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SOMMARIO DEL VOLUME

MARIA ANASTASIADOU, <i>The Phaistos Disc as a genuine Minoan Artefact and its Place in the stylistic Milieu of Crete in the Protopalatial Period</i>	Pag.	13
ILARIA CALOI, <i>The Mesara Tholos Tomb Cemeteries in the Protopalatial Period: Comparing the funerary Complexes of Kamilari and Ayia Triada</i>	»	59
CHRISTINA PAPADAKI, <i>Δεξαμενές καθαρμών και αποθέτες: μορφολογικοί και λειτουργικοί(;) παραλληλισμοί</i>	»	73
FRITZ BLAKOLMER, <i>Il Buono, il Brutto, il Cattivo? Character, Symbolism and Hierarchy of Animals and Supernatural Creatures in Minoan and Mycenaean Iconography</i>	»	97
CLAIRE CAMBERLAIN, <i>Le passé, un outil de hiérarchisation sociale au premier âge du fer en Crète ? Le cas de la nécropole de la Knossos Medical Faculty</i>	»	185
<i>Scavi e materiali</i>	»	217
DESPOINA CHATZI-VALLANOU, <i>The Acropolis of Smari: Homeric Lyktos</i>	»	219
SIMONA TODARO, <i>Shaping tools and finished products from a long-term pottery production area at Phaistos. A combined approach to the Study of hand-forming Techniques in Early and Middle Minoan Crete</i>	»	273

THE MESARA *THOLOS* TOMB CEMETERIES IN THE PROTOPALATIAL PERIOD COMPARING THE FUNERARY COMPLEXES OF KAMILARI AND AYIA TRIADA*

In the Mesara plain in Southern Crete, few *tholos* tombs have been constructed during the Protopalatial period (ca. 19th-18th centuries BC). Despite the general assumption that the Protopalatial *tholos* tomb cemeteries continued to be used and displayed the same mortuary and ritual behaviours as attested in the late Prepalatial phases, and especially in the MM IA phase (ca. 20th century BC)¹, I will show in this paper that the material manifestations of these burial and cult places varied both chronologically and regionally. I will use first-hand evidence from the two funerary complexes of Kamilari and Ayia Triada, located near Phaistos in the Western Mesara. These necropoleis were in use during the Protopalatial period, and showed a strong increase in mortuary visibility precisely in MM IB, i.e., at the beginning of the period when most of the *tholos* tomb cemeteries began to decline.

Recent revisions of local pottery chronologies at settlements and funerary complexes of the Mesara plain have provided finer chronological divisions for the Protopalatial period that allow us to follow changes in shorter time spans² from the end of Prepalatial times (i.e., MM IA) through all the phases of the Protopalatial period, i.e., MM IB, MM IIA and MM IIB. As a part of these revisions, also the Protopalatial phases of the Kamilari cemetery, excavated by Doro Levi in 1959, have been reassessed³. I will first present the archaeological evidence of this cemetery, and then discuss the ritual behaviours attested in the Protopalatial period, highlighting their changes from the beginning to the end of the period. Then I will make comparisons with the nearby necropolis of Ayia Triada, attempting to define both the relationship between the two complexes – whether it was one of competition, integration or complementarity – and their correlation with the emerging Phaistos palace during the MM IB phase.

Kamilari in the Protopalatial period

My recent analysis of the MM IB-MM IIB pottery retrieved from the funerary complex of Kamilari allowed me to affirm that the cemetery was constructed in the MM IB phase⁴.

* This paper develops some ideas first presented at the 11th Cretological Congress held in Khania in September 2011. I would like to thank Filippo Carinci for the opportunity he gave me to study the Protopalatial phases of the Kamilari cemetery. I am also grateful to Simona Todaro and Aleydis Van de Moortel for their suggestions.

¹MURPHY 2011; LEGARRA HERRERO 2014, in part. pp. 157-159.

²For Phaistos, see CALOI 2009A,B; CALOI 2013, 2015B; see also TODARO 2013 for the end of the Prepalatial period. For Ayia Triada, see CARINCI 2003, 2004 and BAL-

DACCI 2013; for Kommos, see VAN DE MOORTELT 2006B.

³CALOI 2009B. Levi has only partially published the material from the Kamilari cemetery in LEVI 1962 and in LEVI 1976, pp. 703-741. The complete publication of the funerary complex of Kamilari is in preparation: L. Girella and myself, together with a good array of specialists, will present the material found in this necropolis in use without interruptions from MM IB to LM IIIA2, with a later reoccupation in the historical period.

⁴CALOI 2009B.

The main *tholos* was built with large, roughly cut and smoothed stone blocks, arranged in regular rows. This construction practice differs from that adopted in Prepalatial times, when most of *tholoi* were constructed with rubble and small undressed stones⁵, but is the same used to construct the *tholos* B of Ayia Triada in MM IB (see *infra*), thus suggesting that it may be typical of the Protopalatial period⁶. The nucleus of the tomb originally included the circular room and antechamber α , located outside the entrance on the eastern side, as well as the contiguous room β and the courtyard to the north, bounded in its northwestern part by a *peribolos* wall⁷. During the Protopalatial period the entrance to the necropolis was from the courtyard through antechamber α : this passage was in use from MM IB to the end of MM IIB and it was likely closed in MM III, when access to the cemetery moved to the east.

Of the MM IB phase only 17 diagnostic vases were recovered, and mainly pouring vessels⁸. The majority of MM IB pottery was found outside the *tholos*, in the courtyard. Most intact vases of this date were found in a specific area of the courtyard, between the passage to antechamber α and the *peribolos* wall⁹. The vases found here include mostly jugs.

In the MM IIA phase, the quantity and the distribution of the pottery suggest an increase in the use of the cemetery, with a rise in the quantities of drinking vessels and the appearance of a new pouring vessel, the bridge-spouted jar. Other new forms attested at Kamilari from MM IIA onwards are conical cups and fine carinated cups. Moreover, some MM IIA bridge-spouted jars display innovative decorations consisting of impressed and incised motifs, such as ridges and zig-zags¹⁰ reproducing decorations of metallic prototypes. The appearance at Kamilari of new forms with impressed or incised decorations, provided with peculiar handles imitating metalwork, seems to follow a trend attested at Phaistos in the same MM IIA phase¹¹.

At Kamilari, the strongest sign of changes both in mortuary and ritual practices occurred in the MM IIB phase¹² as testified by: 1) a major increase in the use of the cemetery, as attested by the construction of a new *tholos* tomb (Mylona Lakko), the conspicuous increase in pottery, and the expansion of the occupied areas towards the east; 2) new ossuaries – the construction of room δ to the south-east of the *tholos* and the transformation in function of room β – and new rituals in association with the relocation of the bones, without the use of *pitthoi* and *larnakes*; 3) the equipment of a slab altar in the courtyard. This evidence suggests that a spatial and functional differentiation occurred among the spaces outside the tomb, where now there were areas exclusively linked to mortuary feasting and others used mainly for non-funerary activities, likely connected to the worship of dead ancestors¹³.

At Kamilari a large amount of ceramic material datable to the MM IIB phase was found scattered in the courtyard. In comparison with the previous phases, the quantity of pottery, both intact and fragmentary, has strongly increased. Especially the rise in the number of cups deposits, which now double that of pouring vessels, attests to the performance of rituals that mostly involve the consumption of drinks. Already in the MM IB phase the

⁵This is the Prepalatial technique defined by S. Xanthoudides as «usual»: XANTHOUIDES 1924, p. 51. Sometimes, very large, unworked stones were used for the lowest row of the circular room.

⁶CALOI 2009B, pp. 234-235.

⁷CALOI 2011A, fig. 1.

⁸CALOI 2009B, pp. 42-50.

⁹CALOI 2015A.

¹⁰CALOI 2009B: nn. 859, 900, pls. 31, 33.

¹¹CALOI 2009A: pp. 420-427, figs. 14-16; see also CALOI 2013, p. 35.

¹²On the changes of the Kamilari necropolis in MM IIB, see CALOI 2015A.

¹³On the topic see CALOI 2011B.

Kamilari cemetery displayed marked differences in mortuary and ritual behaviour with other *tholos* tomb cemeteries of Southern Crete during the Prepalatial period, such as that of nearby Ayia Triada¹⁴ as well as Koumasa, Platanos, Moni Odighitria and Ayia Kyriaki¹⁵. First, differently from the majority of the late Prepalatial *tholos* tomb cemeteries¹⁶, at Protopalatial Kamilari no *larnakes* and *pitthoi* were used either for primary or for secondary depositions. Second, unlike most Prepalatial cemeteries (e.g. Koumasa and Platanos)¹⁷, the Kamilari cemetery has been provided with an open area for ritual activities since its foundation in MM IB. Third, the MM IB ceramic evidence at Kamilari indicates that the ritual activities performed in the open area were not large-scale ceremonies involving drink and food consumption, as attested in the aforementioned Prepalatial cemeteries (e.g. at Ayia Kyriaki, Lebena and Ayia Triada, where large amounts of conical cups have been found¹⁸), but rituals restricted to few people and limited to the northwestern part of the courtyard and antechamber *α*. From Kamilari no traces of food were retrieved (even if food remains were not always mentioned and/or collected by excavators in the 1950s) and the MM IB ceramic evidence does not include vessels or other implements associated with food and drink consumption, since no cooking pots, no bowls and only few drinking vessels have been attested. In contrast, most of the MM IB pottery consists of pouring vessels; from the high presence of jugs it may be inferred that in MM IB the ritual was mostly based on pouring actions¹⁹.

It is interesting to observe that the monumental MM IB *tholos* tomb at Kamilari was constructed on the basis of Prepalatial prototypes, but the mortuary and ritual behaviours practiced in it differed from those generally attested in *tholos* tombs cemeteries of the Late Prepalatial period (i.e., EM III-MM IA), which were used for large-scale communal ceremonies involving the consumption of food and, mainly, drink²⁰. Moreover, whereas the construction of the monumental Kamilari tomb must have involved much labour, the number of people buried in it appears to have been limited. In fact, although it is likely that some MM IB pottery was removed from inside the tomb during cleaning operations, the ceramic evidence from this phase is scant in the funerary chamber. This is in contrast with the large-scale use of the tomb during the successive Protopalatial and Early Neopalatial phases (i.e., MM II-MM III).

In the MM IIA phase the funerary evidence from Kamilari shows the introduction of shapes (i.e., bridge-spouted jars, conical cups and fine carinated cups) that imply the occurrence of new ritual forms that mostly were based on drink consumption. In the MM IIA and MM IIB phases, drinking vessels (e.g. conical cups and carinated cups) far outweigh pottery related to food consumption (e.g. deep and shallow bowls) suggesting that people were more involved in drinking than in eating. Moreover, the large number and variety of pouring vessels leads one to think that the ceremonial activities performed outside the *tholos* tomb involved mostly pouring actions.

¹⁴Especially CARINCI 2003.

¹⁵For Koumasa and Platanos see XANTHOUIDES 1924 and BRANIGAN 1998A; for Ayia Kyriaki see BLACKMAN-BRANIGAN 1982; for Moni Odighitria see VASILAKIS-BRANIGAN 2010.

¹⁶It is relevant to say that also the few Mesara *tholos* tomb cemeteries in use in the MM IB/MM II, such as Apesokari, Vorou and Portì, continued this Prepa-

latial tradition.

¹⁷LEGARRA HERRERO 2011.

¹⁸BRANIGAN 1993, pp. 77-78. In particular, for Lebena see ALEXIOU-WARREN 2004; for Ayia Triada in the MM IA phase, see CARINCI 2003, 2004.

¹⁹CALOI 2009B, pp. 42-50.

²⁰On the topic, see HAMILAKIS 1998, 2008.

It is noteworthy to observe that the new forms attested at Kamilari from the MM IIA phase onwards are not only Phaistian in style, but consist of the same ceremonial sets as those used by palatial elite/s in the communal areas of the palace, as testified by the numerous fills and/or dumps retrieved from the palatial area²¹. The adoption at Kamilari of the ceremonial sets used at the Phaistian palace may signify a social strategy of imitation of ritual performances carried out in the communal area of the palace. This emulation of Phaistian forms of consumption could reflect a new need of the Kamilari community to adopt palatial ceremonies in order to display its membership of the new palatial society. From the MM IIA phase onwards, it seems that Kamilari had become integrated in a new regional system, likely focused on Phaistos, which played a new role in legitimating that regional integration²², «which refers to the re-organisation of a region into a subordinate hinterland by a palatial centre»²³.

Ayia Triada in the Protopalatial period

Ayia Triada, together with Kamilari, is the only cemetery of the Mesara plain in which a new *tholos* tomb was constructed in the MM IB phase, i.e. *Tholos B*²⁴. Moreover, the circular room of the second *tholos* of Ayia Triada was built in the same manner as that of the contemporary Kamilari *tholos* (see *supra*).

Unlike most of the Mesara *tholos* tomb cemeteries, which went into decline in the MM IB phase²⁵, both the Ayia Triada and Kamilari cemeteries expanded at this time. At Ayia Triada, *Tholos A* together with some annexes located to the south known as *Camerette* continued to be used alongside the new *Tholos B*, although the use of *Tholos A* was more limited, having preserved only few MM IB vases (see *infra*). The *Camerette* were employed from the MM IA phase until the end of MM IB, not for burials but likely as pottery repositories. Unlike the main *tholos* of Kamilari, *Tholos B* of Ayia Triada is not the first, but the second tomb built in this cemetery. Many hypotheses can be proposed to explain the establishment of a second *tholos* in the same cemetery, but in my opinion it may signify a segmentation within the community that buried its dead at Ayia Triada. It seems plausible that *Tholos B* was founded in the MM IB phase by a new emerging group or family at a time when the *Tholos A* began to decline after its *akmé* in MM IA. As Carinci has pointed out²⁶, at Ayia Triada there was a strong change in funerary rituals from the MM IA phase to the MM IB phase. Indeed, MM IA is characterised by a massive use of *Tholos A* and of its annexes to the east, in combination with intense ceremonial activities involving drink and food consumption by many people. On the contrary, in the MM IB phase the funerary ritual seems to be limited to fewer people, and it did not involve food consumption. In fact, although the two *tholos* tombs were in use simultaneously, most of the MM IB pottery did not come from their respective circular funerary rooms, but from the *Camerette*, and it is represented by large amounts of jugs. If the MM IB establishment of the second tomb at Ayia Triada is connected with a new use of the *Camerette* as a focus of ritual activities, the new emerging group of the

²¹See, e.g., CALOI 2013, pp. 269-271 for the dump area found to the West of the West Court (*Piazzale I*) of the palace and its comparison with other Phaistian deposits.

²²On the new role of Phaistos in the Western Mesara plain from the MM IIA phase onwards, see CALOI 2015B; MILITELLO 2012.

²³SCHOEP-TOMKINS 2012, p. 23.

²⁴CULTRARO 2003; CARINCI 2003.

²⁵For most of cemeteries with *tholos* tombs the MM IB phase represents their last phase of use: see for example Lebena, Platanos, Koumasa: see CALOI 2011A with bibliography; see also the case of Moni Odighitria in VASILAKIS-BRANIGAN 2010. An exception is represented by the Apesokari necropolis: see FLOUDA 2011.

²⁶CARINCI 2003, pp. 109-113; CARINCI 2004, p. 29ff.

community has chosen to display its status through the exhibition of large amounts of highly elaborated pottery. For the numerous MM IB jugs found in the *Camerette* are mostly polychrome jugs with *barbotine* decoration. The focus on pouring actions could signify that the emphasis was on the group distributing the liquids, rather than on the number of the participants involved in the consumption of drink, as in the Prepalatial period.

From the evidence presented above, it is clear that in the MM IB phase the Ayia Triada *Tholoi* A and B were in use contemporaneously. They, however, did not contain many MM IB vases: from *Tholos* A only a few *barbotine* jugs and cups were retrieved²⁷, while inside *Tholos* B only few pottery fragments and two stone vases were found²⁸. Also the disposal area, identified behind *Tholos* B, has revealed only few MM IB vessels²⁹. On the contrary, the *Camerette* were found full of MM IB *barbotine* jugs, in all about 70 pieces³⁰.

In sum, as at Kamilari, at Ayia Triada a new *tholos* tomb was constructed in the MM IB phase, but it was little used in this phase. The *Tholos* B was not only scantily exploited as mortuary area, but also separated from the area of ritual activities, as the emphasis was on the ritual activities performed in the *Camerette*. Moreover, these rituals were no longer based on large-scale food and drink consumption as in Prepalatial times, but they were based on pouring actions as testified by the numerous *barbotine* jugs found in the *Camerette*.

It is also noteworthy to observe that in MM IB Ayia Triada, the increase in monumentality of the cemetery did not correspond to a growth in occupation of the settlement, which has revealed few structures dating to the MM IB phase³¹ and few MM IB ceramic deposits³². Nevertheless, it must be pointed out that during the MM IIB phase, when the settlement increased in size, previous buildings were destroyed and levelled away to make space for new constructions.

The MM IIA ceramic evidence from Ayia Triada is difficult to evaluate because of the poor publication of the necropolis. Nevertheless, it seems that in the MM IIA phase the Ayia Triada cemetery began its decline. Banti's and Cultraro's publications indicate that both *Tholoi* A and B contained few vases that could be dated to MM IIA or more generally to early MM II³³, whereas the *Camerette* have not provided any MM II vessels at all.

In the MM IIB phase, the cemetery of Ayia Triada seems not to have been used, except for few vessels that are considered to be the last depositions inside *Tholos* A. They consist of five pouring and storage vessels that Cultraro dated to MM IIA³⁴, but which may actually date to final MM IIB as they find good correlations with vases retrieved from the destructions levels of the Phaistos palace³⁵. If in the MM IIA phase the Ayia Triada necropolis was scantily used and the last deposition in *Tholos* A dates to the end of MM IIB, this could signify that the latter represents a final reoccupation of *Tholos* A, likely to be interpreted as a cult action. It is conceivable that during the MM IIB phase the funerary complex went out of use as a burial place in order to change its function, as demonstrated by the transforma-

²⁷BANTI 1931, pp. 228-230, nn. 313-317; CULTRARO 2003, pp. 316-318.

²⁸PARIBENI 1904, p. 685, nn. 1-3.

²⁹PARIBENI 1904, pp. 694-999, fig. 9; pl. XLII, 2.

³⁰CULTRARO 2000.

³¹LA ROSA 1979-1980.

³²CARINCI 2003.

³³From *Tholos* A there is only a *barbotine* jug that could be dated to MM IIA (CULTRARO 2003, p. 317, fig. 17), whereas from the disposal area behind *Tholos* B, three vessels can be dated to MM II (PARIBENI 1904, pl. XLII, 4; pl. XLIII, 1-2).

³⁴CULTRARO 2003, p. 317, figs. 17-19.

³⁵CALOI 2009b, p. 309.

tions occurring in the area during the MM IIB phase. Indeed, as argued by La Rosa in 2001³⁶, a new function of the area seems to be associated with a paved rectangular space constructed to the west of the *Camerette*. In the centre of the paved space there was a rectangular area with small hollows, which may have functioned as an offering table. This area has been interpreted by the excavator as a sacred and public space, more connected with an institutionalisation of a ritual³⁷ than with a «mnemoscape» devoted to the worship of ancestors buried in the disused *Tholoi* A and B, as I have already suggested elsewhere³⁸.

It is interesting to observe that in the MM IIB phase, when at Ayia Triada saw a strong growth in settlement, the nearby cemetery had gone out of use. Since in the MM IIA phase neither the settlement nor the funerary area of Ayia Triada appear not to have been intensely occupied³⁹, it may be inferred that a new group occupied the settlement in the successive MM IIB phase, transforming the funerary area into a sacred place and choosing another area as burial place. The best candidate for this new necropolis of Ayia Triada would have been the nearby cemetery of Kamilari (only 2 km far), where, as already observed, a new *tholos* tomb was built exactly in MM IIB (see *infra*).

Discussing the relationship between Kamilari and Ayia Triada throughout the Protopalatial period: dynamics of competition, integration or complementarity?

In the MM IB phase a strong investment is visible in the Western Mesara, as testified by the emergence of the Phaistos palace, the major expansion of the settlement of Kommos and the first use of the Kamares Cave. It is also indicated by the increase in funerary monumentality both at Kamilari and at Ayia Triada⁴⁰.

Following recent studies on the dynamics of competition and integration among communities living in the same areas⁴¹, I wonder what kind of relationship existed between the two cemeteries of Kamilari and Ayia Triada, which are located less than 2 km apart and are the only known sites of the Mesara plain where new *tholos* tombs were constructed in the MM IB phase. The obvious question is whether there are signs of competition among the communities using the two cemeteries or whether they were perfectly integrated.

If we compare the trajectory of the two cemeteries in the Protopalatial period, we see that in the MM IB phase they display a similar pattern, whereas in the MM II phase, and mostly in MM IIB, they show different but complementary patterns (*fig. 1*).

	Kamilari cemetery	Ayia Triada cemetery
MM IB	Foundation of the funerary complex, with the main <i>tholos</i> tomb (<i>Tholos</i> A)	Construction of the second <i>tholos</i> tomb (<i>Tholos</i> B)
MM IIA	Increase in use of the funerary complex	Decline of the funerary complex
MM IIB	Expansion of the funerary complex (new <i>tholos</i> tomb, new ossuaries, differentiation of spaces)	Out of use of the funerary complex as burial place (transformation into a cult place?)

FIG. 1 – TABLE DISPLAYING THE EVOLUTION OF THE KAMILARI CEMETERY AND OF THE AYIA TRIADA CEMETERY DURING THE DISCRETE PHASES OF THE PROTOPALATIAL PERIOD.

³⁶LA ROSA 2001, p. 225, pl. LXXIVe-f.

³⁷LA ROSA 2001, p. 225.

³⁸CALOI 2015B, p. 152.

³⁹CARINCI 2003.

⁴⁰On the change of the Western Mesara plain in the MM IB phase, see CALOI 2015B with bibliography.

⁴¹On the topic, see SBONIAS 1999, 2012; LEGARRA-HERRERO 2014, in part pp. 140-160.

In the MM IB phase, the cemeteries of Ayia Triada and Kamilari display a similar pattern with respect to the following:

- 1) the investment of much labour in the construction of a monumental *tholos* tomb, which, however is little used and is not the focus of ritual activities;
- 2) the focus of ritual activities is located outside the *tholos* tomb, respectively in the courtyard at Kamilari and near the *Camerette* at Ayia Triada;
- 3) the ritual activities do not involve the consumption of food or drink (no remains of food, no cooking pots, no shallow bowls and the near total absence of drinking vessels);
- 4) the preponderance of jugs show that the focus of ritual activities was on pouring actions.

The two necropoleis were only 2 km far, were built using the same construction techniques, adopted the same pottery shapes (mainly jugs) and displayed the same ritual behaviours. These similar patterns do not show clear signs of competition, but rather suggest to think of integration among communities burying in two close necropoleis and sharing the same material culture and ritual behaviours. This hypothesis is also supported by the fact that other MM IB sites of the Mesara plain display the ritual behaviours observed at Kamilari and Ayia Triada. Two interesting parallels are offered by the cemetery of Koumasa, and by the mountain sanctuary of the Kamares Cave. At Koumasa the few MM IB-MM IIA vessels found outside the tombs, in area AB, include only pouring vessels, which are mostly elaborate *barbotine* jugs⁴². They can be interpreted as evidence of non-funerary rituals occurring after the last use of the cemetery for burials, i.e., in the MM IA phase⁴³. At the Kamares Cave, among the Protopalatial pottery, pouring vessels far outnumber drinking vessels⁴⁴. As already pointed out by some scholars⁴⁵, it is likely that in the Protopalatial Mesara, ritual performances, both at funerary and non-funerary occasions, were focused on pouring rather than drinking. On the basis of these parallels among funerary and non-funerary sites, I wonder whether the two complexes of Kamilari and Ayia Triada – the only cemeteries in the Mesara yielding the *ex-novo* construction of a *tholos* in the Protopalatial period – in the MM IB phase were mostly used as foci for ritual activities rather than as funerary complexes, since the funerary evidence from both necropoleis is scant, as testified by the small amount of vases retrieved from inside the respective funerary chambers. One could argue that the paucity of MM IB pottery in the *tholos* chambers is due to the fact that the two *tholoi* were built late in that phase, so not many burials were made in that phase. Nevertheless, the possibility cannot be avoided that in the MM IB phase the two monumental *tholos* tombs respectively built in the two cemeteries were intended to be symbolic centres of gravity for the communities rather than proper burial places.

Looking at this pattern of interactions, can we speak about integration within a larger regional entity? And what about the role of Phaistos, where a palatial building emerged in the MM IB phase?

From the ceramic evidence, the aforementioned ritual behaviours seem not to be attested in the Phaistos palace, which displays a different pattern in MM IB. Among the

⁴²XANTHOUIDES 1924, pl. LXI; see also CALOI 2011 A, p. 102.

⁴³XANTHOUIDES 1924, pp. 41-43; see also SOLES 1992.

⁴⁴VAN DE MOORTELE 2006A, pp. 82-83.

⁴⁵CULTRARO 2000; VAN DE MOORTELE 2006A.

Phaistian ceramic deposits dating to MM IB the best attested shape is the conical cup, found often in association with jugs, but mostly with globular open-spouted jars. In particular, the latter pouring vessel appeared at Phaistos in the MM IB phase, but it is less attested outside the palatial core and in the surrounding areas⁴⁶. In the settlement quarters near the Phaistos palace (i.e., Ayia Photeini, Chalara) and in the settlement of Ayia Triada, the globular open-spouted jar is barely present, whereas at Kommos it is attested together with the elongated conical shape⁴⁷. The only site where the globular open-spouted jar is largely present with many specimens in MM IB is the Kamares Cave⁴⁸, making it plausible that the relationship of Phaistos with the Kamares Cave was quite strong already in MM IB⁴⁹. There is, however, no lack of ambiguities because, on the one hand, the ceramic evidence speaks in favour of a strong and exclusive connection between the cave and Phaistos, on the other hand, the ritual activities performed there do not seem to imitate the palatial ones (see *supra*).

Although in the area surrounding Phaistos, the sharing of the same Phaistian ceramic tradition is strong, from the ceramic evidence it seems clear that ritual activities attested in the MM IB palace of Phaistos were different from those attested outside. We have already observed that at Ayia Triada and Kamilari, in the MM IB phase a new type of ritual behaviour appeared, not in line either with the funerary activities of the previous period (i.e. MM IA) or with the communal ceremonies performed in the Phaistos palace, which were mostly based on the consumption of drinks, involving large quantities of people using mostly globular open-spouted jars and conical cups.

This picture could lead to two opposite interpretations. One could argue that the large scale drinking ceremonies at the palace of Phaistos were instituted in the MM IB phase for representatives of the communities in the region, as a way of integrating them into the palatial system; on the contrary, one could suggest that in the MM IB phase the palace of Phaistos was not the centre of a subordinate hinterland, as it would be from the MM IIA phase onwards, because its influence on the material culture of the surrounding territory appears to be still limited⁵⁰. In this perspective, it appears that the communities investing in Kamilari and Ayia Triada were somehow more independent from the Phaistian community in comparison, for example, with nearby Kommos, which displays the same material culture as Phaistos from the time of its foundation onward⁵¹.

As already exposed in another paper⁵², in MM II the pattern changes not only at Phaistos, where the palace went through important architectural transformations receiving its most distinctive features (e.g. the *kouloures*, the raised walkways, the monumental entrance. etc.), but also in the other sites of the Western Mesara plain, including Kommos, Ayia Triada and Kamilari. In this period the influence of the Phaistos material culture on these sites is much stronger than in the previous MM IB phase, as these centres commenced not only to imitate the pottery in use at Phaistos, but also the ceremonial sets and the consumption forms adopted there, as already observed at Kamilari.

⁴⁶CALOI 2007.

⁴⁷VAN DE MOORTELE 2006B, nn. Ja/27-30, Jf/7, Jh/1.

⁴⁸DAWKINS-LAISTNER 1913, p. 16, fig. 3, pls. V, VII.

⁴⁹CALOI 2015B; on the topic see also VAN DE MOOR-

TEL 2011.

⁵⁰CALOI 2015B.

⁵¹For Kommos see VAN DE MOORTELE 2006B.

⁵²CALOI 2015B.

Since the beginning of MM II, Kamilari and Ayia Triada, which in MM IB shared a similar pattern, started to show different trajectories that, however, seem to reveal some signs of complementarity. We have indeed observed that, in the MM IIA phase, when the Ayia Triada cemetery commenced its decline as a funerary complex, the Kamilari cemetery started its expansion and growth; then, in the MM IIB phase, when the funerary area of Ayia Triada was transformed into a public sacred space and the settlement saw a strong growth both in size and in pottery depositions, Kamilari became an important and much frequented necropolis, provided with a second *tholos* tomb (i.e., Mylona Lakko) and with two ossuaries (*fig. 1*).

If the ceramic evidence shows that the MM IIA phase is scantily represented at Ayia Triada, both in the settlement and in the funerary area, it is possible that the settlement was poorly inhabited in this period, and intensely re-occupied by a new group in the successive MM IIB phase. The ongoing study by Giorgia Baldacci on the settlement of Ayia Triada in the Protopalatial period could confirm or deny the hypothesis of a limited use of the settlement or even of a possible abandonment during the MM IIA phase. If a more intensive re-occupation of Ayia Triada occurred in MM IIB, as testified by some structures and many ceramic deposits or fills dating to MM IIB, and by the change in function of the funerary area, it is likely that the new group decided to choose another burial place. Considering the new expansion of the Kamilari cemetery and especially the foundation of the new *tholos* tomb of Mylona Lakko, I propose that the Ayia Triada community may have shifted its burial place to Kamilari, which was only 2 km away. The MM IIB shift of the necropolis from Ayia Triada to Kamilari would have been in line with the Prepalatial custom of Western Mesara communities to change continuously settlements and burial places, and use the same sites in alternating periods⁵³. Moreover, since this continuous shifting is well attested in the Prepalatial period at Ayia Triada⁵⁴, I wonder whether it occurred in the following Protopalatial period as well. From the MM II ceramic evidence, it is rather difficult to say if the new group at Ayia Triada would have introduced ceramic innovations. However, the strong sharing of rituals involving pottery depositions among the sites surrounding Phaistos supports the regional integration promoted by the centre of Phaistos from the MM IIA phase onwards and increasingly in MM IIB⁵⁵.

In sum, the new evidence that has emerged from the recent study of the Kamilari cemetery, as well as from the reanalysis of the nearby Ayia Triada necropolis, has shown that several changes in ritual behaviours occurred not only between the MM IA and MM IB phases, but also between MM IB and MM IIA-MM IIB. These changes definitely integrate new evidence into the discourse of socio-political development of the Protopalatial Western Mesara, shedding new light on the changing role played by the Phaistos palace from the beginning through the end of the Protopalatial period. Although the settlement and funerary evidence from the Western Mesara are still far from being well defined, this detailed restudy of the pottery assemblages of the Protopalatial period has produced hints of a clearer and more complex picture.

ILARIA CALOI

⁵³TODARO *forthcoming*.

⁵⁴TODARO *forthcoming*.

⁵⁵CALOI 2015b. On the topic see also MILITELLO 2012.

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ABSTRACT

**The Mesara *tholos* tomb cemeteries in the Protopalatial period
Comparing the funerary complexes of Kamilari and Ayia Triada**

Although it is generally assumed that in the Protopalatial period many Mesara *tholos* tombs continued to be used following the same mortuary and ritual behaviours attested in the late Prepalatial phases, and especially in MM IA, in this paper I will show that the material manifestations of these burial and cult places varied regionally and chronologically. In particular, I will focus on two of the most important funerary complexes of the Western Mesara in use in the Protopalatial period, namely Kamilari and Ayia Triada. Since the Protopalatial phases of the Kamilari cemetery have been recently reassessed by myself after the first 1958 Doro Levi excavation, moving from the evaluation of the archaeological evidence retrieved from this cemetery, I will present the ritual behaviours attested in Protopalatial times and mostly the changes from those occurring in Prepalatial times. Moreover, I will make comparisons with the near necropolis of Ayia Triada, trying to find out the kind of relationship existing between the two complexes, and also to understand their correlation with the emergence of the Phaistos palace in MM IB.