

COME, LET US EAT AND DRINK TOGETHER: FEASTING PATTERNS AND THEIR SOCIO-POLITICAL DIMENSIONS IN LATE BRONZE AGE EASTERN CRETE

by Anastasia M.A. Vergaki 

Irish Institute of Hellenic Studies at Athens and Trinity College Dublin

Feasts in Bronze Age Crete are an important manifestation of material culture. Indications of feasting can be identified in funerary, palatial, and domestic archaeological contexts. As a result of scholarship traditionally focusing on the religious character of funerary practices and palatial feasting, convivial activities within the domestic sphere have been neglected and/or misinterpreted. As a result of this research bias, there is a notable gap in the record of in-depth archaeological analysis of the social, political and ideological reasons of performing a feast in a domestic environment (or within the bounds of a settlement itself). Researchers have found it hard to distinguish between different types of feasts based on the associated cultural material, consequently leading to misinterpretations regarding the differences in feasting symbolism and the contribution of feasting to social organisation. The re-examination of published material from the Neopalatial (c. 1700–1500/1450 BC or Middle Minoan IIIB–Late Minoan IB in pottery terms) sites of Pseira, Mochlos and Gournia in eastern Crete reveals that specific patterns of feasts were in fact in existence and socially performed. Furthermore, the data suggest that feasts in settlements functioned as politically motivated rituals which played a leading role in the formation of social organisation through intra-community antagonisms.

INTRODUCTION

Mochlos, Gournia and the island site of Pseira are three Minoan-era sites located on the northern coast of Crete in the Gulf of Mirabello and situated within close proximity to one another (Fig. 1). These three settlements have been selected for study because they are characterised by extensive habitation over long periods of time, and almost the whole habitation area of each site has been excavated and published. Although only Gournia presents a ‘Palatial Building’ proper, Mochlos and Pseira are not lacking in their material evidence of ‘palatial’ influence. Re-examination of these sites also provides insight towards non-religious rituals which resulted in significant contributions to the formation of socio-political relationships within a community.

Mochlos is a small, circular island of limestone located 150 metres north of the coast of Crete in the Gulf of Mirabello. During the Neopalatial Period, the settlement was connected to the Cretan mainland via a peninsula (Seager 1909, 274; Soles and Davaras 1992, 413; Barnard and Brogan 2003; Soles 2004). Assemblages which are indicative of the performance of convivial events were examined from Buildings D and B.2. Pseira is a small island west of Mochlos, located two kilometers off the north coast of Crete (Betancourt et al. 1990). At Pseira, analogous evidence was studied from Buildings AF, AC and BS/BV. Gournia is located south-west of both Pseira and Mochlos, situated on a hill near an inlet at the southern extent of Mirabello Bay. Assemblages implying the presence of feasting activities were observed from Houses Cm and Ac and from the ‘Palatial Building’.

Through a contextual re-examination of the published material from these sites, it is suggested that convivial events took place on the upper floors of domestic buildings, with strong evidence presented for the performance of feasts in outdoor areas as well.



Fig. 1. Regional map of eastern Crete. Modified from Betancourt and Davaras 1995, xx, fig. 2.

FEASTS AS RITUAL ACTIONS OF A SOCIO-POLITICAL DIMENSION

Ritual actions yield highly specialised purposes, presenting a unique language of symbolism for the attendees as well as for the event's possible spectators. The semiotic analysis of ritual actions greatly informs our interpretation of the socio-political dimension created around the ritual events themselves. Therefore, rituals do not have to be purely religious in nature (Turner 1986, 75; Walker and Schiffer 2006; Rowan and Ilan 2007, 254). They may, for example, be intended to promote a political leader or legitimise and extoll the status quo, or perhaps to change or overthrow the very social and political systems of the community (Turner and Turner 1978, 244; Platvoet 1995, 31–51).

A feast is a ritualised social event which centres upon the ostentatious consumption of food and drink.¹ Feasts have been used as a tool for an individual or a social group to rise to preeminence by demonstrating power that may not be otherwise perceptible in the existing social organisation (Dietler 1996, 89; Hayden 2014, 18; Twiss 2019, 69; Driessen and Letesson 2023). Social display of power, then, is one possible impetus of feasting events (Borgna 2004, 269; Hayden 2014; Hastorf 2017). Both secular and religious rituals are actions through which the participants wish to transmit messages about their sociological stage (apart from psychological and/or physiological) to other people (Rappaport 1971, 25). Rituals, regardless of the medium, are not one size fits all in terms of outcomes, participants and meanings. Thus, participants/promoters could coopt the scope of rituals to fit their individual goals. Relaying messages to the community, through codified ritual feasting actions, served various political goals, such as the promotion of power on behalf of political institutions, as well as allowing an avenue for social subgroups to carry forward their own political interests (Bell 1997, 128–9). As rituals are complex and layered events uniquely crafted for a specific purpose, participants likely did not fully understand all the nuances or symbolism presented at a given feast. Since the communal action of feasting itself contributed to the strengthening of social ties and of solidarity, this potential lack of understanding the feast-giver's intentions or ultimate purpose did not diminish the feast's significance to the participants. Occasionally, rituals have been understood to play a decisive role in the re-negotiation or even transformation of social relations within a community (Dietler 1996, 89; 2001, 66–7; 2011, 181; Kreinath 2005; Girella 2008, 168; Driessen and Letesson 2023). Ritual messaging, including more obscure ritual processes like feasting, is able

¹ Hayden 2001. For a definition on feasts, see also Dietler 2011, 180.

to be presented to the community in a myriad of contexts, developing a 'textual discourse' inextricably linked to peoples' everyday concerns, needs and goals (Barrett 1991, 5–6). Therefore, it is imperative to trace the traits of a feast which are repeated and constitute the very core of the ritual feast, as well as to identify those characteristics that differentiate individual categories of feasts.²

Accurately identifying different classes of feasts within the archaeological record lets unique ritual meanings to be ascribed to each category, allowing for a more comprehensive analysis of the role and impact of feasting in Bronze Age Crete societies. Although it is not always necessary for a ritual to be performed within the limits of an architectural space (Adams 2004, 30; Privitera 2004, 127–33; Sikla 2011, 220), architecture can (and does) create physical conditions necessary for the consolidation of individualistic human behaviour into communal human behaviour, creating a clear liminal space for presenting peoples' intentions (Driessen and Letesson 2023). In addition to architectural evidence, the cultural material left *in situ* after the completion of a feast (such as cups, bowls, bones, pouring and serving vessels) is taken under consideration in order to trace unique artistic or utilitarian characteristics attributed to different types of feasts. Because some objects are used as the material embodiment of a ritual action, this material must be recurrent and found in each architectural space where ritual feasting of a specific type was thought to have occurred (Borgna 2004; Kyriakidis 2007, 15). Furthermore, specific combinations of objects should be recognised as part of a feast's established 'rules'. The adherence to these rules and codification of material conditions is what turns everyday actions such as a simple dinner into an intentional social ritual. These rules and their socio-political relevance in Minoan societies can be identified within the archaeological record, and a revised interpretation of ritual feasting can be produced through a contextual examination (Staal 1979, 3–9).

In the present study, specific types of recurring objects are presented in large quantities. The high volume of these objects indicates that they were not just used by the immediate members of a family or genus but were likely used by members of the community in collective events. Objects which are repeatedly observed in consistently similar contexts, albeit in small numbers, lend their significance not towards practical consumptive use of the vessels as noted above, but towards a cognisant display of wealth and power due to their high value and workmanship (Ballosi Restelli 2015, 90–2; Hastorf 2017). In both quantity categories, the objects comprise the core-equipment necessary of a feast in the domestic sphere. At this point in the re-examination of material culture, a fundamental problem emerges. How can we separate feasts from everyday meals? In theoretical concept alone, it has been suggested that feasts were everyday meals that contained some traits of rituality because they were following a *habitus*, or an ingrained socialisation process of identity and consumption. The cognitive effect of a meal being a ritualised feast was that it could be manipulated by people in order to express a political message (Dietler 2001, 70; Twiss 2019, 8–10).

Past this conceptual distinction of everyday meals versus feasting (that may or may not have been clear to the event participants in the first place), excavations at Mochlos, Pseira and Gournia yielded material evidence that allows us to interpret these different consumption events in a more accurate context. The manner of serving, the decoration of the feast's accoutrement, the type of food and drink, and the aesthetics all play an important role in creating this distinction (Hastorf 2017, 129–31). Other aspects such as spatial differentiations, with regards to indoor versus outdoor architectural spaces, help to further determine different classes of feasts within a given community (Pitts 2015, 100). Feasts which take place in an open area/court are exposed to the public and naturally invite outside observers, relaying a very different ritual message than those performed within the physical and private bounds of a residence. Indoor, private feasts are characterised by a controlled attendance of people and rely on equipment that is recognisable as ritualistic in nature to clearly differentiate between a ritual feast and a normal meal. In both cases, feasts contribute to the formation of the socio-political milieu.

² Regarding research on the traits of ritual in general and its gaps concerning feasts, the following two works are suggested for further study: Platvoet 1995; Bell 1997.

STUDY CASES FROM THE GULF OF MIRABELLO, EASTERN CRETE

Mochlos

Building B.2 was built atop three terraces on the western slope of the Mochlos peninsula (Fig. 2). It was divided into the Eastern and Western wings and is the most elaborate and largest building found in the settlement (Seager 1909, 286–9; Soles and Davaras 1996, 193–4). The use of ashlar masonry and the incorporation of central paved halls that granted access to all wings and levels of the building has led scholars to identify B.2 as the administrative building of the settlement. The north-western section of the building was constructed over extensive architectural remains dating to the Early Minoan (EM) II period and were accompanied by EM II remains of probable feasting events. In the area of B.2's western wing was evidence of collective feasting events dating to the Late Minoan (LM) I period, suggesting that Building B.2 was intentionally built at that site in order to be responsible for the preservation of the community's collective memory (Soles 2010, 333, fig. 32:1).

Five cups, including two conical types, were found in Room 2.2 on the upper floor of B.2 (Soles and Davaras 1996, 189, pl. 51*d*). A strainer and a few pithoi were observed adjacent to the cup

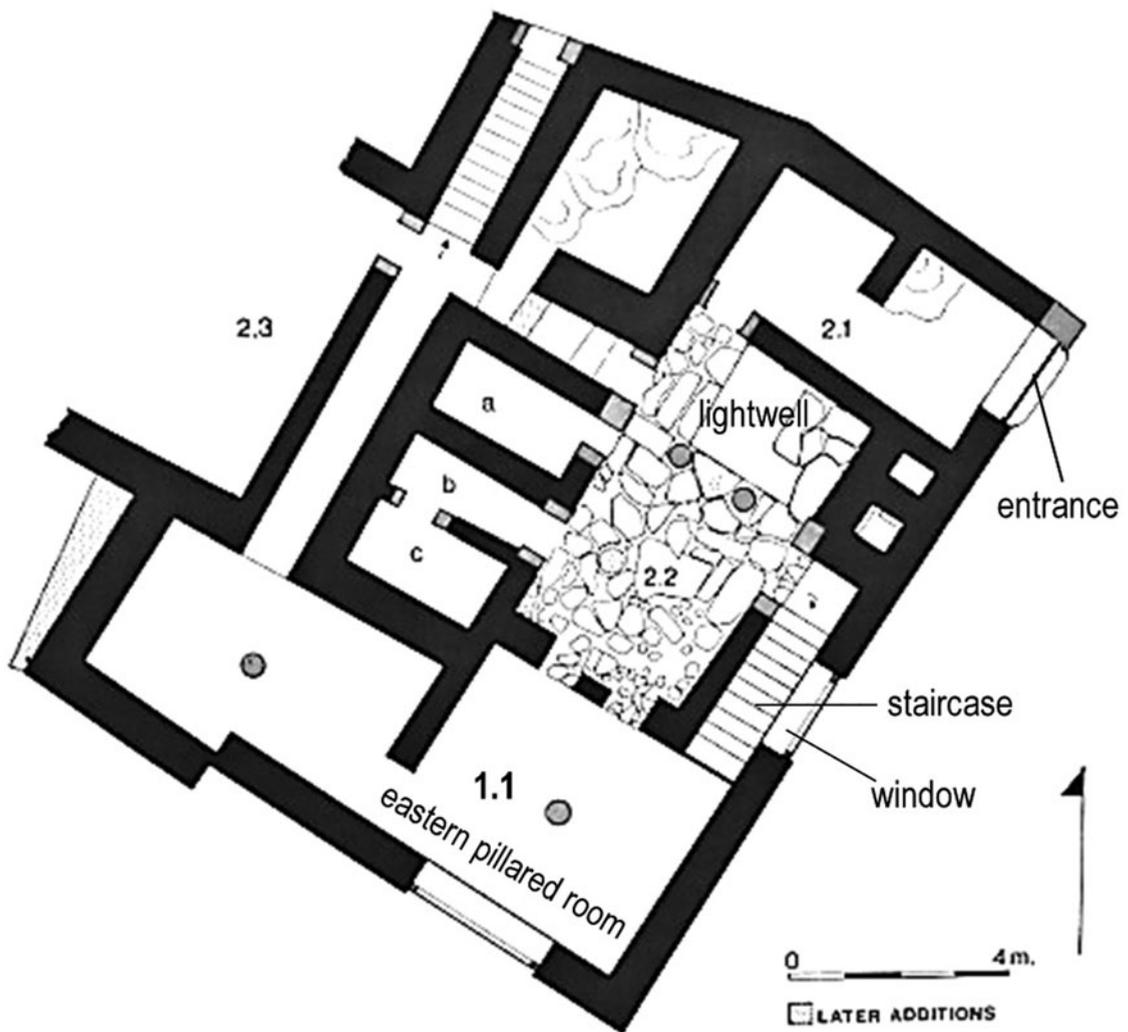


Fig. 2. Plan of the East Wing of Building B.2. Modified from Soles and Davaras 1996, fig. 7.

© Trustees of the American School of Classical Studies at Athens.



Fig. 3. The ‘Theatral Area’ in Mochlos. Photograph by the author. © Ephorate of Antiquities of Lasithi, Hellenic Ministry of Culture and Sports.

deposits in the same room (Soles and Davaras 1996, 189). To the east of Room 2.2 was a staircase leading to the lower level of the building. A conical rhyton was found on the staircase. The rhyton is included in the upper floor’s assemblage inventory due to proximity and the fact that it was found in a secondary deposit location after having rolled down the stairs at some point during or post abandonment (Soles and Davaras 1994, 410).

Some fallen artefacts were found in Room 1.1, a pillared semi-basement. The assemblage belonged to the collapse deposit of a columned room, located to the south of Room 2.2., namely above Room 1.1. This assemblage, in secondary deposit, contained the head of a female clay figurine (Soles and Davaras 1994, 408, fig. 10:C98), the clay model of a boat (Soles and Davaras 1994, 408, fig. 10:C41) and the clay model of a phallus (Soles and Davaras 1994, 408, fig. 10:S17). A piriform rhyton and two strainers were also unearthed in Room 1.1 (Soles and Davaras 1994, 408). The rhyton and strainers of the whole B.2 assemblage belong to elaborate classes of pottery with fine decorations, holding high design value and material significance.³

An important outdoor space, the ‘Theatral Area’, was constructed in the south-west section of Building B.2 (Fig. 3). Recent excavations revealed that it functioned as a small court and included at least three benches at its north and east sides, forming a section of grouped seats. In the northern part of the ‘Theatral Area’ there is a round structure made of rubble which has been interpreted as a hearth (Soles 2010, 332–3). It included a drainage pipe next to which seashells were observed. In particular, triton shells were detected near the hearth, which were probably used as scooping tools or for pouring the contents of vessels during the preparation of meals. The hearth assemblage

³ Regarding the importance of ceramic decoration and shapes during feasts see Dietler 2003, 271–5; Ballosi Restelli 2015, 90–2; Twiss 2019, 8–9, 43.

yielded evidence of 50 bones of cattle, pigs and rabbits. Four skull fragments were observed within the hearth and verified to be human, while an assemblage consisting of 15 fragments of human bones was detected on the top deposit of the hearth. The bones were found along with remains of cattle and many seashells, among which there was one more triton shell. Innumerable portable finds were unearthed in the remaining space of the 'Theatral Area' such as cooking pots and bowls, which were recorded as the main finds, as well as the remains of animals, namely cattle, pigs and rodents. Eighteen additional human skull fragments were discovered at the middle bench of the 'Theatral Area' along with cattle bones and a triton shell.⁴ Based on the dense deposit of animal bones, the presence of scooping instruments vis-à-vis the triton shells at the hearth, and static seating areas, it can be surmised that the 'Theatral Area' of B.2 functioned as a place for food preparation and possibly even a stage for feasting events in the LM IB period of Mochlos. The presence of human bones has led to the interpretation that the feast was part of a ritual related to ancestor worship.⁵ Regardless of what the ritual's specific messaging may have been, it can be observed that the feast was ritualised through intentional architectural configurations (hearth, drainage pipe and benches) as well as through specific combinations of mobile finds (cooking vessels, bowls, cups, triton shells, animal bones). The archaeological and physical characteristics of this outdoor space lend themselves to the idea that it had the capacity to host congregations of people. The archaeological material suggests the performance of a feast as a unique episode, though the possibility that other feasts similar in nature to this one were organised in the court should not be excluded. It should also be stressed that such a court resembling a 'Theatral Area' has only been found in Mochlos, specifically in Building B.2.

Building D, or Seager's House D, is located to the east of Block D in Mochlos and predates Building B.2. It was the largest building until the construction of Building B.2. Building D consisted of at least 16 rooms on the ground floor and was distinctive due to its elaborate architecture of ashlar masonry, columnar rooms, porticoes, and pier and door partitions (Fig. 4). These architectural characteristics are not often incorporated in the layout of a standard Bronze Age house because they require special building materials (including the ability to obtain, process and transport them), while also requiring a substantial labour force to carry out the construction work. Both the acquisition of material and subjugation of a workforce required financial and social power to accomplish. Hence, they are considered as traits of elite architecture.

An assemblage highly indicative of ostentatious food and drink consumption was uncovered in the north-west corner of Area 9 of Building D. Hundreds of stacked conical cups were excavated within a deposit that had collapsed from the upper floor of the building. The stacked nature of the cups indicated that they were stored in this position at the time of the building's destruction (Seager 1909, 298). Their fall was extremely violent and almost everything was found in a fragmented state. A strainer pyxis along with a pithoid jar were excavated from the same archaeological context. Moreover, in Storeroom 15, located to the west of Area 9, a mass number of tripod cooking pots were found, which had also fallen from the upper floor.⁶ The abundance of relatively uniform conical cups and many cooking instruments lends credence to the idea that gatherings of people used to take place on the upper floor of Building D. This hypothesis is based on the fact that the storing of hundreds of cups on the upper floor of a building is rare and only found in Building D. Storage on the upper floor actively manipulated who could access the cups and when, pointing to a controlling group that would be the distributors of the ritual material.

⁴ Personal communication with Dr David Reese, who kindly provided me with this information, regarding the findings in the 'Theatral Area'.

⁵ Soles 2010. The cranial human remains have not been published yet, because Building B.2 was not included in the recent publication of the Neopalatial Town of Mochlos. Therefore, I only used the information provided to me by Dr David Reese, who studied this assemblage of bones. It seems to me that they were scattered cranial fragments, which were not found *in situ*. However, I am stating this with caution while waiting for more information to be published in the near future.

⁶ Seager 1909, 298–9, fig. 4, pl. VII. The excavator did not mention the exact number of cooking pots. He only recorded that they were '... as astonishing a hoard as the cups from the megaron'.

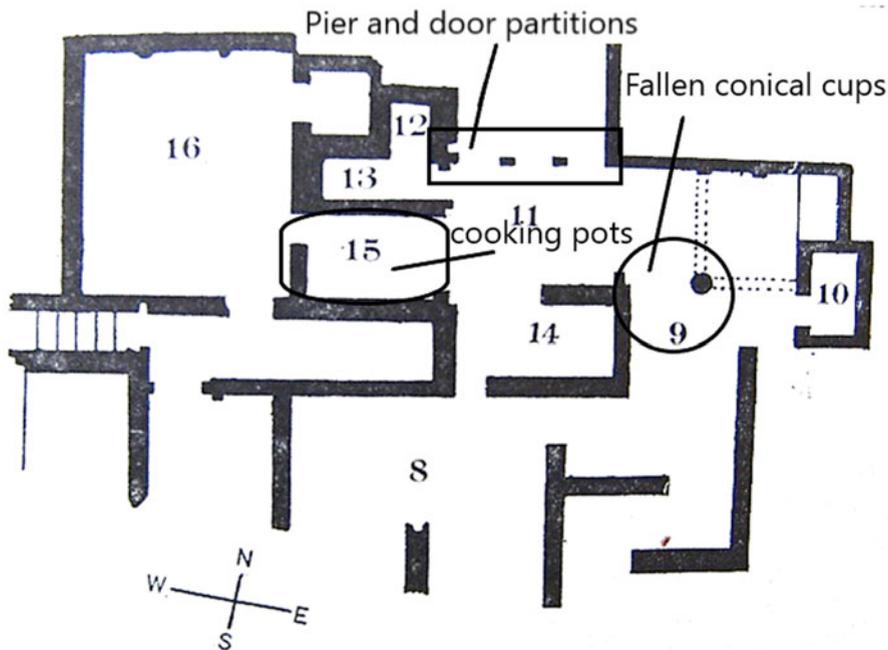


Fig. 4. Plan of Building D. Modified from Seager 1909, fig. 14.

Pseira

Building AF was part of a Neopalatial settlement located on the southernmost edge of the Katsouni peninsula on the island of Pseira (Figs 5, 6). The building is divided into two wings: AF North and AF South (Figs 7, 8). Building AF is conspicuous compared to the rest of the houses in the area due to its elaborate architecture and its prominent location facing the open sea (Betancourt 2009a, 157). The strategic location and the size of Building AF suggest that its owners or inhabitants belonged to an elite and influential social class in the community of Pseira, as neither of these aspects could have been accomplished without some form of social and economic power. The building consists of a pillared room, a well-designed internal layout, pseudo-isodomic masonry, paved floors, indoor and outdoor benches, and elaborate staircases (McEnroe 2009; Betancourt et al. 2009) (Figs 9, 10).

A deposit of ceramics was uncovered in Room 6 of AF North, which again appears to have fallen from the collapsed upper story.⁷ A straight-sided cup, two handleless conical cups, one bell-shaped cup, bowls, a jug, and a fine strainer were identified among the finds, as well as a bull-shaped rhyton (Floyd 2009, 70–3) (Fig. 12). Unlike the robust faunal assemblage found in the ‘Theatral Area’ of the Mochlos settlement, the deposit from Room 6 of Building AF at Pseira only yielded a few marine shells, amongst which were two triton shells (Reese 2009, 139).

Room 8, located to the north-west of Room 6, was probably the anteroom of the AF North wing (McEnroe 2009, 36). Excavation revealed objects belonging to the upper floor’s collapse deposit and attributed to upper floor activities (McEnroe 2009, 37). An assemblage of several types of drinking cups including conical, ogival, spouted, bell-shaped and hemispherical forms (Floyd 2009, 79–83), a miniature tripod cooking pot (Floyd 2009, 79, fig. 18:272), and 12 rhyta with elaborate decorations was identified. More specifically, conical (Fig. 13) and piriform rhyta,

⁷ Room AF6 was probably the kitchen of the North Wing (Floyd 2009, 68). A hearth and cooking pots were found on the ground floor level (Fig. 11). In addition, bones of cattle and mainly fish were identified along with charred wood which belonged to an olive tree (Reese 2009, 139–40). There were no examples of elaborate pottery types which could have been used during feasts as a means of social display. The preponderance of pottery fragments apart from cooking pots also included cooking dishes, braziers, a cooking tray, a strainer and a pithos. In addition, finds in stone and clay formed a ‘kitchen kit’, according to the excavators. Furthermore, a spouted tripod cooking pot and a lid were found *in situ* almost intact (Floyd 2009, 68).



Fig. 5. The island of Pseira and the Katsouni peninsula. Photograph by the author.

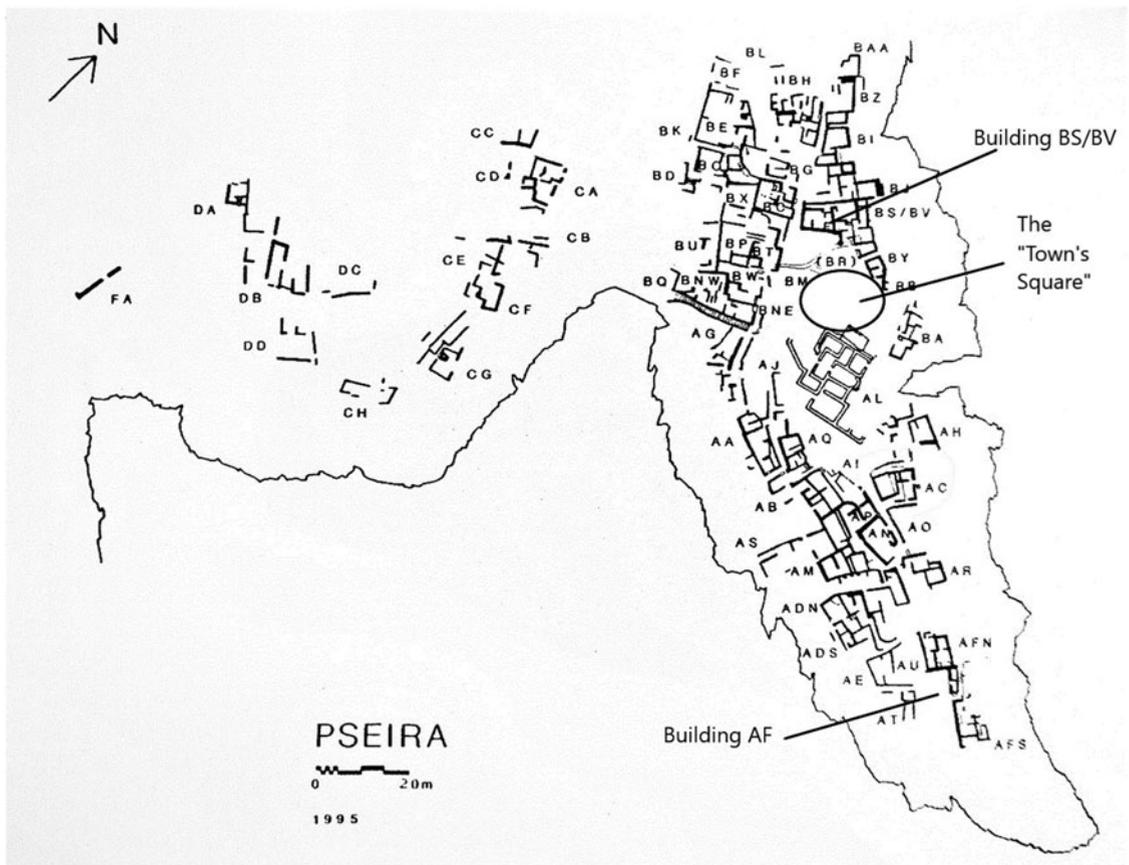


Fig. 6. Plan of the Neopalatial settlement on the island of Pseira. Modified from Betancourt and Davaras 1995, Site Plan. © University of Pennsylvania Museum of Archaeology & Anthropology.

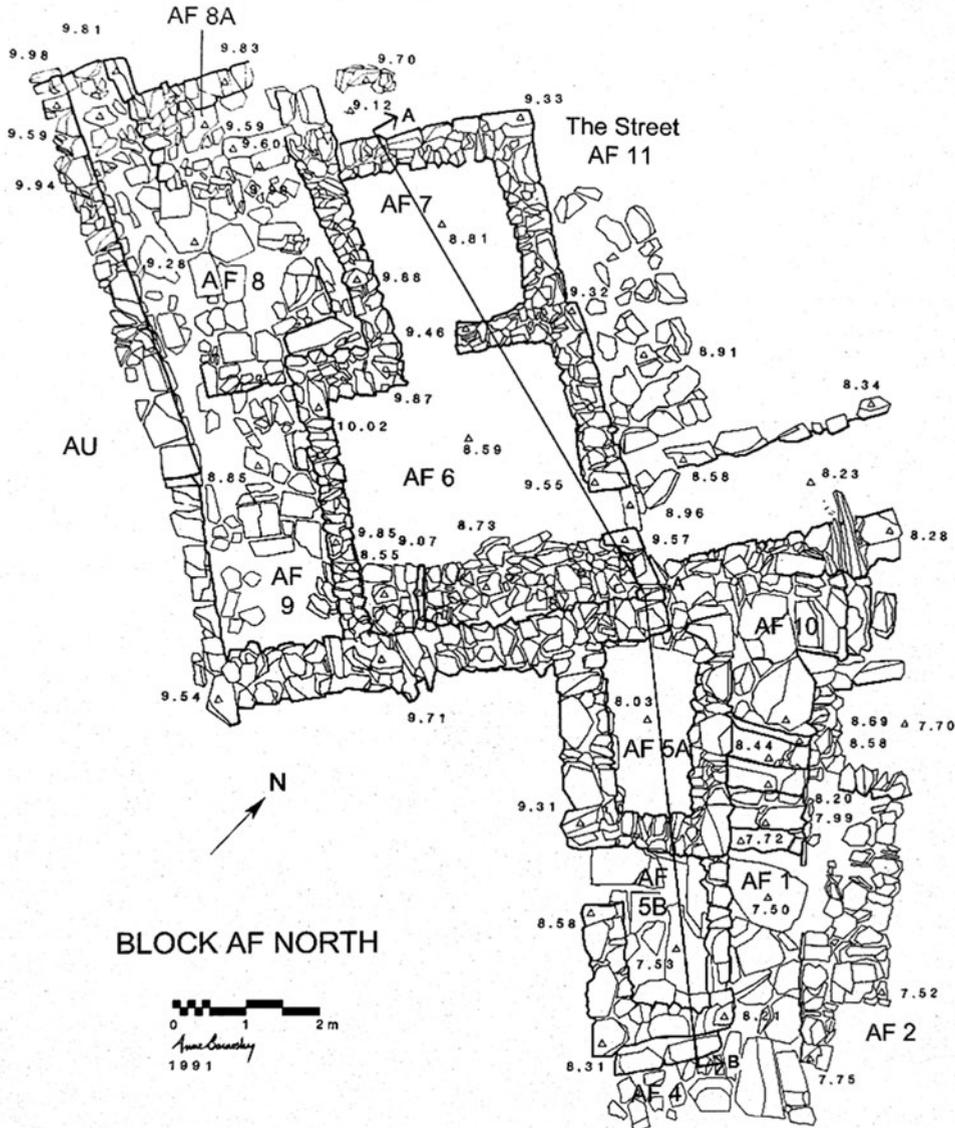


Fig. 7. Plan of Building AF North. Betancourt 2009b, 14, fig. 2:5. © University of Pennsylvania Museum of Archaeology & Anthropology.

along with one probable ostrich-egg-shaped rhyton were unearthed. Cooking pots, bowls, jugs, and an oval-mouthed amphora were also found in a fragmented state (Floyd 2009, 82–3). Faunal remains belonging to cattle, a pig and birds, as well as numerous marine shells were unearthed in the same context (Reese 2009, 141).

From the collapsed deposit in Pillared Room 3A/B/C of Building AF South came an ogival cup, conical and bell-shaped cups, closed vessels, bowls, jugs and at least two cooking pots (Floyd 2009, 48–53). The excavators reported that it was difficult to distinguish the various layers of the stratigraphy, but that the abovementioned finds were associated with the debris from the collapse deposit of the building. They were found in association with a bull-shaped rhyton, which was found fragmented, and to an intact miniature straight-sided cup (Floyd 2009, 52–3, figs 3, 4:75,86). The faunal remains varied from bones of sheep/goats, fish and a mouse to hundreds of marine shells (Reese 2009, 135–7). Based on the above data, there is reliable evidence indicating

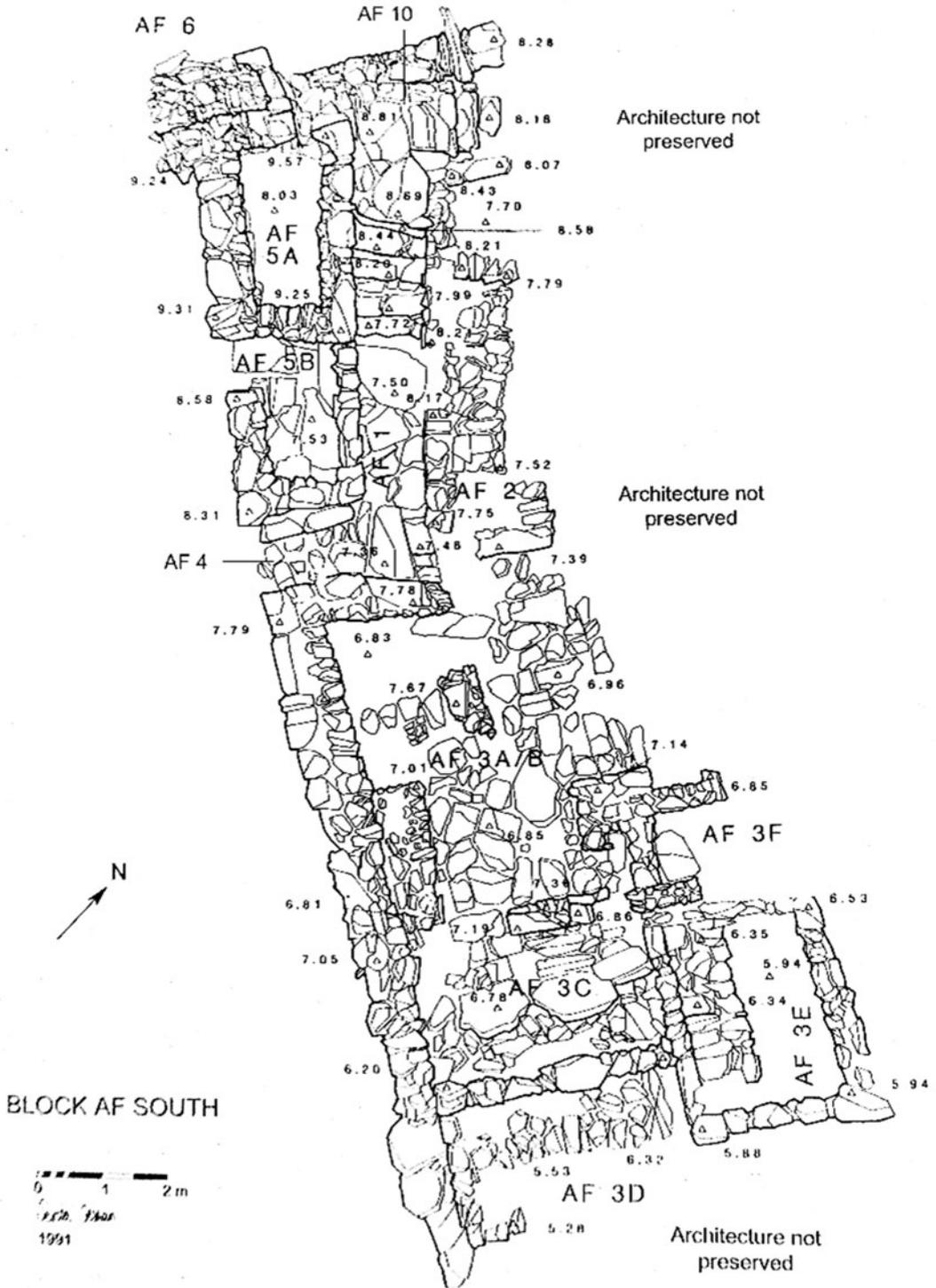


Fig. 8. Plan of Building AF South. Betancourt 2009b, 7, fig. 2:1. © University of Pennsylvania Museum of Archaeology & Anthropology.



Fig. 9. A bench in Room 8, Building AF, Pseira. Photograph by the author. © Ephorate of Antiquities of Lasithi, Hellenic Ministry of Culture and Sports.

the performance of events of commensality on the upper floor of Building AF where specific combinations of objects (cups, jugs, amphoras, bowls, various types of elaborate rhyta, animal bones and more) have been detected.

Building BS/BV occupies the entire north side of the so-called Town's Square, an almost round outdoor area with only one room built to the east (Fig. 6).⁸ This is the largest building that has been excavated on Pseira. It is divided in two wings: the Eastern Wing BS and the Western Wing BV (Fig. 14). All rooms were paved, and its architecture was elaborate (McEnroe 1998, 19–22; Koutsoumbos 2010, 383–6). The collapse deposit of the upper floor yielded finds which are probably related to convivial events of social display. In Room BS1 a variety of cups and pouring vessels and a miniature cooking pot were found (Floyd 1998, 36, fig. 4:57). Several normal-sized cooking vessels (Floyd 1998, 36, nos 56–60) and a stemmed cup rhyton bearing elaborate decoration were also identified within Room BS1 (Floyd 1998, 37, fig. 5:65) (Fig. 15). Two clay weights, obsidian cores and flakes, as well as quartz crystals and marine shells were identified, indicating the processing of raw materials and probably the occurrence of domestic industrial activities (Dierckx 1998, 83–4). Therefore, there was a dual use of the upper floor as there are indications of industrial as well as cooking activities.

Part of the collapse deposit, mixed with material from the upper floor, was recorded in Room BV1. A few bowls and pouring vessels were found in connection with a probable jug that is suspected to have been used as a rhyton due to the slightly off-centre hole perforated in its bottom (Floyd 1998, 59–61, fig. 11:186; Koehl 2006, 215–16, no. 1154). Two stemmed-cup

⁸ The Town's Square is to the south of Block B and is 410 m². It is surrounded by Buildings BY, BW, BT and BN. It has been interpreted as an area of common use by the community.

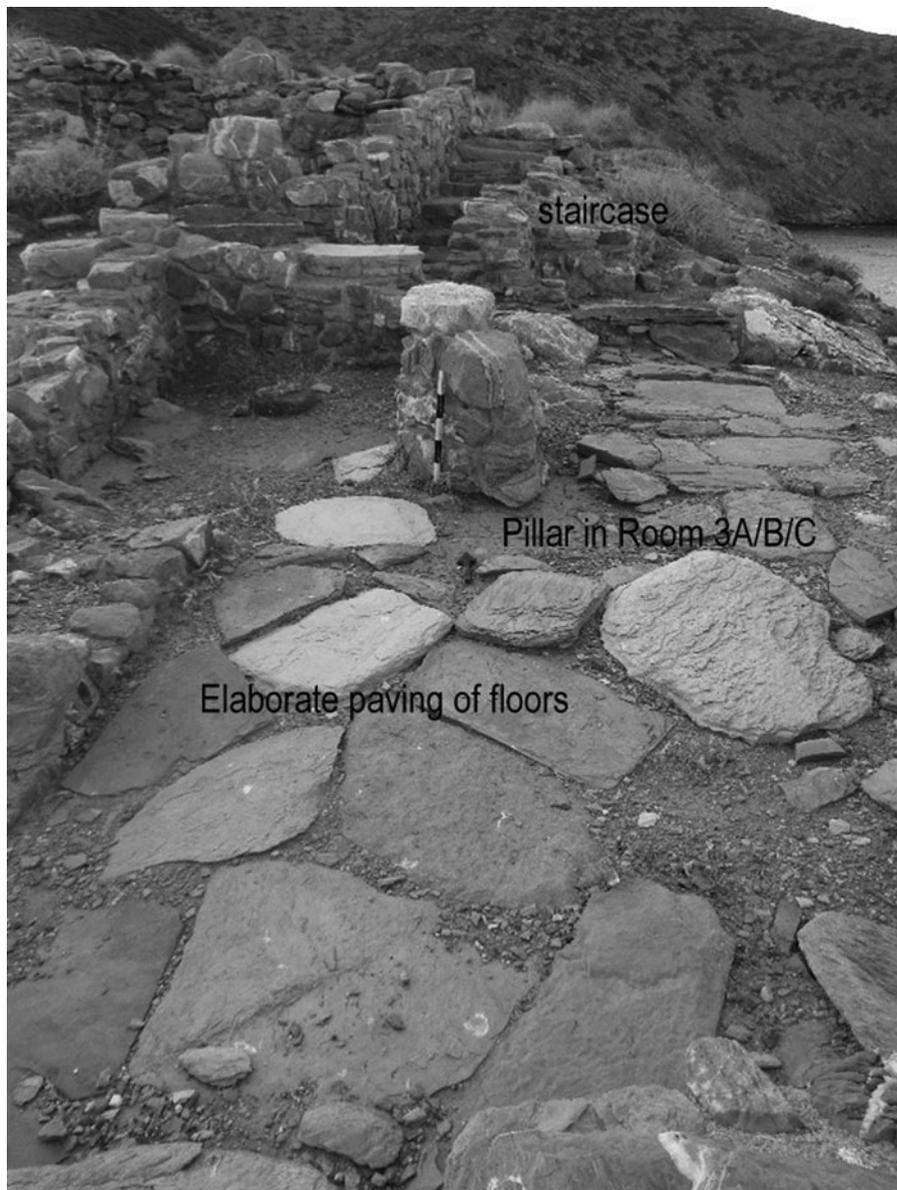


Fig. 10. Traits of elaborate architecture in Room 3A/B/C, Building AF. Photograph by the author. © Ephorate of Antiquities of Lasithi, Hellenic Ministry of Culture and Sports.

rhyta were unearthed, one in BVI with double axe decoration (Floyd 1998, 60, fig. 11:196), and another in Room BV2 also belonging to the corresponding upper floor's deposit (Floyd 1998, 61, fig. 12:201). In the same context of the rhyton in BVI was a strainer (Floyd 1998, 60, fig. 11:190), one more rhyton in the shape of a closed vessel (Floyd 1998, 60, fig. 11:186; Koehl 2006, 215–16, no. 1154), and three 'offering tables' (Floyd 1998, 59, figs 10:176–7, 11:180). The 'offering tables' were made of coarse ware, which is usually reserved for the making of cooking pots. Therefore, they may have been utilised for the short preparation of meals and/or for serving them, since they bore fine decoration (Floyd 1998, 59, nos 176–7, 180). Additionally found in the BVI context were a triton shell, hand tools and various raw materials (Reese 1998, 141; Dierckx 1998, 91–2). Based on the Pseira assemblages, the same combinations of pottery types were detected, namely rhyta, strainers, cups, bowls, triton shells and 'offering tables' as in the previously described assemblages of Mochlos. A pattern is emerging.



Fig. 11. A built hearth in Room 6, Building AF, Pseira. Photograph by the author. © Ephorate of Antiquities of Lasithi, Hellenic Ministry of Culture and Sports.

More objects indicating the function of the upper floor of the building were found fallen on the road (Plateia Road North) which crosses the 'Town Square' to the north. Several straight-sided, bell-shaped and carinated cups (Floyd 1995, 664; 1996; 1998, 65–7), a bridge-spouted jug, and

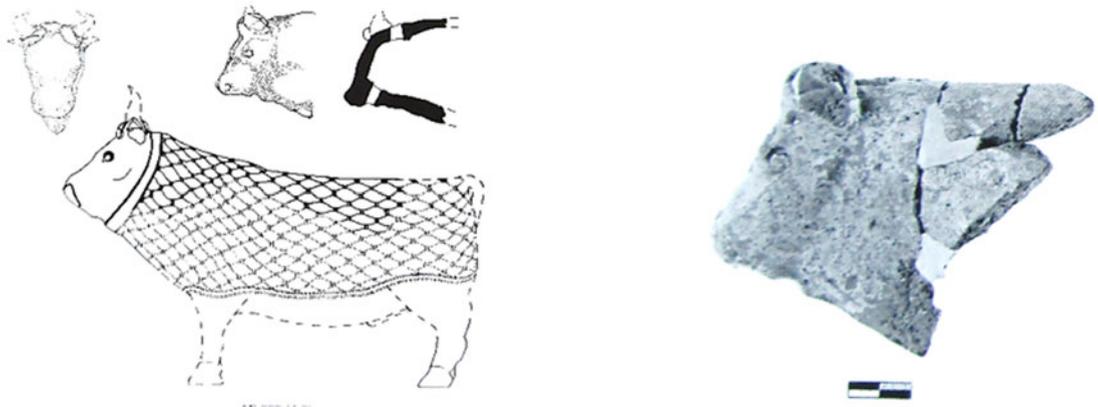


Fig. 12. Bull-shaped rhyton from Building AF. Betancourt 2009a, fig. 14:208, pl. 15:208.
© University of Pennsylvania Museum of Archaeology & Anthropology.

four more rhyta were observed in the same assemblage (Floyd 1998, 67, fig. 15:230,231,232,234; Koehl 2006, 153, no. 562, 225, no. 1233, 168, no. 672, 228, no. 1263). Finally, a stone kylix made of veined marble was uncovered (Betancourt 1998b, 128, fig. 46:486, pl. 19E). Based on the concentration of several types of drinking cups, including the elaborate kylix, cooking pots,

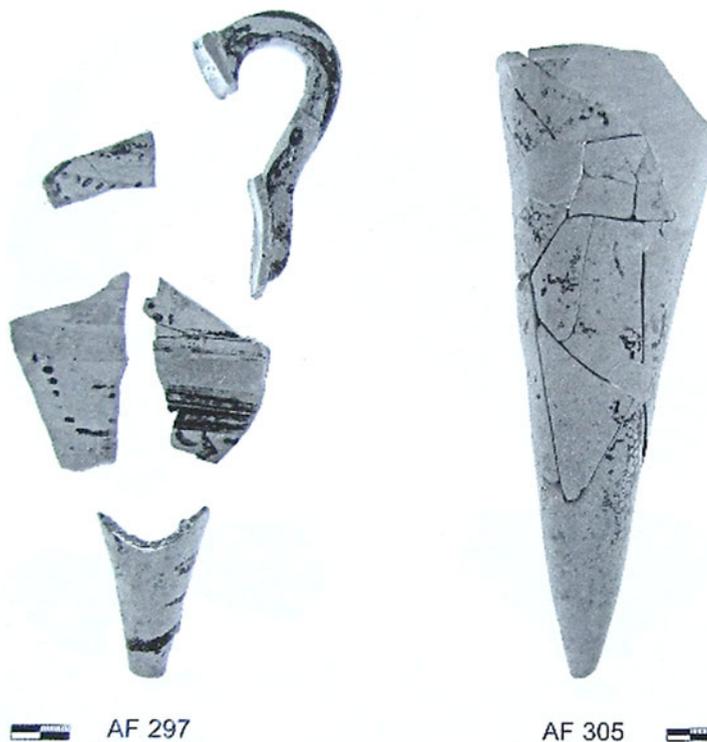


Fig. 13. Conical rhyta from Building AF. Betancourt 2009a, pl. 16:297,305. © University of Pennsylvania Museum of Archaeology & Anthropology.

pouring vessels, and ornate types of pottery such as rhyta, this assemblage of feasting equipment is indicative of convivial events of social display that used to take place on the upper floor of Building BS/BV.

According to the evidence presented so far, Buildings AF and BS/BV offer very similar indications regarding the performance of convivial events located on their upper floors. The presence of repeated types of pottery in certain combinations such as vessels decorated with double axes, conical and/or piriform rhyta, strainers with fine decorations, bull-shaped rhyta, and offering tables along with drinking cups and more comprised the main assemblages of the upper floors, implying the strict adherence of these structural practices. It is also worth mentioning that both buildings' architecture and size are considered elaborate and significant. Such large numbers of high-value pottery have not been observed in any other buildings on Pseira.

House AC is another large building on the island of Pseira, having 15 rooms on its ground floor (Fig. 16). It has been interpreted as the 'Communal Shrine' of the settlement because of the elaborate frescoes which decorated the upper floor (Hood 1977, 165–7; van Leuven 1981, 16; Immerwahr 1990, 184). This building is also unique for the pseudo-isodomic masonry, and the elaborate paving observed in all its rooms. Evidence of feasting was recorded in Space AC10. The architectural remains of the space are quite confined, but the area was likely unroofed, allowing the space to feel more open (Betancourt and Davaras 1988a, 217). Space AC10's significance is rooted in the presence of a bench and of a small artificial pit. The pit was formed by slabs on its four sides and located between the bench and the eastern wall of the house (Betancourt and Davaras 1988a, 217–18; 1988b, 36–7) (Fig. 17). The portable finds from Space AC10 consisted of drinking cups, cooking pots, a brazier or lamp, two jugs, two bowls (Banou 1998, 22–4), and a few animal bones (Rose 1998). A triton shell and a stone quern were observed near the bench, along with charcoal evidence. Tests on the charcoal samples collected close to the bench proved to be oak (Schoch 1998). Inside the pit were several conical and hemispherical cups and bowls, a jug, and a miniature tripod vessel bearing traces of fire on its internal surface (Banou 1998, 22–4, no. 96, pls 11–13). Part of a possible animal figurine was

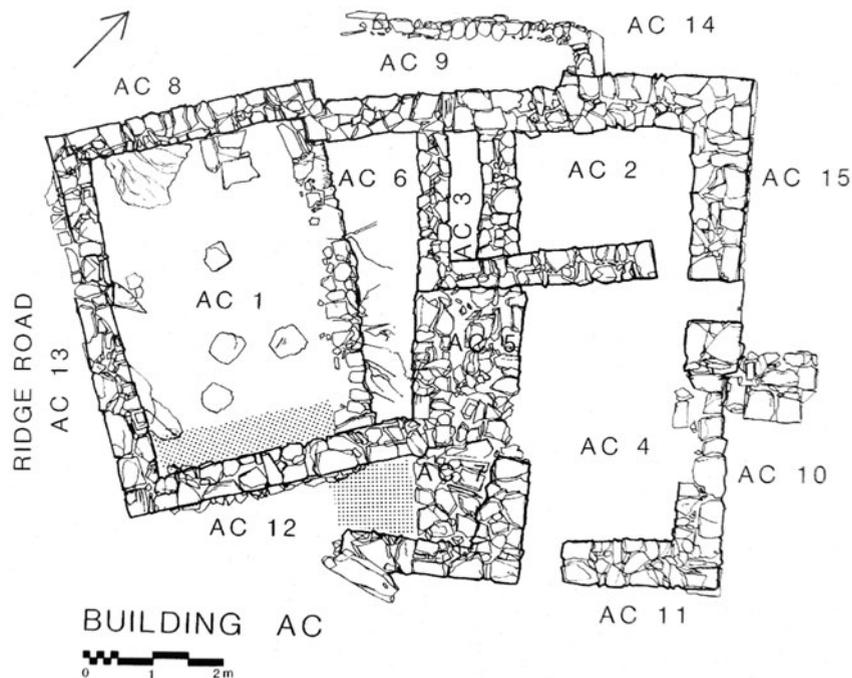


Fig. 16. Plan of Building AC, Pseira. Betancourt and Davaras 1998, fig. 6. © University of Pennsylvania Museum of Archaeology & Anthropology.



Fig. 17. Space AC10 in House AC, Pseira. Photograph by the author. © Ephorate of Antiquities of Lasithi, Hellenic Ministry of Culture and Sports.

identified along with a bone fragment from cattle, bone traces of a rodent and fish, and a fossilised mollusk (Betancourt 1998a, 34, pl. 17:140). More charcoal was identified within the pit as being from an olive tree and a pine tree. All objects were found in a fragmentary state of preservation.

While we can comfortably determine that Space AC10 was used for various domestic activities, especially culinary, the pit indicates the performance of a symbolic event that took place at least once in this area. Fragmentary objects used during the symbolic event were deposited inside the built pit, perhaps as specific ritual waste. Moreover, the contextual relationships between the drinking cups, jugs, bowls, cooking pots, animal bones, and triton shells, and the identification of wood used as fuel to light a cooking fire, indicate the performance of a convivial event in this outdoor area. No other open areas bearing indications of feasts have been found in Pseira, making this site particularly significant.

Gournia

Gournia was a robust Neopalatial settlement that flourished on the Gulf of Mirabello isthmus, located south-west of both Mochlos and Pseira. House Ac is located in the northern part of Gournia, adjacent to the main road (Ridge Road) (Fig. 18). The house's masonry was constructed using medium-sized rubble which was then covered by plaster – a typical architectural practice in the Gournia settlement. Objects found in Space 20 presumably rolled down the (no longer extant) stairs from the upper floor. Amongst this assemblage were three conical rhyta (Hawes et al. 1908, 42, nos 18 and 20, pl. VIII:18,20; Koehl 2006, 168, no. 667, 152, no. 552) (Fig. 19), although, according to Koehl, there were five of them in this deposit. Two rhyta in the shape of a bull's head were also discovered (Hawes et al. 1908, 48, no. 20,

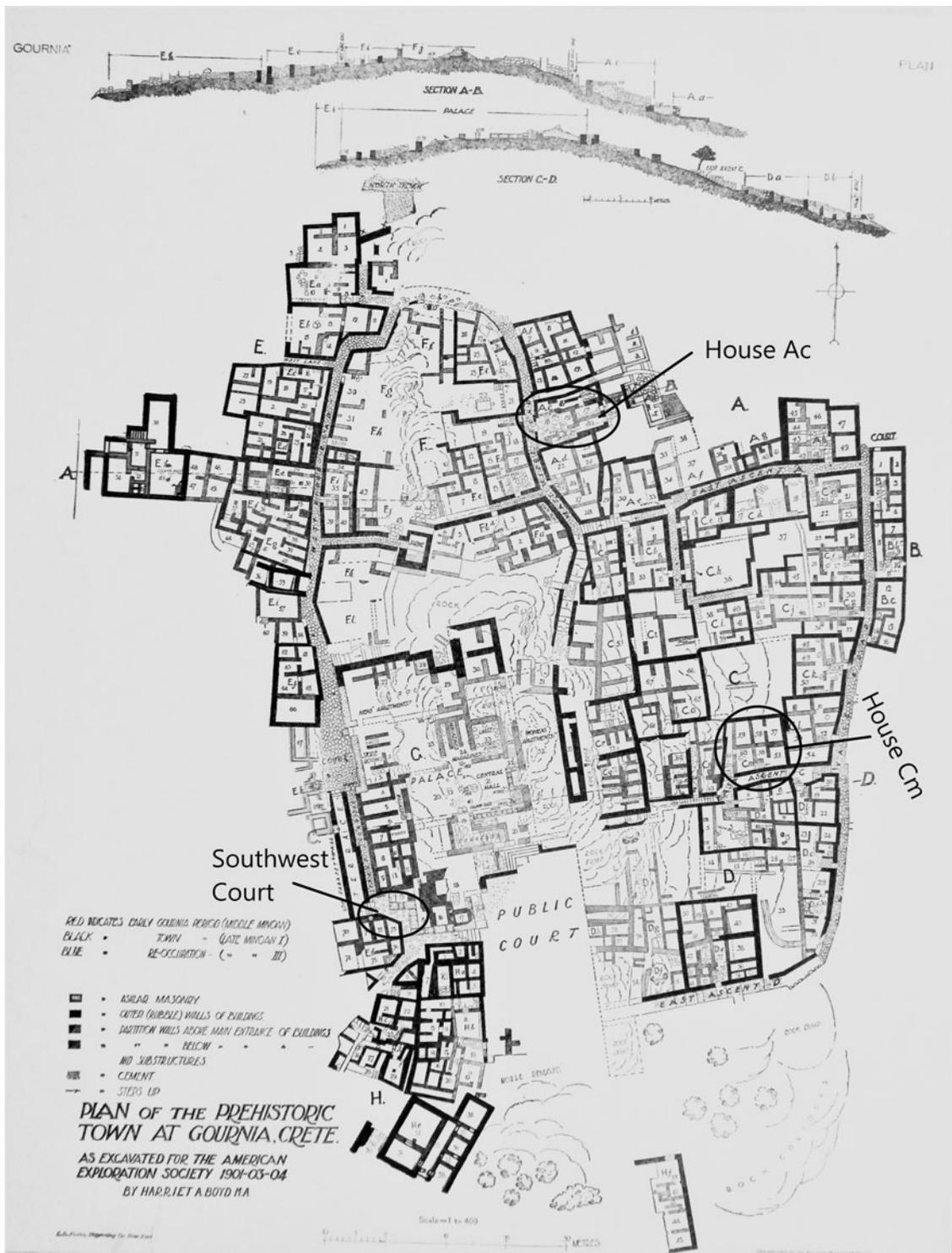


Fig. 18. Plan of the Neopalatial town in Gournia. Modified from Hawes et al. 1908, Town Plan. © University of Pennsylvania Museum of Archaeology & Anthropology.

pl. XI:20; Koehl 2006, 119, no. 315; Fotou 1993, 61; Koehl 2006, 306). Seven rhyta in total were identified as having been originally used on the upper floor of the building. A wine/oil press installation was located in Room 21 and is likely related to the use of rhyta and the performance



Fig. 19. Conical rhyta from House Ac. Modified from Hawes et al. 1908, pl. VIII:18,20.
© University of Pennsylvania Museum of Archaeology & Anthropology.

of drinking events on the upper floor, based on the theory that rhyta could have been used as filters to remove sediments that accumulate in wine storage vessels and to remove spices which were used to flavour wine (Koehl 1990, 356–7; 2006, 269). The presence of this winepress installation increases the probability that wine was consumed on the upper floor of the building and the rhyta were utilised as necessary serving and filtering vessels – all the while functioning as an overt display of social status.

House Cm was constructed to the north-west part of the settlement and incorporated a group of rooms (C57–59) which were used for storage (Fotou 1993, 71) (Fig. 20). It has been suggested that increased feasting led to the need to accumulate surplus supplies and that increased or robust storage capacity directly reflects feasting intensity (Hayden 2014, 62). In particular, excavations in Room C58 yielded an assemblage of LM IB rhyta and pouring vessels that were identified as having fallen from the upper floor (Watrous and Heimroth 2011, 200). Seager stated that more than 70 vessels were identified in this house, many of them found scattered among and inside the pithoi of Room C58 (Hawes et al. 1908, 39; Gesell 1972, 217). Eight conical rhyta were found inside Room C58 in inverted position (Hawes et al. 1908, 40, nos 25–32, pl. VII:25–32; Koehl 2006, 141, no. 434, 162, no. 633, 141, no. 435, 141, no. 432, 162, no. 634, 140, no. 429, 142, no. 442, 142, no. 440). Four piriform rhyta, hemispherical bottles, and a rhyton in the shape of a bull's head were also inventoried (Fig. 21) (Hawes et al. 1908, 40, no. 35, pl. VII:35, nos 38–40, pl. VII:38–40, 39, pl. I; Koehl 2006, 98, no. 170, 89, no. 105, 87–8, no. 96, 88, no. 97, 117, no. 302). Another composite vessel, which the excavator called a 'Kernos', belonged to the same assemblage. Its function is enigmatic, and it could have been used as a strainer or as an incense burner (Hawes et al. 1908, 40, no. 34, pl. VII:34; Koehl 2006, 234, no. 1312; Vergaki 2020, 100, fig. 8). Pouring vessels and drinking cups were found in close proximity to the rhyta,



Fig. 20. Storerooms in House Cm, Gournia. Photograph by the author. © Ephorate of Antiquities of Lasithi, Hellenic Ministry of Culture and Sports.



Fig. 21. Rhyton in the shape of a bull's head and an ovoid rhyton from House Cm, Gournia. Hawes et al. 1908, pl. I. © University of Pennsylvania Museum of Archaeology & Anthropology.

although only the best-preserved artefacts have been published (Fotou 1993, 71). This increased diversity in shapes, decorations and specialised craftsmanship could be indicative of House Cm's potential to display wealth and power through ostentatious consumption on the upper floor (Right 2004, 90–100; Hastorf 2017, 130–3).

There have been different opinions concerning the exact context of House Cm's material assemblage. It has been recently suggested that the conical rhyta were intentionally placed in Room C58 with their conical edges submerged in the floor so that libations could be performed directly into the ground (Papadaki 2018, 43). However, Hood (1997, 113) observed the rhyta to be situated as follows: '*... the hoard of rhytons found standing with their bottoms upwards on the floor in room C58 in House Cm*'. Consequently, the bottoms of the rhyta were placed upwards, the rhyta themselves, then, upside down. This description fits the way we would have normally found a conical rhyton if it had fallen from an upper story. In her excavation report, Hawes noted '*... The value of vases 25–41 is greatly enhanced by their having been found together ... In rapid succession vase after vase was recovered from within and around the pithoi, where they had fallen in the collapse of the house ...*' (Hawes et al. 1908, 39). The excavation records are clear in that the rhyta were not excavated in their primary context of the upper story, but rather were found in a secondary context following some form of structural collapse. This disproves theories like Papadaki's (2018, 43) conjecture that the rhyta were used for libations in their excavated (secondary) context.

Based on the above, it can be concluded that the pottery attributed to the upper floors of specific houses in Gournia were similar to the pottery recorded on the upper floors of Houses AF and BS/BV in Pseira and Building D in Mochlos. Indicative items such as strainers, rhyta, and even bull-shaped rhyta were not found in every building in the settlement but only in the above specified locations. These assemblages were socially stratified, as evidenced by their relative scarcity amongst neighbours in their settlements.⁹

Another case from Gournia concerns the Southwest Court of the 'Palatial Building' (Fig. 18). The Southwest Court and Room 13 (located to the east of the Southwest Court) are related to collective convivial events (Soles 1991, 50; Watrous et al. 2015, 429–31). The Southwest Court is a small, paved area surrounding a stone (*baetyl*) that was probably considered to be an aniconic representation of a divine entity (Soles 1991, 36–7) (Fig. 22). Prior to the construction of Room 13 in the early LM IB period (c. 1480 BC), a small square room dating to the Middle Minoan (MM) IIIA (c. 1700/1650–1600 BC) existed and was in direct contact with the Southwest Court and the *baetyl* (Fig. 23). Two Neopalatial deposits have been recorded in the area of the Southwest Court and Room 13. The first deposit dates to the MM IIIA period, the second to the early LM IB, making it contemporary with the construction of Room 13.

The LM IB deposit yielded many handleless conical and bell-shaped cups, as well as other types of drinking vessels.¹⁰ Pumice was found around and inside some cups, and some were placed in an inverted position. Excavation also revealed a stemmed-cup rhyton and faunal material (Watrous et al. 2015, 430, fig. 22). The faunal material included animal bones, primarily of cattle and a pig, and seashells. Substantial quantities of figs, grapes, pomegranates, almonds and olives were identified in the same LM IB context.¹¹ The figs were present in the form of seeds with no actual fruits observed. Moreover, they had been exposed to high temperatures (Watrous et al. 2015, 456). Grape skin residue was identified and was most likely a result of the sediment that remained in cups after the consumption of wine. Finally, two concentrations of ash were unearthed. One concentration was likely related to charred wooden shelves placed in the room's north-west corner, and the other was probably the burnt remains from cooking activities. The excavator identified this as a sacred area on the basis of these assemblages, where the so-called

⁹ Soles 2022. Rhyta were also found in some more houses in Mochlos, based on the recent publication of the Neopalatial settlement. However, they were not found as clusters like in the cases of Houses Cm and Ac in Gournia or in Buildings AF and BS/BV in Pseira.

¹⁰ Watrous et al. 2015, 430. The exact number of cups has not been reported by the excavator.

¹¹ Watrous et al. 2015, 456; Watrous 2015. The concentration of pomegranates was so high that it was assumed that orchards were cultivated, inside or outside the town of Gournia, on arable land.



Fig. 22. The Southwest Court of the Palatial Building, Gournia. Photograph by the author.
© Ephorate of Antiquities of Lasithi, Hellenic Ministry of Culture and Sports.

‘Crisis Cults’ took place right after the volcanic eruption of Thera in the LM IA period (c. 1600–1480 BC) (Watrous et al. 2015, 433).

The MM IIIA deposit of Room 13 yielded hundreds of cups and bowls, pouring vessels, a firebox, a large kylix, and miniature cups.¹² The animal bones extracted from this deposit were more numerous than those found in the later deposit, and it also included fish bones. Around 80 per cent of the total pottery inventoried at the Southwest Court and Room 13 was found in the ‘small square room’ within Room 13, and more than around 60 per cent of the bones in this

¹² There is no reference by the excavator regarding the exact numbers of pouring vessels and miniature cups.



Fig. 23. Middle Minoan IIIA architectural remains in Room 13, Palatial Building, Gournia. Photograph by the author. © Ephorate of Antiquities of Lasithi, Hellenic Ministry of Culture and Sports.

assemblage was found alongside the west façade of the room. A total of 294 vessels came from both sides of the west wall, mainly including cups and bowls. It was postulated that this whole assemblage was a foundation deposit created during the celebration for building the relevant architectural phase (Watrous et al. 2015, 431–3).

In the above MM IIIA and LM IB assemblages of the Southwest Court and Room 13, combinations of artefacts such as drinking cups, bowls, cup-rhyta, miniature cups and animal bones can be discerned. These findings are very much in line with the assemblage from the ‘Theatral Area’ of Building B.2 in Mochlos as opposed to those assemblages which have been found on the upper floors of buildings such as Buildings AF and BS/BV in Pseira or Houses Ac and Cm in Gournia. As a result, two different categories of convivial events emerge from Mochlos, Gournia and Pseira, both with their own definable characteristics: upper floor feasting and outdoor feasting.

DISCUSSION

Gournia, Mochlos and Pseira offer robust evidence for the performance of commensality events in a ritualised manner. These events were organised in two distinct ways: either on the upper floors of buildings or in outdoor areas. Common, repeated features for each category of event leads us to the conclusion that feasting patterns existed and were employed by communities and individuals. As a result, the different social and/or political messages intended to be communicated would inform the host’s choice of indoor upper-story events versus outdoor events.

The first type of feast (Type A) was held indoors on the upper floors of prominent buildings in a settlement.¹³ This is supported by the presence of drinking cups, cooking pots, pouring vessels and

¹³ Almost all houses had a second floor. The basic traits of differentiation among individual houses are the co-existence of monumental traits of architecture (i.e., ashlar masonry, pillared/columned rooms, pier and door

special pottery types such as bull-shaped, conical and other types of rhyta and strainers which were used for social display.¹⁴ This is further corroborated by the fact that very few houses have such assemblages to exhibit. It is hence suggested that the hosts were intentionally and cognisantly using equipment of fine ware, elaborate decoration, and symbolic value (bull-shaped rhyta) during the ostentatious consumption of beverages and food along with their guests.

The second type of feasting (Type B) was performed in outdoor areas, like the ‘Theatral Area’ of Mochlos, Space AC10 in Pseira or the Southwest Court of Gournia. Occasionally, the court of an important house was specially designed to host events of commensality, exposing these events to the community’s attention. Therefore, anyone could participate, or at least observe, what was happening. In Type B feasting events, more common types of pottery were being used in large numbers such as conical cups, bowls, and kylikes, along with bowls and triton shells, cooking pots and more. More faunal remains are attested in Type B as well. The absence of elaborate types of pottery could be explained through the different kind of socio-political propaganda the organisers of these gatherings wished to promote (Driessen and Letesson 2023). A more in-depth analysis of each type of feasting is provided below.

Indoor feasts (Type A)

In Type A, the ostentatious consumption of beverages prevailed as is indicated by the use of specific combinations of pottery and domestic utensils appropriate for the manipulation of liquid substances as well as for social display. This observation also explains the sparseness of faunal remains on the upper floors of houses.

A variety of rhyta came to light on the upper floors of Buildings AF and BS/BV at Pseira in association with cooking pots and drinking and serving utensils. A similar assemblage of elaborate pottery, including 10 lavish rhyta, was also found in House BQ at Pseira where the vessels were found stored in a storeroom on the ground floor (Betancourt and Banou 1999, 135–6) (Figs 24, 25).¹⁵ Among the assemblage, a bull-shaped rhyton was found in conjunction with a triton shell. However, there is no detailed information regarding other portable finds in the room (Seager 1910, 30–2; Betancourt 1995, 12; Betancourt and Banou 1999, 134). An analogous case was attested in Palaikastro, where a cluster of rhyta was found stored in Room 4 of Block δ. In particular, an assemblage of 17 rhyta in total was unearthed, while one of them was decorated with painted double axes. Most of them were elaborately decorated and were found in correlation with triton shells (Dawkins 1902–3).

Out of a total of approximately 60 houses surveyed in Pseira, at least three provided evidence that pottery was used for social display in convivial events. The hosts were possibly using elaborate equipment of high symbolic value (i.e., bull-shaped rhyta) in order to drink and eat with other people in feasts of more restricted character in terms of small attendance and a confined location.

In House Ac at Gournia, groups of elaborate rhyta were found fallen in the rooms of the ground floor. Bull-shaped and conical rhyta from Gournia House Cm were observed in this same collapsed, secondary deposit state. The large number of high-quality pottery has led scholars to suggest that a pottery workshop functioned in House Cm or that it was the house of a pottery merchant (Watrous and Heimroth 2011, 206 n. 18). Based on the re-occurrence of such assemblages on the upper floors of other buildings in Gournia, it can be suggested that House Cm functioned as a place for Type A feasting to occur as opposed to it functioning as a more unique pottery workshop. These specific gatherings were aimed at communicating social display,

partitions and more) and of fine types of pottery as it was observed in the cases under study. Only in Gournia are there no significant architectural differences between houses. However, those which yielded evidence related to the performance of feasts had large storage capacity like House Cm.

¹⁴ On the use of strainers as objects probably related to meals, see L. Platon 2016, 250. He reached the conclusion that, ‘The high quality of the fabric and the presence of decoration in about all the specimens confirm that these vessels were also used by their owners for social display.’

¹⁵ This building was not selected as a case study due to its very limited architectural remains still standing.



Fig. 24. Bull-shaped rhyta from Buildings BQ and AF, Pseira. Photograph by the author.
© Heraklion Archaeological Museum, Hellenic Ministry of Culture and Sports.



Fig. 25. Ovoid rhyton from Building BQ, Pseira. Photograph by the author. © Herakleion
Archaeological Museum, Hellenic Ministry of Culture and Sports.

promotion of power, and socio-political influence. The presence of bull-shaped rhyta may further support this suggestion, since they are considered as utensils used by social elites and a type of artefact that is mainly found in domestic environments rather than palatial or funerary ones.¹⁶ Such elaborate groups of pottery have not been found in the ‘Palatial Building’ of Gournia in such large numbers. Another piece of evidence supporting the idea that ritualised feasting can and does take place in domestic spheres is the discovery of bull-shaped rhyta at Palaikastro, a non-palatial settlement, found in outdoor areas and probably collapsed from the upper floor of the Northwest Building (Knappett and Cunningham 2012, 219). However, there are examples of

¹⁶ Petit 1989, 16; Rehak 1995, 440. Regarding the evolution of the bull and the ‘*bucrania*’ (the bull’s horns) as symbols of power in prehistoric societies, which are inextricably intermingled with the ability to organise feasts, see Pollock 2015.

analogous assemblages of pottery found in palatial contexts since the Protopalatial Period. For instance, Room IL in the Phaistos Palace worked as a storeroom for bull-shaped rhyta, drinking and pouring vessels, triton shells and the skull of a goat. The assemblage has been interpreted as equipment used in feasts (Levi 1952; 1953; Sanavia and Weingarten 2016, 336–9).

Comparanda of Type A feasting can be found in Room H of the Unexplored Mansion in Knossos where an assemblage of artefacts fallen from the upper floor was found. Among the deposit, two stone rhyta were identified as well as a female figurine, five pyxides, at least 33 kylikes, 1079 cups, stirrup jars, pithoid jars and cooking vessels. This assemblage could be related to feasts that used to take place on the upper floor of the building (Popham 1984, 21). In Room 36 of the Little Palace in Knossos, an assemblage of stone rhyta was found which belonged to the upper floor's deposit. One of the rhyta was in the shape of a bull's head (Evans 1914, 64–74; Hatzaki 2005, 18–19). Another case is related to the so-called 'Treasury of the Shrine' in the Palace of Zakros. Elaborate pottery was found stored in order to be used elsewhere, perhaps on the upper floor of the building. An interesting observation regards the specific combinations of pottery types, such as conical cups, rhyta, triton shells and pouring vessels which were found together.¹⁷

Moreover, in the Neopalatial building from Splantzia, Chania, many handleless conical cups, three clay buckets and one rhyton were found inside the so-called Lustral Basin, probably after they had fallen from the upper floor.¹⁸ For this assemblage it has been stressed that it probably catered to ceremonies of restricted attendance, supporting the character of Type A feasting presented here (Borgna 2004, 257). In Rooms 17 and 18 of the Neopalatial Villa at Nirou Chani, an analogous assemblage was found, which was kept stored in storerooms of the ground floor level. It consisted of drinking cups, 'offering tables', a bucket-like vessel, jugs, a cooking pot, and a cup-rhyton (Sakellarakis 2011, 57–8, 59–61).

In later phases of Late Bronze Age Crete, namely in the Postpalatial LM III period (1400–1100 BC) onwards, assemblages related to convivial events continue to be found in secondary context deposits which originally belonged to the upper floors of buildings. In Room 1 on the ground floor of Building A-B of the Vrondas settlement, excavation revealed pottery related to the consumption of food and drink. The excavators believe that the diligent decoration of the pottery was meant to impress the participants during feasts. There is uncertainty, though, whether the objects had fallen from the upper floor. A rhyton and six kylikes bearing elaborate decorative motifs were identified in Room 3 along with skulls of wild goats. In Room B.4 cores of goats' horns have been identified as part of butchering remains (Preston and Snyder 2004, 69). Only Building A-B produced such an assemblage. Building A-B is also the largest building of the settlement, and the pottery found is the most elaborate compared to that recorded from the rest of the houses. Consequently, it has been suggested that it was probably the central building in a ranked society at Vrondas (Preston and Snyder 2004, 70).

A similar inference was made about the Postpalatial settlement of Karphi. Indications for the organisation of indoor feasts were found in several houses within the settlement with elaborate drinking equipment and other high-value artefacts recorded in the so-called Megaron, the Great House and the Priest's House. Elaborate kylikes and a few conical rhyta, which were kept as heirlooms since the LM IB period, were also found. Plain clay funnels are mainly attested to instead of rhyta due to the fact that during the LM IIIC period the making and use of rhyta had declined. Each house in Karphi was likely competing with one another by promoting their wealth and power through the performance of convivial events and the public display of their lavish possessions. As a result, even after the collapse of the so-called palatial system in the twelfth century BC, a considerable degree of social complexity and intra-settlement competitiveness can be discerned (Preston and Snyder 2004, 77–8; Wallace 2020, 27–8, 312–13). The few examples of LM IB heirloom rhyta probably formed a sociocultural implement

¹⁷ N. Platon 1974, 117–30. Regarding the social significance of rhyta see Vergaki (forthcoming).

¹⁸ Andreadaki-Vlazaki 1988, 66–72; 2002, 162. The excavator is not clear regarding the context of the objects. However, the rhyton was found on the landing of the staircase and thus seems to have rolled down the stairs.

used to demonstrate wealth while simultaneously referring to some distant past of affluence and social power from which the identity of their owners was drawn.

Considering the above analysis, indoor feasts, or Type A, used to take place within the confines of a settlement's distinct houses, specifically on their upper floors. These events were being performed by specific people or social groups (the so-called aggrandisers, referred to by Hayden [2014]), through the display of wealth, in order to exert social influence on the rest of the community and enhance social standing (Wright 2004, 138). To identify such a convivial event, we must take under consideration the following premises:

- Indoor feasts take place on the upper floor of a building.
- The presence of cups, bowls, pouring and serving vessels, cooking pots and miniature cooking pots along with types of pottery bearing exquisite decoration (consisting also of depicted symbols, i.e. double axes, *bucrania*, bulls' horns etc.), which contribute to social display, such as strainers, 'offering tables' and *rhyta*, is obligatory.¹⁹
- Animal bones are usually found. However, they are not in large numbers. An explanation could be that cleanings probably took place in the interior areas of houses and that a much smaller group of people was consuming the animal (fewer people equals fewer animals needed for the feast which means fewer refuse bones). Indoor feasts also focused more on the consumption of beverages, such as wine, rather than food.
- These events take place in the most distinct houses of a settlement, in terms of size, elaborate architecture and high-value possessions. These factors comprise what is called an 'elite house' in Minoan Crete.

In case none of these features are found in a domestic context, indicating the consumption of food and drink within this specific rigid ritual *habitus*, then the context becomes preparation and/or partaking of everyday meals.²⁰

Outdoor feasts (Type B)

Events of commensality were also taking place in courts within the house itself. These events were intentionally exposed to elicit community engagement and observation. Anyone could attend them, even indirectly, through watching and hearing as they were in relatively public spheres. These

¹⁹ Regarding the finding in combinations of specific types of pottery during feasts, see Borgna 2004; Hruby 2006, 227.

²⁰ This was indicated for the ground floor context of Room 6 of Building AF in Pseira, which was used as the kitchen of the North Wing. Moreover, in House C.1 in Mochlos, in Room 3, two cooking holes were excavated. One of them was full of grey ash and small pieces of charcoal. It appears to have been used many times. The second hole was similar to the first one but rather bigger. Fragments of cooking vessels, edible marine shells and remains of cattle were found in and around the holes. Occasionally, the holes were also used for discarding a variety of useless items. In addition, tripod cooking pots, cooking trays and dishes, with their internal surfaces burned, were found on the floor level *in situ*. The room was also used as a pantry and included numerous conical cups and other types of drinking cups, small tripod bowls and small jars. Hundreds of animal bones were retrieved during the excavation belonging to sheep/goats and only one to a pig. Also, bones of birds were identified and 20 different types of sea shellfish. This taxonomic variety led the excavator and his team to suggest that this material represents many successive meals (Soles 2022, 77). The kitchen from House C.1 represents one of the most characteristic examples of a kitchen, including the preparation, partaking and discarding of food in everyday meals. One more example associated with kitchen activities and everyday meals comes from the recent excavations in Gournia. In the north-east area of the town, Room 3 has been identified as a kitchen. The pottery included basins, amphoras, jugs and pithoi; however, cooking wares made up a large part of the ground floor's deposit along with animal bones and drinking cups. No special types of pottery, such as *rhyta*, have been recorded by the excavators (Watrous et al. 2015, 422). Finally, an interesting case has been observed in the palatial building of Galatas. In Room 12 ample animal bones were retrieved from the ground floor deposit, along with burnt soil, marine shells, cooking pots and clay portable ovens. The excavators interpreted the room as a kitchen in which the preparation of bread was also taking place, since hundreds of mortars were also found in the building (Rethemiotakis 1999, 101–2).

events were characterised by the ostentatious consumption of drink and food, mainly meat. It is observed that common types of pottery, in specific combinations, were found in each case of Type B feasting. These combinations include hundreds of drinking vessels (mainly conical cups), among which are a few in miniature proportions, some pouring and cooking vessels, and high percentages of faunal remains. Elaborate pottery is not frequently recorded in Type B feasting contexts. The frequent presence of triton shells in outdoor feasting areas suggests that the shells were used as bowls, scoops, or even as pouring vessels, a direct contrast to the rhyton used for similar purposes in indoor/Type A feasting events (Apostolakou et al. 2014, 326; Sanavia and Weingarten 2016, 336–9). Type B feasting was still stratified as to *who* could host the events, with the feast taking place only in the courts of houses that had gained sovereignty or prominence in a settlement, like Building B.2 at Mochlos, Building AC at Pseira or the ‘Palatial Building’ of Gournia.

Collective gatherings were a tradition in Minoan Crete, deriving their origins from the gatherings that used to take place in the vaulted tombs of the Mesara Plain (Rupp and Tsipopoulou 1999, 735–8; Wiener 2011, 355–9; Driessen and Letesson 2023). Many conical cups related to collective feasts came to light in lateral storage rooms or in outdoor paved areas which were gradually formed in the cemeteries of the EM III–MM IA period (2300–1900 BC). Feasts were also performed in sacred caves during the MM and LM periods, as was revealed in the Skoteino Cave and in peak sanctuaries like Juktas and Petsofas (Tyree, Kanta and Robinson 2008; Karetsou 1974; 1985; 1987; 2012; Myres 1902–3; Davaras 1972; 1981). Archaeological data indicating collective events are found throughout various palatial courts, specifically in the so-called Kouloures areas of Minoan palaces (Driessen and Letesson 2023).

In the area of the Kouloures in the Palace of Malia, many horns of goats along with drinking and pouring vessels have been recorded, although of uncertain dating. It has been suggested that collective feasts used to take place in the area (Chapouthier and Charbonneau 1928, 58). Similar findings were discovered in the Kouloures of the Phaistos Palace and have been interpreted as sacred deposits (Alexiou 1983, 159; Marinatos 1987, 135 n. 9). It is believed that the west courts of palaces were used for collective feasts and attended only by the social elite (Girella 2008, 176–80). Ample findings such as mortars and other tools for food processing led scholars to this conclusion, although they were not found in the courts but rather stored in the West Wing magazines (Driessen 2002, 8–10). In any case, it seems that collective feasts were being performed in outdoor spaces by those who had social sovereignty in a community or wider area. Many people would have attended the outdoor feasts, as is indicated by the number of findings in each case, such as hundreds of conical cups.

At Pseira, only the built pit from House AC indicates the performance of a feast. Unfortunately, its collective character cannot be verified due to natural site deterioration and collapse leading to the loss of portable finds, which tumbled down the slope of the cliff next to the house. However, the presence of feasting activity in the space is not up for debate, just the category of feasting activity itself. Still, the built pit of Space AC10 in House AC probably belongs to the category of ritual waste pits (Papadaki 2015, 15–25). The animal figurine which was found inside the pit enhances the symbolism of the actions, which included the consumption of meat. The construction of ritual waste pits has precedence in the EM III burial rock shelter of Pacheia Ammos-Alatzomouri, where five pits were found containing discarded pottery (Alexiou 1954). At Knossos, two rectangular cists, named conventionally as ‘Temple Repositories’, contained fragmented artefacts which had been used in a MM III–LM IA feast (c. 1700–1500 BC) (Betancourt 1998b, 127). One more pit containing commensality waste was identified in the Cemetery of Armenoi in Rethymnon, dating to the LM IIIA–B period (1390–1190 BC) and indicating a long-standing tradition within Late Bronze Age communities of ritual waste pits (Tzedakis and Martlew 1999, 111). The Kouloures, like ritual waste pits, have been interpreted as spaces for discarding the waste produced during collective events of commensality (Driessen and Letesson 2023).

At Mochlos, only the ‘Theatral Area’ of Building B.2 bears considerable evidence associated with convivial events of a collective outdoor character. The finding of animal bones along with many drinking and pouring vessels intimates the performance of feasts participated in by many.

The construction of benches served as a gathering/viewing point for people who wished to participate in the activities. A contemporary structure observed in Room 29 of the Southwest Building in Palaikastro contained two steps or benches that were reminiscent of those found in the Mochlos ‘Theatral Area’. It was suggested that Room 29 could have been a small theatral area, but this room was likely roofed, and the remains of the supposed benches were rather poor (Knappett and Cunningham 2012, 56, pl. 14b). The ‘Theatral Area’ of Building B.2 in Mochlos cannot be compared to theatral areas of the proper ‘palatial’ structures, either in size or construction, though there is clearly a connection based on the architecture, equipment, and archaeological assemblages.

The presence (albeit, scant) of human cranial remains, however, requires special consideration. The remains do not seem to comprise a deposit related to ancestor worship, as in the case of the adjacent Room 1.3 of Building B.2. In Room 1.3 the skull of a woman along with a jug was carefully placed in the floor as a symbolic action of keeping the dead member of a family (or *genus*) in the house. Careful deposition of human skulls indicating ancestor worship is often coupled with feasting or libation events to honour them. For instance, a skull was found in the ‘Myrtos Shrine Complex’ dating to the EM II period (2600–2300 BC) (Soles 2010, 331). Another fragmented skull was found in the building of Prophitis Elias at Pressos Siteias, dating to the MM IIIA period (1700–1600 BC). The same Pressos Siteias context included animal bones, sherds of pottery, a tool, and parts of wall frescoes (N. Platon 1960, 296–7). The cranial remains found in the ‘Theatral Area’ of Building B.2 are very fragmented and rather scattered in the area.

In the south-west sector of the ‘Palatial Building’ of Gournia, two clear episodes of collective feasts took place. After the end of each feast, the area was never cleaned and the organic remains as well as the cultural equipment were left *in situ*. Hundreds of conical cups, animal bones, and other food remains had not been removed, likely as mnemonic proof of these communal gatherings. The excavators suggested that the assemblage dated to MM III is a foundation deposit. It has recently been postulated that these kinds of deposits are related to the feeding of masons as compensation for their labour during large scale construction projects. These projects were likely under the supervision of the palaces’ rulers and elite (Fox 2012, 44; Shelton 2018, 195–6). The existence together of the participation of the multitude in large-scale building projects and the performance of feasts to celebrate them, as a community, is an attractive interpretation.

During the LM IB period, a new collective event took place, though similar in nature to its predecessor. This event included many participants, as indicated by the feast’s extant equipment. The Southwest Court is in close proximity to the ‘Palatial Building’; however, it should not be taken for granted that it comprises a part of the ‘Palatial Building’ itself. In the area where the ‘Palatial Building’ of Gournia today stands, MM IIIA architectural remains were recently unearthed, leading to the identification of where the performance of these ‘new’ feasts was organised for the first time at Gournia. This is the only area in the town where evidence for the performance of collective feasts has been traced. The later built Room 13 in the ‘Palatial Building’ must have been a storeroom or a closet for feasts’ equipment during the LM IB period, as opposed to where the events took place themselves.

At Palaikastro, conical and other types of cups are often found stored in stacks inside closets constructed close to entrances and open paved areas, as is the case with Rooms 10a, 11a and 45 of the Southeast Building. These assemblages of cups have been interpreted as supplies for feasting events. Apart from conical cups, the closets contained decorated drinking vessels, pouring vessels, and cooking pots, further suggesting the storage of collective feasting equipment (Knappett and Cunningham 2012, 320). Evidence for events of commensality is also found in Building 1 of Palaikastro, where drinking and liquid containers prevail over other types of pottery.²¹ Moreover, Building D.7 in Mochlos has been identified as a storage space for drinking cups, probably used during the performance of collective events of commensality (Soles 2022, 513–14).

²¹ MacGillivray and Sackett 2019, 437. See also chapter 7, pp. 349–69.

To identify a collective outdoor feast (or Type B) and distinguish it from the remains of either an everyday meal or indoor feasts, some particular traits should be identified:

- The feast takes place in an outdoor space/court, which occasionally has special and fixed configurations such as paved floors, benches, hearths etc.
- The court must be adjacent to, or an integral part of, the most distinct building in a settlement.
- There should be an abundance of drinking, cooking, and pouring vessels (cups, miniature cups, kylikes, jugs, cup-rhyta, seashells such as tritons, and cooking pots), which imply the participation of many people (Papadaki 2017, 41–2).
- Usually, there are no types of elaborate pottery (decorated strainers, conical rhyta, bull-shaped rhyta, fine ‘offering tables’ etc.).
- Large quantities of bones from animals such as goats, bovines, and occasionally pigs, as well as the remains of fruits and cereals.²² The maintenance of pigs is not just an indication of surplus production by the organiser of the feast but also part of the political economy (Hastorf 2017, 197). In many civilisations, even in modern times, it is common for pigs to only be eaten at feasts, and thus the presence of pig bones relays a message about the affluence of the feast’s host.
- In several cases of outdoor feasts a ritual waste pit designated for discarding feasting waste is constructed, containing fragments of the equipment that has been used during the feast, as well as food remains. These ritual waste deposits could be considered as long-lasting, on-site testimonies of memory and of material history (Papadaki 2017, 47). In other cases, the remains of the feast can be just left *in situ*.

CONCLUSIONS

At least two patterns of convivial events can be determined to have taken place in Late Bronze Age Crete. Both outdoor feasts and indoor feasts could be utilised as agents of important messages in terms of political economy and power. They could also serve to reaffirm the distinct social position of those who held the feasting events in a society of perpetual competitiveness among individual houses, even in settlements where a proper ‘Palatial Building’ existed.²³

Outdoor feasts were usually performed in outdoor spaces with intentional layouts, as in the case of the ‘Theatral Area’ of Building B.2. It seems that during the LM IB period, Building B.2 had exceeded all the intra-community competitions and had superseded Building D. Building D, which was built at an earlier stage than Building B.2, used to organise indoor feasts on its upper floor. Building D aimed to promote and display its ability of applying social and economic influence upon the rest of the houses. However, Building B.2 seems to have gained that status for itself and therefore exerted dominance in the settlement. There are few indications of indoor feasts on the upper floor of Building B.2, probably because they were not taking place in the LM IB period as the tenants of the building did not need to compete with other houses anymore. Building B.2’s social power was established, and it was only necessary to reaffirm it through public events in outdoor spaces. The consumption of meat, in particular of pigs, in the ‘Theatral Area’ of Building B.2 was a characteristic of the Neopalatial Period and a rather rare one.²⁴ It could be interpreted as an attempt by the tenants of Building B.2 to introduce new dietary habits in order to express not only their power, but also their innovational abilities as a social avant-garde.

²² For more information regarding the finding of faunal remains and/or the significance of specific animals in the archaeological record, see Boyd-Dawkins 1902; Bedwin 1984; Bloedow 1990; Huebner 2003; Bown 1990; Betancourt et al. 2008; Hamilakis and Sherratt 2012, 192; Vergaki 2022.

²³ Dietler 1990; Driessen 2018; Driessen and Letesson 2023. On a similar suggestion see Hamilakis 2002.

²⁴ Consumption of pigs was also attested in Nopigeia-Drapanias at Kissamos, Chania (Hamilakis and Sherratt 2012, 192).

At Pseira, House AC is among the most distinct residences. Outdoor feasts of a collective character were likely being organised in Space AC10, which originally would have had a larger footprint than the one we see today. However, strong rivals, Buildings AF and BS/BV, were gradually coming to the fore and threatening the eminence of House AC.²⁵ They were dynamically demonstrating their emerging social and economic power by performing indoor feasts on their upper floors and possessing lavish artefacts and special types of pottery. The efforts for social display and promotion can be detected in the use of strainers and rhyta. In particular, the presence of bull-shaped rhyta, implying the symbolic properties of a specialised type of pottery and requiring high-skilled craftsmanship, suggests exclusive use by the social elite. These objects worked as ‘prestige symbols’ used to compete for political and social dominance.

In contrast, lavish artefacts are not often found in outdoor feasts because there is no need for social display in this later, and presumably more stable, stage of social development. Indoor and outdoor feasts contributed to the creation of a specific social stratification based on inequality and ultimately led to the socio-political sovereignty of specific houses, which probably alternated in power (Twiss 2019, III).

At Gournia, even though the ‘Palatial Building’ is dominant, there is a flow of wealth and political power which is claimed by a few houses such as Cm and Ac, where indoor feasts were being organised on their upper floors. These feasts are in opposition to those taking place in the Southwest Court of Gournia’s ‘Palatial Building’ which were probably of a public character. Like in the case of Building B.2, open courts seem to have evolved into spaces of public interaction. From the relevant isolation and eclectic participation of people in the feasts of the upper floors, ruling houses moved towards the idea of interaction and collective gatherings (Driessen and Letesson 2023).

As a result, there is an interesting distinction: those who held social power used to perform feasts in outdoor areas which were exposed to the public, claiming collective recognition and support. In contrast, events of commensality which used to take place on the upper floors of buildings were more isolated and had an eclectic character. Following Hayden’s and Dietler’s work, it seems that those who organised such events aimed to promote and impose their superiority within the community as well as to make clear to rivals that they could not compete or return the host’s gifts and displays (Hayden 2014, 83–4), unless someone of the attendees (aggrandisers) was able to ‘answer’ and pay the ‘debt’ by offering another feast of similar or of superior value (Dietler 2001, 74–5; Hayden 2014, 59). An individual’s identity and ambitions, which were expressed through indoor feasts, were being degraded by collective identity and solidarity as soon as social dominance was acquired.

Analysing complexities of feasting patterns can be very informative regarding the processes of social organisation, economy and culture in the Late Bronze Age communities of Crete. Feasting represents a well-established way of social competition and claiming of sovereignty, especially within settlements which are still developing economically and socially, even when a dominant court-centred building has already emerged.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to thank McKenzie Hitchcock, archaeologist at the Death Valley National Park and a friend of mine, for editing and proofreading my paper as a native English speaker. Moreover, I am grateful to both the anonymous reviewers for their insightful comments, which were made in such a polite manner. I also acknowledge the valuable help of the Ephorate of Antiquities of Lasithi for allowing me to photograph the settlements under study and the Archaeological Museum of Heraklion. Last but not least, I thank Philip P. Betancourt for allowing me to use photographs and information from the relevant excavations at Pseira and David Reese for always being so willing to share knowledge and offer help.

vergakia@tcd.ie

²⁵ Building BQ could also be added; however, there is a lack of excavated evidence.

REFERENCES

- Adams, E. 2004. 'Power and ritual in Neopalatial Crete. A regional comparison', *WorldArch* 36.1, 26–42.
- Alexiou, S. 1954. "Υστερομινωικός τάφος Παχύαμμου", *CretChron* 8, 399–412.
- Alexiou, S. 1983. *Μινωικός Πολιτισμός* (Heraklion).
- Andreadaki-Vlazaki, M. 1988. "Υπόγειο Αδυτο ή 'Δεξαμενή Καθαρών'", *AAA* 21, 56–76.
- Andreadaki-Vlazaki, M. 2002. 'Are we approaching the Minoan palace of Khania?', in J. Driessen, I. Schoep and R. Laffineur (eds), *Monuments of Minoan: Rethinking the Minoan Palaces. Proceedings of the International Workshop 'Crete of the Hundred Palaces?' Held at the Université Catholique de Louvain, Louvain-la-Neuve, 14–15 December 2001* (Austin, TX and Liège), 158–66.
- Apostolakou, S., Betancourt, P.P., Brogan, T., Mylona, D. and Sofianou, C. 2014. 'Tritons revisited', in G. Touchais, R. Laffineur and F. Rougemont (eds), *Physis. L'environnement naturel et la relation homme-milieu dans le monde égéen protohistorique. Actes de la 14^e Rencontre égéenne internationale, Paris, Institut National d'Histoire de l'Art (INHA), 11–14 Décembre 2012* (Leuven and Liège), 325–32.
- Ballosi Restelli, F. 2015. 'Eating at home and "dining" out? Commensalities in the Neolithic and Late Chalcolithic in the Near East', in S. Pollock (ed.), *Between Feasts and Daily Meals. Towards an Archaeology of Commensal Spaces* (Berlin), 87–110.
- Banou, E. 1998. 'The pottery, Building AC', in Betancourt and Davaras 1998, 13–26.
- Barnard, A.K. and Brogan, T. 2003. *Mochlos IB: Period III. Neopalatial Settlement on the Coast: The Artisans' Quarter, and the Farmhouse at Chalinomouri. The Neopalatial Pottery* (Philadelphia, PA).
- Barrett, C.J. 1991. 'Towards an archaeology of ritual', in P. Garwood, D. Jennings, R. Skeates and J. Toms (eds), *Sacred and Profane. Proceedings of a Conference on Archaeology, Ritual and Religion* (Oxford), 1–9.
- Bedwin, O. 1984. 'The animal bones', in M.R. Popham, J.H. Betts, M. Cameron, H.W. Catling, D. Evely, R.A. Higgins and D. Smyth (eds), *The Minoan Unexplored Mansion at Knossos* (BSA Supp. Vol. 17; London), 307–8.
- Bell, K. 1997. *Ritual: Perspectives and Dimensions* (New York).
- Betancourt, P.P. 1995. 'Comments and conclusions, Block AG', in Betancourt and Davaras 1995, 12–13.
- Betancourt, P.P. 1998a. 'Other catalogued objects, Building AC', in Betancourt and Davaras 1998, 33–4.
- Betancourt, P.P. 1998b. 'The other catalogued objects', in Betancourt and Davaras 1998, 125–30.
- Betancourt, P.P. 2009a. 'Architectural history', in Betancourt 2009b, 155–61.
- Betancourt, P.P. 2009b. *Pseira X. The Excavation of Block AF* (Philadelphia, PA).
- Betancourt, P.P., Armpis, E., Mitrakis, G., Nikolaidou, M., Velona, E. and Zervaki, F. 2009. 'Architectural Phases 3 (Late Phase) to 5', in Betancourt 2009b, 17–26.
- Betancourt, P.P. and Banou, S.E. 1999. 'The pottery, Building BQ', in P.P. Betancourt and C. Davaras (eds), *Pseira IV. Minoan Buildings in Areas B, C, and F* (Philadelphia, PA), 134–6.
- Betancourt, P.P. and Davaras, C. 1988a. 'Excavations at Pseira, 1985 and 1986', *Hesperia* 57, 207–25.
- Betancourt, P.P. and Davaras, C. 1988b. 'Excavations at Pseira', *Cretan Studies* 1, 35–8.
- Betancourt, P.P. and Davaras, C. (eds) 1995. *Pseira I. The Minoan Buildings on the West Side of Area A* (Philadelphia, PA).
- Betancourt, P.P. and Davaras, C. (eds) 1998. *Pseira III. The Plateia Building* (Philadelphia, PA).
- Betancourt, P.P., Goldberg, P., Hope Simpson, R. and Vitaliano C.J. 1990. 'Excavations at Pseira: the evidence for the Thera eruption', in D.A. Hardy and C.A. Renfrew (eds), *Thera and the Aegean World, Proceedings of the Third International Congress, Santorini, Greece, 3–9 September 1989*, vol. 3, no. 3 (London), 96–9.
- Betancourt, P.P., Reese, D.S., Verstegen, L.L. and Ferrence, S.C. 2008. 'Feasting for the dead: evidence from the ossuary at Hagios Charalambos', in L.A. Hitchcock, R. Laffineur and J. Crowley (eds), *DAIS. The Aegean Feast. Proceedings of the 12th International Aegean Conference, University of Melbourne Centre for Classics and Archaeology, 25–29 March 2008* (Liège and Austin, TX), 161–5.
- Bloedow, E.F. 1990. 'The "Sanctuary Rhyton" from Zakros: what do the goats mean?', *Aegaeum* 6, 59–78.
- Borgna, E. 2004. 'Aegean feasting: a Minoan perspective', *Hesperia* 73.2, 247–79.
- Bown, W. 1990. 'Old bones reveal legendary Minotaur was all bull', *New Scientist* 1747 (15 December), 21.
- Boyd-Dawkins, W. 1902. 'Remains of animals found in the Dictæan cave in 1901', *Man* 114, 162–5.
- Chapouthier, F. and Charbonneau, J. 1928. *Fouilles exécutées à Malia*, vol. 1 (Paris).
- Davaras, C. 1972. "Αρχαιότητες και μνημεία ανατολικής Κρήτης", *ArchDelt* 27 (B2), 645–54.
- Davaras, C. 1981. 'Three new Linear A libation vessel fragments from Petsophas', *Kadmos* 20, 1–6.
- Dawkins, R.M. 1902–3. 'Excavations at Palaikastro II', *BSA* 9, 290–328.
- Dierckx, M.C.H. 1998. 'The ground and chipped stone tools', in Betancourt and Davaras 1998, 77–96.
- Dietler, M. 1990. 'Driven by drink: the role of drinking in the political economy and the case of Early Iron Age France', *JAnthArch* 9, 352–406.
- Dietler, M. 1996. 'Feasts and commensal politics in the political economy. Food, power and status in prehistoric Europe', in P. Wiessner and W. Schiefelhövel (eds), *Food and the Status Quest: An Interdisciplinary Perspective* (Oxford), 87–125.
- Dietler, M. 2001. 'Theorizing the feast. Ritual of consumption, commensal politics, and power in African contexts', in M. Dietler and B. Hayden (eds), *Feasts: Archaeological and Ethnographic Perspectives on Food, Politics, and Power* (Washington, DC), 65–114.
- Dietler, M. 2003. 'Clearing the table. Some concluding reflections on commensal politics and imperial states', in T.L. Bray (ed.), *The Archaeology and Politics of Food and Feasting in Early States and Empires* (New York), 271–82.
- Dietler, M. 2011. 'Feasting and fasting', in T. Insoll (ed.), *The Archaeology of Ritual and Religion* (Oxford), 179–94.

- Driessen, J. 2002. 'The king must die: some observations on the use of Minoan court compounds', in J. Driessen, I. Schoep and R. Laffineur (eds), *Monuments of Minos: Rethinking the Minoan Palaces. Proceedings of the International Workshop 'Crete of the Hundred Palaces?' Held at the Université Catholique de Louvain, Louvain-la-Neuve, 14–15 December 2001* (Austin, TX and Liège), 1–14.
- Driessen, J. 2018. 'Beyond the collective: the Minoan palace in action', in Y. Papadatos and M. Relaki (eds), *From the Foundations to the Legacy of Minoan Society: Studies in Honour of Professor Keith Branigan* (Oxford), 291–313.
- Driessen, J. and Letesson, Q. 2023. 'The gathering: collectivity and the development of Bronze Age Cretan society', *Journal of Archaeological Research* (2023) (available online <<https://doi.org/10.1007/s10814-023-09183-1>> accessed July 2023).
- Evans, J.A. 1914. 'The "Tomb of the Double Axes" and associated group, and the pillar rooms and ritual vessels of the "Little Palace" at Knossos', *Archaeologia* 65, 1–94.
- Floyd, R.C. 1995. 'Assessment of Minoan slips from Pseira, Crete, using scanning electron microscopy', *Materials Issues in Art and Archaeology* 352, 663–72.
- Floyd, R.C. 1996. 'The Plateia Building at Pseira: an assessment of activity areas and status within an Aegean Bronze Age household', *AJA* 100, 374.
- Floyd, R.C. 1998. 'The pottery', in Betancourt and Davaras 1998, 25–76.
- Floyd, R.C. 2009. 'Pottery from Block AF', in Betancourt 2009b, 39–94.
- Fotou, V. 1993. *New Light on Gournia. Unknown Documents of the Excavation at Gournia and Other Sites on the Isthmus of Ierapetra by Harriet Ann Boyd* (Liège and Austin, TX).
- Fox, S.R. 2012. *Feasting Practices and Changes in Greek Society from the Late Bronze Age to the Early Iron Age* (Oxford).
- Gesell, G.C. 1972. 'The archaeological evidence for the Minoan house cult and its survival in Iron Age Crete' (unpublished PhD thesis, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill).
- Girella, L. 2008. 'Feasts in "transition"? An overview of feasting practices during MMIII in Crete', in L. Hitchcock, R. Laffineur and J. Crowley (eds), *Dais. The Aegean Feast. Proceedings of the 12th International Aegean Conference/University of Melbourne, Center of Classics and Archaeology, 25–29 March, 2008* (Liège), 167–80.
- Hamilakis, Y. 2002. 'Too many chiefs? Factional competition in Neopalatial Crete', in J. Driessen, I. Schoep and R. Laffineur (eds), *Monuments of Minos: Rethinking the Minoan Palaces. Proceedings of the International Workshop 'Crete of the Hundred Palaces?' Held at the Université Catholique de Louvain, Louvain-la-Neuve, 14–15 December 2001* (Austin, TX and Liège), 179–99.
- Hamilakis, Y. and Sherratt, S. 2012. 'Feasting and the consuming body in Bronze Age Crete and Early Iron Age Cyprus', in A. Whitley, J. Monins, G. Cadogan, M. Iacovou and K. Kopaka (eds), *Parallel Lives: Ancient Island Societies in Crete and Cyprus* (London), 187–207.
- Hastorf, A.C. 2017. *The Social Archaeology of Food. Thinking about Eating from Prehistory to the Present* (Cambridge).
- Hatzaki, E. 2005. *Knossos. The Little Palace* (London).
- Hawes, B.H., Blanche, E.W., Seager, B.R. and Hall, H.E. 1908. *Gournia. Vasiliki and Other Prehistoric Sites on the Isthmus of Ierapetra, Crete. Excavations of the Wells-Houston-Cramp Expeditions 1901, 1903, 1904* (Philadelphia, PA).
- Hayden, B. 2001. 'Fabulous feasts: a prolegomenon to the importance of feasting', in M. Dietler and B. Hayden (eds), *Feasts: Archaeological and Ethnographic Perspectives on Food, Politics and Power* (Washington, DC and London), 23–64.
- Hayden, B. 2014. *The Power of Feasts: From Prehistory to the Present* (New York).
- Hood, S. 1977. 'Minoan town-shrines?', in F. Schachermeyr and H. Konrad (eds), *Greece and the Eastern Mediterranean in Ancient History and Prehistory* (Berlin and New York), 158–72.
- Hood, S. 1997. 'The magico-religious background of the Minoan villa', in R. Hägg and N. Marinatos (eds), *The Function of the Minoan Villa. Proceedings of the Eighth International Symposium at the Swedish Institute at Athens, 6–8 June 1992* (Stockholm), 105–16.
- Hruby, A.J. 2006. 'Feasting and ceramics' (unpublished PhD thesis, University of Cincinnati).
- Huebner, K. 2003. 'The Sanctuary Rhyton', *Anistoriton* 7, 1–20.
- Immerwahr, S.A. 1990. *Aegean Painting in the Bronze Age* (London).
- Karetsou, A. 1974. "Ἱερὸν κορυφῆς Γιούχτα", *Prakt*, 228–39.
- Karetsou, A. 1985. "Το ἱερό κορυφῆς Γιούχτα", *Prakt*, 286–96.
- Karetsou, A. 1987. "Δύο νέες επιγραφές γραμμικῆς γραφῆς Α ἀπὸ το ἱερό κορυφῆς Γιούχτα", *Prakt*, 85–91.
- Karetsou, A. 2012. 'Stone kernoi from the Juktas peak sanctuary', in E. Mantzourani and P.P. Betancourt (eds), *Philistor: Studies in Honor of Kostis Davaras* (Philadelphia, PA), 81–95.
- Knappett, C. and Cunningham, T. 2012. *Palaiakastro Block M. The Proto- and Neopalatial Town* (London).
- Koehl, R.B. 1990. 'The rhyta from Akrotiri and some preliminary observations on their functions in selected contexts', in D.A. Hardy and A.C. Renfrew (eds), *Thera and the Aegean World III*, vol. 1 (London), 350–62.
- Koehl, R.B. 2006. *Aegean Bronze Age Rhyta* (Philadelphia, PA).
- Koutsoumbos, P.N. 2010. "Οικιστική Αρχιτεκτονική της Εποχής του Χαλκού στην Ανατολική Κρήτη" (unpublished PhD thesis, National and Kapodistrian University of Athens).
- Kreinath, J. 2005. 'Ritual: theoretical issues in the study of religion', *Revista de Estudos da Religião* 4, 100–7.
- Kyriakidis, E. 2007. 'Finding ritual: calibrating the evidence', in E. Kyriakidis (ed.), *The Archaeology of Ritual* (Los Angeles, CA), 9–22.
- Leuven, J.C. van 1981. 'Problems and methods of Prehellenic naology', in R. Hägg and N. Marinatos (eds), *Sanctuaries and Cults in the Aegean Bronze Age. Proceedings of the First International Symposium at the Swedish Institute in Athens, 12–13 May 1980* (Stockholm), 11–24.
- Levi, D. 1952. 'Attività della Scuola Archeologica Italiana di Atene nell' anno 1951', *BdA*, 320–48.
- Levi, D. 1953. 'Attività della Scuola Archeologica Italiana di Atene nell' anno 1952', *BdA*, 252–70.

- McEnroe, C.J. 1998. 'The architecture', in Betancourt and Davaras 1998, 19–24.
- McEnroe, C.J. 2009. 'Architecture in Block AF North', in Betancourt 2009b, 33–7.
- MacGillivray, J.A. and Sackett, H.L. 2019. *Palaiakastro Building I* (London).
- Marinatos, N. 1987. 'Public festival in the west court of the palaces', in R. Hägg and N. Marinatos (eds), *The Function of the Minoan Palaces* (Stockholm), 135–43.
- Myres, J.L. 1902–3. 'Excavations at Palaikastro II. The sanctuary-site of Petsofä', *BSA* 9, 356–87.
- Papadaki, C. 2015. "Αποθέτετε σε αρχαιολογικά 'συμφοραζόμενα' των προϊστορικών χρόνων: θεωρητικό πλαίσιο και προτεινόμενος ορισμός", *CretChron* 35, 9–30.
- Papadaki, C. 2017. "Γιορτές κάτω από τη γη στη νεοανακτορική Κρήτη", *Αρχαιολογία και Τέχνες* 123, 38–47.
- Papadaki, C. 2018. "Μινωικοί βόθροι υγρών προσφορών: Ζητήματα ορολογίας και ερμηνείας", *CretChron* 38, 39–58.
- Petit, F. 1989. 'Les rhytons égéens du bronze moyen au bronze récent', in R. Laffineur (ed.), *Transition: le monde égéen du bronze moyen au bronze récent* (Liège), 13–19.
- Pitts, M. 2015. 'The archaeology of food consumption', in J. Wilkins and R. Nadeau (eds), *A Companion to Food in the Ancient World* (Oxford), 95–104.
- Platon, N. 1960. "Ανασκαφαί περιοχής Πραισοῦ", *Prakt*, 294–300.
- Platon, N. 1974. *Ζάκρος. Το νέον μινωικόν ανάκτορον* (Athens).
- Platon, L. 2016. 'Some fresh thoughts on the use of the Minoan "strainer"', in E. Papadopoulou-Chrysiokopoulou, V. Chrysiokopoulos and G. Christakopoulou (eds), *Achaïos. Studies Presented to Professor Thanasis I. Papadopoulos* (Oxford), 241–53.
- Platvoet, G.J. 1995. 'Ritual in plural and pluralist societies. Instruments for analysis', in J. G. Platvoet and K. van der Toorn (eds), *Pluralism and Identity: Studies in Ritual Behaviour* (Leiden), 25–51.
- Pollock, S. 2015. 'Towards an archaeology of commensal spaces. An introduction', in S. Pollock (ed.), *Between Feasts and Daily Meals. Towards an Archaeology of Commensal Spaces* (Berlin), 7–28.
- Popham, M.R. 1984. *The Minoan Unexplored Mansion at Knossos* (London).
- Preston, D.-L. and Snyder, M.L. 2004. 'The "Big House" at Vronda and the "Great House" at Karphi: evidence for social structure in LM IIC Crete', in L.-P. Day et al. (eds), *Crete beyond the Palaces* (Philadelphia, PA), 63–80.
- Privitera, S. 2004. 'Culti domestici a Creta nel TMIIIA2–TMIIIB. Per un' analisi contestuale', *CretAnt* 5, 107–33.
- Rappaport, R.A. 1971. 'The sacred in human evolution', *Annual Review of Ecology and Systematics* 2, 23–44.
- Reese, S.D. 1998. 'The faunal remains', in Betancourt and Davaras 1998, 131–48.
- Reese, S.D. 2009. 'Faunal remains from Block AF', in Betancourt 2009b, 131–42.
- Rehak, P. 1995. 'The use and destruction of Minoan stone bull's head rhyta', in R. Laffineur and W.-D. Niemeier (eds), *Politeia* (Liège and Austin, TX), 435–60.
- Rethemiotakis, Y. 1999. "Το νέο μινωικό ανάκτορο στον Γαλατά Πεδιάδος και το Ιερό Σπήλαιο Αρκαλοχωρίου", in A. Karetsou (ed.), *Κρήτες Θαλασσοδρόμοι* (Heraklion), 91–111.
- Right, C.J. 2004. 'Mycenaean drinking services and standards of etiquette', in P. Halstead and J.C. Barrett (eds), *Food, Cuisine and Society in Prehistoric Greece* (Oxford), 90–104.
- Rose, J.M. 1998. 'The fish remains. Building AC', in Betancourt and Davaras 1998, 37–8.
- Rowan, M.Y. and Ilan, D. 2007. 'The meaning of ritual diversity in the Chalcolithic of the Southern Levant', in A.D. Borrowclough and C. Malone (eds), *Cult in Context. Reconsidering Ritual in Archaeology* (Oxford), 249–54.
- Rupp, W.D. and Tsipopoulou, M. 1999. 'Conical cups concentration at Neopalatial Petras', in P.P. Betancourt, V. Karageorghis, R. Laffineur and W.-D. Niemeier (eds), *Meletimata. Studies in Aegean Archaeology Presented to Malcolm H. Wiener as He Enters His 65th Year* (Liège), 729–39.
- Sakellarakis, M. 2011. "Ο χαρακτήρας και η λειτουργία των νεοανακτορικών κτηρίων: Η περίπτωση του Νίρου Χάνι" (unpublished PhD thesis, National and Kapodistrian University of Athens).
- Sanavia, A. and Weingarten, J. 2016. 'The transformation of tritons: some decorated Middle Minoan triton shells and an Anatolian counterpart', in E. Alram-Stern, F. Blakolmer, S. Deger-Jalkotzy, R. Laffineur and J. Weilharter (eds), *METAPHYSIS: Ritual, Myth, and Symbolism in the Aegean Bronze Age* (Leuven and Liège), 335–44.
- Schoch, H.W. 1998. 'The charcoal remains. Building AC', in Betancourt and Davaras 1998, 39–40.
- Seager, B.R. 1909. 'Excavations on the island of Mochlos, Crete, in 1908', *AJA* 13, 273–303.
- Seager, B.R. 1910. *Excavations on the Island of Pseira, Crete* (Philadelphia, PA).
- Shelton, K. 2018. 'Citadel and settlement: a developing economy at Mycenae, the case of Petsas House', in D.J. Pullen (ed.), *Political Economies of the Aegean Bronze Age* (Oxford), 184–204.
- Sikla, E. 2011. 'The elusive domestic shrine in Neopalatial Crete: on the archaeological correlates of domestic religion', in K.T. Gloeckel and N. Vogeikoff-Brogan (eds), *ΣΤΕΓΑ. The Archaeology of Houses and Households in Ancient Crete* (Princeton, NJ), 219–31.
- Soles, J.S. 1991. 'The Gournia Palace', *AJA* 95.1, 17–78.
- Soles, J.S. 2004. 'New construction at Mochlos in the LM IB period', in P.L. Day, S.M. Mook and D.J. Muhly (eds), *Crete beyond the Palaces. Proceedings of the Crete 2000 Conference* (Philadelphia, PA), 153–62.
- Soles, J.S. 2010. 'Evidence for ancestor worship in Minoan Crete: new finds from Mochlos', in O. Krzyszkowska (ed.), *Cretan Offerings: Studies in Honour of Peter Warren* (Athens), 331–8.
- Soles, J.S. 2022. *Mochlos IVA. Period III. The House of the Metal Merchant and Other Buildings in the Neopalatial Town* (Philadelphia, PA).
- Soles, J.S. and Davaras, C. 1992. 'Excavations at Mochlos, 1989', *Hesperia* 61, 413–45.
- Soles, J.S. and Davaras, C. 1994. 'Excavations at Mochlos, 1990–1991', *Hesperia* 63, 391–436.

- Soles, J.S and Davaras, C. 1996. 'Excavations at Mochlos, 1992–1993', *Hesperia* 65, 175–230.
- Staal, F. 1979. 'The meaningless of ritual', *Numen* 26.1, 2–22.
- Turner, W.V. 1986. *The Anthropology of Performance* (New York).
- Turner, W.V. and Turner, E. 1978. *Image and Pilgrimage in Christian Culture: Anthropological Perspectives* (Oxford).
- Twiss, C.K. 2019. *The Archaeology of Food. Identity, Politics, and Ideology in the Prehistoric and Historic Past* (Cambridge).
- Tyree, L., Kanta, A. and Robinson, H.L. 2008. 'Evidence for ritual eating and drinking: a view from Skoteino Cave', in L.A. Hitchcock, R. Laffineur and J. Crowley (eds), *DAIS: The Aegean Feast* (Liège), 179–85.
- Tzedakis, Y. and Martlew, H. 1999. *Archaeology Meets Science: Minoans and Mycenaeans, Flavors of Their Time* (Athens).
- Vergaki, A.M. 2020. "'Ritual" contexts revisited. Case studies from the Minoan sites of Pseira, Mochlos and Gournia', *Chronika* 10, 94–105.
- Vergaki, A.M. 2022. 'Lonesome are the eyes. Remarks on the depiction of animals on the Aghia Triadha Sarcophagus', in G. Vavouranakis and I. Voskos (eds), *Metioessa. Studies in Honor of Eleni Mantzourani* (Athens), 271–85.
- Vergaki, A.M. forthcoming. 'Social organization and integration in Late Bronze Age Crete: let the rhyta speak', paper presented at the International Symposium 'Cultural continuity, change and interaction in the Aegean world from the second to first millennium BC', which was organised by DEÜ Archaeology and Archaeometry Application and Research Center in Turkey and took place online on the 18 November 2022.
- Walker, H.W. and Schiffer, B.M. 2006. 'The materiality of social power: the artifact-acquisition perspective', *Journal of Archaeological Method and Theory* 13.2, 67–85.
- Wallace, S.A. 2020. *Karphi Revisited. A Settlement and Landscape of the Aegean Crisis Period c. 1200–1000 BC* (London).
- Watrous, L.V. 2015. 'Gournia 2015: progress toward publication', *Kentro* 18, 12–13.
- Watrous, L.V., Buel, D.M., McEnroe, J.C., Younger, J.G., Turner, L.-A., Kunkel, B.S., Glowacki, K., Gallimore, S., Smith, A., Pantou, P.A., Chapin, A. and Margaritis, E. 2015. 'Excavations at Gournia 2010–2012', *Hesperia* 84.3, 397–465.
- Watrous, L.V. and Heimroth, A. 2011. 'Household industries of Late Minoan IB Gournia and the socioeconomic status of the town', in K.T. Glowacki and N. Vogeikoff-Brogan (eds), *ΣΤΕΓΑ: The Archaeology of Houses and Households in Ancient Crete* (Princeton, NJ), 199–212.
- Wiener, H.M. 2011. 'Conical cups: from mystery to history', in W. Gauß, M. Lindblom, R. Angus, K. Smith and J.C. Wright (eds), *Our Cups Are Full: Pottery and Society in the Aegean Bronze Age. Papers Presented to Jeremy B. Rutter on the Occasion of His 65th Birthday* (Oxford), 355–68.
- Wright, C.J. 2004. 'A survey of evidence for feasting in Mycenaean society', *Hesperia* 73, 133–78.

Ελάτε, ας φάμε και ας πιούμε μαζί: δείγματα συλλογικών γευμάτων και οι κοινωνικοπολιτικές τους διαστάσεις κατά την ύστερη εποχή του χαλκού στην ανατολική Κρήτη

Τα συλλογικά γεύματα θεωρείται ότι αποτελούν μία σημαντική εκδήλωση του υλικού πολιτισμού της Κρήτης κατά την Ύστερη Εποχή του Χαλκού. Ενδείξεις τους μπορεί να εντοπισθούν σε κάθε αρχαιολογικό περιβάλλον, ταφικό, ανακτορικό ή οικιακό. Η έρευνα, ωστόσο, παραδοσιακά επικεντρώνεται στην διερεύνηση του θρησκευτικού χαρακτήρα των ταφικών και ανακτορικών συλλογικών γευμάτων, ενώ παραμελεί ή/και παρερμηνεύει τα κατάλοιπά τους εντός οικιακού πλαισίου. Ως αποτέλεσμα αυτής της προκατάληψης, υπάρχει ένα αξιοσημείωτο κενό όσον αφορά σε μία εις βάθος αρχαιολογική ανάλυση των κοινωνικών, πολιτικών και ιδεολογικών σκοπών της πραγματοποίησης ενός συλλογικού γεύματος σε οικιακό περιβάλλον ή εντός των ορίων ενός οικισμού. Οι ερευνητές έχουν δυσκολευθεί να διακρίνουν διαφορετικούς τύπους με βάση το σχετικό αρχαιολογικό υλικό και συνεπώς οδηγούνται σε παρερμηνείες αναφορικά με τις διαφορές ανάμεσα σε επιμέρους είδη γευμάτων, στον συμβολισμό τους και στη συμβολή τους στην κοινωνική οργάνωση. Η επανεξέταση δημοσιευμένου αρχαιολογικού υλικού από τις νεοανακτορικές (1700–1500/1450 π.Χ. ή Μεσομινωική ΙΙΙΒ – Ύστερομινωική ΙΒ βάσει κεραμεικής) θέσεις της Ψύρας, του Μόχλου και των Γουρνιών στην ανατολική Κρήτη, υποδεικνύει την ύπαρξη δύο ειδών συλλογικών γευμάτων με συγκεκριμένα, επαναλαμβανόμενα χαρακτηριστικά. Επιπλέον, τα αρχαιολογικά δεδομένα υποδηλώνουν, ότι τα γεύματα αυτά στους ως άνω οικισμούς, λειτουργούσαν ως τελετουργίες με πολιτικά κίνητρα, έχοντας πρωταγωνιστικό ρόλο στη διαμόρφωση της κοινωνικής οργάνωσης μέσω ενδοκοινοτικών ανταγωνισμών.