

SATURDAY 19 MARCH 2005

**CLEARING AWAY CONTEMPORARY CLUTTER AND ACCIDENTAL ASSOCIATIONS -
AN ATTEMPT TO RESURRECT EVANS'S OLD PALACE AT KNOSSOS**

MINOAN SEMINAR GIVEN BY COLIN MACDONALD



Much of Evans's Old Palace structure has been re-assigned to the New Palace period by a number of archaeologists over the last 20 years – myself included. Although in some instances it was correct to do so, a re-examination of architecture and deposits has convinced me that a number of features should be returned to their rightful place in the 20th-19th centuries BC. The justification for this *volte-face* lies in a growing awareness of the chronological validity of the 'mason's mark' series at Knossos as suggested by Evans and Hood, as well as in conclusions drawn from excavations in and next to the palace in 1987 and 1992-93. The account of these Middle Minoan deposits has just been submitted to the British School to be published as a Supplementary Volume with Carl Knappett as co-author and a number of others as contributors.

Secure dating evidence for boldly cut mason's marks on gypsum blocks comes from the Middle Minoan IB destruction deposit found by Sinclair Hood in 'Early Magazine A' in 1973; the mason's marks were discovered on *in situ* gypsum blocks when the rest of the deposit was cleared by me (under Hood's direction) in 1987. The elements that I would now date to the earlier Old Palace period (to MM IB and/or MM IIA, a matter to be discussed in the seminar) include the following: The West Façade gypsum orthostats; the old West façade of the Central Court including the rounded corner by the antechamber of the Room of the Throne; the gypsum piers of the West Magazines, the 'Protopalatial magazines' and the east wall of the Long Corridor; the north wall of the South Corridor; the 'Great Cutting' for the Domestic Quarter, the drainage system and perhaps the south terrace wall of the south lightwell of the

Queen's Megaron; parts of the north wall on the south side of the NW Lustral Area; some of the terrace walls on the east slope and the massive foundations leading east from the North Pillar Hall which may well have been the foundations of a NE stepped approach to complement the Stepped Portico on the SW.

In addition, a range of deposits – apart from that in Early Magazine A – can now be assigned to MM IB, some of which include clay sealings: deposits at the W ends of West Magazines I and II; Vat Room deposit (already clear from the work of Momigliano 1991 and Panagiotaki 1999); deposit beneath the Olive Press (mostly MM IB as well as the MM IIA bridge-spouted jars mentioned by MacGillivray 1997); Room of the Jars (Momigliano 2000); Monolithic Pillar Basement. There is now more evidence for administration in MM IB than was previously thought to be the case, coinciding with the foundation of the full palace structure.

Destruction deposits of the end of the Old Palace remain elusive. However, in contrast to recent suggestions by me that it should be contemporary with the destruction of Anemospelia in MM IIIA, I now think that a good case can be made for Middle Minoan IIB, broadly – if not precisely – contemporary with that at Phaistos.

In short, Evans's views, while in need of modification and amplification, were largely correct and MacGillivray's 1994 article (in *Knossos, A Labyrinth of History*) was closer to the truth than I had previously thought.

FRIDAY, 28 JANUARY 2005

***THE HIEROGLYPHIC ARCHIVE AT PETRAS. PROBLEMS ON THE
INTERPRETATION OF CONTEXTS***

E. HALLAGER & M. TSIPOPOULOU

The hieroglyphic archive at Petras excavated in 1996 and 1997 is very close to the final publication, but there are problems concerning the interpretation of the archaeological facts which we should appreciate would like to discuss with colleagues before the book is sent to press.

We will start with a presentation of what we think the finds may tell us about what happened in the hieroglyphic archive the day it was destroyed. We will present our ideas on what the archive looked like, how it was organized, how many people worked there, what kind of activities took place etc. We will then present the archaeological facts on which our ideas are based: the detailed plans of the archive and the immediate surrounding area and the distribution maps of all the finds - and then the problems will become obvious.

The northwestern corner of the MM II palatial building at Petras (where the archive belonged) was much disturbed by later building activities and essential parts of the outer walls are now completely missing. Can we thus be sure what the architecture looked like and can we be sure how the archive was approached? We know for a fact, that none of the items from the archive were found on the floor of the space where they were excavated for which reason we also take it as a fact that they had fallen from the storey above. From the preserved architecture at the ground level it is relatively easy to make a plausible reconstruction of the archive room at the upper storey, but is it equally plausible that the distribution of finds noted on the ground floor reflect a similar distribution on the upper floor? In other words how did the remains from the archive become deposited? We have pointers to make us believe that the actual find spots do reflect what happened upstairs, but can we be sure?

These are the main problems we want to present, while the actual finds such as hieroglyphic archival documents, pottery, bones, plaster and wall painting, obsidian and other small finds will only be touched upon very briefly.

FRIDAY 1 OCTOBER 2004

A NEW LATE MINOAN IIIC SHRINE AT HALASMENOS, IERAPETRA, EAST CRETE.

METAXIA TSIPOPOULOU

The Late Minoan IIIC site of Halasmenos is situated on a steep-sided hill of some 240m just to the south of the Ha gorge, near the village of Monastiraki, at the north end of the Ierapetra Isthmus. The investigations started in 1992, under the direction of the speaker and the late William Coulson. The settlement belongs to a dense pattern of occupation, known from sites excavated or located by survey. Its size suggests that it was of major importance to the area. The buildings have not suffered extensive damage through ploughing and reuse of construction materials. Consequently, this excellent state of preservation offers a unique opportunity for determining room function, construction techniques, and spatial relationships between buildings and streets.

The settlement consists of three separate areas, A, B and C. Excavation has been conducted in all three sectors for a total of almost 3000 m². In Sector B the single-storey plan is agglomerative. Sector A, which is divided by a road in two parts, has larger rooms and more complex plans. In A Lower the architecture comprises three *megara*, parallel to each other. On top of the largest one a rectangular *oikos* was built in the second half of the 8th century BC.

In Sector C, situated on a slightly lower plateau, a public shrine of the so called «goddess with up raised arms» was discovered and excavated. The data from the excavation will be presented, and an attempt will be made at integrating the shrine within the framework of the other similar finds in the area. Also the issue of the provenance of this type of cult place (Mycenaean or Minoan) will be addressed.

The shrine has a megaroid plan and is freestanding. In it more than 9 large female clay figures of the type conventionally called "goddess with up-raised arms" came to light. The group of cult vases included at least 8 more or less complete "snake-tubes". The shrine contained also 11 plaques or *pinakes* with double horns on the upper part. The amount of pottery in the building was limited, the most important vessels being three large pithoi.

In order to understand the position of the shrine of Halasmenos in the wider framework of the Mirabello-Ierapetra area, the reasons of the foundation of these settlements, at the beginning of Late Minoan IIIC or slightly later, should be explored. The presence of Gournia, which was a Late Minoan IIIB center, in the immediate vicinity of Halasmenos and of at least another three important settlements, namely Kavousi-Kastro and Vronda and Vassiliki-Kephala, two of them equipped with a shrine of the «goddess with up raised arms», is of particular importance. Furthermore, the issue of the origin of the large female idols found in these shrines is a contentious one. Alexiou in his old and still valid study suggested the most plausible explanation.

Halasmenos, with a well organized urban arrangement, and the hierarchical organization of its buildings, offers the possibility for a re-assessment of the character of the Late Minoan IIIC settlements, in the Aegean in general, and Crete in particular.

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THURSDAY 29 APRIL 2004

THE ICONOGRAPHIC PROGRAMME OF XESTE 3 AT AKROTIRI

ANDREAS VLACHOPOULOS

Thirty years after its initial excavation, the monumental Xeste 3 at Akroteri, Thera, provides a uniquely large amount of information regarding the art, society and ideology of the prehistoric Aegean in the form of its architectural idiom and the corpus of superbly preserved wall-paintings.

The conservation of hundreds of square metres of wall-paintings that decorated most rooms of the three-storey building continues and will need much more time before completion. However, restoration and study of many of the wall-

paintings – particularly those from the east sector of Xeste 3 – permit us to form a fairly clear idea of the very extensive and varied iconographic programme.

In the seminar, the wall-paintings restored over the last decade will be presented and an attempt will be made to identify precisely from which walls in each room they came. The first results of the on-going architectural and iconographic study of Xeste 3 will be submitted as a contribution to the attempt of modern research to decipher this building's iconographic programme which is so multifaceted, laden with symbolism and capable of interpretation on many different levels.

16 MARCH 2004

WHO SEES THE GODS AND WHY ON MINOAN GOLD RINGS

NANNO MARINATOS

(University of Illinois at Chicago)

There is a body of Minoan gold rings that depict divine epiphanies. The divinity arrives from the sky in rapid motion, and the epiphany is witnessed by one single person, a woman or a man.

Fr. Matz was the first to draw attention to the extraordinary character of Minoan epiphany. He connected it to the absence of cult images in Minoan palatial Crete and saw epiphany as a substitute. He also defined the experience as ecstatic. But is really the phenomenon so extraordinary or is it part of a larger Near Eastern tradition?

In order to understand the scenes, their syntax must first be analyzed in the tradition established by Ch. Sourvinou-Inwood and W.-D. Niemeier. This will be the first methodological tool of the analysis and it may be termed the *establishment of a vocabulary*. The second tool is the *establishment of a frame* through the use comparative religion. This frame will not be based on anthropological models constructed by 19th century scholars, such as Frazer, or models constructed by twentieth century theorists of culture. It will rather be images and texts from the Near East, namely from cultures that shared in the same broad tradition as Minoan Crete. Models cannot be avoided altogether in any kind of reasoning, but they need to be constantly checked by the evidence.

The final aim of the presentation is to define the social identity of the visionaries and their role in Minoan society. A few concluding remarks about the *purpose* of the imagery on the rings will be made.

Three major questions shall be asked, all of which concern the issue of social identity. First: What is the status of the persons who see the god? Second: is the location where the epiphany occurs of any significance? Third: Why are the scenes engraved on gold rings?