Kommos
(Betancourt 1985: 93 fig. 66)



Photograph of a conical cup

Figure 5.11 Kyathia (conical cups): figures from Betancourt (1985) and photograph



Rims of fineware cups (exterior)



Bases of fineware cups (exterior)



Bases of fineware cups (interior)



Handles of fineware cups



Straight-sided cup from Vrysinas (1:2)

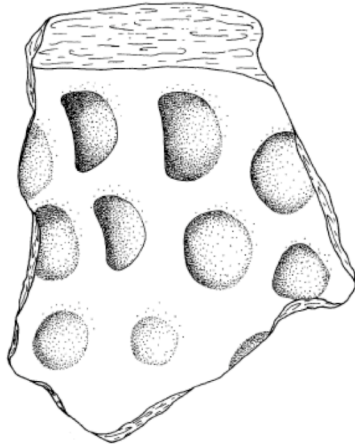


Carinated cups (Betancourt 1985: 125 fig. 93)



Semi-globular cup from Vrysinas (1:2)

Figure 5.12 Finewares (cups): photographs & drawings from Vrysinas assemblage; figs. Betancourt (1985).



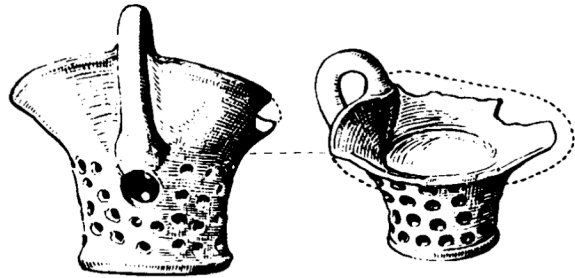
Rim of beehive or strainer from Vrysinas (1:2)



Photograph of firebox from Vrysinas



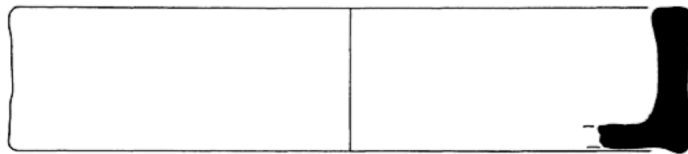
LM I miniature cup (height 4 cm)
(Betancourt 1985:127 fig. 96)



LM I firebox from Gournia (Betancourt 1985: 127 fig. 96)



Shallow disk or tray from Vrysinas (1:2)



Disk or tray with straight walls from Vrysinas (1:2)

Figure 5.13 Special function vessels: drawings from Vrysinas assemblage; figures from Betancourt (1985).

These categories are useful for exploring my primary research questions regarding the range and intensity of activities that took place at the sanctuary. Their general nature also allowed me to include information on the 60% of the sample that could *not* be identified to specific vessel form. As observed already, the fragmentary nature of the material often made it problematic to assign sherds to specific vessel forms. The difficulty of this task was compounded by the unfortunate lack of comparanda, especially from peak sanctuary assemblages, but more generally from Minoan extra-urban ritual assemblages (one notable exception is van de Moortel's recent publication of the Kamares Cave pottery [2006], although even this is a preliminary report, with few illustrations).

As a result of the absence of stratigraphic or contextual information from Vrysinas, chronological distinctions were assigned to the material, when possible, primarily on the basis of fabric. Certain fabrics (such as a fine, bluish-gray fabric) were easily assignable to the Protopalatial period (primarily MM II). The majority of the material, however, appears to be Neopalatial (MM III-LM IA), with a much smaller percentage dating to later and even post-Bronze Age periods.

Each diagnostic sherd was examined and recorded in detail. Information noted included the part of the vessel, the sherd paste color, vessel fabric, surface decoration, chronological period, wall thickness, and diameter (of bases and rims). A student at the University of Rethymnon, Georgia Kordatzaki, is currently performing a fabric analysis on the assemblage, so for my research, I recorded only basic colors and fabric consistencies. Fabric colors ranged from gray and red to orange and buff to some white

and light bluish-gray fabrics. Fabric distinctions were deliberately kept very broad, from coarse to medium-coarse to fine. There was some co-variance between colors and fabrics, as will be discussed below.

The body sherds, which comprised the majority of the assemblage, were already pre-sorted into general fabric and color categories (as a result of the earlier study performed by Tzachili [2003]). These groups were further refined in order to more closely fit the seven functional categories established for my research. All groups of body sherds were counted and weighed. In order for these data to be informative with regard to projected total numbers of vessels from the site, these totals were compared to notional measurements taken from whole or reconstructed examples of vessels from those categories.

The conical cups also received particular attention, due to their prevalence as well as to the fact that previous research had been conducted on them by another student at the University of Rethymnon, Maria Roussou. She had sorted the conical cups based on the part of the vessel (rim or base) and fabric color and type (primarily red, gray and buff coarse fabrics). I decided that no further fruitful research could be done on these vessels, given the lack of stratigraphic or contextual information. Therefore, I simply recorded the presence and quantities of conical cups in order to assess their relative frequencies as compared to other categories of vessel form and function.

V. Analysis

This section provides a general overview of the composition of the 20% of the total Vrysinas ceramic assemblage that was analyzed in detail for this study. Two major

axes of variation – chronological and functional – are presented and elucidated (Table 5.1). I also consider how these axes co-vary. These data are then compared to the few other extra-urban sanctuary site assemblages that have been published in useful detail. Finally, I discuss the larger implications of this analysis for understandings of Vrysinas, of Minoan peak sanctuaries, and of extra-urban ritual sites more generally.

Functional Category	MM II	MM III/LM I	LM III	Totals
Conical cups	281 (49%)	2079 (49%)	37 (49%)	2397
Finewares	185 (32%)	516 (12%)	4 (5%)	705
Kitchenwares	5 (<1%)	629 (15%)	2 (3%)	636
Pithoi	1 (<1%)	11 (<1%)	2 (3%)	14
Storage/Transport	13 (2%)	187 (4%)	12 (16%)	212
Tableware	61 (11%)	651 (15%)	8 (11%)	720
Special function/ other	20 (2%)	88 (2%)	0	108
Unknown	7 (1%)	68 (2%)	10 (13%)	85
Totals	573	4229	75	4877

Table 5.1. Summary of distribution of diagnostic sherds by functional category and period.

As can be seen from Fig. 5.14, body sherds constitute the vast majority of the ceramic assemblage, at some 75% of the total.² The body sherds represent all functional categories of the assemblage. Bases (13%), rims (9%), and handles (3%) were the primary classes of diagnostic sherds from the assemblage, while tripod legs and spouts were less common, together representing less than half of one percent. Complete profiles of vessels were rare (n=11). The miniature vessels, which were almost all complete,

² In fact, this percentage is quite low for ceramic assemblages, and may suggest that the material was not screened thoroughly, or perhaps was not saved in its entirety.

merited their own category in this breakdown because they are so unlike the rest of the material considered.

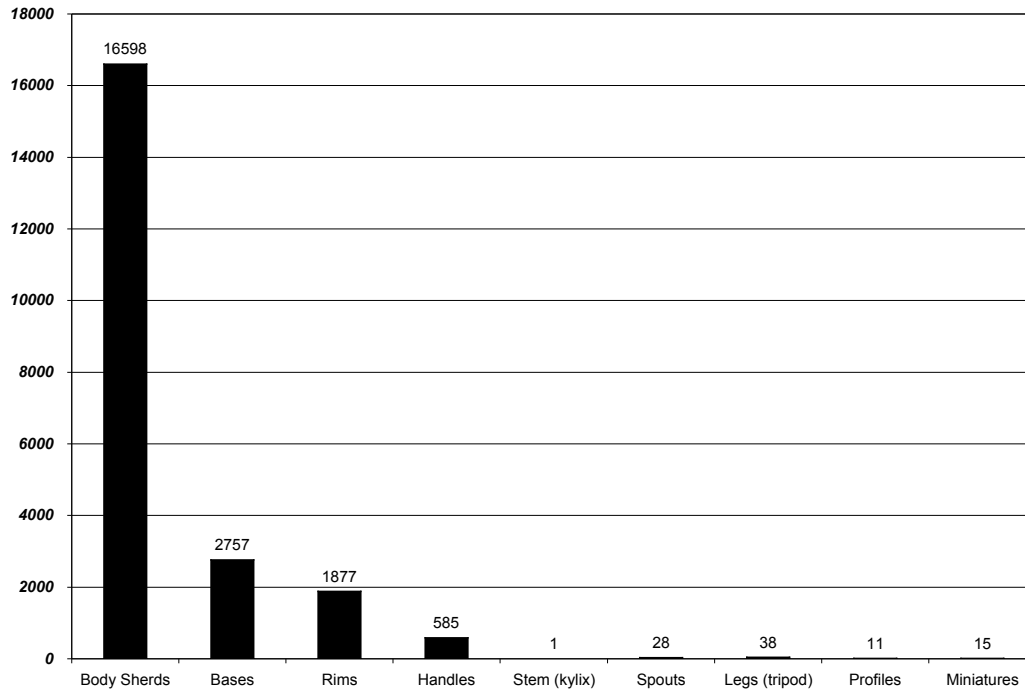


Figure 5.14 Distribution of vessel parts from sample of Vrysinas assemblage.

Figure 5.15 presents the distribution of diagnostic sherds across chronological periods (n=5356). The overwhelming majority of the assemblage belongs to the MM III/LM I, or Neopalatial period. The MM I period is only barely represented with 2 sherds (less than 1% of the sample assemblage).³ By contrast, MM II ceramics constitute 11% of the sample, suggesting that this was the initial period of significant activity on the site. The MM III/LM I period (79%) represents the most intensive use of Vrysinas: unusual for peak sanctuary assemblages, which tend to concentrate in the MM I-MM II (Protopalatial) periods. Activity continued in later periods, though the ceramics taper off

³ Tzachili's excavations have produced some evidence of still earlier material (EM, possible Neolithic), though it is unclear if these are related to ritual activity.

in the LMIII period to just over 1%, while the post–Bronze Age periods (from Geometric to Hellenistic, up through Byzantine and Early Modern) together comprise less than one percent. Although evidence for activity after the Bronze Age is negligible, it is nonetheless interesting that the site continued to be used in later periods.

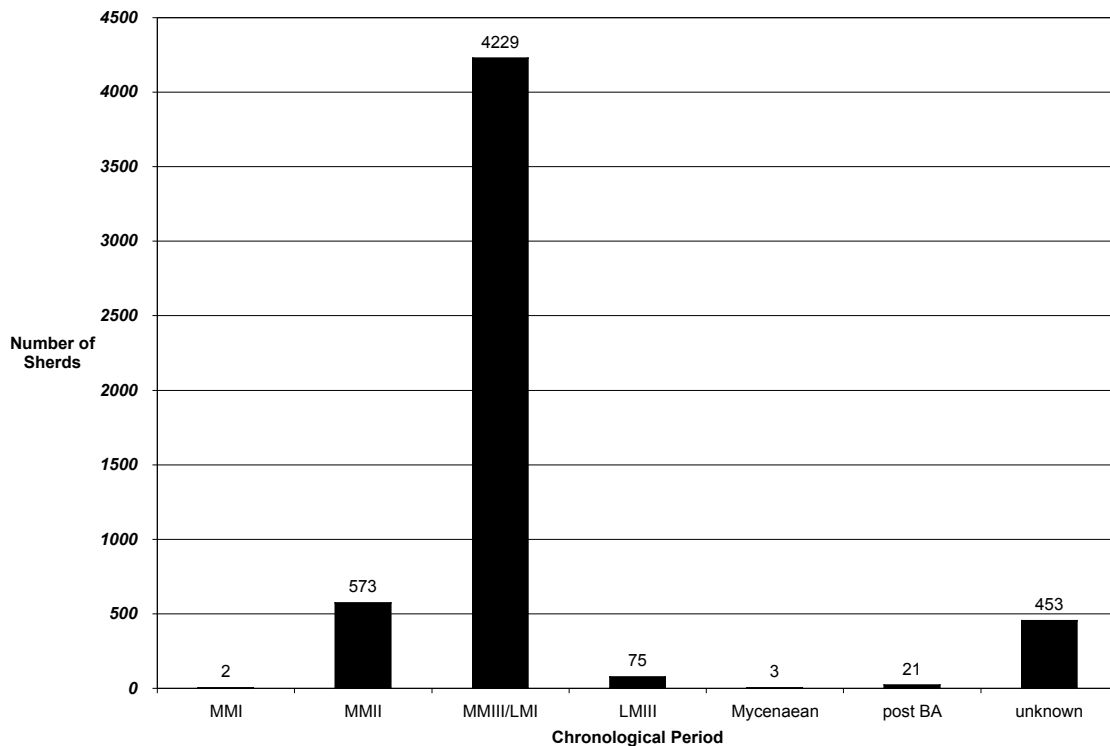


Figure 5.15 Distribution of diagnostic sherds across chronological periods.

Before turning to the co-variation between chronological periods and the various functional categories, it is worth reviewing the distribution of those categories across all time periods (Figure 5.16). Conical cups comprise just under half of the total assemblage of diagnostics (49%).⁴ Kitchenwares (12%), tablewares (16%), and finewares (14%), are

⁴ Given the regularity of conical cup forms throughout the Bronze Age, and in the absence of any stratigraphic or contextual information from the Davaras excavations, the conical cup count was distributed proportionally across the chronological periods, based on the relative percentages of the other diagnostics.

all strongly present, although, as discussed below, their frequencies vary over time.

Special function vessels (2%) and storage/transport vessels (2%) were present, although the numbers are limited. Finally, pithos sherds constituted an extremely small portion of the assemblage (less than one percent). This might seem somewhat predictable, given the difficulty of transporting such large vessels to a remote location such as a peak sanctuary.

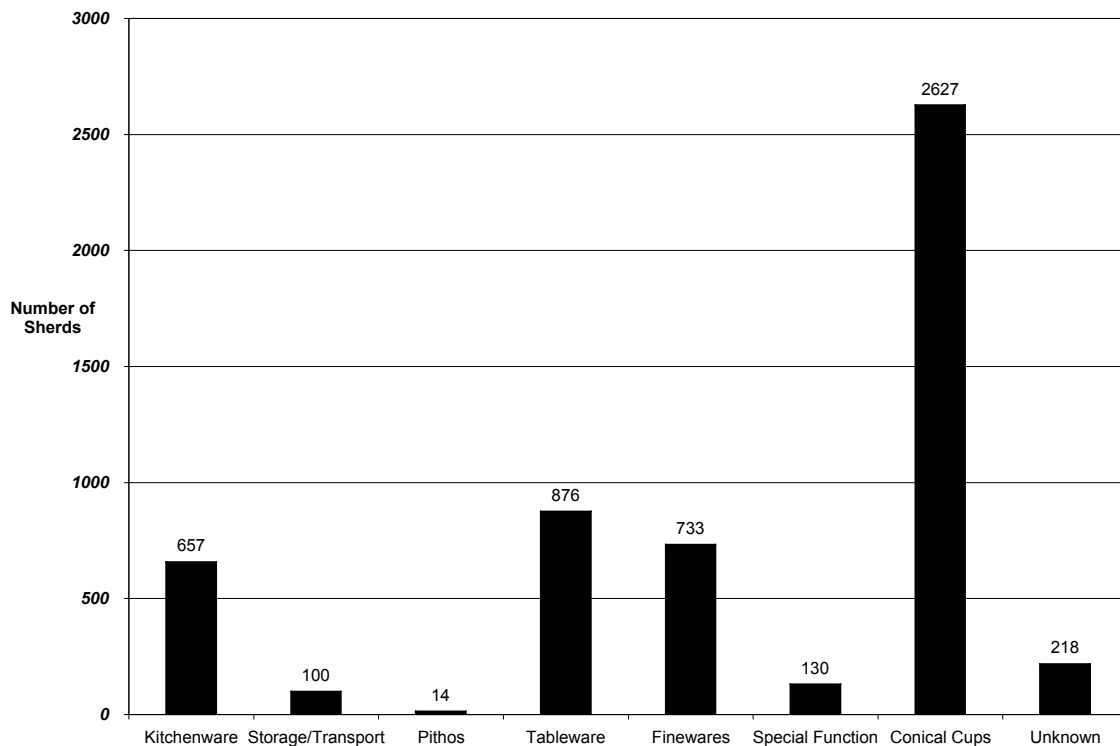


Figure 5.16 Distribution of diagnostic sherds into functional categories, independent of chronological period.

At the same time, the pattern is slightly surprising, considering that a single pithos would produce so many more sherds than any other type of vessel.

Function by Period⁵

⁵ Given the dearth of evidence from the MM I period (2 sherds), I will skip this period and move directly into the MM II period.

Looking at the distribution of functional categories in the MM II period (Fig. 5.17), conical cups are most abundant (49%). The finewares are the next most common (32%). Finewares consist of different forms of cups: globular, straight-sided, and carinated cups. In the MM II period, the tableware category includes forms such as the jug, kalathos, skyphos, and lopus, and represents 11% of the assemblage in this period.

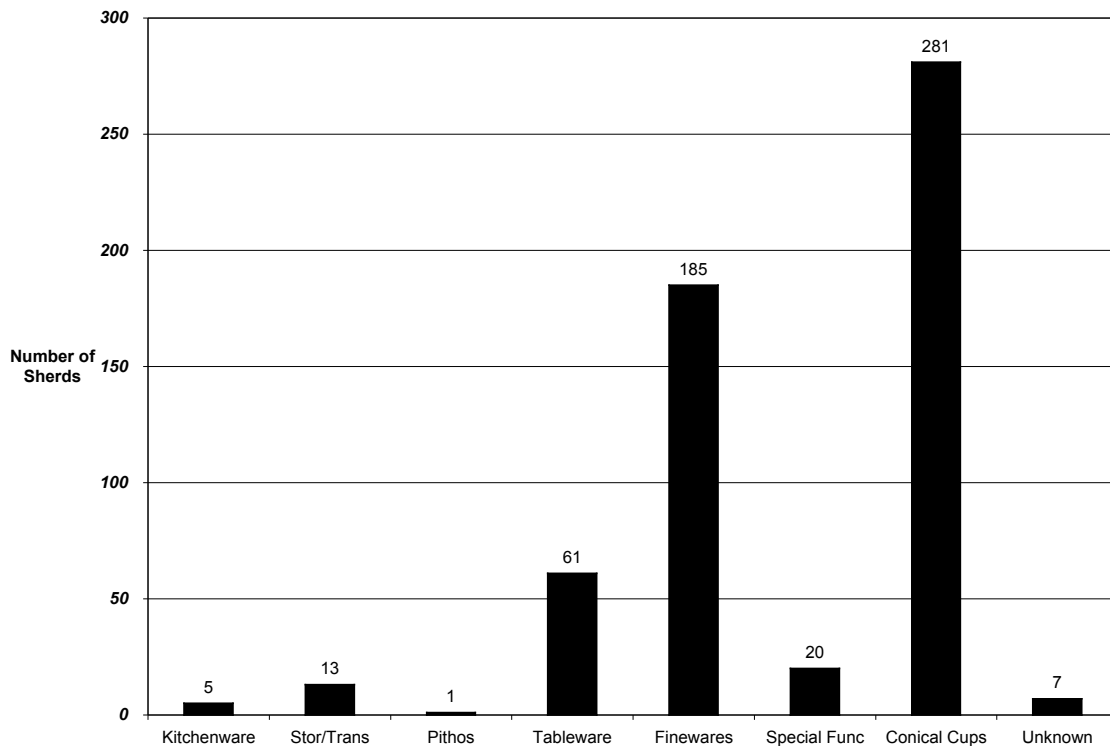


Figure 5.17 Distribution of diagnostic sherds by functional category in the MM II period.

Storage/transport vessels (large jars and jugs) are minimally represented (2%). Special-function vessels, such as incense burners and juglets too small to be used as tableware, comprise four percent of the MM II total, and kitchenware, which consists of sherds from just four general kitchenware vessels and a kados, is less than one percent. Pithos sherds are also extremely rare. Overall, this period is characterized by the use of cups (whether

conical or other), suggesting that drinking activities were most important at the site at this time.

In contrast, the MM III/LM I periods, while still exhibiting large numbers of conical cups, have a noticeably different distribution (Fig. 5.18). Conical cups are still the most significant portion of the assemblage (49%), but unlike the MM II period, the kitchenware (15%) and tableware (15%) categories are much more prominent. Moreover, the vessel types that constitute these categories are more varied in these later periods. The kitchenware vessels are represented by tripod cooking vessels as well as kadoi and other general kitchenware shapes.

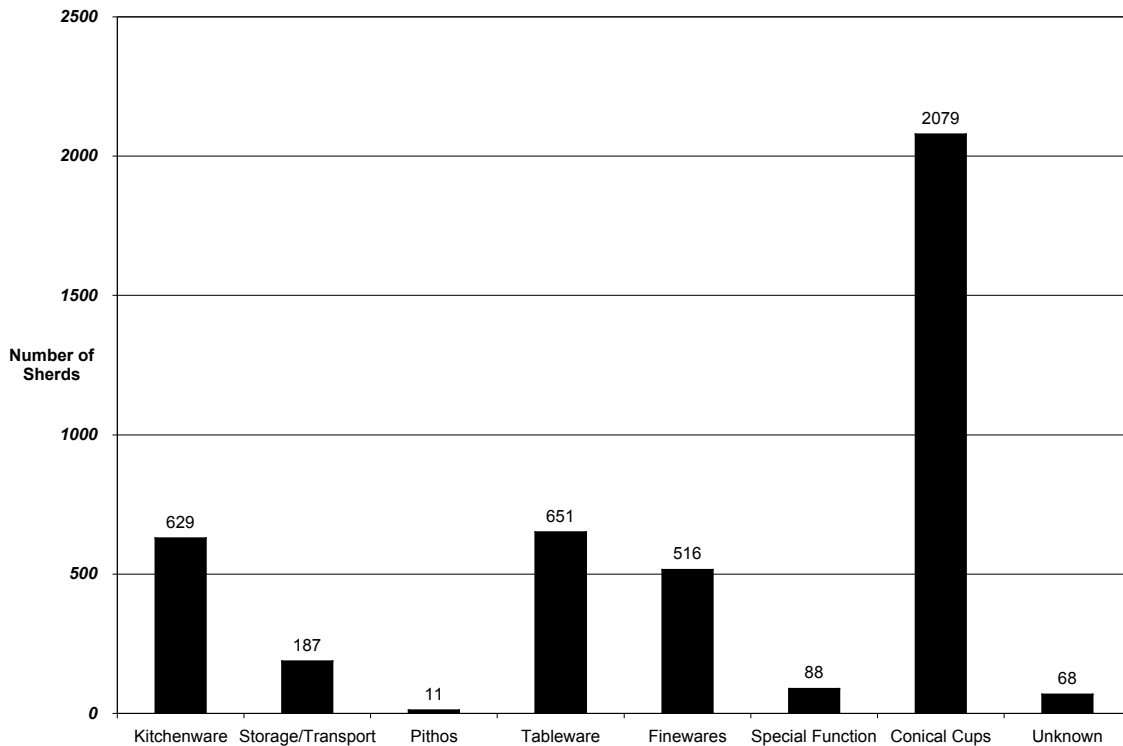


Figure 5.18 Distribution of diagnostic sherds by functional category in the MM III/LM I periods.

The tableware category is comprised of several types including the bowl, kalathos, lopas, skyphos, jug, small jar, plate, and lekane. Finewares are still present in significant

quantities (12%), with shapes similar to those of the MM II period: i.e., globular and straight-sided cups, as well as some larger examples of cups with handles.

Storage/transport vessels (4%) even include an example of a stirrup jar and a few beehives in these periods. The special-function vessels, although still a small percentage (2%), also exhibit much more variety. They are represented by examples of different types of trays – with rims, without rims, rectangular in shape, and some with incised or applied decoration. There are also examples of fireboxes, cylindrical vessels that most likely had a ritual or libation function, juglets and strainers. Given the evidence for the increase of activity in these periods, as measured by the dramatic increase in ceramic quantities, it is noteworthy and no doubt significant that the nature of these activities also appears to have changed. The greater diversity of tableware vessels, and the special functions vessels, suggests that conspicuous consumption became a much more prominent aspect of ritual in the Neopalatial period.

In the LM III period, the final epoch when there is evidence for considerable activity at the site, the number (75 sherds) and range of vessels nonetheless decreases dramatically (Fig. 5.19). The conical cups still form the majority (49%) of finds, but storage/transport is now the second most abundant category (11%), although this includes only jars and jugs. The number of fineware sherds decreases dramatically (5%), and the range of vessel types is reduced to basic cups. Kitchenwares are represented by only two sherds, although that still constitutes 3% of the total. Tablewares are still apparent (11%), including jugs, kalathoi, and skyphoi. Pithos sherds are few (3%), as in the other chronological periods, and there are no sherds from special function vessels. In fact,

sherds that are identifiable as LM III according to their fabric, but are indistinguishable as to form, represent 13% of this assemblage.

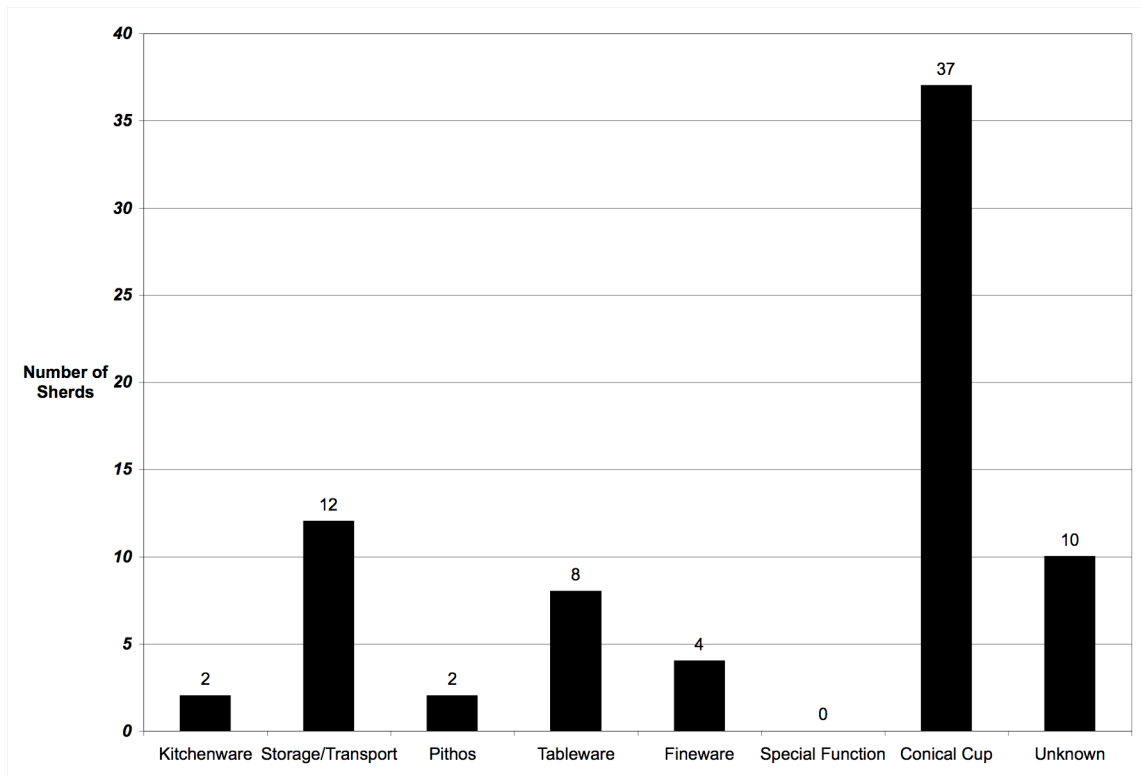


Figure 5.19 Distribution of diagnostic sherds by functional category in the LM III period.

A few small but significant categories have not received attention in the discussion so far, namely, the sherds that retained traces of decoration and the extremely small number of miniatures. While the miniatures could have been included in the category of special-function vessels, it seemed more appropriate to assign them a unique position for two reasons. The first is that they are not definitively assignable to a specific chronological period, which precluded their inclusion in any of the preceding analysis. The second is that their size (dimensions range up to 3 cm in height and 4 cm in diameter) suggests that although they are considered part of the ceramic assemblage, it is

more likely that they were votive dedications. Only 15 miniatures were in my sample (see Fig. 5.14 above). These vessels, mostly whole, are extremely miniaturized versions of a range of vessel shapes, all of which appear in full-size versions in the assemblage. The vessel forms that appear include kadoi, jars and jugs, cups, and open serving vessels, such as a kalathos or a lopas. Although these are pottery, they may also be considered votive dedications like anthropomorphic and zoomorphic figurines, possibly commemorating the ritual activities that took place at the site.

The sherds that exhibit traces of decoration are fairly typical for the Bronze Age. There are examples from all of the major chronological periods – five from MM II, 63 from MM III/LM I and three from the LM III period. In the MM II period, cups primarily exhibit decoration, including two examples of the thin-walled Kamares Ware style, and one jar sherd with applied pellet decorations. From the MM III/LM I periods, examples of most of the range of forms preserve some trace of decoration, primarily in the form of incised lines or small, applied plastic decoration. A small subset of this group, appearing on large, open vessels, has plastic decoration, in the form of rocky landscapes, often with small mountainous animal species (such as goats and sheep) amid the rocks and clefts. These scenes are reminiscent of the relief decoration on the Zakros rhyton or similar scenes from fresco paintings (Bloedow 1990, Rutkowski 1988a). The other type of vessel with notable applied decoration are the disks (= trays), which, along with the more common incised lines, sometimes exhibit traces of impressions where standing figures would have been attached.⁶ Finally, the LM III period provides examples of decorated pithoi (with applied rope-like bands) and one jar decorated with incised lines.

⁶ While rare, there are comparanda mentioned from Pyrgos and Petsophas (Rutkowski 1989).

Although they might perhaps be considered the least interesting portion of any ceramic assemblage, body sherds definitely deserve some attention, not least since they constitute 76% of the total assemblage (n=16,598 sherds; Fig. 5.14), and altogether weigh in at just over 100 kg (Fig. 5.21). Kitchenware body sherds are the most significant portion of the assemblage, with respect to count and weight, although it must be taken into consideration that it was often difficult to distinguish coarseware body sherds reliably between the kitchenware or storage/transport categories. The high relative proportions of kitchenwares, storage/transport vessels and tablewares (in comparison to the diagnostic distributions; see Fig. 5.20) are doubtless somewhat inflated due to the fact that these types of vessels will produce more sherds per vessel than, for example, a cup. Nonetheless, the pithos sherds are very scant despite this consideration, which suggests that only a few pithoi were ever brought to the site.

In order to help make sense of these totals of body sherds, a number of complete or restored vessels of similar date (i.e., MM II – MM III/LM I) were weighed in the Rethymnon Museum *apotheke*. From the kitchenware category, three kadoi were weighed and measured. A large kados, with a base diameter of 26 cm, and a height of 22 cm, weighs 8 kg; a medium kados (base diameter 14 cm, height 20 cm) weighs 2.2 kg; and a small kados (base diameter 10 cm, height 16 cm) weighed 1 kg. Using these figures (Table 5.2) as a guide, the material studied would roughly represent five large kadoi, five medium kadoi, and five small kadoi (remember, this is only 20% of the material *kept* by Davaras). In the tableware category, a medium-sized jar (base diameter 8 cm, height 22 cm) weighs 1.7 kg and a medium-sized lopas (base diameter 14 cm) weighs 1.2 kg. Either 11 medium jars or 15 lopades could be constituted from the body

sherds attributed to tablewares. Cups, of course, weigh considerably less, leading to projected vessel numbers, which underlines again the dramatically high proportion, and sizable absolute numbers of conical cups and finewares in this assemblage. A conical cup, a globular cup and a straight-sided cup each weigh about 150 g. On this basis, approximately 77 complete cups could be inferred from the counts of these body sherds from cups. Although all of these projections are rough estimates, they provide some helpful perspective on the numbers of original whole vessels represented by the sherd material recovered from the excavations.

Rethymnon Museum			Vrysinas Assemblage - Projected	
Vessel Type	Dimensions (cm)	Weight (kg)	Weight of Sherds (kg)	Complete Vessels
Large kados	26 (base) x 22 (height)	8	57.36 (total kitchenware)	7
Medium kados	14 (base) x 20 (height)	2.2	57.36 (total kitchenware)	26
Small kados	10 (base) x 16 (height)	1	57.36 (total kitchenware)	57
Jar	8 (base) x 22 (height)	1.7	18 (total tableware)	11
Lopas	14 (base)	1.2	18 (total tableware)	15
Cup	8 (base)	.15	11.55 (total fineware)	77

Table 5.2. Summary of the dimensions and weights of vessels in the Rethymnon Museum and projected numbers of complete reconstructed vessels from total assemblage, based on weight of body sherds from that functional category.

These estimates thus also provide some perspective on the amount and frequency of ritual activity at Vrysinas. Since the sample studied was approximately one fifth of the total material from Davaras' excavations, these numbers could be multiplied by five in order to get rough estimates of total numbers of vessels. This would suggest 385 conical

cups, 55 jars or 75 lopades, and 25 large kadoi, 25 medium kadoi and 25 small kadoi represented by Davaras' fragmentary remains.

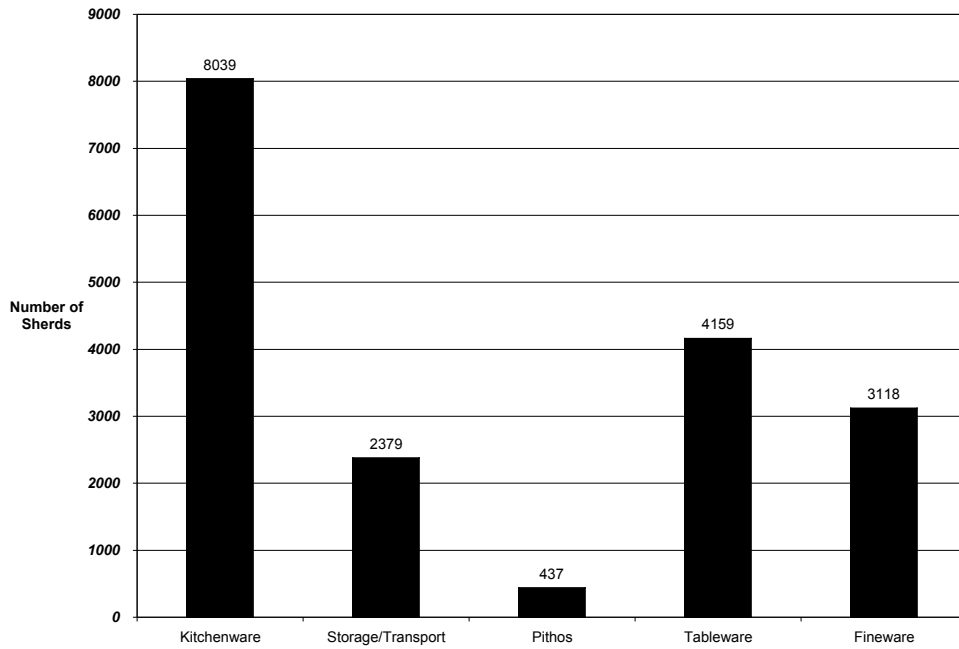


Figure 5.20 Distribution of body sherds across functional categories in all periods.

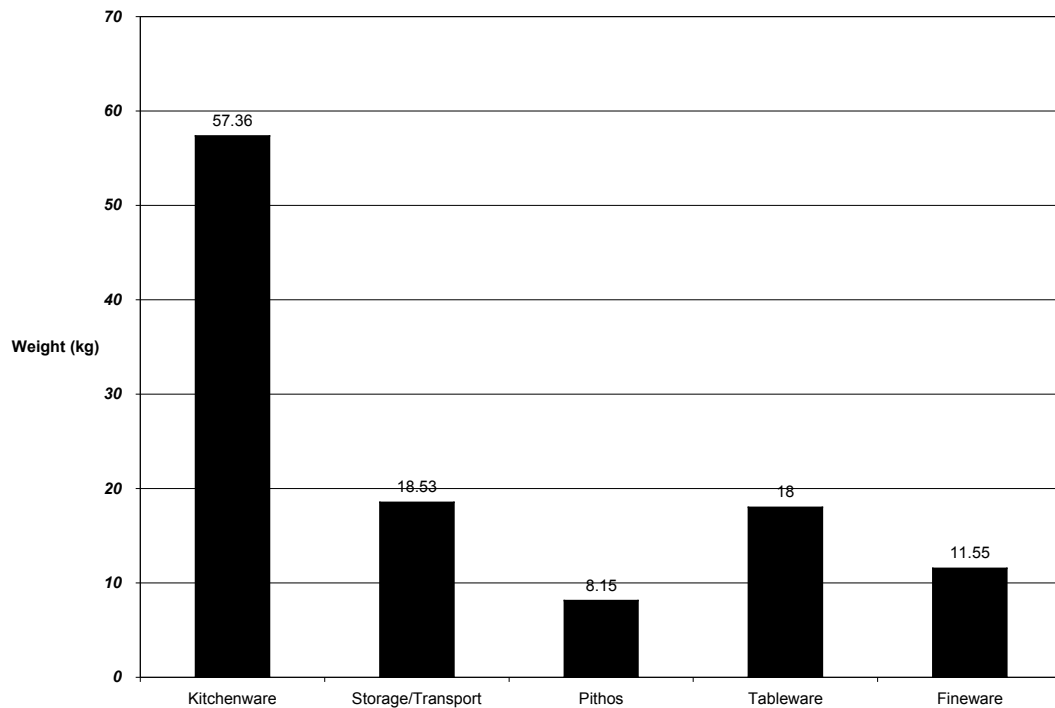


Figure 5.21 Body sherds, by weight in kilos, distributed across functional categories.

Two major unknowns prevent these calculations from giving an exact impression of total numbers of vessels at the site: if the body sherds were reconstructed, some vessels would be missing sherds deposited elsewhere on the site (therefore, these numbers are the absolute minimum); and there is no way to know what percentage of the site was excavated by Davaras. Nevertheless, these types of projections are salutary for gauging ritual activity at Vrysinas at the height of the sanctuary's use.

Despite these unknowns, the minimum numbers of vessels are still surprisingly small, given the noted ceramic productivity of Vrysinas, especially when it is considered that these numbers cover the entire span of site use: Protopalatial through Postpalatial. This would suggest that either the sanctuary was visited by only very small numbers of people, or that the visitors came very infrequently to the site. I will return to this question later in my argument.

VI. Comparanda

To appreciate fully the conclusions that may be drawn from these data, the assemblage from Vrysinas must be understood in its wider context. As mentioned above, this is difficult insofar as very little has been published on pottery from peak sanctuaries. However, some recent publications do provide information on the ceramic assemblages from a few extra-urban sanctuary sites that provide useful comparanda. The pottery from the peak sanctuary at Ayios Georgios on Kythera, for example, has been published in detail by Tournavitou (2006), van de Moortel has recently re-studied and published the ceramic finds from Dawkins and Laistner's excavations in 1913 at the Kamares Cave (2006); the ceramics from Atsipadhes (the closest peak sanctuary to Vrysinas) have been

published by Peatfield and Morris (1995); and finally, the findings from this study can be compared to those published by Tzachili (1996) from her preliminary analysis of the Vrysinas material from Davaras' excavations.

Atsipadhes

Atsipadhes Korakias is the peak sanctuary that is closest to Vrysinas. Despite its proximity, however, Atsipadhes offers a very different picture to the one presented by Vrysinas. Excavated in 1989 under the direction of Alan Peatfield, the peak sanctuary has been subsequently published in a number of short articles (1992, 1994, Morris and Peatfield 1995, Morris and Batten 2000, Moody, Peatfield and Markoulaki 2000, and in preliminary reports in *BSA* 1992-1998), with one in particular dedicated entirely to the pottery excavated from the site (Morris and Peatfield 1995). The Atsipadhes pottery assemblage is not only significantly smaller than the Vrysinas assemblage (with only around 2500 sherds) but it is dated entirely to the earlier periods. The majority of the assemblage dates broadly to the late Prepalatial and Protopalatial periods (EM III-MM II) (Morris and Peatfield 1995: 645). There were two almost complete cups that the excavators have dated tentatively to Early Minoan. In startling contrast to the Vrysinas assemblage, Atsipadhes produced no evidence from the MM III-LM I (Neopalatial) period, or from any later epochs.

Despite the vast difference in amounts of pottery and their chronological distribution, there do exist some similarities between the Protopalatial assemblages from Atsipadhes and Vrysinas. The range of vessel forms from Atsipadhes includes cups of various types (these are the most abundant shapes), large dishes, small dishes, bridge-

spouted jars, jugs, and fragments of small pithoi and tripod cooking-pots (Morris and Peatfield 1995: 645). The Protopalatial assemblage from Vrysinas (see above, Figure 5.17) contains similar shapes, with cups as the most common form. While additional detail is needed on the Atsipadhes assemblage to draw further conclusions about local variations, it may be suggested that the ritual activity that occurred at both sites in the Protopalatial period was broadly similar.

The most salient difference between Atsipadhes and Vrysinas is their discrepant chronological trajectories. Atsipadhes has produced evidence from earlier periods, while Vrysinas may begin slightly later, but continues on to its period of most intense activity after Atsipadhes falls out of use. One possible explanation is that the visitors to Atsipadhes began to use Vrysinas in the Neopalatial period, which would be supported by the increased amounts of pottery from Vrysinas, but the fabrics and forms from this period at Vrysinas remain locally produced.

Ayios Georgios on Kythera

The ceramic assemblage of the peak sanctuary of Ayios Georgios on Kythera has proven to be similar to those from the peak sanctuaries on Crete, as far as we can determine with our limited data set. It therefore provides a useful comparison to any peak sanctuary assemblage, but especially, it would seem, to that of Vrysinas. A summary overview was published by Sakellarakis (1996), the excavator of the site, and, more recently, the pottery has been published in much more detail by Tournavitou (2000). Like Vrysinas, and unlike the majority of peak sanctuaries on Crete, Ayios Georgios was most heavily used as a sanctuary in the Neopalatial period, which coincides

with the acme of the nearby center at Kastri (Tournavitou 2000: 298) and with the spread of dense, heavily Minoanized settlement in that site's hinterland, as revealed by the work of the Kythera Island Project (Broodbank 1999). The similarity in chronological patterning makes this site ideal for comparison with the Vrysinas, despite its non-Cretan location.

Not only is the assemblage from Ayios Georgios similar to Vrysinas in chronology, but the range of vessel forms is analogous as well. Although the total amount of pottery is much smaller, the proportions are comparable. Firstly, the large majority of the assemblage is from the MM III-LM I periods (95%) and there are only a few sherds from the MM I-MM II periods. Within the Neopalatial sample, the most common form is the conical cup, which comprises 85% of all the cups; other forms include the straight-sided/cylindrical cups, a few hemispherical cups, and one or two Vapheio cups. Small jugs and bridge-spouted jars represent the closed vessels and larger jars, which Tournavitou (2000: 298) points out are very similar to those found at Jouktas and Atsipadhes. The remainder of the assemblage is comprised of cooking pots, a small percentage of pithos fragments, and rhyton fragments.

While the vessel forms and their relative proportions are similar to Vrysinas, Ayios Georgios has yielded a large and diverse collection of sherds from decorated vessels. In fact, Sakellarakis claims that sherds from fine/decorated vessels are as common as the coarse, undecorated ones (1996: 87). Among them, Sakellarakis mentions a mini-rhyton, discovered intact, decorated with lilies; sherds from a vessel with clay oyster-shell moulding; clay appliqué of a nautilus and a fish; and a cup, also intact, decorated with running spirals (1996: 87). Vrysinas too has produced some decorated

vessels, most notably the large open forms with appliqué rocks and animals, but they represent a very small percentage of the total assemblage. This disparity may be the result of post-depositional processes at Vrysinas, such as multiple episodes of looting.

Alternatively, a more compelling explanation is that the visitors to Ayios Georgios were more interested in establishing, displaying and solidifying their links to Crete proper and one of the island's most important religious phenomena, the peak sanctuaries, by emulating vessel forms found at the Cretan sites.⁷ In fact, the nearby settlement of Kastri offers one of the most compelling examples of this process of “Minoanization”, evident not only in the sacred landscape centered at Ayios Georgios, but also in the ceramic phases, exchange and consumption of metal and stone objects and raw materials, and in symbolic and ideological spheres (Broodbank 2004). At the time contemporary with the Neopalatial period on Crete, there is the appearance on Kythera of large multi-chambered rock-cut tombs that have no precedent on the island, and whose closest parallels in the Knossos valley and coastal zone (Broodbank 2004:80, cf. Bevan 2000). Furthermore, at this time, there is a massive intensification of deposition at Ayios Georgios, including metal figurines and a stone ladle with a Linear A inscription, which are closely associated with Knossos and the peak sanctuary at Jouktas (Broodbank 2004: 80; cf. Sakellarakis 1996, Tournavitou 2000). The assemblage from Ayios Georgios not only exhibits strong links to the Minoan ritual complex, but, more specifically, indexes particular associations via high-status symbolic goods (metal figurines and objects with Linear A inscriptions) with the elite population of Knossos and the most prominent peak sanctuary – Jouktas.

⁷ Broodbank (2004) presents a compelling overview of this phenomenon of “Minoanization”, covering the Minoan influence on landscape use, human mobility and political networks in the Aegean world, with specific analysis of the Minoanizing influence on Kythera.

Kamares Cave

The assemblage from Kamares Cave also bears similarities to that of Vrysinas, although its date range falls much more strongly in the Protopalatial period than at the latter site. It should be noted that this is the reverse of the standard view of these two types of sanctuaries: namely, that in general caves became more heavily utilized for cult in the Neopalatial period, whereas most peak sanctuaries were used primarily in the Protopalatial period. The Kamares assemblage studied by van de Moortel consists of approximately 17,000 ceramic fragments recovered by Dawkins and Laistner (van de Moortel 2006). In comparison to the estimated 100,000 sherds from Vrysinas we can see how vast the number of ceramics from Vrysinas truly is.⁸

The assemblage from Kamares contains material from throughout the Bronze Age, although the Protopalatial period exhibits the most evidence for ritual activity. From that period, pouring vessels are the most common forms, especially in comparison to the very small proportion of cups. van de Moortel (2006: 183) calculates that the ratio of cups to pouring vessels is 1:11, which is dramatically different from the extremely high percentage of cups in the Vrysinas assemblage. She points out that this pattern is very similar to the assemblages from the sacred caves at Psychro, Amnissos, and Skoteino, which hints at an important difference in ritual activity between the peak sanctuaries and the sacred caves. The other major categories of material from Kamares are pithos fragments (representing about 50 vessels), tripod cooking pots (again, about 50 vessels), lamps, and various special-purpose vessels, such as oval perforated basins and

⁸ The lack of detailed publication about size and depth of excavation at either site prevents a clear comparison of the two.

slotted jars. van de Moortel also documents a number of *larnakes* (ceramic basin). While the range of vessel forms is somewhat similar to that at Vrysinas, their relative proportions strongly suggest a very different hierarchy of ritual activities.

In the Neopalatial period, this range of vessel forms endures, but absolute numbers decrease considerably, and in LM III use of the cave falls off even more dramatically. The assemblage from Kamares thus provides a useful comparison to Vrysinas for several reasons: it highlights the massive quantities of pottery from Vrysinas and it demonstrates a distinctly different chronological trajectory for a sacred site. Moreover, even during the period of most intensive use, the nature of ritual activity was considerably different, evidenced by its relative dearth of cups.

Vrysinas: Tzachili's Analysis

Finally, to turn briefly to the earlier publication by Tzachili of the pottery from Vrysinas, it is worth noting and understanding the differences in the findings between that report and this study. Tzachili's sample was the entire Davaras assemblage but she studied and counted only bases, whereas this study considered in much greater detail all types of diagnostic sherds, albeit from a smaller percentage of the assemblage. Both studies produced nearly identical distributions by chronological period, with MM III-LM I sherds representing 80% of the total assemblage. Further, Tzachili's study shows that conical cups and one-handled kyathia are the most common form, comprising 80% of the total assemblage. The remainder of the assemblage contains cooking vessels, such as tripod cooking pots (2-3%), medium-sized vases like skyphoi and small jugs (7%),

pithos sherds (5%), trays and plates (2%), and transport vessels (< 2%). She also reports that there are no special-purpose pots (2003: 331).

At first glance, the basic findings from these two studies look remarkably similar, yet a critical dimension is added by my study of the relative proportions of vessel forms and categories. In the sample I examined, conical cups are still very common, but even if the fineware cups are included in that total, they only amount to 63% of the total. The kitchenwares and tablewares were much more clearly represented in the later, more rigorous, analysis, and many special function vessels were identified, even if they only amount to 2% of the total. One of the main reasons for these discrepancies is that in Tzachili's study only bases were counted, whereas this study counted all diagnostic material. Given this broader sample of diagnostics, many more forms were recognizable and identifiable. Body sherds were also considered in this study, which gives a more holistic view of the assemblage.

VII. Discussion and Conclusions

The data from the Vrysinas ceramic assemblage, especially when placed in the context of other extra-urban ritual sites, provide key evidence for the nature of ritual performance in the Minoan periods. These activities vary across chronological periods, as well as among different types of sites and even between individual sites of the same general type. These variations, and the changes that they imply, provide clues to the interpretation of ritual practice and the role of participants.

With regards to its chronological trajectory, Vrysinas is not a canonical peak sanctuary. As a result, it is a particularly interesting case study to examine, because its

differences highlight the assumptions and interpretations that have been made about peak sanctuaries as a whole. As discussed in the previous chapter, most of the peak sanctuaries on Crete exhibit evidence for intense ritual activity in the Protopalatial period. The few that continue into the Neopalatial period become monumentalized (i.e., marked by architecture, high status votive offerings, etc.), and, more importantly, are usually linked to palatial centers – the best and most famous example being Juktas and Knossos. Vrysinas is a remarkable anomaly in this respect, as it boasts huge amounts of pottery from the Neopalatial era, while its Protopalatial assemblage is scant in comparison. Further, no large, urban center, such as a palace to which it could have been linked, has yet been identified in its vicinity. Based on current knowledge, the three most likely candidates for a major urban center in the area are Rethymnon itself, Chamalevri, and Stavromenos.⁹ These last two represent sizable settlements, both with evidence from the Proto- and Neopalatial periods, but there is little evidence (architectural, etc.) that would indicate a role for either of them as regional centers. However, some scholars are not deterred by this lack of evidence and simply assume there must have been a controlling center in this part of Crete (e.g., Warren 2002).

Significant differences emerge when changes in the characteristics of the assemblage are assessed between the Proto- and Neopalatial periods. Conical cups remain the most common form throughout both periods, although the frequencies of other forms of cups (straight-sided cups, globular cups, etc.) counted among the fineware category change significantly. In the Protopalatial period, other cups combine with conical cups to comprise 81% of the sample. Drinking rituals were clearly the most

⁹ For the most complete review of evidence for Bronze Age sites in the Vrysinas region, see Schiering 1980, 1982.

prevalent form of ritual practice in this period. In comparison, all of the other categories are minimally represented, which suggests that other activities, such as food preparation and the rites of commensality, along with storage and transport, were less important, or at least less frequently carried out. In the Neopalatial period, conversely, the other fineware cups are a much smaller proportion of that period's total, and combined with the conical cups constitute only 61% of the assemblage. Conversely, kitchenware and tableware categories are much more strongly represented, together accounting for 30% of the Neopalatial totals. This suggests that the range of ritual activities had expanded dramatically to include conspicuous consumption and commensuality, and were a much more prominent part of the events that took place at the site.

These relative proportions, taken into consideration with the huge jump in numbers of sherds between the two periods, suggest that in the Neopalatial period more people were coming to the site, for more diverse rituals. For example, perhaps in the Protopalatial period, groups of people went to the site to dedicate their various votives and to drink together to commemorate the occasion. In contrast, in the Neopalatial period, while people were still clearly dedicating votives and drinking together in greater numbers, perhaps they remained at the site longer, precipitating the need for a greater number and range of food preparation and storage vessels. Further, the tableware category, with its serving vessels ranging from jars and jugs to skyphoi, kalathoi, etc., suggest that dining together was an important part of participation in ritual activity in the Neopalatial period.

What is the significance of these changes in relation to the other sites reviewed and the stories told by their individual assemblages? The Vrysinas assemblage from the

Neopalatial period resembles those of peak sanctuaries in the Protopalatial period (e.g., Atsipadhes), and it also resembles that of the Protopalatial Kamares (another *atypical* site among caves). There are also strong similarities with the Neopalatial material from Ayios Georgios on Kythera, which is linked with a Minoan “colony”. These are not the only sites with which it shares similarities in the composition and nature of the assemblage. Most peak sanctuary sites exhibit evidence for drinking, such as Atsipadhes, Ayios Georgios, (Kythera), Etiani Kephala, Gonies Philioremos, Jouktas, Karphi, Kophinas, Prinias, Pyrgos, Thylakas, Traostalos, Vrysinas and Xykephalo, and feasting (all these sites, except Thylakas, with the addition of Petsophas). Fewer have produced evidence for cooking, however; these include Ayios Georgios (Kythera), Jouktas, Kophinas, Petsophas, Traostalos and Vrysinas.¹⁰ What, then, makes sites such as Vrysinas, Kamares, and Ayios Georgios on Kythera different and noteworthy? The picture they present, in fact, is that there are quite a few and perhaps increasingly recognized number of exceptions to the traditional interpretations of the chronological trajectories of Minoan religious sites. These “exceptions” tend to support the newer ways of looking at larger socio-political phenomena on Crete, introduced in Chapter 2 (18-25).

First, for example, regional differentiation has recently found evidentiary support in a number of cultural phenomena in Minoan Crete, from systems of administration and writing, to architecture and settlement distribution patterns. The regional and topographical locations of the extra-urban sites discussed here are primary factors in assessing and explaining their chronological trajectory and the nature of their assemblages. Ayios Georgios on Kythera attains its period of most extensive use in the

¹⁰ See the tables in “Appendix: Analysis of Find Types,” Kyriakidis, 2005: 128-168 for distributions of find types, with more detailed information on the vessel forms that constitute this evidence.

Neopalatial era, but this directly coincides with the acme of the settlement to which it is connected on the island. Kamares is an exception to the general pattern of use of sacred caves, but given its prominent location high on a mountain, and its readily visible connection to the palace at Phaistos, it makes sense that it would “behave” more like a peak sanctuary than a canonical cave.

Vrysinas is no exception with regard to such factors. As mentioned above, like these other examples, it does not quite fit the orthodox view of the development and decline of Minoan peak sanctuaries. According to this view, Vrysinas should have some major urban palatial-style center nearby, fueling its intensive use in the Neopalatial period. Further, since the most intense use of the site is in this later period, it should be monumentalized architecturally, and its material culture assemblage should bespeak some more direct contacts with a better-established elite. Even Ayios Georgios, the “colonial” peak sanctuary, boasts extensive numbers and variety of highly decorated vessels. As is more than amply demonstrated in the above analysis, the large majority of the Vrysinas assemblage is none of these things – not monumentalized, nor fancy, with its the pottery from the Neopalatial primarily coarsewares or undecorated conical cups.

It seems feasible, given the current state of the archaeological evidence, that the reason that Vrysinas followed the chronological trajectory it did was a result of the lack of any nearby large urban center. It is almost as if the inhabitants of this area were playing out the socio-political dynamics of the Protopalatial period again, or even for the first time, in the Neopalatial period. There was no established elite at the site responsible for fancy new architecture, bringing with them high status objects, who dominated the dynamic of the ritual activity and the activities of the other participants at Vrysinas. The

nature of the assemblage, and the relative distributions of vessel forms and function categories in the Neopalatial period, suggest that the participants in the ritual activity at the site were all local (cf. the work on clay analysis by Georgia Kordatzaki, mentioned above on p. 8), and were visiting the site in order to drink and eat together, as well to dedicate votives and worship.

In general, the picture of ritual activity presented by the ceramic assemblage from Vrysinas includes a range of activities that expanded between the Protopalatial and Neopalatial periods. In both periods, drinking was an important part of ritual (this practice has its antecedents in funerary rituals from the Prepalatial period¹¹). The range of drinking vessels represents a desire for both social cohesion and the establishment of vertical and horizontal relationships within and between groups (see Haggis 2007 for these social dynamics represented in the Lakkos deposit from Petras, discussed in Chapter 2: 22-23). In the Neopalatial period, the evidence for conspicuous consumption and commensality become much more prevalent than in the Protopalatial, which may indicate larger numbers of participants and the subsequent need for more elaborate rituals that may have had a larger audience. In both periods, although this is not exhibited by the pottery expressly, the dedication of votives is a prominent aspect of ritual activity, in both durable media (e.g., ceramic figurines) and more ephemeral offerings, such as agricultural items that do not survive but are evidenced by their receptacles – stone tables of offering. As we will see in the next chapter, the iconographic evidence suggests that there were many more activities that did not necessarily leave an archaeological signature (e.g., dancing, baetylic worship, nature worship, etc.).

¹¹ See Legarra Herrero 2006 for an overview of mortuary practices and their connection to social organization in Pre- and Protopalatial periods on Crete.

The picture of ritual activity offered by the Vrysinas assemblage fits generally into Peatfield's model of Minoan religion, in which he outlines the differences between palatial and popular religion (2000). The former expresses the religious dimension to palatial elite authority, as a series of pageants designed to reinforce status and authority. The latter (as in most Protopalatial peak sanctuaries) focuses on the experiential and instrumental aspects of rituals designed rather to accomplish the more universal processes of survival and continuity (i.e., fertility, protection, healing, etc.). The evidence at Vrysinas in both the Proto- and Neopalatial periods points to this latter dimension as the operative mode of ritual.

It would be easy to say that Vrysinas simply represents a peak sanctuary that lacked a major urban center in the Neopalatial, and therefore produced from that period a material culture assemblage that is similar to a rural, popular Protopalatial sanctuary. The Neopalatial assemblage, however, presents a more complex situation than that. While the pottery from Vrysinas may be local, mostly undecorated, and not obviously mimicking specifically palatial styles, the site has also produced material of a kind that has generally been taken as implying at least a sharing of ritual activities that also occurred in palatial settings – miniature double axes, miniature bronze knives, libation tables/altars, and the use of Linear A (Davaras 1973, 1974, Davaras and Brice 1977).

These latter finds highlight an important point. Peak sanctuary ritual, and its assemblages, represents a phenomenon that materially expressed a pan-Cretan ideology. The material culture associated with the visible ritual aspects of peak sanctuary activity and participation are found at Vrysinas in the Neopalatial period, although their numbers are limited and the local material comprises a larger portion of the assemblage. I have

argued that Vrysinas does not behave as a canonical peak sanctuary in the Neopalatial period, but it is definitively a peak sanctuary. This classification is not based simply on the topography of the site, but rather on the components of the material culture assemblage that are reiterated at similar sites across Crete (Briault 2007). This material culture signals the participation of Vrysinas' visitors in a larger, Cretan ritual complex, even though other aspects of the assemblage (i.e., the pottery) are more local and regionally differentiated. Like the ritual participants at Ayios Georgios on Kythera, the people who visited Vrysinas actively signaled their connection to the larger, pan-Cretan phenomenon of peak sanctuary ritual. At the same time, they were interacting with one another on a local scale and aspects of the assemblage reflect those regional dynamics.

Although individual identity is not possible to ascertain given the nature of the material, it is noteworthy that the participants, or groups of people, were expressing their local identity by producing and using vessels at this communal ritual site that were indicative of their group status. Very few if any imported vessels were found at the site, and few local vessels were found that imitated ceramic traditions of distant regional centers, such as Knossos or Phaistos. Further, based on the projected numbers of reconstructed vessels, the numbers of people at the site were never huge, suggesting that perhaps the participants were closely connected, by physical proximity, at least. The interactions of the users and creators of Vrysinas were on a local not regional level, and therefore, the material culture reflects the local, group identities of these participants.

In this chapter, I presented the findings of my research on the ceramic assemblage from the peak sanctuary site at Vrysinas. The material was analyzed along both chronological and functional dimensions, in order to ascertain the nature of the

assemblage and how it changed over time. It was during the MM III-LM I periods (the Neopalatial) that the site hosted the most intense ritual use, and the composition of the assemblage sheds light on some of the socio-political dynamics and ritual activity that occurred at the site and in a larger regional context. This analysis contributes to a growing body of research on ceramic assemblages from peak sanctuaries. Peak sanctuaries have long been used to make larger points in arguments about socio-political development on Crete: yet these arguments, for the most part, have relied on little material evidence and even less data analysis; moreover that evidence was always based on the votive dedications, especially the anthropomorphic and zoomorphic figurines. Only by studying and analyzing the ceramic assemblages, which provide a more direct picture of the actual ritual activity that took place at these sites, can we begin to make arguments about the larger implications of religious practices at peak sanctuaries.

Chapter VI:

Rural Sanctuaries

Introduction

Numerous extra-urban ritual spaces situated within the landscape of Minoan Crete do not fall into the previously discussed categories of peak sanctuary or sacred cave.

These sites are variously referred to as sacred enclosures, rural sanctuaries, grottoes, rock shelters, field sanctuaries, village sanctuaries, small agrarian sanctuaries, sanctuaries on a plain, small cult complexes, and sanctuaries on a farm (Rutkowski 1988b: 23).

Disagreement over terminology is symptomatic of much larger issues of variability.

Nonetheless, it is evident that there were a number of sites used in both the Protopalatial and Neopalatial periods for ritual purposes that were focused on aspects of nature, located in rural settings, and producing material culture that links them closely with the rituals performed at peak sanctuaries and sacred caves (Fig. 6.1). In previous chapters, I have considered the range of variability among sites that are at least agreed upon as categories (e.g., peak sanctuaries and sacred caves). With respect to rural sanctuaries, the similarities are far fewer, and the differences far more noteworthy. In addition, these sites have rarely been treated as a distinct category, have received little attention in larger discussion of Minoan ritual, and have suffered from the same dearth of excavation reports and publications as many other Minoan Bronze Age sites.

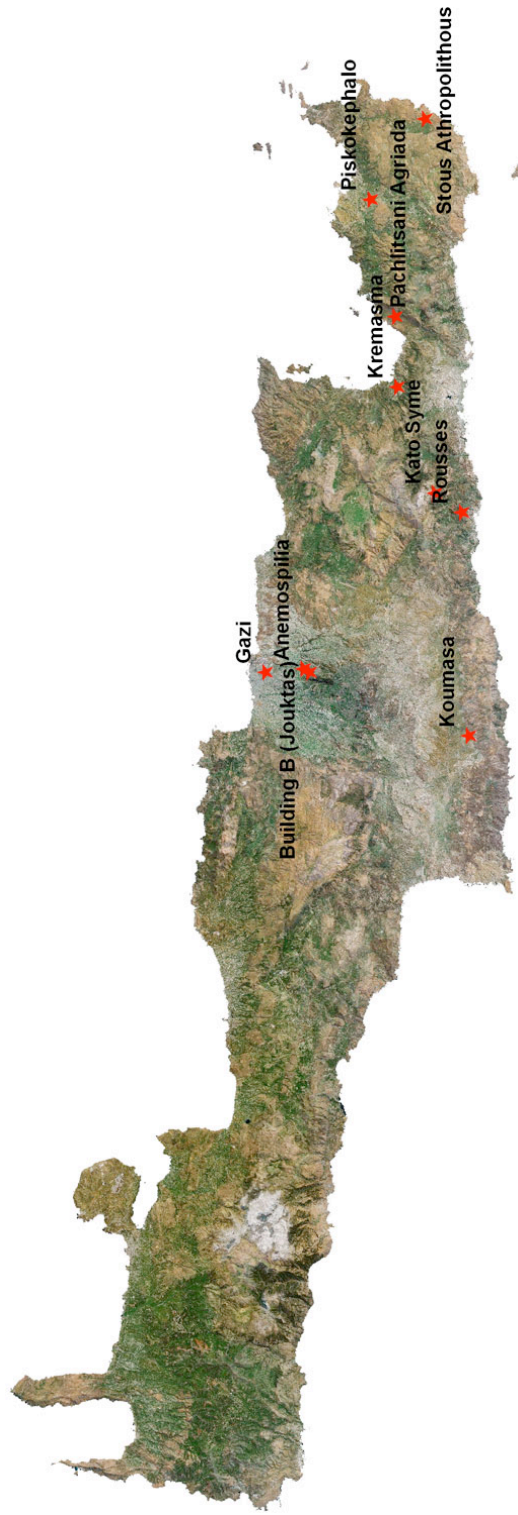


Figure 6.1 Map showing distribution of rural sanctuaries.

In this chapter, I will examine various issues that have contributed to the neglect of these sites: identification and classification – to what degree are these sites a cohesive category, the nature of a ritual site, and the material culture signature of ritual performance and activity. Then, I will consider the iconographic evidence that has not only been the primary source of evidence for sacred enclosures, but almost the primary reason for the existence of such a category. The iconographic representations that have been counted among the evidence for sacred enclosures range from scenes of specific ritual activities performed within architectural settings to more nebulous depictions of outdoor locations with representations of actions that may perhaps be interpreted as ritual. Finally, it is necessary to consider the extant archaeological evidence – architecture, votive offerings, other material culture – that informs our understanding of the nature and performance of ritual activity at these rural sanctuaries, and their role in the ritual and socio-political landscapes of Minoan Crete.

Previous Research

Although very little systematic research has been conducted about open-air sanctuaries as a taxonomic category, it is worth reviewing what *has* been said about them, whether by the few scholars who have considered them as a group to some extent, or by the excavators who have classified individual sites as open-air sanctuaries or sacred enclosures. A review of the literature on this category of site illustrates that each site has been treated as a specific, unique case, in distinct contrast to the peak sanctuaries and sacred caves. With the exception of Rutkowski's work, such isolated treatment has largely contributed to the lack of scholarship on rural sanctuaries as a coherent category.

Dessenne (1949) was the first to use the term “open-air shrine”, when attempting to classify the site at Kremasma. At the time, however, he offered no analogy or comparanda for this site (or the term). The next scholar to consider the category seriously was Faure (1967, 1969, 1972), although he referred to them as rural and field sanctuaries. Faure identified their cultic function as related to sacred springs, trees, and rocks.

With regard to treatments of the sites themselves, there are varying degrees of investigation and publication, although this is not specific to this category of extra-urban ritual site. Generally speaking, those sites that preserve architectural remains have received more attention. Two sites in particular are well known and have been studied and published thoroughly: Kato Syme and Anemospilia, although this latter is often not considered among open-air sanctuaries (e.g., Rutkowski [1986, 1988] does not include it in his catalogues). Other sites, such as Gazi, Kavousi-Pachlitsani Agriada, and Rousses, have received scholarly attention focused on their extant architectural remains (e.g., Alexiou 1956 for the remains at Kavousi-Pachlitsani Agriada; Gesell 1972 on Gazi), although they have not been studied and reported systematically. These same sites have also had their significant finds published, although separately from the treatments of the architecture (Dessenne 1949; Gesell 1976). Select categories of finds from the assemblages at Piskokephalo and Epano Zakro have been published (Platon 1951, Brown and Peatfield 1987), while others - Pankalochori, Sachtouria – have been discussed simply in terms of one or two spectacular finds, such as the large statues they produced (Tsedakis 1967). The remainder of the sites that are mentioned as open-air sanctuaries are known only from brief preliminary report, notes, or passing mention.

Rutkowski is one of the few scholars who have treated these sites as a distinct category (1986; 1989). In his article (1986) dedicated to “open-air shrines”, he focused on the archaeological evidence – the architectural remains and votive assemblages. Interestingly, just two years earlier, he included a chapter entitled “sacred enclosures” in his book *Cult Places of the Aegean World* (1986). In both works, he used the term “sacred enclosure”, but with no real explanation for this choice. It appears, however, that he chose this term in order to emphasize his point that these spaces, while often ephemeral, were clearly bounded, with a wall or natural boundary demarcating the sacred area; he uses both iconographic evidence and later Greek tradition to support this claim (1986: 100-101).

The primary goal in Rutkowski’s study of open-air shrines (like his studies of peak sanctuaries and caves mentioned in earlier chapters) were to identify, classify, and categorize these open-air sanctuary spaces. He systematically discusses the evidence (both archaeological and iconographic) not only for boundary walls, but also for built structures and the foci of religious worship. He concluded that the most important aspect of a sacred enclosure was the altar, which could have been either a built structure or a more ephemeral ash altar. Other foci of ritual activity were trees and rocks that designated an aniconic representation of a deity (“baetyls”). Other cultic paraphernalia that Rutkowski listed as part of the sacred enclosure repertoire are: vertical pillars, double axes, horns of consecration, and potentially cult statues or images (1986: 108-109).

Rutkowski concludes his analysis with a discussion regarding the nature of the ritual activity that was performed at these sites, for which he relies heavily on iconographic evidence. The depictions of religious action — blowing a trumpet;

dancing; shaking a tree; or embracing a baetyl — have been interpreted as intended to summon a deity. These representations will be considered in further detail shortly.

Rutkowski concluded that the deity worshipped was the Goddess of Fertility and that the rituals performed at sacred enclosures were intended to ensure good harvests (1986: 114).

The work by Rutkowski has been crucial for the study of the open-air sanctuaries, especially with regard to his classification and catalogue of the sites. While this is valuable, it is only a first step. His criteria for inclusion are not rigorous and his catalogue of sites needs to be reconsidered. The evidence he provides for classification of sites can consist of the mention of merely a single figurine, or statements such as “objects belonging to a sacred enclosure were found here” (1986: 115). Furthermore, he does not consider critically the relationship between iconographic evidence and the extant archaeological material. Rutkowski’s project was broadly to identify these sites and to argue for their status as ritual sites, based on their similarities to other extra-urban ritual spaces. He explained that “at present the archaeological evidence has a diversified cognitive value, and gives only a confined range of information on this category of shrines” (1988:26), and pointed out that this is the reason that the iconographic evidence is so crucial to our understanding.

Naturally, new research and better publication of previous excavations and their finds would be the best means of furthering our knowledge of rural sanctuaries. Meanwhile, however, we can attempt a systematic review and analysis of these sites individually, in hope of reaching a more comprehensive and nuanced understanding of them as a category. Their material culture needs to be more completely understood in relation to their topographic settings and the surviving architectural remains. Building

from the evidence that is currently available, it is possible to shed some light on the range of spaces, on the character of the artifactual assemblages, and on the ritual activities these might represent. These sites constituted an important element in the overall ritual landscape of Minoan Crete. More fully appreciating that landscape will increase our comprehension of how open-air shrines may have fit within it.

Identification and Categorization

As mentioned above, one of the primary reasons for the lack of scholarship on sacred enclosures, as well as reticence in treating them as a coherent category of Minoan ritual site, is the very heterogeneity of the evidence from them (and thus the rather wide range of activities that can be suggested to have taken place at them). Three essential questions emerge as the crux of any discussion about those extra-urban ritual spaces that are not easily identifiable as peak sanctuaries or sacred caves. First, is it possible to discuss these sites as a unified category when their material remains vary so widely? Second, how much of any given indicator is needed to identify a site as ritual? Finally, to what degree is it possible to say that there is an overlap in the types of activity performed at these sites with those at other types of ritual site, even though such ritual performances may not have left a distinct material culture signature? In the following section, each of these issues will be considered in order to gain some perspective on precisely what is intended by the use in the literature of the term “sacred enclosure”, and indeed on whether it is a term worth retaining.

First and foremost, open-air sanctuaries are located in variety of natural settings. Kato Syme’s setting is focused on a spring, which is situated high on a mountain,

although not close to its summit or any prominent peak. Anemospilia is located on the Jouktas massif, approximately halfway up the northern slope; it is clear that the view down toward Knossos and the sea was the major reason for its location. Other sites were to be found in grottoes, on low hills, or in clearings that may have had a baetyl or some other aniconic representation of a deity. Often there was architecture, in the form of enclosing walls or perhaps a more elaborated façade with Minoan ritual symbols, such as horns of consecration or double-axes. From iconographic representations, moreover, we know that there were also sites that had little or no architecture, and which have therefore left no tangible material remains.

As noted earlier (and best illustrated by Rutkowski's writings), there is considerable variability concerning the terminology applied to these sites. The term "sacred enclosure" strongly suggests architectural remains, which encompass only a portion of the sites that probably existed in the Minoan period. "Open-air sanctuary" or "nature sanctuary" seem equally exclusive through their implication that there was little or no architecture. It is difficult, in fact, to settle on any term that adequately encompasses the variability among this class of sites; yet to create some new expression that has no historical background is too confusing, and simply adds to the number of possible alternatives. While "rural sanctuary" does lead to comparisons with other types of ritual site, it is preferable for a number of reasons. The sites that were architecturally elaborated most likely had simple enclosing walls, and even in the monumentalized sites there were certainly areas that were open to the sky. Further, the term conveys that one of the primary motivations for ritual in these areas was to be away from urban, settled environments, and closer to the natural world. The term allows room for those sites at

which ritual action was too ephemeral to have left surviving material remains, but the existence of which is attested by the iconographic evidence. Finally, the similarities that the term emphasizes with other ritual spaces, most notably peak sanctuaries, highlights the integral role it played in the extra-urban ritual landscape.

In previous chapters (in particular, those on peak sanctuaries and sacred caves), one of the main points to have emerged was that although there was a high degree of similarity in the material culture assemblages found at those sites, there was also an almost equal degree of variability, both among and between different categories of site. This phenomenon was a result of two different factors exerting influence on the nature of ritual performance and participation. On the one hand, there is the unifying force of inclusion in a general Minoan or pan-Cretan religious system and ritual landscape, which precipitated certain types of votive offerings, ritual activities, and architectural elaboration that are re-iterated throughout Minoan ritual sites; this is supported by the proliferation of ritual objects and architectural elements located in other types of ritual spaces (e.g., in palatial contexts). At the same time, the differences are the result of each site's location in relation to local communities and practices. These influences together shaped the permutations of the ritual activity, as well as the expression of the style and form of the material culture.

With respect to the rural sanctuaries, however, the issues that problematized the identification and classification of peak sanctuaries and sacred caves are manifested even more noticeably. There is no one simple paradigm for what an open-air sanctuary needed to look like, where it needed to be located, what types of ritual were performed there, and which votives or material culture would accompany that activity. It is my contention

that, even more so than other extra-urban ritual spaces, the amorphous open-air sanctuaries arose as a direct result of the needs and requirements of local and regional people. Indeed, Rutkowski suggests that these sites met the fundamental needs of the Minoan people – agricultural and pastoral fertility (1986: 114). Therefore, they took varied forms: some were monumentally architecturally elaborated (e.g., Kato Syme and Anemospilia), some had simpler architectural remains (e.g., Gazi, Kavousi – Pachlistsani Agriada, Rousses), and some were so ephemeral that they left behind no tangible archaeological material and we know of them only through iconographic representations.

Given this considerable variability, is it possible to discuss these sites a coherent category? I believe so. Simply put, these were the ritual spaces that were not located in urban or domestic contexts, and yet were not peak sanctuaries or sacred caves. More particularly, they were site-specific locations for ritual action — that is, places that were specific to their topographical, natural setting, whether that involves a tree or grove, a spring, a rock that represented an iconic image of the deity, a baetyl, or the view afforded to another site, a landscape, or the sea. In this sense, rural sanctuaries were in fact just as location-specific as peak sanctuaries or sacred caves, but that location was not as rigidly defined. As a result, each site had a specific plan, material culture assemblage, and rituals performed. In relation to their work at Kato Syme, Lebessi and Muhly have suggested: “a sacred enclosure can be defined as an unroofed area serving specific cult purposes and consequently having a specific architectural plan” (1990: 332). For this research, any site that has definite evidence for ritual activity (architecture, material culture, cult paraphernalia, etc.) and is located in a rural, natural setting, will be included as a rural sanctuary. In time, as more excavations and research are conducted on this

category of site, it may become possible to break them down into more closely defined types of shrines – baetylic, those focused on tree or groves, spring shrines, etc. – but, for the purposes of current research, understanding them as a general category is the first step.

What, then, are the criteria for inclusion within, or exclusion from this category of rural sanctuaries? Rutkowski's catalogues (1988) encompass sites that fall into three categories:

- 1) sites that were certainly used as cult places;
- 2) sites that were probably used as cult places, but final evidence is still lacking;
- 3) sites sometimes described as cult places, but without any evidence to support their sacred function.

In the first category, he includes 14 sites: Stous Athropolithous, Gazi, Kato Syme, Katsaba, Kamilari Tymbakiou Pyrgiotissis, Kavousi – Pachlitsani Agriada and Plai tou Kastrou, Keramoutsi Kavrochoriou, Kremasma, Pankalochori, Piskocephalo, Poros, Rousses, Sachtouria, and Vaveloi. In his second category are nine sites, and there are an additional two in his final group. I have chosen to include in the present discussion only eight of the sites from the first group, but with two additional sites (Anemospilia and Building B at Jouktas) that Rutkowski does not mention¹ (see Appendix 3: Rural Sanctuaries). The remaining six sites in Category (1) that Rutkowski considers definitely to be sacred enclosures have been excluded from my analysis because, in my view, the evidence remains inconclusive, for a couple of reasons: either the nature of the evidence itself is inadequate (e.g., at Katsaba nothing specifically ritual has been mentioned or

¹ Rutkowski does not mention or include these two sites because they had not been discovered or published at the time of the publication of his book (1988).

published; only one figurine was found in 1932 wedged between two rocks at Pankalochori; and at Sachtouria the fragmentary sherd evidence is not conclusive), or the degree of exploration of the site is insufficient (e.g., at Kamilari and Vaveloi, figurines were found near the sites by local inhabitants, but reported only much later.

The ten sites that have been included in this analysis, then, are: Anemospilia, Building B at Jouktas, Gazi, Kamilari, Kato Syme, Kavousi – Pachlitsani Agriada, Kremasma, Piskokephalo, Rousses, and Stous Athropolithous. These sites were chosen because their material culture and (in some cases) architectural remains provide tangible evidence for ritual activity that falls generally within the range of the Minoan ritual complex. In addition, these sites comprise examples that effectively illustrate the potential variation in types of architecture, material culture, and activity that were involved in ritual performance at rural sanctuaries.

Iconographic Evidence

As mentioned above, iconography is the primary body of material that informs any discussion of rural sanctuaries or sacred enclosures, yet little work has been done that has treated this body of evidence systematically. In fact, most treatments of the iconography of ritual activity simply attribute the location of these scenes to general, amorphous “Nature” (Niemeier 1990, Cain 2001) and consequently, scholarship has come to assume that there must have been open-air sanctuaries because we have pictorial representations of them.

The majority of the imagery is glyptic, preserved primarily on seal rings made of gold and presumed to have been used as administrative insignia (Palaima 1996). These

objects for the most part come from later contexts or have no known provenance, and some even come from contexts not on Crete, such as tombs from Mycenae in Mainland Greece. The imagery, however, contains symbols and indexes of the Minoan ritual complex, which continued into and were adopted by Mycenaean culture. Therefore, despite these potential incongruities, these scenes still represent one of the best categories of evidence for rural sanctuaries that otherwise left no material culture signature.

In addition, one miniature fresco will also be discussed, since it explicitly illustrates performance in an outdoor setting, under a grove of trees. This section, however, is not intended to be an exhaustive review of all ritual imagery from the Cretan Bronze Age; it will exclude images that may depict rituals at peak sanctuaries, in sacred caves, and in urban or domestic contexts. As a result of the scarcity of archaeological evidence regarding open-air shrines, however, a brief discussion of select relevant images illustrates points that are otherwise unclear. In this analysis, the issue of which symbols constitute indexes of Nature in Minoan iconography will be carefully considered. Further, the extent to which those indexes can be read together with gesture and composition to constitute an interpretation of open-air ritual activity needs to be made explicit. In addition, the range of ritual activities that are being depicted – shaking trees, embracing baetyls, dancing, etc. – requires exploration, along with the question of whether any of these activities would have left a material signature in the archaeological record.

Glyptic Representations

Peter Warren's seminal work *Minoan Religion as Ritual Action* (1988) used iconographic evidence, in conjunction with archaeological data, to provide a compelling

analysis of Minoan ritual activity. “Ritual action, in the limited sphere of religion to which we here restrict ourselves, will usually comprise δρωμενα things done, λεγομενα things said or sung, δεικνυμενα things displayed or, if we abandon Eleusinian prototypes, things envisioned in epiphany” (1988:12-3). The five types of ritual that Warren described are dance, baetylic, robe, flower, and sacrificial rituals. In particular, the first two concern us here, although the others may of course also have played some role in the religious activity performed at open-air sanctuaries. Dancing and, to some extent, the worship of a baetyl² would not typically have left material culture signatures that we can identify archaeologically, and yet, given their preponderance in ritual iconography, it is clear that these were important, integral parts of Minoan religion.

As Figures 6.2 and 6.3 illustrate, depictions of baetyl worship are very distinct in Minoan ritual imagery. On the left, on the gold ring from Knossos, a man is embracing a baetyl. The setting, although schematized, represents an outdoor scene, with a stylized rocky outcrop and overhanging tree on the extreme left side of the scene. The figure appears to be gesturing toward the bird that is swooping down from the upper right. The appearance of birds and butterflies in these scenes is traditionally interpreted as the epiphany of the deity, rather than as a simple reference to the animal itself (Sournivou-Inwood 1989). In the sealstone on the right, a woman is embracing a baetyl in a rocky clearing,³ with no other indexes of nature depicted. The baetyl worship, however, is evidence that we should include this scene among depictions of open-air sanctuary ritual.

² In some cases, baetylic ritual would have left a material signature; if the baetyl was discovered in a space that was already identified as ritual (i.e., the sanctuary at Phylakopi), but in an open, otherwise ambiguous space, baetyl worship would be hard to identify archaeologically.

³ Some scholars (e.g., Morris 2004) have suggested that this rocky background, which does not completely encircle the female figure, may be iconographic shorthand for a cave.



Figure 6.2 Gold seal ring from Sellopoulo, near Knossos, c.1400 BCE ([*CMS* II. 3, no. 114] after Warren 1988: 17, fig. 7; cf. Popham 1974: 218, fig. 14D).

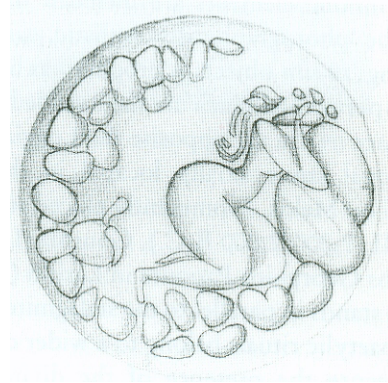


Figure 6.3 Drawing of a lentoid sealstone, from Stratigraphic excavations at Knossos, 15th-12th cent. BCE [Warren 1988:17, fig. 9]

The scene illustrated on the Vapheio gold ring⁴ (Fig. 6.4 a & b) shows multiple figures engaged in different aspects of ritual that are associated with sacred enclosures. The male figure on the left (right in the impression), is stepping up on rocks to grab an overhanging tree that appears to be growing out of a large pithos. The central figure of a woman, who is the most elaborately dressed, performs a gesture that probably represents dancing. The object on the right has been interpreted as a “Figure of Eight” shield lying on its side, with something lying or leaning on it. There is some disagreement about the identification of this aspect,⁵ but it seems likely that it is a human figure, based on the shorthand head and schematic arms (Evans 1901: 176).

⁴ It is worth noting that this ring comes from a Late Bronze Age tomb in Mainland Greece, and was discovered with a cache of other objects, including another ring (of bronze) and 37 sealstones made of gems.

⁵ See Mylonas 1977: 97-8 for discussion of possibility that, rather than a human figure, it is a robe or garment with a knot and tassels. This identification has been used to argue for robbing rituals that are elsewhere (esp. in frescoes) depicted in Minoan iconography.



Figures 6.4 a & b: Impression and drawing of the gold ring from the LH II tholos tomb at Vapheio (*CMS I* [Xenaki-Sakellariou], no. 219; after Kyriakidis 2005: 143, fig. 7a).

This central figure is most likely a depiction of a priestess. Floating in the middle of the upper right field is a small object that Kyriakidis has interpreted as a double-axe with tassels (2005: 141-2; cf. Younger 1988: 283-4, s.v. “double-axes”). The object to the right of this is known as a “spike” (Kyriakidis 2005:140), which most likely represents a shaft of wheat. Overall, this scene presents the three basic aspects of open-air ritual, with a conventional cult symbol depicted to index a ritual space, and perhaps the wheat suggests a general concern with agricultural fertility. The figures in the scene are both male and female, and the composition suggests a hierarchy of personnel, or perhaps a division of activity.

The images presented on the gold rings from Archanes (Fig. 6.5) and from Chamber Tomb 91 at Mycenae (Fig. 6.6) are extremely similar to each other, and to the scene depicted on the ring from Vapheio (Fig. 6.3 a & b). There is a central female figure with a male figure on the right side, pulling down or shaking a tree and another figure on the left. In the Archanes scene, the figure is male, kneeling and embracing a baetyl. On the Mycenae ring, a female figure is standing and leaning over an object that looks like a tripod table of offering. Although the compositions are similar, there are

notable differences: the gender of the figure embracing the baetyl, the gesture of the central female figure, and the motif that indexes the ground: on the Archanes ring, it seems to be a built, paved surface, whereas in the Mycenae ring it appears to be a more natural, rocky floor.



Figure 6.5 Gold seal ring from Archanes (Sakellarakis and Sakellarakis 1997; after Kyriakidis 2005: 138, fig. 1b)



Figure 6.6 Drawing of gold ring from Chamber Tomb 91 at Mycenae (after *JHS* 21(1901): 177, fig. 53).

These images, when compared with the scene from the Vapheio ring, illustrate some important points about the depiction of ritual activity. The central female figure, while performing some dance in all three depictions, has three distinctly different gestures: dancing was evidently not represented in a standardized way. The rings from Archanes and Mycenae have trees growing out of architectural elements, both of which notably are tripartite in structure; in comparison, the tree on the Vapheio ring emerges from a pithos. In fact, the paving and the architectural elements on the Archanes ring seem to suggest that the activity is taking place in a built environment. Further, the floating objects in each scene are not standardized, although they are objects that are represented as floating in other Minoan and Mycenaean iconographic representations. Finally, the find contexts of these rings are interesting. Archanes, which is a Minoan

settlement, is closely associated with the sanctuary at Anemospilia, which is architecturally monumentalized, and the scene from that ring depicts architectural elements. The ring from Mycenae is much later, and from the mainland, and yet depicts a similar, even canonical Minoan scene.⁶ Like the sanctuaries themselves, it seems, the depictions are very similar, but standard elements are deployed in a unique manner.

One ring, in particular, has received recent scholarly attention: the gold ring found in one of the chamber tombs at Isopata near Knossos (Fig. 6.7) (Wedde 1992, Rehak 2000, Cain 2001). Scholars have used this scene to argue for various interpretations of Minoan ritual, and its representation in iconography. Essentially, the arguments rest on some key points: the identification of the small floating figure in the upper right, the nature of the other floating symbols, and the reading of the four large female figures. The scene is conventionally interpreted as epiphanic (Wedde 1992); although alternative readings that it is a narrative sequence showing different moments in time have also been suggested (Cain 2001). It is, however, generally agreed that the scene takes place outdoors, as indexed by the four clumps of flowers that dot the left half of the scene. The identity (or identities) of the individual figures may never be resolved, but there is no dispute that it is a depiction of ritual activity that takes place at an open-air shrine, attended or performed only by women, whose gestures suggest dance, worship, or adoration, all of which are viable options for open-air shrines.

⁶ Despite the fact that this ring was found in a Mycenaean chamber tomb in mainland Greece, it was possibly made quite a bit earlier than the date of its deposition. Also, its function as an administrative insignia on Crete makes its depositional context confusing, but the Mycenaeans did settle and rule on Crete. The appearance of this object at Mycenae is strong evidence of the close connections between the two cultures.



Figure 6.7 a & b. Image and drawing of gold ring from tomb I at Isopata, Knossos, at the Heraklion Museum precious metal 424 (*CMS* II.3 [Platon and Pini 1975], no. 51).

On another ring from Mycenae (Figs. 6.8 a & b), a very different set of activities is presented, although in a similar setting. A female figure, who is interpreted as a goddess, based on her seated position and her floral crown. She is holding a bouquet of what appears to be poppies,⁷ and is seated underneath a tree, while two female figures approach her, with gestures of offering. The double double-axe is very central to the composition, highlighting the scene as one of ritual activity, since the double-axe in one of the primary indexes of sacred space in the Minoan ritual complex, both iconographically and in physical votive and life-size versions.

Interestingly, the scene includes two much smaller figures, one directly in front of the seated goddess, and one behind, gesturing upward toward the tree. The hierarchy of scale suggests that the largest figure is the deity, the two standing women are priestesses, and the two smallest women are attendants or worshippers, although such an interpretation is necessarily speculative. In the upper left of the arrangement, there is a tiny floating figure, which most likely represents a male warrior, since they are often depicted with their “Figure-of-Eight” shields in this position. The figure’s position in the

⁷ The presence of poppies in Minoan ritual iconography has led to the suggestion that they were used as hallucinogens to induce ritual trances.

scene implies that it may be a deity, but with such a complicated composition, it is difficult to tell.

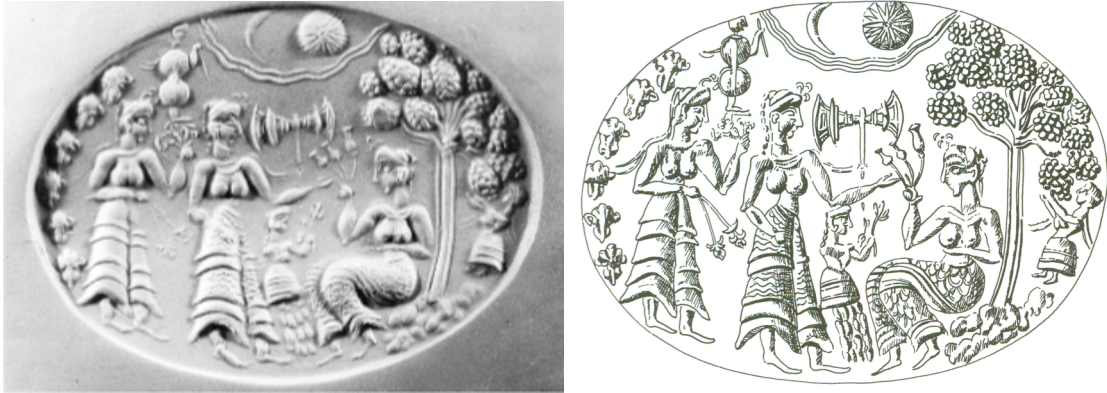


Figure 6.8 a & b. Impression and drawing of gold ring from the acropolis of Mycenae (*CMS I* [Xenaki-Sakellariou 1964], no. 17; *JHS* 21(1901): 108 fig. 4; Niemeier 1989: 167, fig. 1).

Another aspect of the phenomenon of rural sanctuaries is their role in the socio-political context of Minoan Crete. These representations occur on rings and seal stones that are usually made of precious materials (i.e., gold, rare stones, etc.), and that have been linked conclusively to administrative activities. These characteristics provide a perspective on the identity of the ritual participants at rural sanctuaries. Further, most of the archaeological evidence and the imagery date to the Neopalatial period (although some material in the assemblages dates to the Protopalatial period), the time when Crete is hierarchically and centrally organized. The chronology, taken together with the precious raw materials and administrative function of the seal rings, suggests a strong link to elite participation, and perhaps control, of ritual activity at the rural sanctuaries.

Christine Morris has addressed this issue explicitly, in the context of her analysis of the ecstatic imagery presented in Minoan glyptic art (2004). Drawing upon her work with Peatfield (2002) on ‘ecstatic’ ritual and altered states of consciousness, Morris explores the scenes from some of the rings discussed above – in particular, the sealstone

from Knossos, the gold ring from Archanes, the Isopata ring, and the gold ring from Sellopoulo – in the framework of sensory experience. She concludes that, in fact, the depiction of ecstatic ritual on objects closely linked to the elites was an important symbol of ideology and power, especially in the Neopalatial period:

“There is clear evidence for Minoan elite’s intense interest in expressing control over ritual, especially in the Neopalatial period when there is an increase in ritual paraphernalia and imagery, and stronger links develop between peak sanctuaries and palatial centers” (2004: 41-2).

Moreover, although Morris does not expressly mention caves (as discussed in chapter 3) sensory experience was a crucial component of ritual activity in those spaces, which also demonstrated strong links to the Neopalatial elite through the material culture assemblages.

This brief, far from comprehensive, review of just half a dozen glyptic images illustrates certain aspects of iconographic representations, but it does not convey the abundance of these types of images from the Bronze Age on Crete. There exist hundreds of glyptic iconographic representations on seal stones and signet rings that depict scenes of ritual activity performed in rural sanctuaries (cf. Niemeier 1985). These seal stones and signet rings have been discovered at sites throughout Crete, as well as at a number of sites on the Greek Mainland. These images are variations on those discussed above – dancing, tree adoration, baetylic worship, and epiphanic scenes, all of these with or without architectural components to the images. Within these scenes, there are vast variations, with regards to the composition, the figures included, the ritual symbols, and the natural and architectural elements.

The Miniature Fresco from Knossos

While many frescoes from the Minoan Bronze Age show religious or ritual scenes, one in particular sheds light on how open-air ritual performance was depicted in iconographic representations. The so-called Sacred Grove fresco (Fig. 6.9), which decorated rooms on the second floor of the west wing of the Palace of Knossos (16th century BCE), shows in detail what has been interpreted as female ritual performers with male and female spectators at a sacred grove (Evans 1967). The scene is unfortunately fragmentary, but the parts that are preserved are informative nonetheless. In traditional Minoan style, the female spectators are painted against a white background, in contrast with the male spectators, who are painted against a red background. In the foreground of the composition, painted with a blue background, are female figures rendered in far greater detail than the merely outline heads of the spectators. Their specific gestures and placement on the blue field have traditionally been interpreted as indications of the performance of a ritual dance (Wedde 1999: 914 gesture G17).⁸

The trees in the central left portion of the composition are the index of an open-air sanctuary, or more specifically, a sacred grove; certainly, this cannot be a performance taking place in a palatial context, even though the painting decorated a palace wall. Several aspects of this scene are noteworthy. The blue field that is the staging area for the performance is demarcated by white stripes, which supports Rutkowski's assertion (1988: 100-1) that the sacral area was bounded. The performers in this area, which is admittedly only partially preserved, are exclusively female. Taken together with the

⁸ This interpretation has been seriously questioned, due to the heavy restoration of the fragments and the interpretation of the gesture itself (Cain 2001). For further information about representations of dance in Minoan imagery, see Younger 1988; and for gesture in general, see Morris 1993 and Morris and Peatfield 2002.

glyphic imagery reviewed above (especially the Isopata ring), this may suggest that the dance aspect of open-air ritual was restricted to women, and that perhaps they were the priestesses of the cult. Finally, its context is interesting, in that it decorated a private area in the palace at Knossos, which makes explicit the link between the people who lived in or used the palace and the participants in open-air ritual.⁹



Figure 6.9 Miniature fresco, “Sacred Grove and Dance” from Knossos, Heraklion Museum gallery XV.

This abundance of iconographic imagery that seemingly represents ritual performance in open-air settings begs the question of why so few rural sanctuaries have been recognized in the physical landscape of Crete. This is not to suggest that each scene represents an individual shrine or sanctuary. But, if such imagery was so common in the iconographic repertoire of the Minoans, we may ask whether that necessarily means that actual shrines were equally common. While it is difficult to estimate precisely how widespread this phenomenon may have been, in terms of numbers of shrines, given the ephemeral nature of the ritual activity, I believe that it is likely that there existed many such

⁹ The traditional interpretation would assume that the elite who lived in the palace were the priestesses of the ritual, hence its display in the palace. Given that the fresco is from the Neopalatial period, this is more likely, but at that level of detail, such an interpretation is speculative at best.

rural sanctuaries throughout the landscape of Crete in the Protopalatial, and especially in the Neopalatial, periods. Possibly the use-life of the sites was not long, or perhaps they were used only once or twice over an extended period of time, but the performance of the rituals — whether dancing, or tree-centered activity, or baetylic worship — did not require great quantities of ritual paraphernalia and architecture. Therefore, I would suggest that only the shrines that had frequent, extended use were elaborated in such a way that they would be visible in the archaeological record, and the remainder of the sites, of which there were doubtless many, will only ever be known to us from the iconographic evidence. Thus, the glyptic and fresco data are crucial in the reconstruction of a fuller, more robust picture of the Minoan ritual landscape that otherwise is populated only by those few sites that received special attention.

The evidence of individual sites and their assemblages¹⁰

Even more than other types of extra-urban ritual space, the rural sanctuaries were very explicitly influenced by their particular local and regional landscapes. The finds, although these can be generally categorized as part of the suite of Minoan ritual paraphernalia, were dictated by the specific function and chronology of that individual site. In addition, there have been very few comprehensive studies of the artifacts and architecture of these sites, so little comparison is possible; most of the publications of the individual sites are preliminary reports, which do not go into detail about the finds themselves. The architecture is more clearly published and studied, although this is in general specific to the topography and location of individual sites, making comparison

¹⁰ For a complete review of each rural sanctuary site, see Appendix III: Catalogue of Rural Sanctuaries.

difficult. In any case, there exist no typical forms that identify any given building complex as indicative of a rural sanctuary.

In the following section, then, rather than comparing charts and diagrams of types of finds (as in peak sanctuary and sacred cave chapters), this review of the archaeological evidence will focus attention on a range of individual sites and their finds. This format best illustrates the variety of types of site that fall within the category of rural sanctuary – their location, architectural remains, chronological trajectory, and material culture. In the previous section, I reviewed the evidence for those sites that probably didn't leave behind discernable archaeological evidence. This section will focus on the complementary evidence from those sites that were architecturally elaborated and have produced extensive material culture assemblages. Although I have included ten sites in my catalogue of rural sanctuaries, I will discuss in detail only three of these. This is partly due to the fact that these sites have been extensively excavated, studied, published, but also because they each illustrate effectively different aspects of ritual at rural sanctuaries.

*Kato Syme*¹¹

The Minoan sanctuary building at Kato Syme first became architecturally elaborated in the Neopalatial period, which was the period of its most intense use (although pottery sherds provide evidence for use of the site in Protopalatial times). This epoch saw three fundamental changes with respect to its plan: during the first phase, it consisted of many rooms sprawled over the central part of the site; the second phase encompassed a monumental complex open to the sky; and in its final Minoan phase an

¹¹ For more details on this site, and the two that following, see their entries in Appendix III: Rural Sanctuaries.

extensive roofed building was constructed (see Fig. 6.10). During the second phase, which is the focus of the most intense activity, the site consisted of three major areas: (1) a well-defined rectangular open area, (2) a paved road that led to the interior of this area, where (3) a rectangular built structure was located (Lebessi and Muhly 1990: 320-21). Within the walled area, a thick, black stratum was excavated, consisting of the remains of carbonized wood mixed with animal bones, pottery and other objects. Based on these finds, the excavators have interpreted this area as intended for the lighting of fires, the slaughter and consumption of animals, and the deposition of offerings (Lebessi and Muhly 1990: 323).

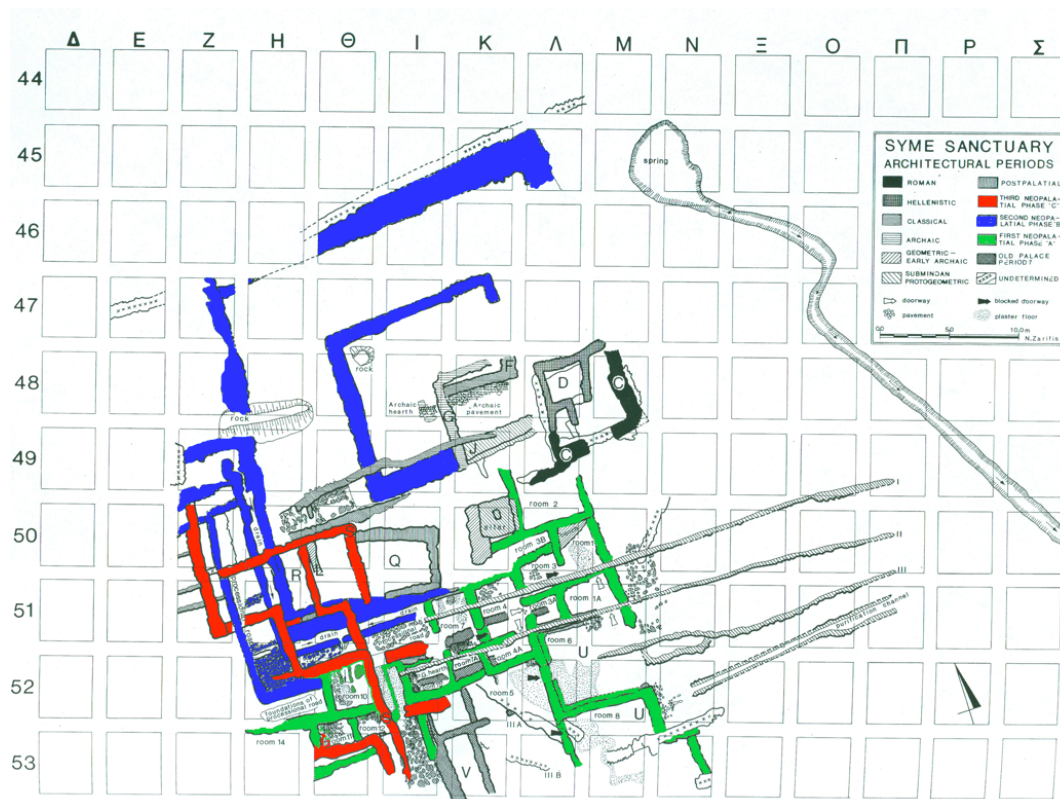


Figure 6.10 Plan of sanctuary at Kato Syme (after Lebessi and Muhly 1990: 316, fig. 1), the first Neopalatial phase is highlighted in green, the second in blue, and the final phase in red.

The material culture assemblage has been characterized as typical of the Neopalatial period (Lebessi and Muhly 1990: 324). The ceramic vessels comprise chalices, goblets, tubular stands, and quantities of miniature vessels (akin to those in the Vrysinas assemblage). The chalice is a common shape, especially in stone (found at all of the palaces and other settlement contexts) but is unknown from Minoan sanctuaries (Lebessi and Muhly 1987: 110). Chalices were found in the thousands at Syme, some painted, but most with applied decoration (pellets, strips, and festoons). The stone libation tables, some with Linear A inscriptions (SY Za 1, SY Za 2, SY Za 3 [Muhly 1984]), are also found in exceptional abundance at Syme – over 500 in number. The most typical objects are clay and stone cult vessels, but other finds include bronze male figurines, a dagger, sealstones, pieces of silver and rock crystal vessels, and quantities of gold foil fragments (Lebessi and Muhly 1987: 110).

Based on the architecture, the assemblage, and the continuation of cult use into later times, the excavators have drawn explicit comparisons with Jouktas and the Psychro cave, and the bronzes are also strongly reminiscent of the assemblage from the Idaean Cave (Lebessi and Muhly 1987: 111).

“The features that Syme shares with Jukhtas and, to a lesser extent, with other peak and cave shrines (roofed buildings combined with open terraces, burnt deposits with animal remains and libation tables, and even some types of unusual and luxury votives) may indeed offer ‘support for unity of material expression of belief in Minoan religion,’ but the scale of architecture and the volume of evidence pertaining to ritual activity set Syme apart” (Lebessi and Muhly 1990: 334)

Kato Syme perfectly encapsulates the problems of identification – it is unique, with respect to its architectural plan and the sheer quantities of material, and it lacks comparanda with other rural sanctuaries. Its assemblages, however, contain material

that is firmly part of the “ritual kit” (Briault 2007b) of Minoan religious belief. The wide-ranging ritual activity (and underlying belief system) that this assemblage indicates has many parallels, not only with other extra-urban ritual places such as Jouktas, Psychro, and the Idaean Cave, but also with ritual spaces in urban and domestic contexts. The Linear A inscriptions link it to some type of administrative elite as well. The excavators (1987) refer to Kato Syme as a “Cretan cult place”, without any further categorization; but that underplays the information that this site can offer, when taken into consideration with other rural sanctuaries, and within the ritual landscape as a whole.

Anemospilia

Anemospilia is an exceptional ritual site from Bronze Age Crete, and as a result, has received a great deal of attention, in both the scholarly and public media. Its uniqueness illustrates that these sites were individualized and specific to their surroundings. While the architecture and the human remains suggest a ritual that is very rarely evidenced elsewhere in Minoan culture, the material culture assemblage firmly identified this site as participating in the Minoan complex of ritual activity. It also presents an excellent example for analysis by virtue of its destruction – all of the objects and human remains were preserved *in situ* as a result of the building’s collapse during an earthquake, which occurred (based on ceramic evidence) at the end of MM IIIA (c. 1680 BCE). The excavators believe this to be the same event that destroyed the palaces at this time, causing the end of the Protopalatial period.

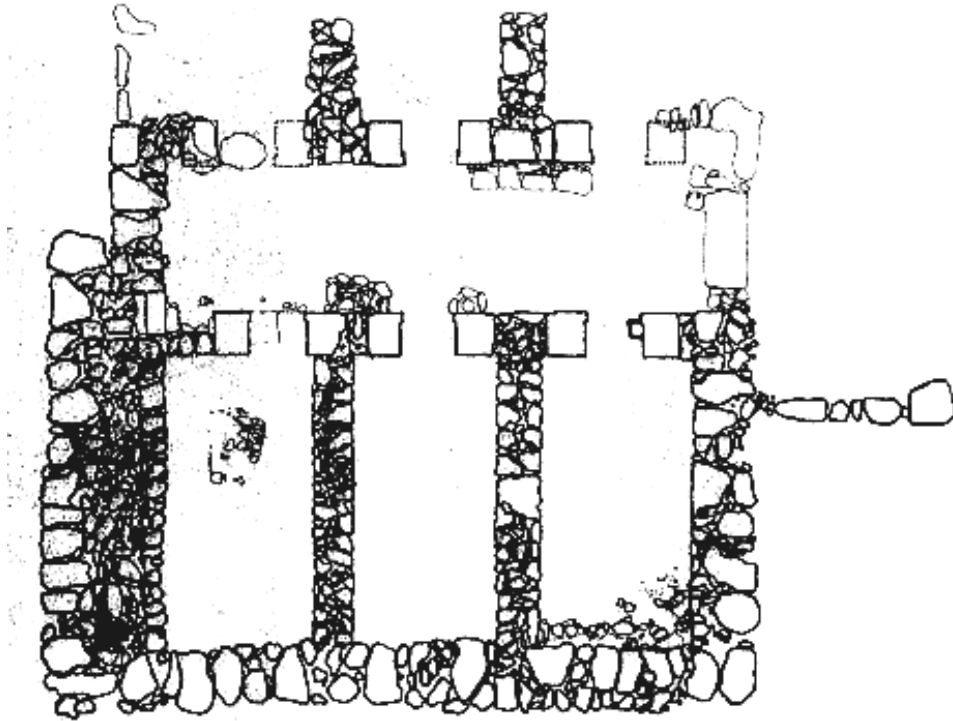


Figure 6.11 Plan of building remains at Anemospilia (Sakellarakis and Sakellarakis 1997: 271, fig. 67).

The site is comprised of a tripartite building (Figs. 6.11 and 6.12), built in the MM IIB period, which faces north towards the palace at Knossos and the sea. Three rooms, oriented north-south, open onto the north to a corridor that runs east-west along their length. The antechamber had a masonry bench running along the wall and a deep, built-in stone basin near the entrance to the central room. The central room enclosed a large bedrock outcropping that the excavators believe may have been the base for a cult image or statue (Sakellarakis and Sakellarakis 1997: 285). The east room contained an altar stepped in three tiers against the southern wall (like those found in the central court at Phaistos [Levi 1964], depicted on the Ayia Triadha sarcophagus [Long 1974], and at Tourkoyeitionia [Sakellarakis and Sakellarakis 1997]). The west room had no interior architectural elements; the human skeletons and small finds were discovered in situ on

the floor surface.¹² Architectural aspects of the building link its very closely with ritual architecture from the palaces and other urban ritual spaces – in particular, its tripartite plan (e.g., West Façade of the Central Court at Knossos) and the stepped altar (the altar from the central court at Phaistos). Furthermore, the tripartite architectural elements are typical in iconographic representations of ritual buildings (the Zakros rhyton, the Grandstand Fresco from Knossos, and the shrine at Vathypetro [Shaw 1978, 1980]). While this building is unique in plan for rural sanctuaries, the architecture clearly indexes connections to the system of ritual spaces on Crete.



Figure 6.12 View of the remains at Anemospilia, looking south, with Jouktas in the background.

The material culture assemblage affords a useful perspective as a result of the finds all being discovered *in situ*. The antechamber contained 150 vessels, including pithoi (some with traces of Linear A inscriptions), pestles, and tripod cooking pots;

¹² The excavators suggest that it is possible that the position of some of the small finds suggest collapse from a second storey (Sakellarakis and Sakellarakis 1997: 294), although there is little other evidence for this reconstruction.

animal bones (pig, goat, and bull) were found near two enormous clay disks and clay offering tables with incised foliate motifs. The central room was packed with objects – pithoi lined up against the walls, small and large clay vessels, and a variety of metal objects. The east room produced more pithoi, small clay vessels and bronze objects, a large clay basket-shaped vessel with a Linear A inscription, a stone offering table, and variously colored pebbles from the seashore, and three calyx cups. Exact parallels for the calyx cups, made of faience, also with a foliate pattern, were found in the Temple Repositories at Knossos (Platon 1973) and in tombs from Grave Circle B at Mycenae (Mylonas 1964). The west room was the poorest in small finds, with the exception of one large Kamares Ware sherd. The distribution pattern of the assemblages within these rooms suggests that ritual activity was spatially differentiated. Further, the object categories within the assemblage link it firmly to other extra-urban ritual assemblages (e.g., the pithoi, tripod cooking pots, stone offering tables, etc. have parallels with peak sanctuary assemblages), while at the same time indicating connections to urban palatial assemblages (e.g., the objects with Linear A inscriptions, the Kamares ware sherd, and the bull imagery on the large ceramic tub-like vessel). The overall picture presented by the material culture suggests a range of activities associated with extra-urban ritual (feasting, offering of agricultural products, etc), but activities that were also dictated very specifically by the needs of the local people associated with the palace at Knossos.

The evidence from the west room – the human skeletons, the material culture, and the architectural furnishings – has led the excavators to suggest that the ritual activity that occurred here at the time of the destruction of the building was human sacrifice (Sakellarakis and Sakellarakis 1981a, 1997: 299-311). Although the humans perished at

the time of the building's collapse, the position of the skeletons and the personal objects found with them, suggest that an older male priest and a female attendant were preparing to sacrifice a male youth, spread out on a table, or altar. While this argument remains contested, the practice was exceptional. If true, this scenario would indeed be unique among Minoan ritual, and would enhance the distinctiveness of this shrine.

Anemospilia is an excellent example of the influence of a site's specific local context, in part due to the extensive work done in that area. It is close to Knossos, and it is located on the Jouktas massif, with the peak sanctuary at Jouktas less than a kilometer away, and the rural sanctuary Building B very near as well. In a landscape so densely dotted with high profile ritual sites, it is no surprise that each is so specialized.

Moreover, falling within the immediate hinterland of Knossos, it is clear that the area received so much attention as a result of large population attached to this central urban complex. Finally, if human sacrifice was the intended final ritual of the shrine, only the specific, individual circumstances of the chronology and location of the site would suffice as an explanation.

Stous Athropolithous (Epano Zakro)

Unlike Anemospilia and Syme, the sanctuary at Stous Athropolithous has been long known and considered to be some sort of rural sanctuary or sacred enclosure. Evans visited the site on three occasions (1894, 1896, 1903), during which time he made notes and sketches of the architectural remains visible on the surface and purchased from local villagers figurines discovered at the site. Since the site has been known since the earliest days of Minoan archaeology, Stous Athropolithous has often been cited in discussions

about rural sanctuaries. Bosanquet, Pendlebury, Platon, Faure, and Rutkowski all discuss the site, whether in relation to other sites (such as Bosanquet [1901/2] when he was excavating Kato Zakro), or in more specific discussions of rural shrines. Based on surface remains alone, Evans grouped the site together with Petsophas and Jouktas (1921: 151). Pendlebury classified it as an MM I sanctuary (1939: 102, 126) and Platon recorded two shrines during his visit to the site (1951: 122). Faure, in his seminal work, reclassified the site as a “sanctuaire de campagne” (1967: 115), and Rutkowski’s analysis identified it as a sacred enclosure (1986: 197).



Figure 6.13 Plan of the site at Stous Athropolithous (after Rutkowski 1988: 11, fig. 1).

Despite all of this scholarship, very little archaeological exploration has been undertaken at Stous Athropolithous (Fig. 6.13). Scholarly classifications are based on a very small amount of material: sherds that are primarily from conical cups and pithoi, which have been dated to MM III/LM I, and anthropomorphic and zoomorphic figurines of the MM I-II and MM III periods. Evans and Pendlebury both also noted LM III finds, but no other visitors recorded similar material. Unlike Anemospilia and Kato Syme, Stous Athropolithous does not present a large, architecturally elaborated ritual space with numerous votive objects that can help its identification. In fact, it seems that the shrine was perhaps more like those represented in the iconographic evidence discussed above. Unusually, despite this lack of architecture and large numbers of votives, scholars have been categorizing it as a sanctuary since Evans.

More recently, Brown and Peatfield restudied Evans' notes and the material from the site, with the intention of using Athropolithous "as an example to test more rigorously the process by which shrine sites are identified and classified" (Brown and Peatfield 1987: 33). In fact, their conclusion, based on the dearth of analysis of rural sanctuaries as a group, was that "the most that can be said of many of them, including Athropolithous, is that the reported finds suggest some level of ritual activity" (Brown and Peatfield 1987: 32). Stous Athropolithous thus presents an example of a site that has always been classified as a rural sanctuary, but the basis for that categorization is quite doubtful.

Site assemblages

As Table 6.1 illustrates, there is no discernible pattern in the distribution of the objects in the material culture assemblage. This is partly a result of the varying levels of

exploration and publication of each of the sites. In certain respects, however, the assemblages do seem fundamentally different. Certain sites have been identified as ritual spaces because of the votive figurines discovered there, while others, notably Anemospilia, have not produced any figurines at all. Unlike the peak sanctuaries, then, the deposition of votive figurines was evidently not a crucial aspect of the ritual activities that were performed at every rural sanctuary. Similarly, evidence for drinking rituals (e.g., conical cups) have only been reported from four sites (Building B at Jouktas, Kato Syme, Piskokephalo and Stous Athropolithous); whereas this was an integral component of ritual at peak sanctuaries and sacred caves. Rather than presenting a set of criteria necessary for the identification and categorization of a rural sanctuary, the comparative distribution of objects within the assemblages illustrates that each site was used for different purposes, sometimes overlapping, that responded more to local and regional needs and influences than to the demands of some overarching set of ritual activities.

		Anemospilia	Building B (Jouktas)	Gazi	Kato Syme	Kavrosi	Pachlissani-Agrifada	Koumissa	Krenasima	Piskokephalo	Rousses	S. Athropolithous
Figurines	Anthropomorp		X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
	Zoomorphic				X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Pottery	Cult	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
	Conical Cups	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
	Pithoi	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
	Other	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Bronzes	Figurines											
	Other			X								
Other	Stone	X		X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
	Faunal	X		X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
	Architecture	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X

Table 6.1 Distribution of finds among rural sanctuaries.

Even though there may have been no specific categories of material that were necessary for ritual performance at a rural sanctuary, there are some striking similarities with finds from other types of sanctuaries: the MM I-III anthropomorphic and zoomorphic votive figurines and stone libation tables have parallels at a number of the peak sanctuaries, most notably Jouktas, Petsophas, and Vrysinas. The bronzes, including figurines, weaponry and other objects, are linked closely with the assemblages from certain sacred caves, particularly Psychro, the Idaean Cave and Arkalochori. Large clay statues, such as those from Kato Syme, Gazi, and Pankalochori, have also been found at Gournia, Karphi, and Jouktas. The other common ritual paraphernalia, such as double axes and horns of consecration, index these sites' participation in the general Minoan ritual landscape, linking them not just to other extra-urban ritual spaces, but also to ritual spaces in other contexts, such as in domestic and palatial environments.

Although there are thus strong similarities with other places, these cannot overshadow the features testifying to the distinctiveness of the rural sanctuaries.

Rutkowski suggests:

“It is therefore probable that in spite of the similarities of the votive offerings and cult paraphernalia found in the sacred enclosures and other sanctuaries, the former served for worshipping gods different from the ones venerated e.g. in the peak sanctuaries” (Rutkowski 1988: 26).

It is difficult, I believe, to construct an argument about the nature or identity of the deity being worshipped at any of these sites, given the scant evidence available. Rutkowski's point, however, is well taken: perhaps there was something fundamentally different about these sites from the peak sanctuaries and sacred caves. Rather than a difference in

the deity or deities worshipped, it is more likely that the rural sanctuaries fulfilled particular niches in a given landscape. For example, in the case of Anemospilia, in a landscape rich in other ritual spaces (e.g., Jouktas, Building B, etc.), the site was intended for a very specific role, whether or not human sacrifice was its initial function or merely a desperate response to the cataclysmic earthquake that appears to have destroyed the sanctuary.

Discussion and Conclusions

In this chapter, iconography and archaeological material have been reviewed. These two categories of evidence present different pictures of the nature of rural sanctuaries. The iconography points to shrines that were largely ephemeral and as a result may not have left a distinct material signature. The archaeological finds demonstrate that a small subset of these rural sanctuaries was architecturally elaborated and involved activities that included the use of objects made from durable materials likely to survive archaeologically – votive offerings, pottery assemblages, ritual paraphernalia, etc. The two groups of sites represented by these different classes of evidence could be separated into discrete categories of shrines; but I believe that in general they occupy much the same niche in the ritual landscape of Minoan Crete. They are all located in rural settings, focused on aspects of the natural world, specific to the individual setting of the site, and they present material culture assemblages that are specialized for the particular rituals that were performed there. They all use symbols and signals that index participation in the ritual complex of Minoan Crete. Perhaps in the future, with more research and publication, this category will be broken down into more

closely defined subsets – spring shrines, tree shrines, baetyl shrines – but at present, it is necessary that they remain an inclusive category, so that they can be discussed as an integral part of the landscape with other extra-urban ritual spaces.

For any comprehensive understanding of the ritual landscape of Minoan Crete, space *must* be allotted for the types of sites that were not elaborate or monumentalized. There are places in the landscape that received ritual attention at which the performance of ritual did not require the presence of durable, permanent material culture.¹³ Indeed, perhaps it was the very fact of the transience of these performances that made them efficacious? Further, while there is little archaeological evidence of the sites themselves, it is possible to document their existence via iconography and also some of the activities that occurred there. For example, at Knossos, from the Stratigraphical Museum site excavations, a carefully constructed, ashlar masonry circular platform was discovered that has been interpreted as a place for dancing (Warren 1988). There are also extant clay models of people dancing (Rutkowski 1988, Warren 1988).

It is necessary to stress again the sheer abundance of the iconographic representations – the large number of glyptic scenes that illustrate ritual activities performed in nature (i.e., at rural sanctuaries) present compelling data that these types of sites were common in real practice. It is likely that one of the reasons for the high incidence of these scenes on signet rings and seal stones is that the rituals performed at the sites were transient and ephemeral, and therefore the material culture record of that activity becomes the glyptic representations themselves. A votive anthropomorphic figurine is not essential for the designation of a space as ritual. Further, that the focus of

¹³ This phenomenon is not unique to Bronze Age Crete (e.g., Birge's work (1994) on trees and groves in the sacred landscape of Roman Greece, discussed by Pausanias).

the actions or worship at rural sanctuaries were features of the natural environment; their naturally occurring presence sufficed.

Furthermore, the iconography can be understood together with the archaeological evidence. For example, perhaps the sites from which there exists archaeological material were the elaborated versions of the types of sites for which we only have iconographic evidence. Alternatively, perhaps they were variations on those same themes; certain aspects of nature cult worship required the communal activities that leave behind material evidence, such as feasting, drinking, and votive dedication. It is likely, as well, that due to the characteristics of a particular site – chronological trajectory, use-span, and frequency of use – these sites received more material elaboration. Like the peak sanctuaries and sacred caves, each rural sanctuary was the result of the local and regional contexts, which precipitated the need for certain types of rituals to be performed in that specific location (e.g., Anemospilia). At the same time, they are all part of the ritual complex that pervades Minoan Crete – they have definitive links with other extra-urban ritual spaces (e.g., categories of object in the assemblages), as well as with urban, domestic, and palatial contexts (e.g., the Linear A inscriptions; the iconographic representations on seal stones, signet rings, and in fresco paintings). Additionally, the glyptic scenes on seal stones (worn as a pendant or on a string around the neck) provide evidence for the identity of participants in the ritual, due to the fact that the owners of these objects chose to signify their links to these sites on high-status, administrative objects.

The architecture and material culture assemblages of the sites that have been well-studied and published are much more clearly presented. The sites (e.g., Anemospilia and

Kato Syme) have tended to be treated as individual sites, with unique characteristics and assemblages, and consequently they are viewed as exceptional. This treatment is the antithesis of how other sites that fall into peak sanctuary or sacred cave categories have been presented – these assemblages are not discussed in detail, because they are viewed as “typical” of that class of site. In previous chapters, it was necessary to illustrate and highlight the differentiation between individual sites in the face of the history of scholarship that grouped them together and glossed over subtle differences that were present and made them unique. In this chapter, by contrast, it has been very necessary to relocate these sites and their assemblages back within a category of extra-urban ritual sites, and to highlight and underline their similarities not only with each other, but also within the larger ritual complex of Minoan ritual assemblages and landscape.

Chapter VII:

Conclusions

This dissertation has re-examined the role of extra-urban ritual spaces in the ritual and socio-political landscapes of Bronze Age Crete during the second millennium BC. By looking at the nature of the performance of ritual activity, as expressed through archaeological assemblages, my work investigated how regional interactions influenced ritual activities and their material signature in the landscape.

My research has shown that two opposing, but complementary forces shaped the character of the material deposited at each of these site-types. The island-wide Minoan ritual complex, which was manifested not only at the extra-urban sacred spaces, but in urban and palatial settings as well, shaped the performance of ritual activity and the nature of votive dedication. At the same time, each site's specific context in local- and regional-scale socio-political landscapes shaped permutations of activity and material culture: categories of material culture that appeared at almost every site and thus were clearly an important indicator of ritual practice, nonetheless vary considerably with regard to their material, production technique, form, and style. The tension between these forces accounts for the distinctiveness and variability to be seen in the assemblages of these sanctuaries.

The theoretical frameworks for my research were presented in Chapter 2, including questions of socio-political complexity, the role of ritual in the changing

cultural landscape of Crete, and some challenges presented by the study of material culture from fully a prehistoric context — in particular, the creation of value, the embodiment of identity, and how networks of humans and objects constitute the material world. These frameworks set the stage for the discussions that followed.

The re-examination of the evidence presented in Chapter 3 showed that the caves did indeed constitute a sensory experience distinct from other ritual spaces on Minoan Crete, and that the material culture assemblages are distinctly different as well, being more closely linked to the elite strata of Neopalatial society. My re-analysis also brought into relief the observation that both the number of sanctuaries in use and their associated assemblages changed over time. Ritual activities at sacred caves intensified at the same time that peak sanctuaries declined in popularity, but their assemblages displayed stronger links to an elite who were (re)-defining their status in the re-established power structure that developed in the Neopalatial period.

The evidence from peak sanctuaries, reviewed in Chapter 4, illustrated that although there has been a long history of research on these sites, the tendency has been to treat them as a unified, cohesive phenomenon, which has muted differences in favor of arguments about broader issues. Looking more closely at the individual sites and their assemblages, I argued for a more site-specific approach to the Minoan ritual landscape. The votive anthropomorphic figurines were considered more closely, in order to illustrate that even this ubiquitous category of votive demonstrated local and regional influences.

Chapter 5 presented the unpublished pottery assemblage from the peak sanctuary at Vrysinas in west-central Crete as a detailed case study. This study illustrated that a close analysis of one category of material culture from one site can provide evidence for

how the influence of the unifying effect of the Minoan ritual complex intersects with the local context of an individual site. This analysis, which contributes to the still quite scant research that has been undertaken on pottery from peak sanctuaries and adds to the limited number of *detailed* studies of material culture from sites of this sort, placed the Vrysinas assemblage in comparison to assemblages from other extra-urban ritual spaces. Moreover, the comprehensive examination of the pottery revealed details of ritual activity (e.g., the relatively small number of participants), that have otherwise gone unnoticed.

Finally, the rural sanctuaries considered in Chapter 6 offered a counterpoint to the peak sanctuaries and sacred caves, specifically in terms of past research – where they have rarely been treated as a distinct category – and the insufficient attention paid to them in larger discussions of Minoan ritual. The iconographic scenes (mainly miniature representations on signet-rings and sealstones) were reviewed as the primary source of evidence for the nature of the ritual activities performed at open-air rural sanctuaries. The interpretations of these images were then set alongside the actual archaeological evidence – architecture, votive offerings, other material culture – that has survived at these rural sites and that can inform our understanding of ritual activity at them.

Looking at these three categories of ritual extra-urban space together offers a perspective on the complex networks of components in the Minoan ritual landscape: humans, objects, sites, and the interconnections between them. In addition, studying peak sanctuaries, sacred caves, and rural sanctuaries within a unified framework highlights some of the issues created by past scholarship that this research seeks to resolve. Peak sanctuaries, and to a lesser extent sacred caves, have been treated as uniform phenomena, and deployed as such in wider arguments about developments on

Minoan Crete; conversely, rural sanctuaries have rarely been treated as a coherent category, and the sites have therefore been considered as individual, unique expressions of Minoan ritual activity. The assemblages of peak sanctuaries and sacred caves are rarely discussed in detail, because they are viewed as “typical” of that class of site, whereas individual categories of material from rural sanctuaries often receive specialized treatment because they are viewed as unique.

The different categories of site presented in the context of the Minoan ritual complex and its place in the landscape illustrated the tension that was present when participants in the ritual activity chose to produce votive dedications and material culture in a specific style and form. In particular, the ceramic assemblage from Vrysinas exhibited characteristics (raw materials, style, and nuances in the form of the vessels) that suggested the local identities of the participants, while at the same time the type of vessels were similar to those found in other peak sanctuaries and ritual spaces across Crete.

Another form of tension that became clear through these chapters was the tension that existed in the scholarship on different categories of site. Certain types of ritual space (the best example being the peak sanctuaries) have long been used in scholarship in discussions of socio-political complexity and consequently have been treated as a unified, monolithic phenomenon. The primary goal of analysis of these sites was largely the identification and classification of similarities between sites, muting the subtle differences in the material culture assemblages that made each sanctuary unique. In contrast, the rural sanctuaries have rarely been treated as a category of ritual spaces, and therefore each site has received its own attention and has been discussed in terms of its

local landscape. My analysis has shown that the tension created by these disparate approaches has in the past prevented an holistic understanding of the ritual landscape, while accounting for evidence that suggests both unity and individualization between sites and categories of site provides a perspective on the role of these sites in the Minoan landscape.

In the chapters dealing with peak sanctuaries and sacred caves, it was necessary to illustrate and highlight the differentiation between individual sites in the face of the history of scholarship that grouped them together and glossed over subtle differences that were present and made them unique. In the final chapter on rural sanctuaries, by contrast, it was essential to relocate the sites and their assemblages back within a category of extra-urban ritual sites, and to highlight and underline their similarities not only with each other, but also within the larger ritual complex of Minoan ritual assemblages and landscape. It is a compromise between these two approaches that this study has advocated: the peak sanctuaries and sacred caves need to be teased apart as categories, and the specific material culture and use-spans of sites understood as differentiated, whereas the rural sanctuaries need to be considered in terms of their participation in a larger Minoan ritual complex.

Another variation on this theme of tension is the co-occurrence and change of hierarchical and heterarchical structures in the Proto- and Neopalatial periods. My analysis of the extra-urban ritual spaces supported, to some extent, an interpretation of a more vertically-organized hierarchically structured system of organization in Neopalatial times. This organization was evidenced by stronger links between the peak sanctuaries and sacred caves and a palatially-based elite, and individual rural sanctuaries (e.g.,

Anemospilia) demonstrated the importance of centers such as Knossos. In comparison, the Protopalatial period was characterized by a larger number peak sanctuaries with few links to a controlling elite, and material culture assemblages from most ritual spaces were comprised of less high-status objects. While these observations are generally true, my research has shown that each site has a unique use span, chronological trajectory, and attendant material culture assemblage (Kamares cave and Vrysinas are the best examples). In my opinion, the tension between hierarchy and heterarchy must be simultaneously considered when looking at socio-political organization, in the same way that the unifying and individualizing tendencies must be considered in an analysis of extra-urban ritual spaces. In both cases, neither tendency is exclusive, but it is the dynamic interaction between the two that creates the objects of analysis, from ceramic assemblages and votive dedications to administrative organization and modes of production and consumption.

I chose to divide the chapters of this dissertation according to categories of site in order to emphasize some of the tensions discussed above. As a result, each chapter required a lengthy introductory discussion on the history of research of that category of extra-urban ritual space. While informative, I would argue that this to some extent took away from the main arguments of each chapter, and created an overall analysis that was driven by the research of individual scholars, rather than a discussion and characterization by period or region of the island, which would have placed the emphasis on different aspects of my argument. This alternative structure would have allowed me to explore more directly the differences between the Proto- and Neopalatial periods, and

perhaps to look more closely at the distribution of material culture associated with ritual activity across the landscape.

Other aspects of my analysis to which I would like to have given more attention are the iconography of ritual activity, and the physical performance of ritual at the different types of site. Even just a small subset of the extant iconographic evidence provided a crucial perspective on the nature of ritual at rural sanctuaries (and presented evidence for types of activity that are not otherwise visible in the archaeological record). Further research and incorporation of ritual iconography would help to strengthen arguments about ritual space, performance, and activity. A more detailed analysis of the iconography would also help to place the people back into the picture of Minoan ritual action.

This dissertation, at least in part, has taken the shape that it has in part as a consequence of one of the main impediments to the fruitful study of research on Minoan extra-urban ritual spaces in general. The lack of publication of most of the sites and, more specifically, the difficulty of gaining access to unpublished material, prevented me from conducting analysis and acquiring data that otherwise would have made this a very different study. If more assemblages had been published, or if I had been given access to bodies of material (e.g., the figurines from sanctuaries), the result would have been more detailed analysis and less generalization. This is evident in the rich and rewarding results that were produced from the material to which I was granted access (i.e., the pottery assemblage from Vrysinas), which itself was just a sample of a much larger assemblage.

In the future, I believe that the types of approaches advocated in this study – that extra-urban ritual sites need to be studied simultaneously as components of a larger

Minoan ritual complex and with an eye toward each site's specific context in local- and regional-scale socio-political landscapes that shaped permutations of activity and material culture – can fruitfully be applied to more assemblages, and more categories of material. These detailed analyses will help us better understand the sites in their specific historical, geographic and socio-cultural contexts. Ironically, through an appreciation and recognition of the uniqueness of individual sites the Minoan ritual landscape can be understood as a whole. Once a more complete picture of Minoan religion is achieved, only then can ritual performance and activity be successfully brought to bear on larger issues of socio-political complexity.

Appendix I:

Catalogue of Sacred Caves

Amnissos, Pediada

(1)

Periods of Use: FN, EM, MM, LM, Geometric, Classical, Hellenistic, Roman, Byzantine

History of Exploration: Known to early archaeologists at the end of the 19th century (mentioned by Pashley, Halbherr, and Hazzidakis), Hazzidakis, in 1886, spent half a day making a trial pit in one corner of the cave. S. Marinatos originally systematically excavated Amnissos in 1929 and 1930, and also included some topographic work, which was focused on the vicinity of one stalagmite. In the 1950s, it was explored by Faure, and, in 1977, Rutkowski and Nowicki studied the cave, topographically mapping and surveying it. Most recently, Betancourt and N. Marinatos revisited and re-excavated the cave in 1992. During this work, they also restudied the material discovered by S. Marinatos in his earlier excavations.

Topography: Located at an altitude of 30m, it is extremely close to the coast and only 700 m. south of the well-known Minoan villa at Palaiochora, immediately outside of Heraklion. The cave itself is approximately 65 m. long, 24 m. wide, and about 2 to 3 m. high, with a roughly level floor. The interior of the cave has many prominent stalagmites, and some remains of architecture survive (see Betancourt and Marinatos 2000: 186-87).

Material Culture: The most significant category of find was the ceramic assemblage. The excavators have classified these into four main periods: (1) FN-EM II, (2) MM I-III, (3) LM I-III, and (4) Iron Age and later. The first group constitutes the most significant group of ceramics from the cave, and includes many forms (including Ayios Onouphrios ware) that have led scholars to interpret this phase of use as burial/funerary ritual. Beginning in the MM I period, and continuing through the LM III, the cave was used as a ritual space, with drinking and storage vessels as the most common ceramic forms. The majority of the ceramics come from the MM I-III period, with use tapering

off in the later periods. The architectural remains most probably date to this period. Other finds include jewelry (primarily from the period of funerary use of the cave) and clay lamps, which are from the later Classical periods of use.

Other Comments: Traditionally, Amnissos has been interpreted as the famed “Cave of Eileithyia”, mentioned in the Odyssey (XIX.188).

References: Pashley (1837): 265; Hazzidakis (1886): 339-42; Halbherr (1893): 112; Marinatos (1929): 95-109; (1930): 91-9; (1934b): 341; Bequignon (1929): 520; Karo (1930): 156; Pendlebury (1963): 56; Kirsten (1940): 27; Lindberg (1955): 171; Daux (1959): 740; Matz (1962): 26; Platakis (1965): 198-226; Spanakis (n.d.): 126; Gerard (1967): 31; Schäfer (1991): 111-16; Betancourt and Marinatos (2000): 179-236.

Aphendis Christou, Pediada

(2)

Periods of Use: MM, LM, Roman, Byzantine

History of Exploration: Surface explorations were conducted by Hazzidakis around 1934, and Pendlebury and Faure both explored the site in 1934 and 1958, respectively.

Topography: The cave is located in a place known as Plagia Papouras, in the southern part of the Papoura mountains, and is more a rock cavity than an official cave. The very shallow interior is covered by drapery stalagmites, limestone concretions, and fissures in the rock.

Material Culture: The very few finds consist of fragmentary libation vessels and “tymiatheria” (pouring vessels) from the MM III period, pottery from the LM I period, and Roman and Byzantine vessels. The area is currently a modern Greek Orthodox chapel.

Other Comments: The status of this site as a sacred cave is much debated. Faure believes that it began to be used ritually in the MM III period, although Alexiou (quoted by Tyree) denies any possibility of this exhibiting evidence for ritual activity beyond the modern Greek Orthodox. It is worth mentioning here because, like Liliano, there is a possibility that with further work, more definitive evidence may come to light.

References: Hazzidakis (1934): 76; Pendlebury *et al.* (1935/6): 80-81; Platon (1951): 145; Faure (1958a): 512; (1958b): 115; (1964b): 185; (1978): 631; Tyree (1974): 23; Rutkowski (1986): 68; Rutkowski and Nowicki (1996): 50.

Arkalochori, Monophatsion

(3)

Periods of Use: FN, EM, MM, LM, PG

History of Exploration: At the beginning of the 20th century, local inhabitants began to find potsherds on the surface at the mouth of the cave, and then they dug and found bronze blades of knives, beads, etc. As a result, they dynamited the entrance, thinking more treasure was inside. Hazzidakis (with Bambakas) first systematically excavated the cave in 1912, but the work was restricted to the central chamber. Finally, Platon and S. Marinatos excavated further in 1934 and 1935, although this work has still not yet been fully published.

Topography: The cave is located approximately 500 m. south-southeast of the modern day village of Arkalochori in central Crete, just below the summit of the hill *Prophitis Elias*, at an altitude of 400 m. The cave is long and narrow (c. 30 m. long and up to 10 m. wide), with much collapse of the ceiling that has occurred both in ancient and modern times (notably, during its excavation). Currently, the cave is closed due to its instability. The two main areas that produced cultural material were the central part of the cave and the northern corner.

Material Culture: The earliest finds, from the EM period, include pottery (Pyrgos, Vasiliki, Ayios Onouphriou, and Koumasa Wares) and a few obsidian tools. The excavators have suggested that it became used as a ritual space in the MM period, based on the finds from that period. The vast majority of finds consist of metal objects, including tools, bronze votive double axes, two types of swords, and a lump of gold; it has been reported that these objects came from the central area of the cave near a possible altar. By far the most interesting group of objects were the double axes inscribed with Hieroglyphic and Linear A scripts.

Other Comments: Although the cave produced many fantastic metal objects, its lack of any other category of common ritual object – figurines, stone vessels, etc. – has led some scholars to suggest that perhaps the cave was used as a metalsmithing workshop rather than as a ritual space (S. Marinatos 1961). Other scholars have suggested that perhaps this cave was sacred to a metalworking guild or priesthood (N. Marinatos 1996).

References: Hazzidakis (1912/13): 35-47; Marinatos (1934a): 251-4; (1934c): 547-49; (1935): 212-20; (1935b): 248-54; (1962): 87-94; Blegen (1935): 134-36; Evans (1935): 246-47; Spanakis (n.d.): 82-83; Pendlebury (1939): 47, 60, 76, 91, 123, 176, 232, 236; Guarducci (1940); Picard (1948): 102; Nilsson (1950): 58-61; Bouphidis (1953); Buchholz (1959): 33; Faure (1960): 189-96; (1964): 14; (1967): 133; Vermeule (1959): 5; Brice (1961): 24-25; Tyree (1974): 28, 216; Davaras (1976): 43; Rutkowski (1972): 40, 66, 139, 145, 149, 151, 190, 317; (1986): 10, 47, 54, 57-59, 64-68, 227; Zois (1973): 216, 232; Leekley and Noyes (1976): 74-75; Kanta (1980): 80; Godart and Olivier (1982): 142; Evely (1988): 92.

Chosto Nero, Temenos

(4)

Periods of Use: MM, LM, Classical, Hellenistic, Roman

History of Exploration: Taramelli was the first to explore and describe this cave in 1896, and Bosanquet then surveyed it in 1911. It was visited by both Pendlebury and Faure in 1937 and 1956, respectively. Marinatos was the first to systematically excavate the cave in 1950. Sakellarakis and Sakellarakis restudied the cave in the early 1990s, in conjunction with their survey and exploration of the Archanes region.

Topography: Located at an altitude of 780 m, the cave of *Chosto Nero* is situated in the southern part of the Jouktas range, on its west side, within walking distance of the Minoan settlement at *Archanes*. There is a small platform in front of the entrance to the cave, which is 2.7 by 1.8 m. The chamber inside, which is approximately 7 m. deep, opens onto 3 different openings: the one on the right-hand side leads to a corridor and a small chamber that contains a small pool and 3 pillars. The left-hand opening leads to two galleries that then rejoin and reveal another small chamber with three miniature pools. The central passage opens directly onto a central chamber.

Material Culture: Numerous terracotta figurines were discovered Taramelli in the left-hand chamber, near the three small pools. These figurines were dated by Faure to the MMIII period. Faure himself discovered numerous sherds of MM III, Hellenistic and Roman sherds, as well as Neopalatial animal figurines. One decorated male statuette, dated to the MM III period by Faure, has been alternatively dated to the LM I period by Tyree.

Other Comments: The small pools in the left-hand chamber are reminiscent of the pools of water in other Minoan sacred caves, such as the ones at Psychro, and is the focus of ritual activity.

References: Taramelli (1899): 356-7; Myers (1902/3): 379; Cook, I, 160; Pendlebury (1939): 346, 351; Marinatos (1950): 250; Faure (1958b): 143-45; (1964b): 175-76; Sakellarakis & Sakellarakis (1991): 136.

Idaean Cave, Mylopotamos

(5)

Periods of Use: FN, EM, MM, LM, SM, G

History of Exploration: Originally noted in 1591 by Casabona and then by Spratt in 1865, discoveries of local inhabitants and shepherds at the end of the 19th century prompted Fabricius, in 1884, to connect this cave with the mythical Cave of Zeus as described in the ancient sources. The first excavation of the cave was carried out by Halbherr in the following year (1885), which produced votives from the Geometric, Orientalizing and Archaic periods. Xanthoudides was the next to investigate the cave in 1916-17, who recovered primarily Roman material. At the same time, Hazzidakis also reported some small finds from the Idaean Cave, although it is unclear as to the method of their procurement. Faure conducted a small sondage in 1955, producing primarily Roman material, and Marinatos in the following year excavated and recovered further Geometric, Orientalizing, Hellenistic and Roman ceramics material. Platakis conducted speleological investigations in 1964. Most recently, new excavations were begun by Sakellarakis in 1983 which lasted throughout that decade.

Topography: The cave is located at an altitude of 1538 m., on the eastern slope of Psiloriti massif (Mt. Ida), and the northwest side of the upland plain of Nida. The entrance to the cave is a huge arch, 23 m wide by 9 m. wide, and there is a broad platform in front of the cave. There are an upper and lower parts to the cave: the lower part consists of an antechamber and two main chambers, and the upper part is comprised of three chambers. Many of the chambers have calcareous stalactites and stalagmites, although none contain pools of water.

Material Culture: Recent excavation have produced quantities of FN and EM sherds and obsidian and flint blades, cores, and debitage that suggest domestic habitation in these periods, but like many of other caves, Minoan ritual activity most likely began in the MM periods, although there was discovered a EM III sealstone by Sakellarakis that was mentioned briefly in a preliminary publication. MM finds consist of pottery, Barbotine cups and jugs, Kamares Ware, a groundstone mortar, and obsidian blades. There is an abundance of finds from the Neopalatial (LM) periods, including pottery (relief decorated vases), sealstones, bone needles, bronze human and animal figurines, stone libation tables and kernoi, a necklace of rock crystal beads, a bronze double axe, as well as evidence for animal sacrifice and ritual feasting (animal bones, ash, and carbon). The LM III material is also substantial: large, wheelmade anthropomorphic and zoomorphic figurines, cups, cult vases, seals, jewelry, and clay horns of consecration.

The post Bronze Age finds were the dominant categories until Sakellarakis' recent excavations, and among these are massive Archaic deposits consisting of bronzes, gold, ivory, anthropomorphic and zoomorphic figurines, shields, jewelry, pottery, and numerous imports from the around the Mediterranean. The Classical through Roman periods boast similar categories of finds, although none as abundant as the Archaic period material.

Other Comments: It is clear from both the history of excavation and the brief catalogue of finds presented here that the Idaean Cave was an extremely important ritual space, in the Minoan period but also in later periods. This has led to the traditional interpretation that this cave is the famed cave of Zeus on Crete. It will take a significant amount of time and

work to properly sort through the masses of material that have been recovered from the cave, most published only briefly in preliminary reports.

References: Fabricius (1885): 59-72; Halbherr (1888a): 690-766; Halbherr and Orsi (1888): 769ff.; Mariani (1895): 178; Furtwangler (1901): 47; Karo (1904): 123-24; Toutain (1911): 277-91; Faure (1956): 97-98; (1964): 109; Platon (1956b): 409-10; (1956a): 23; Marinatos (1956/7): 239ff.; Kerenyi (1961): 38-39; Platakis (1965b): 1-75; Kanta (1980): 203; Vasilakis (1983): 125-30; Sakellarakis (1982-3): 59; (1983-4): 65; (1984-5): 61; (1985-6): 91; (1986-7): 57-58; (1983): 93-96; (1984): 106-11; (1985): 78-83; (1986): 141-49; (1983): 415-500; (1982) 99; (1983) 91; (1985): 23; (1987): 239-63; (1988): 207-14; Matthäus (2000): 267-80.

Kamares, Pyrgiotissa

(6)

Periods of Use: FN, EM, MM, LM

History of Exploration: The earliest finds from Kamares Cave came to light (the fruits of looting) when Hazzidakis gave them to the Heraklion Museum at the end of the 19th century. Subsequently, in 1895, Myres and Mariani published the amazing polychrome vases that became known as the distinctive Kamares Ware. Taramelli visited the cave and conducted a few sondages in 1894, and the cave was further investigated by Dawkins and Laistner in 1913. Unfortunately, no further archaeological work has been conducted at the cave and most of it remains unexcavated.

Topography: Situated on the southern slope of Kamares range, approximately 150 m. below the eastern summit of Mt. Ida, at an altitude of 1524 m., Kamares Cave overlooks the western Mesara plain and the palace at Phaistos. The wide entrance to the cave (40 m x 18 m) is visible from Phaistos and most of the plain, although there is only a small platform outside the entrance. The cave itself consists of one main cavern that is full of light, as a result of the size of the entrance. There is a pool of water in the rear of the cavern, where the cave descends slightly.

Material Culture: The earliest finds from the cave are from FN and EM I periods, although these consist of only a few sherds from each (Taramelli noted Ayios Onouphrios Ware from the vicinity of the pool). The majority of the finds date to the MM periods (MM IB-II). Most of the pottery from this period (found primarily in the

back of the cave) is predominantly plain and coarse wares (jugs, jars, and pithoi). The diagnostics have been studied by Walberg, who has said that all of the “palatial styles” are present – the forms are bridge spouted jars, cups, Barbotine jugs and stemmed plates. The much less common LM pottery consists of jars, pithoi, plates, juglets and shallow bowls. There were very few non-ceramic objects found: iron spearheads, a strip of bronze, bone and stone tools, and a few ceramic zoomorphic figurines.

Other Comments: Although the cave is famous for its namesake pottery style, the range of finds are much less dazzling than those from other caves, for example the metal weaponry and jewelry found at the Idaean Cave and Psychro. However, the strong palatial links of the Kamares Ware pottery, and the limited range of forms, suggests that the cave was indeed used for ritual activity. It is likely that the nature of the assemblage is due, in part, to the earlier date of its most intense use. It should also be noted that alternative names for the cave are *Mavri*, *Mavri Spiliara*, or *Mavrospilio*, which should not be confused with the cave immediately in the environs of the palace of Knossos, which has produced no Minoan material.

References: Dawkins and Laistner (1912/13); Taramelli (1899): 291-4; (1901): 448; Mariani (1895): 333-42; Myres (1895): 351-56; Evans (1897): 350; (1921): 238; Pendlebury (1939): 35, 44, 92, 124, 147, 177, 234, 264; Nilsson (1950): 65-7, 73; Faure (1964): 178-83; (1965): 41; (1967): 133; (1985): 11-2; Rutkowski (1986): 54-5, 62; Zois (1973): 225-6; Tyree (1974): 38; Kanta (1980): 111-3; Walberg (1983): 96-7; 135; Betancourt (1983): 9.

Liliano, Pediada

(7)

Periods of Use: LM, Archaic, Roman

History of Exploration: The cave has never been properly located, and the only evidence of its existence, and possible ritual use, are chance finds that are now stored at the Heraklion Museum.

Topography: Located in the area of the modern village of Liliano, south of Kastelli, the cave has been located in the past, but that knowledge no longer exists. There are many caves in the region, and despite efforts of Kanta (who published the chance finds from the

Heraklion Museum) and others, modern scholars have not been able to securely identify its location.

Material Culture: The chance finds that are stored at the Heraklion Museum consist of some MM and LM clay figurines of bulls, and LM III pottery sherds. The finds from the Archaic period consist of a female anthropomorphic figurine and a bull figurine. There are also Roman lamps reported from the site.

Other Comments: Although there is little evidence for the cult activity of the cave, especially because it has never been located (let alone archaeologically excavated), the finds at Heraklion Museum suggest that it was a sacred cave in the Minoan period, and later. Hopefully, future work will locate and investigate the cave more fully.

References: Kanta (1971): 425-39; Tyree (1974): 23-4; Rutkowski (1986): 69; Rutkowski and Nowicki (1996): 62.

Mameloukou Trypa, Kydonia

(8)

Periods of Use: FN, EM, MM, LM

History of Exploration: The cave was first discovered and explored by Tsiphetakis in 1966, but Tsedakis excavated there during the years 1966-1969. According to Tyree, Tsedakis closed the cave after he finished work there.

Topography: This cave is situated in western Crete, not far from Chania, on the western slope of the Perivolia mountain. There are two entrances to the large cavern, one located higher than the other, and the interior is comprised of seven chambers. Most evidence for activity (habitation and ritual) seems to have come from close to the entrances.

Material Culture: Tsedakis discovered FN and EM pottery that suggested typical habitation in those periods. From the MM III-LM I periods, there is evidence for the beginning of cult activity consisting of a kernos and a clay bull figurine. There are also diagnostic sherds from the LM I period and numerous finds of pottery from the LM III

period, including a sherd inscribed with Linear B. Most scholars, however, have interpreted this later pottery as domestic.

Other Comments: The nature of the ritual finds from the MM III-LM I periods make this the only cave to produce evidence for ritual activity in the western part of Crete. This use does seem to be limited to this period, however, and the remainder of the finds, both earlier and later, suggest use as a habitation site.

References: Tsedakis (1967): 506; (1968): 417; (1969): 434; (1970): 469-70; Michaud (1970): 1156 - 61; Tyree (1974): 58-9; Rutkowski (1986): 70; Rutkowski and Nowicki (1996): 62.

Patsos, Amari

(9)

Periods of Use: LM, Geometric, Hellenistic and Roman

History of Exploration: The first finds from the cave/rock shelter at Patsos were recorded by Halbherr and Orsi in 1883-1886. The cave was later explored, but never officially excavated, by Faure in 1955, Platakis in 1962, and Hood in 1965.

Topography: The sacred cave is one of many rock shelters along the Patso gorge. The terrace and overhanging cliff combine to form a rock shelter that is 10 m. at its deepest and approximately 30 m. long. On the terrace directly in front of the cave is an enormous calcareous concretion, the only one, except for a small stalactite hanging from the center of the shelter.

Material Culture: The earliest finds from the cave date to the LM I period: sherds of pottery and a limestone offering receptacle attest to limited ritual activity in the period. The majority of finds come from the LM III period, including pottery, terracotta horns of consecration, a bronze dagger, and bronze anthropomorphic and zoomorphic figurines. Geometric period finds consist of a bronze male anthropomorphic figurine, an inscribed loomweight, and some ceramic zoomorphic figurines. Numerous Hellenistic and Roman lamps have been recovered, along with a Roman altar dedicated to Hermes Kranaios.

Other Comments: As with some other caves, the ritual activity in the Minoan periods is difficult to prove convincingly, and the ritual use of this cave in later periods may have influenced some interpretations. However, it is worth noting again that the cave has never been properly excavated and is currently a modern Greek Orthodox chapel dedicated to A. Antonios. These facts leave open the possibility that more conclusive evidence may yet exist.

References: Halbherr and Orsi (1888); Dunbabin (1947): 187; Hood and Warren (1966): 185-7, 195-6; Pendlebury (1939): 262, 346, 349; Nilsson (1950): 67, 460; Zervos (1956): 792, 801; Boardman (1961): 76-78; Faure (1964): 136-9; Davaras (1969): 632; Desborough (1972): 286; Tyree (1974): 45, 223; Kanta (1980): 204-5; Negbi (1980); Rutkowski (1986): 52, 59-60, 70.

Phaneromeni, Pediada

(10)

Periods of Use: LM, Geometric, Archaic, Hellenistic, Roman

History of Exploration: Marinatos excavated about a quarter of the cave, primarily near the entrance in 1937. Platakis excavated further portions of the cave in 1971.

Topography: The cave is situated on a steep and rocky slope, from which it gets its name, in the Lasithi Range at an altitude of 780 m. It is located immediately below the LM III refuge settlement *Gonies To Flechtron*, which lies on the summit of the hill. There is a narrow opening at the entrance, with no terrace on the exterior. The interior of the cave is narrow, and is comprised of two chambers. The first has many stalagmites, some of which have been described as resembling human figures. The second chamber, which is wider, has a pool located in it, similar to other sacred caves.

Material Culture: The earliest finds from this cave, produced by Marinatos and Platakis' excavations, date to the LM I period. These consist of pottery, bronze and gold votive double axes, bronze anthropomorphic (male) figurines, and three stone libation tables. Also, a famous seal depicting a chariot drawn by agrimi probably dates to this period. Later finds from the LM III period include pottery, bronze anthropomorphic (male) figurines, and part of a clay figurine. The Geometric, Hellenistic and Roman periods all

produced pottery, and with some Hellenistic and Roman lamps, and two Geometric bronze figurines.

Other Comments: Although the material evidence from the cave is later (beginning in the LM I period), the ritual nature of the finds securely identify this as a sacred space. The nature of the relationship with the LM IIIC settlement at the summit of the hill remains uncertain, although it is likely that inhabitants visited the cave.

References: Marinatos (1937): 222-23; Boardman (1961): 118; Faure (1964): 160; Rutkowski (1986): 134, 141; Tyree (1974): 11-13; Platakis (1984): 103.

Psychro, Lasithi

(11)

Periods of Use: FN, EM, MM, LM

History of Exploration: Halbherr and Hazzidakis were the first excavators of Psychro; in 1886 they explored the entrance to the cave. In 1896, Evans supervised test excavations in the upper part of the cave, after purchasing some looted objects (weapons and bronze figurines) in 1894. Demargne also excavated part of the upper chamber in the following year. In 1900, Hogarth conducted major explorations of both the upper and lower chambers. In the upper chamber, digging in the northwest and west bays, he discovered five separate strata that produced material ranging from FN through the Geometric period, as well as architectural remains of walls and a possible altar. In the lower chamber, the majority of the material was found in the pool and in crevices in the stalagmites.

Topography: The Psychro cave is located immediately above the Lasithi plateau, at an altitude of 1025 m., on the northwest side of the plain, and commands a view of the entire plateau. The upper part of the cave is very shallow, and had collapsed in antiquity. The lower chamber is reached by a steep passage down, where there are numerous stalagmites, stalactites, and a large pool of water.

Material Culture: Like many other caves, the earliest evidence from Psychro cave dates to the late FN and EM I periods, consisting of handmade, burnished “bucchero” sherds

and domesticated animal bones, which suggests that the cave was used as a habitation site in these periods. The evidence from Hogarth's excavation suggests that in the EM I-II periods the cave was used a burial site. The cave began to be used as a ritual space in the MM IA period, and most of this evidence is from the upper chamber of the cave: principally clay offerings (decorated cups, bowls, jugs and jars, miniature vessels, and male and female anthropomorphic figurines), but also some votive bronze double axes, daggers, and tweezers from the lower chamber could be Protopalatial, although the stratigraphy was not as well documented.

From the MM III-LM I (Neopalatial) period, there is an explosion of artifacts in both the upper and lower chambers: pottery (Floral and Marine style sherds, conical cups, and fruitstands), bronze artifacts (weaponry, jewelry, votive double axes, tools, anthropomorphic and zoomorphic figurines), stone offering tables (some inscribed), several engraved gems, lead and stone objects (primarily figurines), clay anthropomorphic and zoomorphic figurines, ash, bones of animals, and the architectural remains in the Upper Chamber appear to date to this period as well. As mentioned above, most of the finds in the Lower Chamber were discovered in vertical slits and crevices of the stalactites and in the pool itself.

Following this period of intense use, the cave is still used in the Postpalatial and post-Minoan periods, but much less frequently. From LM II-III, there is still a wide variety of finds and offerings, but not as many, and from the Protogeometric through Roman periods, the numbers of finds steadily trail off.

Other Comments: There is a tradition of associating this cave with the goddess Dikte. The very obvious spatial distinctions in the exterior and interior of the cave, as well as the accompanying finds, have led scholars to interpret spatial differentiation of function: the terrace and Upper Chamber were for public rituals of sacrifice, feasting, dancing, etc., whereas the Lower Chamber, with its pool, may have been used for libations, ritual bathing, etc.

References: F. Halbherr and P. Orsi (1888): 905ff.; Halbherr (1888b): 905-12; (1893): 3-4; Evans (1896): 452-53; (1897): 351-61; Hogarth (1899/1900): 94-116; (1910): 162ff.; Taramelli (1901); Bosanquet (1900): 171; Boyd-Dawkins (1902): 162-65; Demargne

(1902): 580-83; Toutain (1911): 277-91; Pendlebury (1936/37): 194-95; Guarducci (1941): 99-100; Lindberg (1955): 9; Pougliese Carratelli (1957): 165; Platakis (1973); Platon (1947): 637; Verbruggen (1985): 13ff.; Panagiotakis (1988); Davaras (1989b); Watrous (1996); Rutkowski and Nowicki (1996).

Skoteino, Pediada

(12)

Periods of Use: MM, LM, Geometric, Hellenistic, Roman

History of Exploration: This cave has been known since at least the 17th century (Basilicata mentions it in 1630), and finds are mentioned by Taramelli in 1901, but Evans conducted the first systematic excavations at the beginning of the 20th century. In 1933, Pendlebury opened trial pits. The cave was visited by Faure between 1953 and 1959 and then by Lindberg in 1955. Davaras excavated briefly in 1962, and speleological surveys were done by Platakis (1962), and with Ioannou (1969).

Topography: The cave lies on a plateau, at an altitude of 230 m., about three hours walk from Knossos. A natural depression (21-25 m. in diameter) leads to its high, arched entrance (25 m. wide by 8 m. high). The cave is long with successive chambers, each at a slightly lower level than the preceding one, each with little chambers and side extensions. The first chamber has extremely high ceilings, making the space cathedral-like; it is lit almost completely with sunlight, and has two large calcareous formations in the center. The second chamber is divided into several smaller sections, and has stalagmites, natural stone pillars, and calcareous concretions. The circularly-shaped third chamber also has stalagmites and other concretions. A long, narrow, straight shaft leads down to the fourth and lowest chamber, which has beautiful stalagmites, a large stalactite in the center of the chamber, and a seasonal pool of water.

Material Culture: Unlike many of the other caves, Skoteino cave produced no evidence for habitation or burial use in the FN or EM periods. The first evidence of use comes from the MM periods, which consists almost entirely of pottery: cups, jars, strainers, basins, and other vessels. The LM I period has produced decorated bowls, fruitstands, offerings vessels, and a kernos among the plainware ceramics, along with several bronze daggers, blades, and a knife point. Davaras discovered three bronze figurines during his

excavations, which he dated to the MM III-LM I period. Objects from the Geometric, Hellenistic and Roman periods have been mentioned, but never published.

Other Comments: Most scholars agree that this was one of the most important caves used for ritual purposes in the Minoan period, but unfortunately, the finds have never been fully published. Currently, however, a team is working on restudying the cave and that material, the publication of which should come out shortly.

References: Taramelli (1901): 442; Evans (1920): 163; Nilsson (1950); Lindberg (1955): 171ff.; Faure (1956): 96; (1958): 508-11; (1962): 45-46; (1964a): 208-10; (1969b): 199-200; Alexiou (1963): 312; Davaras (1969): 620-50; Ioannou (1970): 55ff.; Rutkowski (1986): 71; Tyree (1975): 20-23; Rutkowski and Nowiski (1996): 36-37.

Stravomyti, Temenos

(13)

Periods of Use: FN, EM, MM, LM, G, H, R

History of Exploration: The cave was first explored at the end of the 19th century by Mariani (1895) and Taramelli (1899), but Evans was the first to conduct archaeological excavations at the site in 1924. Marinatos subsequently excavated further trial trenches in 1949 and 1950.

Topography: The cave is located in the southern part of the Jouktas range, just below the modern church of Aphenidis Christos and approximately 300 m. from the Karnari spring, at an altitude of 400 m. There are five entrances to the cave, all of which are small and obscured by dense vegetation. The interior consists of upper and lower levels, which are connected by means of a steep shaft. A long, winding passage (40 m.) leads from the lower entrance to the lower chamber, whereas the upper chamber consists of two large chambers and is partially filled with rubble.

Material Culture: The earliest layers of the deposit contained FN and EM I (Pyrgos style) sherds along with animal bones, and Sapouna-Sakellarakis has interpreted the use of the cave as a burial place in the Neolithic and a refuge site in EM. From the MM-LM periods, there are pithoi and possibly other types of pottery, whereas the LM III period

produced one-handed bowls and fragments of large, decorated vases. From the later periods, there were found Geometric pottery and an iron knife, a lamp from the Hellenistic, and a few sherds from the Hellenistic and Roman periods. Further, a stone base was found at the entrance to the lower cave, which may have been the base for an altar or baetyl.

Other Comments: Not much conclusive evidence has been produced to testify to the ritual nature of the cave. Sapouna-Sakellarakis has re-studied the excavated material and interpreted its use as a ritual space from the MM III period onwards, possible through the Geometric period. The stone base and possible baetyl may provide the best tangential evidence for ritual activity, but these are not necessarily Minoan in date. However, the evidence is poorly published and awaits further study.

References: Marinatos *Praktika* (1949): 100-106; (1950a): 256; (1950): 532; Mariani (1895): 133-48; Taramelli (1899): 285-446; Evans (1928): 68-71; Pendlebury (1939): 56, 295; Faure (1964): 173-75; Sapouna-Sakellarakis (1990): 69, 85-86; Sakellarakis & Sakellarakis (1991): 136.

Tylissos, Malevyzion

(14)

Periods of Use: MM, LM

History of Exploration: Hazzidakis explored the cave at the end of the 19th and beginning of the 20th century. Faure later surveyed it in the 1960s, and Rutkowski and Nowicki further explored the cave in 1985. Never having been systematically excavated, the cave has not been well published.

Topography: Tylissos cave, or *Trapeza Tylissou*, lies on the northern slope of the Pyrgos mountain, approximately 150 m. below the summit. There is a wide, open area in front of the cave, which is itself a large single room with a small chamber off to one side. The main chamber is filled with stalagmites and other calcareous concretions, and in the center is a huge pillar mass with natural ledges. The side chamber has stalagmites supporting natural pillars that reach to the ceiling, and a small pool of water is trapped by a stalagmite and a natural ledge.

Material Culture: Tyliossos cave has been frequently explored but never excavated, and the chance and surface finds have never been well published. However, Hazzidakis mentions an LM I bronze male anthropomorphic figurine, and both he and Faure report scatters of MM III-LM I sherds. Rutkowski and Nowicki believe that other figurines exist from the site, which have never been reported.

Other Comments: Like many of the other un-excavated caves, the evidence for ritual activity at Tyliossos is questionable, but the figurine does strongly suggest that if excavations were conducted, more votive offerings and ritual paraphernalia might be found. Further, the interior of the cave, with its stalagmites and calcareous concretions, along with the small pool of water in the side chamber, strongly resembles other better known and attested Minoan sacred caves.

References: Hazzidakis (1934): 75-6; Pendlebury and Money-Coutts (1935/6): 13-100; Faure (1964): 176; (1978): 633; Tyree (1974): 37-38; Rutkowski (1986): 71; Rutkowski and Nowicki (1996): 38-39.

Appendix II: Catalogue of Peak Sanctuaries

Ambelos, Siteia

(1)

Periods of Use: MM

History of Exploration: The site has been largely damaged by local clandestine digging, and well as from the effects of natural erosion and site degradation. Davaras briefly excavated the site in 1971.

Topography: The site is located on a low, flat-topped hill immediately adjacent to the coast. The summit of the hill measures 130 x 210 m, and is scattered with large rocks and boulders. The area is scattered with sherds, dating from Minoan periods as well as later times. There are no visible traces of architecture, although Rutkowski (1988) suggests that the main temenos area was located in the central part of the summit, around a natural hollow.

Material Culture: Aside from the sherds that still remain on the surface, Davaras' brief excavations discovered fragmentary anthropomorphic and zoomorphic figurines, which have been loosely dated to MM.

Other Comments: The topography of the site is unique for peak sanctuaries: it is much lower in elevation than most, and lacks the rocky outcroppings with fissures that received the votive offerings of ritual participants. Despite this, it still commands a spectacular view of the coastal plain that extends from the base of the southern mountains to the coast. Furthermore, its location makes it extremely visible from the sea for miles, which supports claims that the peak sanctuaries were beacons (Soetens *et al.* 2004).

References: Davaras (1971b): 264-66; (1971c): 302; (1972b): 651; Papadakis (1983a): 137-38; Peatfield (1983): 274; (1987): 91; Rutkowski (1986): 96; (1988): 78; Rutkowski and Nowicki (1984): 180; Schlager 1991/2.

Atsipadhes, Mirabellou

(2)

Periods of Use: EMI-II(?), MM I-II

History of Exploration: Nowicki first identified the site in 1985 as a peak sanctuary based on the pottery and fragmentary votive figurines. Peatfield directed excavations at the site in the 1980s, which produced one of the most detailed spatial analyses of any peak sanctuary.

Topography: The site is located in west central Crete, south of Rethymnon, and is intervisible with S. Vorizi and Vrysinas, linking the valley network together. There are Upper and Lower Terraces, which are naturally occurring, and the excavators report no evidence for built structures at the site.

Material Culture: Peatfield's team excavated 80% of the site. On the Upper Terrace, they discovered huge numbers of water-worn pebbles, and larger ceramics vessels, including a rhyton. The Lower Terrace produced cups and shallow dishes, rhyta and stone offerings tables. The general character of the ceramic assemblage suggests to the excavator drinking, libations, and ritual meals, and he reports no evidence for ritual/sacrificial bonfires or cooking (interesting, then, that he reports evidence for ritual meals – where were they cooking the food?). The votive figurines excavated were predominantly animal, and primarily bovine. The anthropomorphic figurines produced data for the analysis of regional production traditions and studies of gesture (cf. Morris 1993 and Morris and Peatfield 2002).

Other Comments: Atsipadhes is considered the smallest and poorest of the peak sanctuaries known, and Peatfield has used it to demonstrate the argument that the origin of peak sanctuary ritual lay in a tradition of rural, popular religion.

References: Rutkowski and Nowicki (1985): 162; Peatfield (1992): 59-87; (1994): 90-95; Morris (1993): 41-66; (2001): 245-51; Morris and Peatfield (1995): 643-47; Rutkowski and Nowicki (1986): 162; Morris and Batten (2000): 373-82.

Etiani Kephala, Siteia
Periods of Use: MM I-II

(3)

History of Exploration: Davaras officially excavated the site in 1971, although at that time reported that it had already been extensively looted. Earlier, in 1959, figurines reportedly from the site were given to the Heraklion Museum, possibly by Kanakis.

Topography: Currently, the summit of the hill that the peak sanctuary is situated on has an extremely large power station placed there, but as Faure pointed out in 1965, the sanctuary is not located on the summit, but rather to the north(west), overlooking the plains of Armenoi and Chandras. The rocky area of the temenos has many large rocky outcroppings with jagged peaks and fissures, in which many votive offerings were found. On the small terraces below, Rutkowski mentions traces of terrace walls, although these are not clearly visible or identifiable.

Material Culture: Davaras' excavations reported few finds due to the extensive looting of the site, but sherds are still visible on the surface, and fragmentary anthropomorphic and zoomorphic figurines, as well as small horns of consecration, are reported from the site (and now housed at the Heraklion Museum). Traces of terrace walls (Rutkowski 1986) are the only possible remains of built structures at the site.

Other Comments: Etiani Kephala is very typical for a Protopalatial peak sanctuary – it has few traces of architecture remains, which were primarily terracing walls, and the primary ritual area consisted of a rocky summit with terraces below that seemed to be the area of ritual.

References: Platon (1959): 391; Faure (1965): 29; (1967): 121; Davaras (1971a): 200; (1971b): 264-6; (1971c): 302; (1972b): 652; (1972a): 47-48; Papadakis (1983a): 32; Peatfield (1983): 274; (1987): 91; Rutkowski (1986): 96; (1988): 78-79; Rutkowski & Nowicki (1984): 180.

History of Exploration: Alexiou excavated the site for most of the 1960s, uncovering a large extent of the sanctuary on the summit. Rutkowski subsequently visited the site, and currently, Kyriakidis is preparing the assemblages for publication.

Topography: The sanctuary lies at the summit of the mountain Philioremos (797 m), which is oblong and oriented east-west, and there is a modern Greek Orthodox chapel built on the eastern half of the summit. There are extensive architectural remains, which were uncovered by Alexiou's excavations in the 1960s. The rough stone walls of what appear to be three separate rooms are preserved in places up to two courses. There is also a terrace wall that survives slightly below the main architectural remains, and was probably associated with the ritual space. Rutkowski (1988) dates the beginning of the building to MM I, although this is a rather early date for architectural elaboration at any peak sanctuary.

Material Culture: Extensive sherds of both coarse and finewares were recovered by Alexiou's excavations, as well as large numbers of zoomorphic figurines (predominantly bovine – both large, hollow and smaller, solid versions) and fewer anthropomorphic figurines. Vessels were also discovered that appeared to have figurines attached to them, and possibly some models of rocky summits with figurines attached (these objects have close parallels in the assemblage from Vrysinas). Animal bones were also found, near what has been described as the altar in one of the rooms.

Other Comments: The assemblage from Alexiou's excavations is now being prepared for publication and will provide an excellent body of data for the entire range of objects the comprise a peak sanctuary assemblage.

References: Alexiou (1963b): 406; (1964): 282; (1965): 552; (1966): 322; (1967): 321; *Deltion* 18 (1963): 4; Faure (1967): 125-27; (1969): 184; Rutkowski (1984): 176-7; (1986): 96.

Jouktas, Temenos
Periods of Use: MM, LM

(5)

History of Exploration: Antiquarian traveler Buondelmonte first mentioned Jouktas in AD 1414, and many tourist/travelers have subsequently visited the site since. In 1837, Pashley published the first detailed account, followed by Evans' and Taramelli's descriptions in 1896 and 1899, respectively. Evans was then the first to carry out systematic excavation in 1909. Following that, finds were reported in 1952 and 1963, although the method of their discovery is unclear. In 1974, Karetsou began large-scale systematic excavations that continued for approximately a decade, during which they uncovered a large portion of the site, with substantial architecture. The finds from these excavations are still being studied and intermittently published.

Topography: The sanctuary is located at an altitude of 780 m on the eastern slope of the mountain, and the main temenos area is encompassed by walls approximately 3m thick, which are preserved to height of 2.50-3.60 m, and have a circumference of 735 m. The walls have not yet been dated with certainty; Evans dated them to MM I, whereas Alexiou dated them to LM III. A more conservative date, based on a fragmentary offering table uncovered by Karetsou near the walls suggests MM III-LM I. The walls, the most extensive of any peak sanctuary, seem to form a system of buildings with multiple rooms and terraces.

Material Culture: Jouktas has produced the largest and most extensive assemblage of any Minoan extra-urban sanctuary – including ceramics, votive dedications, ritual paraphernalia, and architectural remains. Among the things discovered at Jouktas are: a hoard of votive bronze double axes; bronze and lead votive figurines, and objects of gold; an abundance of clay votives, including male and female anthropomorphic figurines, animals and small objects (e.g., miniature horns of consecration), votive limbs, small clay balls; stone offering tables (some inscribed with Linear A); and sealstones and sealings. The ceramic assemblage consisted of vessels from all periods from EM II to LM IIIC that

ranged from miniatures to plain wares to Marine Style vessels to Vapheio cups, to tripod cooking pots, to pithoi and other storage vessels.

Other Comments: Jouktas is the most well-known and one of the best-studied peak sanctuaries on Crete. Its use also extends over the longest period, stretching from the EM to LM IIIC and then to later periods.

References: Savary (1788): 194; Pashley (1837): 210-19; Evans (1896): 513; (1921): 151-59; Buondelmonte (1897): 148ff.; Taramelli (1899): 350-55; Platon (1951): 144-45; Karetsou (1974): 228-39; (1975): 330-42; (1976): 408-18; (1977) 419-20; (1978) 232-58; (1979) 280-81; (1980): 337-63; (1981) 405-408; (1984) 111-15; (1985) 83-87; Evans (1921): 151-62; Platon (1951): 144-45; Karetsou *et al.* (1985); Kanta (1980): 34; Rutkowski (1986): 96-97; (1988): 81-82; Sapouna-Sakellarakis (1990): 69, 72-73.

Kalamaki, Sitias

(6)

Periods of Use: MM

History of Exploration: Davaras carried out just one season of excavation at the site, in 1971.

Topography: The site is located on hill, *Kephala*, in the extreme northeast part of Crete, near Vai. The sanctuary lies at the summit of the hill, and partially extends down of the eastern slope, which consists of large rocky outcroppings. At the northern end of the summit is a Roman period building that is comprised of four rooms with two corridors in between. The three or four terraces that extend down from the summit, although not architecturally elaborated, did produce Minoan votive offerings and sherds during the course of Davaras' excavations.

Material Culture: Davaras reports, preliminarily, that his excavations yielded typical MM period votive offerings, such as male and female anthropomorphic figurines.

Other Comments: Rutkowski (1988) suggests that the Roman period building was a military outpost, which would be appropriate based on the spectacular view that the site offers from its place on the promontory at the northeastern tip of the island.

References: Davaras (1972b): 651; (1972a): 46-47; Rutkowski (1984): 177; (1986): 97.

Karphi, Lasithi

(7)

Periods of Use: MM I-II, LM IIIC, SM, PG?

History of Exploration: Pendlebury excavated the sanctuary in 1938, along with the later LM III settlement that occupies the same summit. Although Pendlebury *et al.* designated the finds as coming from a peak sanctuary, Platon first dated the site as an MM peak sanctuary.

Topography: The sanctuary lies at the summit of the mountain (1143m), on a peak that rises up to the east of the saddle between the summits of *Karphi* and *Mikri Koprana*. The saddle is the location of the LM III C settlement site. The main temenos area consists of a flat summit and three terraces. Although there are traces of walls (originally attributed to a watchtower by the excavators), it is not clear that those walls are connected to the sanctuary.

Material Culture: Pendlebury's excavations uncovered a number of finds, deposited mostly in cracks and fissures in the rocky outcroppings of the summit and terraces. The finds included numerous male and female anthropomorphic and zoomorphic figurines, bronze weaponry (primarily blades), two lead fragments, clay and steatite spindlewhorls, and many miniature vessels. One fragmentary vessel was discovered that contained fragmentary clay figurines.

Other Comments: The main period of use for the sanctuary was MM I-II, although Peatfield notes that it was reused in LM III, probably by the inhabitants of the LM IIIC settlement. Today, it is difficult to identify the area of the sanctuary amidst the remains of the later settlement.

References: Pendlebury *et al.* (1937/8): 97-8; Platon (1951): 142-44; Alexiou (1958):192-95; Faure (1967):122; Watrous (1982): 13; Peatfield (1983): 274; (1987): 91; Rutkowski (1985): 355-57; (1986): 97; (1988): 82-83; Rutkowski & Nowicki (1984): 180-83; Nowicki (1987b).

Korphi tou Mare (Ziros), Siteia

(8)

Periods of Use: MM?

History of Exploration: Faure reports that a peak sanctuary existed on the summit of this mountain (based primarily on the reports of local villagers) but that it was destroyed during World War II when German forces built an observation post here.

Topography: The summit of the mountain rises to an altitude of 760 m, and the site is located approximately 4.5 km southeast of Ziros.

Material Culture: Faure based his identification of the site on reports of local villagers, which consisted of descriptions of clay votive figurines.

Other Comments: The site is still currently in a militarized zone, so no analysis is possible, although Peatfield and Rutkowski list it among certain or probable peak sanctuaries. Korphi tou Mare illustrates the problems of classification and categorization of sites, when the material remains have been destroyed, or are vaguely reported as a result of illicit looting.

References: Faure (1967): 128; Peatfield (1983): 274; (1987): 91; Rutkowski (1986): 97; (1988): 91.

Kophinas, Monophatsiou

(9)

Periods of Use: MM I-III, Hellenistic, Roman

History of Exploration: The site was discovered in 1955 by Platon. Both Alexiou and Davaras both subsequently conducted excavations, revealing extensive portions of the site.

Topography: The mountain of Kophinas is visible from a great distance, with its steep, rocky summit rising like a tower. However, the sanctuary is not located on the summit of the mountain, but rather on a rise approximately 250 m below that, at an altitude of 970 m. There are extensive architectural remains, including a wall that surrounds the site and has a bench running along the inside preserved in places.

Material Culture: The assemblage of anthropomorphic figurines exhibits a range of styles, forms, gestures, etc., which are almost unique in their variety among peak sanctuaries (Jouktas and Petsophas are other exceptions). These mostly fragmentary figurines range in size from very small to quite large, with a full range of gestures (hands together raised to chest, one arm upraised, hands on hips, etc.). Some of the figurines stood individually on ceramic bases, while others were organized on bases in groups (standing in rows and involved in communal activity, like the group of dancing worshippers). The zoomorphic figurines, which were also large in number and ranged greatly in size, are comprised mostly of bulls and other quadrupeds.

The pottery assemblage is also extensive. The range of forms varies from pithoi to conical cups. The most common forms are storage vessels, and only a few sherds preserve traces of painted decoration. Vessels associated with ritual activity were also discovered, such as rhyta in the form of bulls or a bull's head. Stone offering tables and other ritual paraphernalia were also recovered. The assemblage contains a few bronze objects including small votive knives, as well as a few beads of rock crystal.

The main period of use appears to have been the MM III period based on a preliminary analysis of the pottery. There is, however, evidence that the sanctuary was used from the beginning of the MM periods, and the architectural remains (along with the metal offerings), suggest use into at least the early LM periods. There was also re-use of the sanctuary, on a small scale, in the Hellenistic and Roman periods.

Other Comments: There was also a later Greek town located here or nearby, which has produced evidence including lamps, the figurine of a goddess, and coins from the Greek and Byzantine periods.

References: Alexiou (1963b): 310; (1964): 132; Faure (1963): 200-1, 501-2; (1967): 224-5; (1969): 181; Platon (1955): 567; (1957): 420; Platon and Davaras (1960): 526; Rutkowski (1986): 97; (1988): 83-4; Karetsou and Rethemniotakis (1991/3): 289-92.

Maza, Pediados

(11)

Periods of Use: MM

History of Exploration: In 1947, the sanctuary was excavated by Platon in association with the nearby Proto-Geometric settlement. Rutkowski reported difficulty subsequently re-locating the temenos.

Topography: Located on the summit of *Stou Maza* or *Korphi*, at an altitude of 457 m., the sanctuary lies on the border of a Proto-Geometric settlement. The entire summit is covered with walls, which Rutkowski tentatively identifies as fortification walls of the P-G settlement.

Material Culture: Anthropomorphic and zoomorphic figurines were reported by Platon from his original excavation, while new finds were reported in 1958 from subsequent investigations.

Other Comments: The dating of this sanctuary is tentative due to the lack of extensive excavation or publication of finds, but was used at least in the MM periods.

References: Faure (1967): 122; Platon (1947): 639; (1951): 96-160; (1958): 479; Rutkowski (1986): 97.

Modhi, Siteia

(12)

Periods of Use: MM, LM, Geometric, Classical

History of Exploration: Faure and Phygetakis first explored the site in 1961, including trial excavations that uncovered architectural remains and fragmentary figurines in an ashy deposit. Phygetakis conducted further excavations later that decade. Davaras then

excavated the site in 1971, along with some trenches on the lower eastern summit *Symmodi*, which produced no material.

Topography: The sanctuary, which lies on the summit of the mountain (alt. 539 m.), commands a spectacular view of the surrounding area, including a clear sight line over to Petsophas (only an hour and a half walk away). The site encompasses the rocky summit as well as three terraces that extend down along the eastern side of the mountain. Faure and Phygetakis' excavations revealed traces of architecture that they identified as the 'Priestess' House,' which Rutkowski later interpreted as a modern wall made out of ancient blocks. Rutkowski further suggested that the ancient architecture consisted of walls that created a 'sacred screen', some other type of hypaethral structure, or a eastward-facing sacred building.

Material Culture: The extensive finds reported by both Faure and Davaras include the typical anthropomorphic and zoomorphic figurines located in a layer of black ashy earth. The zoomorphic figurines were comprised of bulls, oxen, rams, and lambs. The pottery discovered included sherds from Minoan, Geometric and Classical periods.

Other Comments: The intervisibility between Modhi and Petsophas is extremely pronounced, and there is no evidence that any Minoan sanctuary sites lies between the two.

References: Faure (1962): 37-38; (1967): 118; Davaras (1972b) 651-52; (1972a): 47; (1980a): pl. I; Peatfield (1983): 274; (1987): 91; Papadakis (1983a): 61; Rutkowski (1985a): 356; (1986): 97; (1988): 84-85; Rutkowski & Nowicki (1984): 183; Tzedakis *et al.* (1990): 60-61.

Petsophas, Siteia

(13)

Periods of Use: MM I-LM I

History of Exploration: The sanctuary was first excavated by Myers in 1903, in association with the nearby site of Palaikastro. Davaras then revisited the site and

conducted further excavations in 1971 and 1976. Rutkowski published a monograph in 1991 that focused almost exclusively on the anthropomorphic figurines.

Topography: The sanctuary lies extremely close to the settlement at Palaikastro, on a promontory that is approximately 20 minute from the site. To the north and west of the site, the slopes drop away steeply (providing an excellent view down to Palaikastro). The site also affords views of the sea and over to the peak sanctuary at Traostalos. There are extensive architectural remains, which Rutkowski dated to two separate episodes in the Protopalatial and Neopalatial periods.

From the first phase of construction, traces of four main walls survive, which are constructed of large limestone blocks. This was probably the enclosure of a hypaethral construction. In places, the wall is 2 m thick, although it narrows towards the north. In this area, Rutkowski discusses the remains of a staircase, which leads him to suggest that the main entrance to sanctuary was along the northern escarpment.

The second phase of construction is more substantial. The building complex consists of five rooms, some of which were roofed, some open to the sky. Rutkowski suggests that in certain rooms, there were 'holy rocks' which were the foci of ritual activity. The walls of the rooms are made of large stones and natural rocks.

There are also three or four terraces that extend down from the sanctuary, all of which have produced related material. The entire area of the sanctuary is extensive; Rutkowski suggested that it extends almost 80 m. to a second, lower summit (he notes that Pyrgos also lies on two peaks). The second summit is extremely rocky, with many clefts in rocks that the Minoans favored for the deposition of votives.

Material Culture: The anthropomorphic figurines, both male and female, provide excellent evidence for Minoan dress and adornment, gesture, production techniques, and many of them preserve traces of paint (red, black, and even white). There are also a number of votive body parts, including numerous heads, and many of the limbs have holes for suspension. The zoomorphic figurines consist primarily of bulls, while other quadrupeds (sheep, rams, goats and pigs) are the next largest category. Other animals represented include birds, beetles, tortoises and weasels.

There are numerous fragmentary ceramic forms, although these have not been studied extensively; the numerous miniature vessels and small cups are notable. Other ritual paraphernalia discovered include miniature stone offerings tables, some with inscriptions.

Other Comments: While Petsophas is one of the best known and well studied peak sanctuaries, only the anthropomorphic figurines and stone offering tables have been published in detail. The major components of the assemblage, especially pottery, are rarely discussed.

References: Davaras (1972b) 652-53; (1976) 380-81; Myres (1902/3): 356-87; Dawkins (1905/6): 2-8; Evans (1921): 151; Platon (1951): 120-22; Davaras (1972a); (1980a): pl.II; (1980c); (1981a); Papadakis (1983a): 74-77; Peatfield (1983): 274; (1987): 91; Rutkowski (1985a): 353-55; (1986): 97; (1988): 85-86; Rutkowski & Nowicki (1985): 123-24; Tzedakis *et al.* (1989): fig. 3; (1990): 60-61, fig. 20; MacGillivray & Driessen (1990): 410-12.

Plagia (Ziros), Siteia
Periods of Use: MM I

(14)

History of Exploration: The site has been destroyed by modern construction, although before this Faure noted remains of two architectural structures and associated materials. Alexiou excavated there briefly in 1962 before the site was completely destroyed.

Topography: Approximately 1.7 km. southeast of the settlement at Ziros, this sanctuary lies on a peak at an altitude of 819 m. The two buildings reported by Faure, which were approximately 100 m. apart and open to the west, were surrounded by three discrete deposits of archaeological material.

Material Culture: In the hollow between the two structures, Faure reports bronze objects. Another deposit, against a small cliff, consisted of ashy earth, vessels and anthropomorphic and zoomorphic figurines. Local inhabitants reported to Faure finds of

a large (70 cm. high) clay figure, a bronze double axe with a Linear A inscription, clay models, and a snake vessel.

Other Comments: Unfortunately, the site is now destroyed and the reports of finds are largely unverifiable.

References: Alexiou (1954) 516; (1963b): 399, 406; Davaras (1963) 313; Faure (1965): 28; (1967): 119; (1969a): 176; (1972): 393; Peatfield (1983): 274; (1987): 91; Rutkowski (1986): 98; (1988): 86.

Prinias, Siteia

(15)

Periods of Use: MM I-III

History of Exploration: Faure discovered this sanctuary in 1965, and subsequently Davaras excavated there briefly in 1972, noting that the site has been robbed extensively.

Topography: The location of the sanctuary is known as *Gallou to Skopeli*, which is an imposing peak that rises up from the western side of the mountain, at an altitude of 801 m, slightly lower than the actual summit. The main temenos area is comprised of three natural terraces, with many large rocks. There is one particular large flat rock in the center of the highest platform terrace, which Faure suggests may have been an altar. Davaras' investigations support this assertion; he notes a funnel cut in it that may have been used to carry away blood from sacrifices.

Material Culture: On the highest terrace, many votive figurines (male and female anthropomorphic, as well as zoomorphic forms) were found among an ashy deposit, along with MM pottery. One notable find is a large dung beetle-shaped rhyton, which according to Davaras was one of the largest on Crete.

Other Comments: Based on his excavations Davaras believed that the sanctuary at Prinias was one of the most important on Crete. Until more material is published, however, it is difficult to support or refute this claim.

References: Davaras (1972a): 47; (1972b): 651; (1976): 271; Faure (1967): 118-9; Peatfield (1983): 274-275; (1987): 91; Papadakis (1983a): 49; Rutkowski (1986): 98; (1988): 86-87; Rutkowski & Nowicki (1984): 184.

Pyrgos, Maleviziou

(16)

Periods of Use: MM I-III, Archaic, Classical, Hellenistic

History of Exploration: Alexiou carried out excavations at the site for one season in 1963.

Topography: Rising to an altitude of 685 m, the sanctuary is situated on two peaks (*Korphi tou Pyrgou* and *Pera Korphi*) separated by a saddle; the entire area has produced material from multiple periods. On the lower, southern summit there are extensive architectural remains of a building that had two or three rooms. The walls of the building are made of large, rough rocks in some sections or small stones in others, and are in places preserved quite well. Rutkowski has suggested possible reconstruction of the sanctuary building, although it is unclear how to reconstruct the façade of the building and the structure on the northern side.

Extending down from the sanctuary are two terraces, which were demarcated using natural stones. It is likely that cult activity took place on these terraces, perhaps with the building as a backdrop.

Materials are scattered on the saddle and upper peak across the various irregular terraces, although there are no architectural remains from Minoan periods. On the summit of the higher peak are remains of walls of a shrine dating to the Archaic through Hellenistic periods (although the dates remain unclear).

Material Culture: The finds from this sanctuary consist of numerous sherds and anthropomorphic and zoomorphic figurines from the MM periods, although pottery and figurines (one potentially of Hyakinthos) from the later periods have been produced as well.

Other Comments: Based on its architectural elaboration, this extensive sanctuary was most likely used to the Neopalatial periods, although there are finds dated to the MM periods, as well.

References: Alexiou (1963b): 404-5; Faure (1963): 500-1; (1967): 125; Rutkowski and Nowicki (1984): 184; Rutkowski (1986): 98.

Spili Voritsi, Ayios Vasileios (17)

Periods of Use: MM

History of Exploration: Nowicki identified this site as a peak sanctuary in the 1980s, based on surface finds. No formal excavations have ever been conducted at the site.

Topography: The large, flat terrace that the sanctuary occupies is on the highest summit of the mountain of Voritsi, rising above steep rocky slopes below.

Material Culture: Nowicki identified the head of a votive figurine, as well as much MM pottery, including small cups.

Other Comments: Nowicki does not report any architecture, which influenced his identification of it as an MM sanctuary. Peatfield (1990) agrees with this classification.

References: Rutkowski (1988): 88; Rutkowski & Nowicki (1988): 184; Peatfield (1990): 199.

Thylakas, Mirabellou (18)

Periods of Use: MM, Geometric, Archaic

History of Exploration: The site was first reported in 1901 by Demargne, and in 1910 was excavated by Reinach (reportedly lasting only three hours), who at the time believed he was excavating a sanctuary used solely in the Geometric and Archaic periods. Faure's study of the finds from these early excavations reattributed figurines, votive limbs and kernoi to the MM periods. Sakellarakis re-examined the finds in 1970 and published his

findings, which dated figurines to MM periods based on comparanda from other peak sanctuaries. He further suggested that the structure that Reinach excavated may have also dated to those periods. Davaras further reported finds in 1972.

Topography: The sanctuary is located on a prominent peak (altitude 521 m.) in the southeast part of Mt. Thylakes, approximately 2 km southeast of the site of ancient *Lato*. The main temenos area is comprised of two terraces, one higher and one lower, with remains of walls discovered on the lower terrace. On the upper terrace, Reinach reported an altar, although Sakellarkais contested this identification based on the lack of associated finds.

Material Culture: Based on Sakellarakis' report, the MM votives were discovered by Reinach between temenos area and the 'altar.' These consist mainly of male and female anthropomorphic figurines, but also include animal figurines (primarily oxen, but also birds, dogs and pigs) and 'detached' human bodies. Davaras' 1972 findings include MM sherds and a miniature clay head. However, the majority of finds date to the Geometric and Archaic periods – reliefs and clay lamps dating between the 8th and 3rd centuries.

Other Comments: It seems most likely that the architectural remains should be dated to the later, post-Minoan periods of use, and Sakellarakis' claim that the area around the altar produced neither bones, sherds, nor votives suggests that little architectural elaboration existed here in the MM periods.

References: Davaras (1972b): 647-48; Reinach (1913): 278-300; Demargne (1929): 407-414; Faure (1967): 122; (1972): 393; Sakellarakis (1970): 252-256; Peatfield (1983): 274; (1987): 91; Rutkowski (1986): 98; (1988): 89; Rutkowski & Nowicki (1986a): 162.

Traostalos, Siteia

(19)

Periods of Use: MM I-LM I

History of Exploration: The site was first discovered, and briefly test excavated, by Faure in 1962. Davaras subsequently carried out excavations there in 1963 and 1964 and then

again in the 1978. In 1978, Papadakis reports on fragmentary clay figurines, fragments of a stone vessel, and loomweights that were turned in to the Ayios Nikolaos Museum by a local inhabitant of Zakros. In 1995, rescue excavations (due to illicit digging) were undertaken under the direction of Chryssoulaki.

Topography: At the location known as *Gallou Skopeli*, at the summit of *Traostalos*, the sanctuary lies at an altitude of 515 m., approximately an hour walk to the southeast of *Azokeramos*. Despite its relative low altitude, it has good intervisibility with many other peaks: *Ambelos*, *Ziros Plagia*, *Modhi*, *Kalalmaki* and *Petsophas*. The sanctuary lies on the summit, where there are traces of a two-room building and surrounding terraces. The building was originally dated to MM I-III, but subsequent excavations in 1978 places its origins in LM I, and suggests that it overlays MM material. The terraces have many rocky outcroppings, some with grooves and pits cut into them.

Material Culture: Deposited among the rocky clefts were the typical anthropomorphic (both male and female) and zoomorphic (typically oxen and sheep) figurines. Notably, Davaras' 1963 excavation discovered four small bronze figurines, primarily female, dating to the MM III period, as well as seven gold bands (Rutkowski suggests perhaps to adorn a dress). *Traostalos* has also produced the well-known figurine of a seated women with an extremely swollen leg, which has led many scholars to suggest a healing cult/deity worshipped here. Some votive limbs and a plaque with a graffito depicting the sole of a human foot have been used to support this argument.

Davaras reports three sherds with inscriptions (only one was confirmed as Linear A), and fragments of stone offering tables were discovered here as well.

Other Comments: This site offers the best evidence for healing worship practiced at a peak sanctuary, although votive limbs, some with holes for hanging, have been discovered at a number of other sanctuaries. The evidence from *Traostalos* suggests that healing was at least a part of peak sanctuary worship and ritual, or that perhaps this site in particular was known for its efficacy in healing.

References: Alexiou (1963b): 401-402; (1963c): 313; Davaras (1973): 595; (1976): 375; (1978) 392-93; (1980a); Faure (1962): 38; (1963a): 495-96; (1967): 116-18; (1969a): 181; Platon (1971): 37, 167; Papadakis (1978a): 63; Godart and Olivier (1982): 107; Peatfield (1983): 274; (1987): 91; Rutkowski (1986): 73, 81, 98; (1988): 89-90; Henriksson & Blomberg (1997): 99-114; Chryssoulaki (1999): 310-17; (2001): 57-68.

Vigla, Siteia

(20)

Periods of Use: MM

History of Exploration: Faure first noted a circular area containing ashy earth and bone fragments in 1967. Davaras excavated the site in 1972.

Topography: At an altitude of 711 m, the site is a relatively short walk from the Minoan settlement at *Epano Zakro*. The temenos area is located on two terraces: the upper (eastern) terrace and the lower (southern) terrace. On the summit is a small oval depression where the ashy deposit containing bones was spotted by Faure. Although there are architectural traces, these are a modern *mandra* (animal enclosure).

Material Culture: Deposited among the clefts in the rocks, particularly in the northern part of the summit, were many anthropomorphic and zoomorphic figurines. Excavations also produced rounded, smooth sea pebbles, which were clearly intentionally carried here for some purpose. Also reportedly discovered here were further anthropomorphic and zoomorphic figurines, along with remains of vessels and altars dated to the MM periods, which were the result of illicit digging at the site.

References: Davaras (1973): 592; (1974): 54; Faure (1967): 118; Peatfield (1983): 274; (1987): 91; Rutkowski (1986): 98; (1988): 90; Rutkowski & Nowicki (1984): 184.

Vrysinas, Rethymnou

(21)

Periods of Use: MM, LM, Archaic, Classical, Hellenistic, Roman

History of Exploration: The expansion of the modern chapel of *Ayia Pnema* in 1938 uncovered clay anthropomorphic and zoomorphic figurines, as well as two Classical

goddess statuettes. Faure studied the area in 1962 and published some of the finds, along with some astronomical observations that he took from the summit (calculations regarding the sunrise between the twin peaks of Mt. Ida as seen from the site). Davaras then excavated the site in 1972 and 1973, producing huge quantities of material. Currently, excavations are being carried out there under Tzachili by the University of Rethymnon.

Topography: On the top of the mountain that rises above the modern city of Rethymnon, approximately 2.5 km south of the village of *Roussospiti*, the sanctuary lies partially on the conical summit at an altitude of 858 m and the surrounding terraces, although most of the summit has been destroyed by modern building. Architectural remains have been discovered, although the modern building activity has destroyed a large portion of it. There also appears to be terrace walls on the eastern terrace.

Material Culture: The finds from Faure's excavations (which he originally, incorrectly, attributed to the LM III – Geometric periods) include anthropomorphic figurines (primarily female), human heads, animal figurines (bulls, sheep and other quadrupeds), individual horns, and fine and coarseware pottery. The majority of these were found in a rocky depression filled with an ashy deposit.

Davaras' excavations in the 1970s produced much more material, mostly from the slope to the east of the summit. The anthropomorphic figurines demonstrate a variety of gestures, details of age, clothing, jewelry and hairstyle. Also discovered were model parts of the human body, such as votive limbs and torsos. There were zoomorphic figurines as well, including several hundred bovines, goats, birds, and individual horns. Other votive paraphernalia includes bronze knives and two miniature double axes, clay horns of consecration, fragmentary stone altars/tables of offerings, one of which, made of green serpentine, has a Linear A inscription.

The pottery discovered at the site during Davaras' excavations is extensive. Over 100,000 sherds include fragments of barbotine ware, bridge-spouted jars, numerous conical cups, miniature vessels, and large numbers of coarsewares, including pithoi with various types of surface elaboration.

Other Comments: Vrysinas is one of the few peak sanctuaries that continues to be used in the Neopalatial period, evidenced by the bronze offerings, the architectural remains, and the pottery assemblage.

References: Alexiou (1963a): 315; (1963b) 401-402, 412; (1964b): 447; Faure (1963): 504-508; (1964): 97, 120; (1965): 49-51; (1967): 127; (1969a): 185-86; (1972): 397; Rutkowski (1972): 323; (1986): 80, 98; (1988): 90-91; Davaras (1973): 583-84; (1974a): 210-13; Davaras and Brice (1977); Hiller (1977): 172; Godart and Olivier (1982): 61; Peatfield (1983): 274; (1987): 91; (1990): 127; Tzachili (2001): 131; (2003): 327-31.

Xykephalo, Siteia

(22)

Periods of Use: MM

History of Exploration: Faure first identified the site as a peak sanctuary in 1963, based on the surface discovery of human figurine fragments. He then revisited the site in both 1965 and 1967, reporting further finds among an ashy, carbon-rich deposit. Davaras subsequently excavated the site in 1971.

Topography: The site lies at the summit of the mountain, at an altitude of 705 m, approximately 1.5 km from the site of *Katelonias*. The sanctuary consists of a rocky, oblong natural terrace at the summit, with slightly lower terraces surrounding it. There are no definite traces of architectural remains, although Faure reported rock-cut steps leading up to the sanctuary, and Rutkowski suggested that the terraces may have been altered to create depressions and a small terrace wall. There are also some large crevices in the rocky outcroppings surrounding the summit, which were probably the locations of the votive deposits. The slopes of southwestern, western, and northwestern sides of the summit are very steep and rocky.

Material Culture: Anthropomorphic and zoomorphic figurines were discovered, primarily among the crevices of the rocky outcroppings. MM pottery was also discovered, but no other ritual paraphernalia has been reported.

Other Comments: The topography of the site is very paradigmatic of peak sanctuaries, with the natural terraces, rocky outcroppings, and commanding view of the surrounding area. However, the associated assemblage is sparse, whether as a result of the plundering, or natural post-depositional processes, or that it was just a very small, rural peak sanctuary.

References: Davaras (1971b): 264-66; (1972b): 652; Faure (1963a): 496; (1965): 30; (1967): 119-21; Papadakis (1983a): 37; Peatfield (1983): 274; (1987): 91; Rutkowski (1986): 98; (1988): 71-98; Tzedakis *et al.* (1990): 60-61.

Appendix III: Catalogue of Rural Sanctuaries

Anemospilia, Temenous (1)
Periods of Use: EM, MM, LM

History of Exploration: First identified by Evans as a guardhouse, the walls still visible on the surface were relocated by E. Sakellarakis during a survey of Jouktas. Sakellarakis and Sakellarakis then excavated the site for one season in 1979. Due to the spectacular nature of the finds, the site has been well published and received attention in the public media.

Topography: Located at an altitude of 400 m., facing north approximately halfway up the Jouktas massif, the location affords spectacular views to Phourni and Archanes, Mt. Dikte in the east and Heraklion, Knossos and the sea to the north.

Material Culture: The buildings, which is tripartite in plan, consists of three long rooms facing north with a long east-west corridor on the northern side of the building. Inside the rooms were discovered at least 150 vessels (large pithoi [some with Linear A], jars, jugs, pestles and tripod cooking pots), animal bones, clay offering tables. The built-in furnishings include a masonry bench, a deep stone basin, and a stone base (probably for a statue). Also four skeletons were found in situ, who had been killed during the earthquake destruction of building.

Other Comments: The human skeletons have been the source of much attention because it is believed that a young male was about to be sacrificed by an older male priest, perhaps in an attempt to appease the gods and stop the imminent earthquake destruction.

References: Evans (1921-1935), I, 154, 499; Hiller (1983/4): 312-3; Starr (1984): 9-12; Walberg (1984); Prag *et al.* (1994); Sakellarakis (1994); Sakellarakis (1995); Sakellarakis (1995); Sakellarakis and Sakellarakis (1979): 347-92; (1991): 136-56; (1997): 269-311; Kyriakidis (2005): 54-6, 128-68.

(Building B) Jouktas, Temenous

(2)

Periods of Use: MM, LM

History of Exploration: The site was discovered in 1987 by A. Karetsou as part of the excavations at Jouktas and the survey of the Jouktas massif. It has only been preliminarily published along with preliminary reports of Jouktas.

Topography: The site is located on the Jouktas massif, at an altitude of 730 m. (the peak sanctuary is at 809 m.), close to the peak sanctuary at Jouktas, with Anemospilia and the settlement of Archanes nearby. The building itself consists of multiple rooms (some appearing to storage chambers), located around a central paved area.

Material Culture: The finds from Building B date primarily to the Middle Minoan periods (Karetsou suggests a date range from MM II – MM IIIB). A wide selection of pottery has been discovered (including a number of large storage vessels); as well as a variety of votive dedications, ranging from seal stones to zoomorphic figurines, to offerings tables that would have held cereals and other agricultural products.

Other Comments: Due to its proximity to the peak sanctuary at Jouktas, and the large number of storage, the site may be an auxiliary building attached to the peak sanctuary. As Kyriakidis (2005) points out, however, the associated paved courtyard may signify ritual activity at the site itself.

References: Karetsou (1988): 160-5; (1989): 147-52; (Forthcoming); Kyriakidis (2005): 22, 50, 51, 54, 56, 59, 82, 103, 105-6, 115, 123, 128-68.

Gazi, Maleviziou

(3)

Periods of Use: LM

History of Exploration: In 1935, the site was first discovered by local villagers, who revealed the remains of walls, and at the same time was partially destroyed during the process of modern construction. Marinatos conducted brief excavations there in 1936.

Topography: The site is located approximately 2 km southwest of the village of Baira, near the road to Krousonas. It is roughly 70 m. in altitude, and consists of a flat area which in modern times is occupied by an olive grove.

Material Culture: The building, which was partially destroyed, consisted of a rectangular room that may have had a wooden bench running along the walls. Six large figures (the so-called “Goddesses with Up-raised Arms”) were found placed along the edges of the room, which vessels nearby each. Other finds included clay offering tables, vessels known as “snake tubes”, stone vases, kylikes, and coarseware sherds. The finds suggest a late date for this shrine, either LM IIIB or IIIC.

Other Comments: Although this shrine is considerably later (in the Postpalatial period), it is included here because there are so few nature sanctuaries that have been excavated, studied or published.

References: Blegen (1936): 371; Marinatos (1937): 278-91; Alexiou (1958): 188-92; Faure (1967): 145; Gesell (1972); Gesell (1976): 247-9; Rutkowski (1988): 10.

Kato Syme, Viannou

(4)

Periods of Use: MM, LM, Iron Age

History of Exploration: Excavations were undertaken at this site from 1972 to 1984 by the Greek Archaeological Society, under the direction of A. Lebessi, originally focused on the Classical sanctuary of Hermes and Aphrodite. Together with P. Muhly, the excavations continue until the present, as the site is quite large and multi-phase.

Topography: The site is situated on the southern slopes of Mt. Dikte, around a spring that emerges from the side of the mountain. At an altitude of 1130 m, the site overlooks the southern coast of the island and the Libyan Sea. The area covers approximately 400-500 square meters.

Material Culture: The site was the location of an open-air sanctuary from the 1700 BCE through the 5th century BCE. From the MM III period, the building remains comprise a complex of approximately a dozen rooms, the walls of which are preserved up to 1 m in places. Within that complex, many clay vessels were discovered, along with bronze objects (figurines, votive double-axes) and clay figurines (including large wheel-made figurines from LM II). Also revealed were a great number of offering tables (approximately 400 [some with Linear A inscriptions]), and a number of seals. A great deal of material culture also survives from the Iron Age, most notably bronze plaques, figurines, weaponry, etc.

Other Comments: This stratigraphy of this site is extremely complicated, and it was only after a decade of excavation that the excavators realized that there was a significant Bronze Age sanctuary located underneath the Iron Age complex. Given the continuous use from MM through the Hellenistic period, it is almost impossible for a visitor to understand what walls and rooms belong to which period.

References: Lebessi (1972-1983) *Prakt*; (2002): 1-19; Lebessi and Muhly (1976): 2-13; (1987): 102-113; (1990): 315-36; (2003): 95-103.

Kavousi – Pachtitsani Agriada, Ierapetras (5)
Periods of Use: LM

History of Exploration: In 1950, during the course of modern agricultural digging, figurines were discovered. As a result, Alexiou excavated for a single season 1951. Unfortunately, part of the architectural remains were destroyed by the modern digging.

Topography: Situated near a stream, the site is located approximately 1 km to the east of Kavousi (altitude 200 m).

Material Culture: The building, built of large, roughly worked stones, encompasses an area of approximately 12 square meters, although this is based on projected reconstructions. There was a bench running along the interior wall, on which was

discovered the lower part of a clay statue on a stone base. Other finds include votive figurines.

Other Comments: Little has published from this site, but it appears that the building dates to the sub-Minoan period and the votives may be of even later date. The site remained in use until the Archaic period.

References: Alexiou (1956): 7-10; Faure (1967): 142; Drerup (1969): 8; Rutkowski (1986): 115; Rutkowski (1988b): 13-4.

Koumasa, Monophatsiou

(6)

Periods of Use: MM II, LM IIIB

History of Exploration: Xanthoudides conducted brief excavations at the site in 1906, in connection with his excavations of the nearby tombs, when he termed it a “Minoan sanctuary”. Rutkowski studied the topography of the site systematically, but not the finds. Recently, Georgoulaki has restudied the material from the site.

Topography: Located in the lower northern foothills of the Asterousia mountains at an altitude of 420 m., the site is located approximately 18 km. from the palace at Phaistos. Spread among three hills and the two saddles between, the area is rocky and sterile, but preserves some traces of architectural remains.

Material Culture: The material dates primarily to the Neopalatial period and later. The finds consist mostly of pottery, including cups and jars and jugs. Other material produced lamps, a stone bowl, a stone libation table, a clay stand, and the ‘snake tubes’ that are ritual objects.

Other Comments: The poorly contextualized material has kept the identification of the sanctuary tenuous; but the objects taken with the topography and architectural remains makes it a likely rural sanctuary.

References: Xanthoudides (1905): 215-16; (1906): 32; Dawkins (1907): 292-93; Evans (1935): 147; Pendlebury (1939): 103, 117; Platon (1951): 145; (1954): 457; Hood (1977): 158; Warren (1969): 62; Gesell (1985): 13-14; Rutkowski (1985): 97; (1989b): 48-50; Georgoulaki (1990): 5-23.

Kremasma, Mirabellou

(7)

Periods of Use: MM, LM, PG

History of Exploration: Finds by local residents were first reported in 1929, but the site was not investigated until 1948 when a group of French scholars visited here and Desenne published their observations, although no formal excavations were conducted. In 1963, Davaras reinvestigated the site and discovered Sub-Minoan and Proto-Geometric sherds and some fragmentary ceramic figurines.

Topography: An area covering approximately 20 square meters, the site is located on a terrace on the coast approximately 500 m. north of the ancient site of *Kato Sisi*.

Material Culture: The finds have never been published in detail, and are the product of surface investigations, so there is little contextual information. The votive dedications (anthropomorphic and zoomorphic figurines) suggest a Middle Minoan date, based on similarities with figurines from peak sanctuaries. The pottery evidence, in contrast, suggests use in later periods, at the end of the Bronze Age and early Iron Age.

Other Comments: It seems as though little remains of this site, due to modern military activity. Therefore, earlier reports are difficult to verify.

References: Desenne (1949): 307; Davaras (1963): 405; (1964): 422; Faure (1967): 142-43.

Piskokephalo, Sitas

(8)

Periods of Use: MM

History of Exploration: Evans first visited the site in 1894, when he noted sherds and the remains of walls. For the following 30-40 years, figurines from this location were purchased or casually collected and ended up on display in the Heraklion Museum. Marinatos conducted one season of excavation in 1931, and Platon subsequently excavated there in 1952, producing a great number of finds that have never been published.

Topography: The site, consisting of two terraces (the upper northern and lower southern), is located on the northeast slope of the *Katrinia* hill, at an altitude of approximately 60 m and roughly 40 m from the summit of the hill.

Material Culture: The most notable finds from this site are the clay figurines, primarily dating to MM II-III. There are male and female anthropomorphic figurines, and many zoomorphic figurines, among which are a number of beetle figurines. Also found were four clay models of ritual architecture (indexed by the horns of consecration that adorn the walls).

Other Comments: Although this site has been known for over a century, many finds are on display in the Heraklion Museum, and it is one of the few sites that authors all agree is a sacred enclosure, very little work has been done on the finds, and they remain to be published.

References: Mariani (1895): 175; Foster (1901/2): 273; Müller (1915): 12; Bossert (1921): 31; Marinatos in Karo (1932): 176; Pendlebury *et al.* (1932/3): 96; Evans (1935) IV: 524; Schachermeyr (1938): 474; Pendlebury (1939): 126; Hutchinson (1939/40): 43; Platon (1951): 124ff.; (1952): 631ff.; Faure (1967): 115; Rutkowski (1986): 115; Rutkowski (1988): 15-7; Kyriakidis (2005): 17, 22, 57, 56, 96, 128-68.

Rousses, Viannou
Periods of Use: MM, LM

(9)

History of Exploration: Platon conducted excavations there in 1957 and 1959.

Topography: Near the modern village of *Chondros*, at the foot of Kephala hill, where there is a LM III settlement, the site lies close to a seasonal stream.

Material Culture: A small building, 80 m. in area, consisting of five rooms has been excavated, the western part of which was destroyed by modern building. In one room a central pillar was discovered, along with the remains of horns of consecration and pithoi. In another room, 40 overturned kylikes were found. Additional finds include fragmentary stone offering tables, pottery sherds, and more pithoi.

Other Comments: The excavator originally dated the building to MM IIIB-LM IA but then redated it to just MM IIIB. Hood, Warren, and Cadogan have dated the building to LM IA and IB based on the ceramic evidence.

References: Platon (1957a): 331-2; (1957b): 145-47; (1959b): 197ff.; Hood *et al.* (1964): 82; Hood (1977): 69; Rutkowski (1988): 13, 139, 152, 239; Rutkowski (1988): 17.

Stous Athropolithous (Epano Zakro), Sitias

(10)

Periods of Use: EM, MM, LM

History of Exploration: Evans visited the site on three occasions, in 1894, 1896, and 1903, during which he discovered traces of architecture, coarseware sherds, and anthropomorphic and zoomorphic figurines (some bought from the villagers). Bosanquet, who first visited with Evans, investigated there briefly in 1903 as part of the excavations of Kato Zakro. Pendlebury was the first, in 1939, to classify the site as an MM I sanctuary, and Faure reclassified it as a “sanctuaire de campagne.”

Topography: The site lied approximately 1.5 km. southsoutheast of the modern village of Epano Zakro. The hill is composed of a rough conglomerate that has eroded to create the hollow rock shelters that gave the site its other name “*γπο epikremasmenon vrachon.*” There are multiple terraces, which are where the majority of the material culture was located. Although the hill is not very high (altitude 290 m), it is prominent enough above

the surrounding plains to afford good views to the peak sanctuaries at Traostalos and Vigla. The palace and Kato Zakro is not visible, due to the steep slope.

Material Culture: Evans reported and sketched traces of wall, which were no longer visible by Rutkowski's visits in the 1980s. The pottery sherds, which are mostly conical cups and pithos fragments, are datable primarily to MM III-LM I, whereas the figurines (anthropomorphic and zoomorphic) suggest MM I-II and MM III dates. Evans and Pendlebury both noted LM III sherds, and Rutkowski identified EM-MM I, MM III, LM IIIA and Geometric sherds scattered on the surface.

Other Comments: The site has not been extensively excavated, which has led certain scholars (Brown and Peatfield 1987) to suggest that this site, rather than a nature sanctuary, was perhaps part of a larger domestic or even urban complex.

References: Mariani (1895): 182; Hogarth (1900/1): 276; Bosanquet (1901/2): 276; Pendlebury *et al.* (1932/3): 99; Pendlebury (1939): 102; Platon (1951): 122; Faure (1967): 114; Rutkowski and Nowicki (1984): 184-5; Rutkowski (1986): 115; Brown and Peatfield (1987): 23-34; Rutkowski (1988): 10; Kyriakidis (2005): 22, 56, 128-68.

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