CRETE (IRON AGE TO HELLENISTIC)

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Introduction

This year, the newly-published material bookends nearly a decade of archaeological work on the island with *ADelt* covering work on Crete from 2001 to 2004 and the second volume of *Archaiologiko Ergo Kritis* showcasing work in the years immediately before 2010. Several of the more impressive discoveries from the beginning of the decade have been known to the wider archaeological community for some time, but their publication in *ADelt* allows us to discuss them in greater detail and in their broader context. Overall, this is an opportune time to look at how some of the fieldwork done between 2001 and 2010 might contribute to our view of post-Bronze Age Crete.

Iron Age

The largest single contribution of the 2012–2013 reports to the Iron Age came in the form of the publication of the 2001–2004 seasons at the settlement site on Prophitis Elias hill near **Smari** (**ID3655**): an account that rounds out earlier notices for the 1999 and 2000 seasons (*AR* 53 [2006–2007] 107–08; **ID1814**). The site of Smari has entered the literature principally thanks to the megara with stone-lined hearths at their centre. The buildings have been interpreted as a ruler's dwelling, with some relationship to Cretan hearth temples, and as a locale for communal dining (Mazarakis-Ainian [1997] 220–21, 296; Prent [2007] 143; Sjogren [2007] 153; Wallace [2010] 112, 119). After a Middle Minoan occupation, the site's main period of use covers the whole of the Iron Age from Late Minoan IIIC through to the Orientalizing period, after which a small cult place remained in use through to the Classical period (fifth- to third-century BC figurines: Hatzi-Vallianou [2000]).

The 1999–2004 seasons have helped to clarify the process of this site's development over the course of the Iron Age and to illuminate the buildings surrounding the central megara. The result is a picture that adds complexity and variety to the accounts of the site in the secondary literature. At the centre of the site there are signs of continuity of form, with the discovery of a Geometric floor and hearth, at a deeper level than the final Orientalizing-period floor and hearth of megaron B. The discovery of rooms, including at least one megaron (2B), which contained household pottery, stone tools and animal bones, outside the 'peribolos' wall to the southeast, complicates the plan of the site. The presence of ramps over the megaroid building 2A-2B-3 and the prodomos of megaron A, each of which sealed Late Minoan IIIC material, could attest to centralization and the formalization of access routes. One striking discovery was the presence of footings for stone-built tables, to go along with the benches of megaron B, which could feed into the complex arguments over the function of rooms with hearths and benches in Iron Age Crete. Meanwhile, the discovery of a bone comb, together with beads of electrum and semi-precious stone, in layer 3 (LMIIIC to Geometric) of the prodomos to megaron D, should add a further element to the discussion of the status and function of these buildings.

Smari represents one element in a trend between 2001 and 2010, which saw important work done at several Iron Age settlement sites in the central region of Crete. At **Gortyn** (**ID203**, **ID267**, **ID780**, **ID1807**, **ID1915**), excavations on Prophitis Elias hill conducted between 2005 and 2010 revealed an area of dense eighth- and seventh-century habitation, constructed on terraces alongside a major thoroughfare running east–west (**Fig. 96**). The buildings vary in size and in the number of rooms, but were accessed from subsidiary alleys, running north–south, rather than from the main thoroughfare itself. The rooms feature built benches, slabs for footing roof supports, thresholds with pivot-holes and installations such as an oval stone hearth, a millstone, platforms associated with numerous pithos sherds and a lekane embedded in the floor. Residual material attests to a preceding Protogeometric phase and the excavators suggest that the area was abandoned gradually in the seventh and perhaps into the sixth century BC. They take the presence of a later wall over the site to be the peribolos of a sanctuary, which, if true, would suggest, as at Smari, cult activity after the site fell out of use as a settlement.

At **Prinias** (**ID198**, **ID264**, **ID1918**) the 2000s have witnessed both the publication of work done between 1969 and 2000 (Rizza [2008]) and the renewal of exploration at the site. Excavations conducted in 2005, 2007 and 2009 explored the earlier phases under the floor of temple A and a large building to the south of temple B, revealing an intriguing pattern of continuities and discontinuities in the use of space. Three strata are reported below the cella and pronaos of temple A: the first dating to Late Minoan IIIC, consisting of drinking and cooking vessels, together with bones and burnt seeds; the second, dating from the Protogeometric B to Geometric periods, consisting of kraters, cups and a figurine in what seem to be structured deposits; and the third, dating to the Late Geometric and Early Orientalizing periods, consisting of a mixture of cups and cooking wares. The excavators, meanwhile, identify in the large building to the south of temple B an initial cultic function, which was replaced by craft activities at a later date. At **Knossos** (**ID263**, **ID783**, **ID1811**, **ID1920**, **ID2804**, **ID2815**, **ID2900**) the 2000s witnessed the initiation of the ***Knossos Urban Landscape Project*** (KULP), whose team members argue, on the basis of their results (**Fig. 97**), that the model of numerous small settlements for the site in the Iron Age should be replaced with one of a very substantial nucleated settlement (Kotsonas *et al*. [2012]). As if in confirmation, excavations conducted in 2010 uncovered further Protogeometric to Orientalizing burials (two chamber tombs, 17 pit burials and 12 cist tombs) at the Teke portion of the north cemetery, to add to the large number already known.

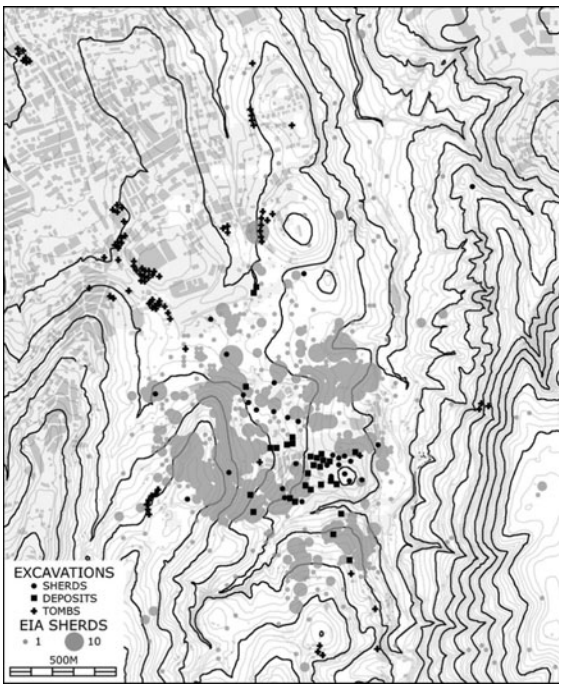
Eleutherna (**ID269**, **ID271**, **ID1827**, **ID2005**, **ID2768**, **ID2857**) too, continued to reveal its striking sequence of wealthy Iron Age tombs. By 2009, the tally of burials at the site was said to have reached 400. In 2012–2013 we were lucky to see some of the finds from Eleutherna's Iron Age tombs showcased in the exhibition *Princesses of the Mediterranean at the Dawn of History* at the Museum of Cycladic Art (December 2012 to May 2013).

Although many of the sites so far discussed have been known for a very long time, in recent years it has been work on Iron Age 'refuge' sites in the east of the island that has been most widely discussed, and that has set the pace of scholarship. This work in the centre of the island promises to rebalance the picture: already a view of the diverse types of community in the region has emerged, and fine-grained analysis of the patterns and forces underlying diversity should become increasingly profitable.

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96. Gortyn, Prophitis Elias: 2010 site plan.© SAIA.



97. Knossos: *Knossos Urban Landscape Project* survey plan showing the distribution of Early Iron Age settlement and cemetery remains, with grey shading showing concentrations of Early Iron Age pottery. © BSA.



98. Phaistos, Agios Ioannis: pottery from the Geometric tomb after conservation. © Ministry of Culture and Sport: 23rd EPCA.

2012–2013 also saw the continued gradual increase in the number of known Iron Age burials, with three new examples to add to the already substantial corpus (Eaby [2011] contains a very useful gazetteer and exploration of the patterns). A Geometric chamber tomb with two dromoi (one interpreted as belonging to a secondary phase) was found at **Agios Ioannis** near **Phaistos** (**ID3628**) (**Fig. 98**), but the region still has far fewer examples of the type than the area around Knossos. A small Late Minoan IIIC to Protogeometric tholos tomb was found at **Kera Pediados** (**ID3575**), on the road from Krasi to the Lasithi plateau. It contained four skulls, seven pots, a fibula, a stone tool and a bead. The tomb type, its contents and LMIIIC construction date are typical of the region. Further east, at **Drakos** (**ID3640**) near Agios Nikolaos, a pair of LMIIIC to

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Protogeometric pithos burials, within a stone-built construction, were found. Each pithos contained only bones but was accompanied by a couple of pots. This is primarily significant for giving us an extra spot on the map in an area that has a comparative dearth of Iron Age burials: the nearest comparanda are at Olous to the east and Dreros to the west.

Finally, it is worth mentioning one addition to the growing body of conference proceedings in which Iron Age Crete features prominently; 2013 saw the publication of the major 2006 conference entitled *Kreta in der geometrischen und archaischen Zeit* (Niemeier *et al*. [2013]).

Archaic to Early Classical

By contrast to the other periods covered in this overview, the Archaic to Early Classical is only poorly represented in the newly-published fieldwork. Low visibility particularly of the Archaic period is a longstanding and well-known problem on Crete. Traditional accounts attribute the 'gap' to some historical event, such as a famine or invasion (Coldstream and Huxley [1999]). Other interpretations find some explanation in a Crete-specific social trajectory: the island's dour warrior elites had little footprint in the material record (Whitley [2001] 250–52). In this case, the pages of *AR* itself may help to frame the debate. Material under-representation of the Archaic period is not an uncommon phenomenon, especially once one moves beyond the kind of material culture that features in Classical art textbooks. Already in the short life of this remodelled journal, contributors from a variety of regions of Greece have alluded to points of under-representation falling somewhere in the Archaic to Classical period (Stewart on the under-representation of Archaic and Classical material in the Peloponnese: *AR* 57 [2010–2011] 51; Archibald on the paucity of Archaic evidence from northern Greece: *AR* 57 [2010–2011] 91; Stamatopoulou on the relative paucity of Archaic cemeteries in Thessaly: *AR* 58 [2011–2012] 86). A more fine-grained understanding of precisely how Crete compares to other regions of Greece in terms of the visibility of its Archaic material culture may help to advance the debate.

The years bookended by the reports covered in this survey in fact witnessed a couple of momentous new developments on this front. First, Brice Erickson's *Crete in Transition: The Pottery Styles and Island History in the Archaic and Classical Periods* (2010) lays out a sequence in some pottery shapes which bridges the 'gap' and which will undoubtedly form the seed from which our understanding of the period will grow. Second, excavations conducted at the site of **Azoria** (**ID184**, **ID765**, **ID1700**, **ID2856**) between 2002 and 2006 have revealed an extensive settlement belonging to the most problematic period (the excavators believe there was a major episode of construction at the beginning of the sixth century and that the site was destroyed at the beginning of the fifth). Nevertheless, the period remains a very poorly-represented one, with important sites, like Knossos, having a major lacuna within it. Indeed, in this overview we have already come across one typical example of the more general pattern in the case of Smari, where the site has Orientalizing and fifth-century votives attributed to a cult of Athena, but the sixth century is either absent or has not been identified.

Four discoveries reported in 2012–2013 might be able to make some contribution to the problem, albeit with further study. First, there is the excavation of an Archaic farmstead with a phase reportedly dating to the lacunose sixth century (600–550 BC) near the Church of Agios Konstantinos, uncovered as part of the rescue work done for the **Aposelemis** (**ID3645**) dam project. This could be important for a couple of reasons. It could help to triangulate a comparison with Archaic buildings within nucleated settlements, as uncovered at Azoria, and peri-urban structures interpreted as being of special function (like the Archaic building partially uncovered at **Itanos** in the 1990s that has become one of the foci of new study at the site: **ID2822**; http://crea.ulb.ac.be/Itanos.html). Additionally, as one potential explanation of low visibility is always a changing settlement pattern, a rural site like this could assist in the spotting of similar sites elsewhere and help in our understanding of changing land use.

Second, there is the information that the richest phase of the **Patsos** cave (**ID3612**, see also **ID1846**) is the Archaic one. This is potentially important as, hitherto, the sanctuary has drawn more attention for its Bronze and Early Iron Age remains, and has seen even Roman and Hellenistic finds more frequently entering the literature than those of the Archaic period (Prent [2005] 156–58). Understanding the dynamics of dedication in the Archaic period is a prerequisite to understanding apparent lacunae at sanctuary sites such as Smari.

Third, there is the report of a Late Archaic over life-size statue of a warrior, suggested to be the product of an island workshop, found at **Stavros Akrotiriou** (**ID3599**). On the one hand, this statue joins a small but significant corpus of finds that do not quite fit the narrative of Archaic to Early Classical austerity. On the other hand, that this discovery falls within the territory of ancient Kydonia is potentially significant, given that Kydonia enjoyed a special relationship with Aegina, manifested in other forms of material culture (coinage: Stefanakis [1999]; inscriptions: Jeffrey [1990] 314). Aegina is home to the pediments of the Temple of Aphaia, graced by a series of sculpted warriors of the same period.

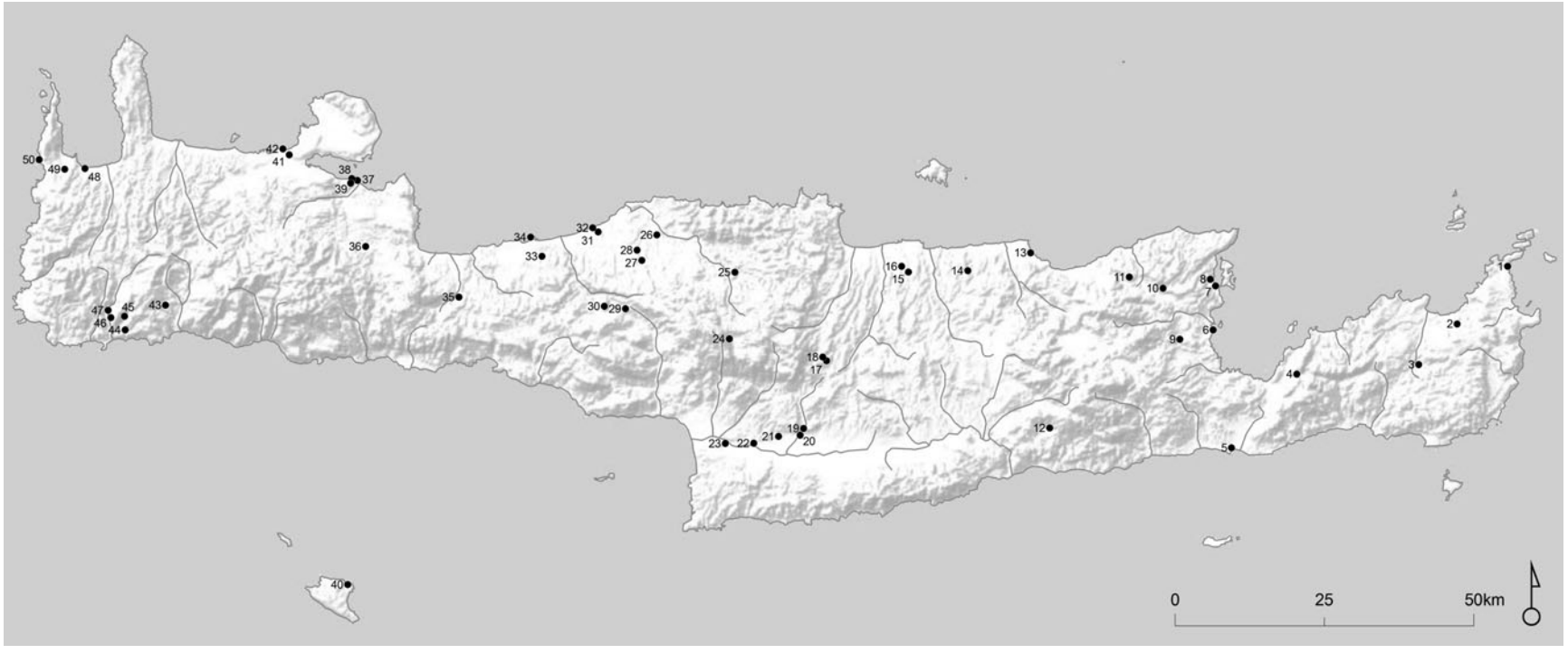
Finally, and perhaps most importantly, at **Stylos** a pottery kiln surrounded by production debris is noted, which reportedly continues throughout the problematic period from the seventh through to the fifth century BC (**ID3600**). This is just the kind of discovery that could find a key role in helping to push our knowledge of sixth-century pottery developments forward, consolidating the basic framework of this difficult period.

The long Hellenistic period

In preparing an overview of field reports like this, it soon becomes obvious that there are certain blocks of time that stand out as more or less coherent and distinct in terms of their representation in the archaeological record. These blocks of time give a staccato rhythm to a regional archaeology that is sometimes in harmony with and sometimes discordant with the grand narratives of classical archaeology. Of these blocks of time on Crete, by far the best represented (after the Bronze Age) is the era running from the fourth century BC through to the first century BC: that is to say the stretch of time covered by the Late Classical, Hellenistic and Early Roman periods. At least, at a superficial level, the high visibility of this period in the reports for 2012–2013 fits with the general pattern by which the peaks and troughs of material representation in the Cretan archaeological record are somewhat out of synchronism with those witnessed on the southern Greek mainland (for further discussion, see Bintliff [2012] 313–18).

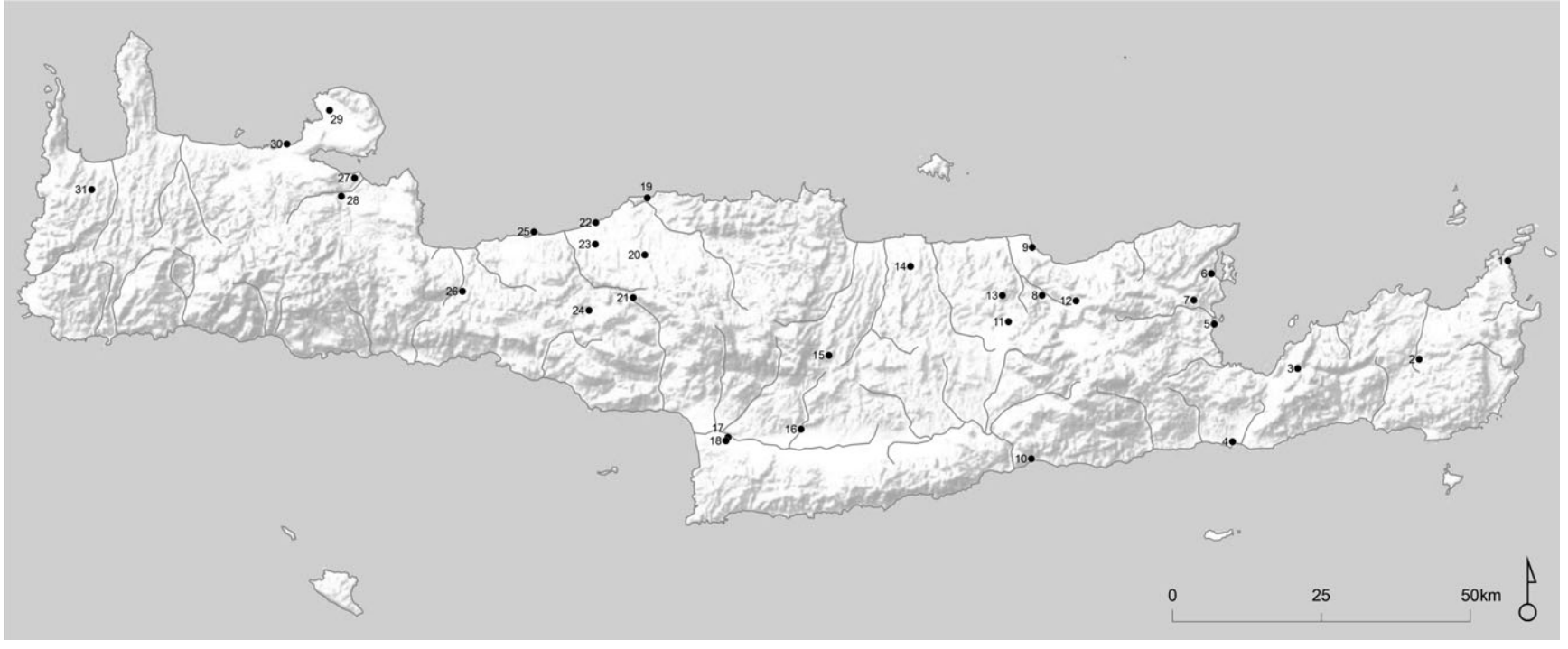
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Map 6. Crete 2011–2012: Iron Age to Roman sites. 1.Itanos; 2. Roussa Ekklesia-Kastri; 3. Praisos; 4. Azoria; 5. Ierapetra; 6. Agios Nikolaos; 7. Olous; 8. Schisma Eloundas; 9. Lato; 10. Dreros; 11. Anavlochos; 12. Viannos; 13. Chersonesos; 14. Skopela-Kephala; 15. Knossos; 16. Ambelokipi; 17. Prinias; 18. Dodeka Apostoloi; 19. Prophitis Elias; 20. Gortyn; 21. Kastelli; 22. Moires; 23. Phaistos; 24. Idaean Cave; 25. Axos; 26. Perama; 27. Eleutherna; 28. Alpha-Mnemata; 29. Sybrita; 30. Veni; 31. Chamalevri; 32. Sphakaki; 33. Agia Eirini; 34. Rethymnon; 35. Lappa; 36. Vaphes; 37. Kyani Akti; 38. Kalami; 39. Aptera; 40. Gavdos; 41. Chania – cemeteries; 42. Chania – settlement; 43. Elyros; 44. Anydroi; 45. Azogyres; 46. Spanakianos; 47. Vlythias; 48. Kisamos; 49. Phournados; 50. Phalasarna.

Readers can now compare the range of sites reported for 2011–2012 (above) with those referred to in *AG* 2013 (map 7).



Map 7. Crete 2012–2013: Iron Age to Roman sites. l. Itanos; 2. Praisos; 3. Azoria: 4. Ierapetra; 5. Agios Nikolaos; 6. Schisma Eloundas; 7. Drakos; 8. Aposelemis; 9. Chersonesos; 10. Kastri Keratokampou; 11. Kastelli Pediados; 12. Kera Pediados; 13. Smari; 14. Knossos; 15. Prinias; 16. Gortyn; 17. Phaistos (survey); 18. Agios Ioannis/Phaistos; 19. Panormos; 20. Eleutherna; 21. Agia Photeini (ancient Sybrita); 22. Sphakaki; 23. Loutra; 24. Patsos Cave; 25. Rethymnon; 26. Argyroupolis; 27. Aptera; 28. Stylos; 29. Stavros Akrotiriou; 30. Chania; 31. Polyrrhenia.

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As elsewhere in the Greek world, one of the major issues in this period on Crete is the balancing of continuities and discontinuities in the archaeological record (see, for example, Alcock [2002] 106–09). The historical accounts emphasize the instability of the age, with warfare between the Cretan poleis and the involvement of Mediterranean powers culminating in the hard-fought Roman conquest of the island in 62 BC. Certainly there were several prominent casualties, which are attested archaeologically, such as **Praisos**, excavated most recently by the BSA in 2007 (**ID266**, **ID1794**), and **Phaistos**, currently being surveyed by SAIA and the 23rd EPCA (**ID268**, **ID789**, **ID1820**, **ID1917**, **ID2821**) in a project that will hopefully shed more light on the precise process by which this long-lived site was abandoned. In the balance is the evidence for *sympoliteia* between Gortyn and Phaistos in the third century (*IC* 4.165; *SEG* 23.563; see Chaniotis [1996] 105–07, 422–28) and Strabo's statement that Gortyn razed Phaistos to the ground (Strabo 10.4.14). But the main contribution of the reports of 2012–2013 is to balance the other side of the ledger with a series of small-scale (but possibly for that very reason significant) continuities. Indeed, these continuities are some of the membranes that give this period the distinct coherence referred to in the previous paragraph. They range from cemeteries that have their first phase of use in the Late Classical and continued well into the Imperial period (as at **Schisma Eloundas ID3579** and **Aptera ID3584**); through bath-houses that were first built in the second century BC, before the Roman conquest, but continued into Imperial times (at **Chersonesos ID3629**); to individual houses and workshops that were first used in Hellenistic or even Late Classical times, but which remained occupied into the Roman period (at **Kastelli Pediados ID3632**, **Chania ID3588**, **Argyroupolis ID3660**, **Agia Photeini ID3659** and **Loutra ID3662**). The last are perhaps the most interesting for any consideration of the impact of a turbulent time on the flow of people's lives, and as such it might be important that the examples thrown up by the 2012–2013 reports cover both vernacular buildings in towns and those in the countryside.

A related and equally fundamental axis of debate for our understanding of the period concerns the nature of the **Cretan economy** and the pace of economic change. One side of the argument views the economy of the island as being oriented primarily towards subsistence farming with minimal trade until very late in the Hellenistic or even the Roman period (Chaniotis [1999] 184; [2005]). The other side of the argument believes that a major shift happened much earlier, as the island opened up and became entwined in the trade routes of the eastern Mediterranean (Harris [1999] 357–58; Perlman [1999]; Watrous [2001]; Gallimore [2011] 407–15). A number of the discoveries reported in 2012–2013 might be relevant to a distinctively archaeological perspective on the argument, aiding the orientation of the debate between these poles. At the most unrefined level, of course, the very material visibility of this period, in contrast to the preceding one, should connote a major gear-shift in aggregate levels of consumption from the fourth century BC onwards. Similarly, items such as the Megarian bowls and Tanagra figurines found at **Kastri Keratokampou** are indicative of Crete's involvement in wider trade networks and cultural trends (**ID3637**). More fine-grained studies have been relatively rare on Crete (one recent exception is Gallimore [2011]). However, there are signs within the work done during the years bookended by the reports of this year that there are interesting patterns to explore. To modern eyes, Kastri Keratokampou is off the beaten track. But the reports of imports or off-island imitations at this site seems to contrast with reports from the major contemporary city of **Praisos**, where preliminary indications suggest that a very small proportion of the assemblage consists of imports. This might suggest that comparison of assemblages between settlements is a profitable avenue of future research and is just the kind of study to which the finds from even small-scale rescue excavations could contribute.

The reports of 2012–2013 also add grist to the mill of debate over modes of production on Crete in the Hellenistic period. Kilns have been reported at **Kastri Keratokampou** (**ID3637**) and **Loutra** (**ID3662**). The potential of such discoveries has been demonstrated by Marangou-Lerat's (1995) study of kilns involved in amphora production, as part of her work on the Cretan wine trade. This is one of the seminal studies into this period – one of the pillars of Chaniotis' view of the economy (cited above) – and the study of amphora production remains the most active and productive arena for research in this period (see, for example, Vogeikoff-Brogan and Apostolakou [2002]; Eiring et al. [2002]). It would, nevertheless, be enlightening to see the debate extended to encompass the production of other pottery types. Elsewhere, evidence of craft or of workshops is reported at **Kastelli Pediados** (**ID3632**), **Ierapetra** (**ID3569**) and **Panormos** (**ID3611**). The last of these, where a single building is said to have produced evidence for both textile production and pottery making, may be particularly interesting with regards to recent trends in the debate. These have started to explore the degree to which craftsmanship was specialized and related to the household, whether or not it was undertaken as an independent means of livelihood and the degree to which it mobilized labour beyond the domestic unit (Tzachili [2008]; Tsatsaki [2010]).

More generally, the reports of this year give us a collage of snapshots illustrating the fabric of urbanism in Hellenistic Crete. A large number of sites have revealed Hellenistic domestic buildings, with deposits shedding light on their use (e.g. **Sphakaki ID3616**, **Rethymnon ID3615**, **Panormos Lake ID3611**, **Phaistos ID3628**). A building discovered at **Agia Photeini** (ancient Sybrita, **ID3659**) can stand as a good example, illustrating the typical spectrum of finds. The building had the usual range of serving pottery (cups, prochoes, etc.), implements of domestic life (lekanes, stone tools, lamps), facilities for agricultural storage and production (beehives, pithoi) and textile production (loomweights), but also a few more luxurious goods (fragments of metal vases). Several major centres have revealed glimpses of affluence in urban life. At **Agios Nikolaos** (**ID3583**) Late Hellenistic public buildings, graced with stone sculpture, have been found and two Late Hellenistic silver kantharoi were discovered amongst buildings elsewhere in the city. Meanwhile, at **Chersonesos** (**ID3629**) a bath-house with its main phase in the second century BC was graced with the statue of an athlete and elsewhere a second- to first-century BC courtyard house was excavated. In the secondary literature the appearance of the latter type has become emblematic of the realignment of Cretan lifestyles to broader Hellenic 'norms' and a concomitant change in social and political structures (Westgate 2007).

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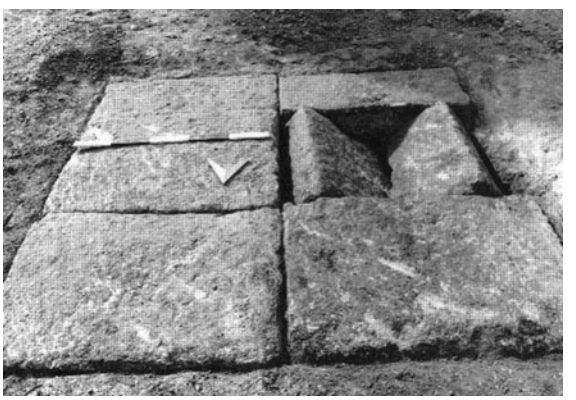
It is through the various rescue excavations at **Chania** (**ID3587**, **ID3588**, **ID3589**, **ID3592**) that we can perhaps gain a glimpse of the variety of **urban space**. Excavations in a relatively central portion of the city, at Plateia 1866, revealed Hellenistic buildings with pebble and plaster floors which replaced Late Classical buildings with beaten earth floors. Just to the east, at the junction of Peridou and Ypsilantou Streets, excavations revealed a monumental Roman building with a well containing fourth-century BC material beneath it. Heading out of the ancient city to the south, excavations on Botsari Street uncovered Hellenistic buildings with dirt floors and a dirt road running between them, while on the western outskirts there is an interesting area with a cobbled alley, tombs and workshops.

The single greatest corpus of new material this year comes from Late Classical to Early Roman cemeteries. The information on these is amongst the most detailed in the latest volume of *ADelt* and the sites providing the evidence cover most of the island with **Itanos** (**ID3570**), **Ierapetra** (**ID3569**), **Agios Nikolaos** (**ID3583**) and **Schisma Eloundas** (**ID3579**) represented in the east, **Chersonesos** (**ID3629**) in the centre of the island and **Aptera** (**ID3584**), **Chania** (**ID3590**, **ID3591**) and **Polyrrhenia** (**ID3601**) in the west. Several of these sites have been worked on for some time or have been repeatedly worked on over the years. Altogether this makes for a tremendous dataset, which could potentially shed a great deal of light over a whole range of issues in this period. Interesting patterns immediately jump out. There are several consistencies that seem to run across the island. The dead, for instance, are often laid in a supine position, with the head to the east, or child burials are frequently accompanied by astragaloi. At both Ierapetra and Agios Nikolaos these are said to have been scattered around the children's legs. In other cases there seem to be interesting divergences between sites: at Chersonesos, for example, oinochoae/prochoes seem to be amongst the most common grave goods and only a couple of lamps are mentioned, whereas at Aptera lamps are said to be the most common grave goods and only one oinochoe is mentioned. Occasionally these patterns of difference between sites are very striking: it is only at Chersonesos, for instance, that horse burials are mentioned, an extremely unusual phenomenon for the period. A host of questions, inspired by pioneering work done on Greek burial assemblages elsewhere, could be asked of this material. What accounts for the differences and similarities between sites? Why, given pre-industrial child mortality rates, are there so few child burials mentioned (for example, only two out of 58 burials at Agios Nikolaos)? What, therefore, was the status of those children that have been found? What underlies the wealth differentials, so that one grave at Agios Nikolaos might have a lekane, an unguentarium and a loomweight, whilst others contained gold jewellery or ivory beads in a pyxis? Or, given the overall consistencies in grave goods, how do we explain occasional finds such as terracotta masks, eggshells or metal wreaths? These days it is pretty much accepted that status in life cannot be straightforwardly read from grave goods, and the overall homogeneity of the record is probably the backdrop against which patterns and striking instances should be understood.

Many of the tomb types, like the tile graves, and grave goods, like the lekythoi or unguentaria, will be immediately familiar from more general Greek patterns in Late Classical, Hellenistic or Early Roman burial. Others, like the late fourth-century nine-chambered graves at Chania, are more exotic, with parallels in the eastern Mediterranean, on Cyprus, in Palestine, Egypt and Cyrenaica. An exploration of the external influences on Cretan burial patterns, therefore, is likely to be profitable and related to the themes of economy and trade just discussed.

One area related to burial is the **epigraphy of death** – the various epigrams of this period. A whole series of themes could be examined by looking at the epigrams and the archaeological record in parallel: individual versus community identity or attitudes to death for instance. A systematic comparison, an examination of the contrasts and interconnections between the materiality of the graves and the written memorials placed upon them, could be extremely fruitful. One potential obstacle to such a study will be that many of the stone stelae seem to turn up as spolia, reused in the walls of tombs or nearby buildings. But, while this might impede one-to-one comparison in many instances, it should not prevent a more general overlaying of patterns from being illuminating. At the very least, tombs like those excavated at **Polyrrhenia** (**ID3601**, cist tombs associated with transport amphorae) give an extra contextual dimension to supplement entirely textual approaches to nearly contemporary epigrams from the same site, such as the famous example that seems to allude to the supposedly primitive institutions that are the focus of many text-based discussion of Crete: 'Adrastos, you who were famous out of the *agela*, loathsome fate has brought you down, to Acheron the place of groaning' (*IC* 2.23.30).

As with the urban sphere, it is **Chania** (**ID3590**, **ID3591**) that gives us the best perspective on the variety of burials from a single site. The graves are reported in two clusters. The first came from various properties on Renieri Street, just to the west of the ancient city. Some of the tombs there were of typical types – cist, pit and tile graves – but some, at least, contained exceptional finds. A double cist grave (**Fig. 99**) with plastered stone walls, for example, contained, in one of its cists, an iron strigil and a wreath of bronze leaves, myrtle flowers painted blue, faience rosettes and yellow painted fruit. Trenches and pyres with burnt pottery and figurines were associated with the graves. Further cist and tile graves were found to the south on Igoumenou and Vamvaka Streets. As with the Renieri examples, the graves were oriented north–south. The Renieri plots also revealed two Hellenistic multi-chambered



99. Chania, Renieri Street: double cist tomb. © Ministry of Culture and Sport: 25th EPCA.

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graves. Both were used in Roman times, but the surviving Hellenistic burials and grave goods were consistent with those found in less exceptional tombs of the period. One burial, for instance, was simply accompanied by a strigil and four unguentaria. Other finds include gilded clay jewellery, mirrors, coins, eggshells, lamps and figurines. Obviously, there is some more complex pattern here than a straightforward correlation of investment in an exotic tomb type and the placing of the most exceptional grave goods to accompany the dead. Some distance to the north of these graves, much closer to the sea, another broadly contemporary cluster of burials was discovered in the area of the National Stadium. Here 81 burials were uncovered, cut into a deep layer of sand. Many of the burials seem consistent with socially marginal groups. Sixty of the burials were *enchytrismoi*, containing premature or new-born infants. One of the pit graves contained a man accompanied by iron shackles (**Fig. 100**) and another at least 12 bodies of individuals in poor physical condition accompanied by a lekane, a lamp and a lagynos. This is the second mass-grave reported from the city. The other, further inland, contained at least 40 individuals and has been interpreted as a burial of defeated enemies (Bourbou and Niniou-Kindeli [2009]). But social marginality may not be the whole story, as there are also two tile graves in the cluster and general finds include such items as an iron strigil and silver *danake* (**Fig. 101**). In short, Chania, in spite of the overburden of the modern city, is offering up a veritable death-scape; fuel surely for any number of potential lines of research. The grand themes of Crete's Hellenistic history, its conservative traditions wrestling with social upheaval, economic development accompanying piracy, inter-polis rivalry, a flourishing slave trade and a strategic position on blossoming Mediterranean trade networks, intersect the evidence from these burials in innumerable ways. This should be more than enough to demonstrate the potential and appeal of Crete's archaeology after the Bronze Age.



100. Chania, National Stadium site: iron shackles from grave 36. © Ministry of Culture and Sport: 25th EPCA.



101. Chania, National Stadium site: silver *oboloi* of Axos and Itanos from graves 7 and 43. © Ministry of Culture and Sport: 25th EPCA.

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THE AEGEAN ISLANDS (PREHISTORIC TO ROMAN)

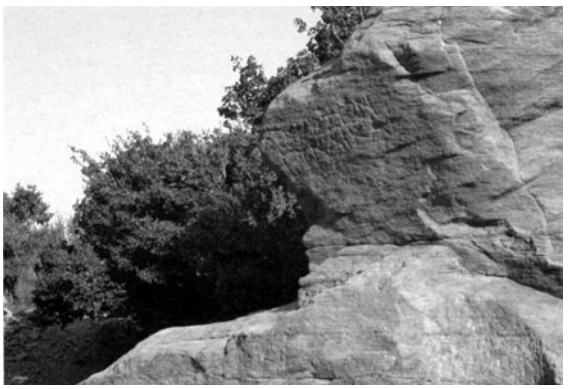
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Introduction

Strabo, who visited the island of **Gyaros** in 31 BC, described it as a village (*kōmion*, κώμιον; Strabo 10.5.3) inhabited by fishermen. This comes as no surprise to anyone familiar with the Aegean islands today. Modern photographic promotions give local fish specialities, and the modest, traditionally whitewashed homes of the fishermen responsible for fresh catches, plenty of colourful emphasis. Not all the fish on offer in the islands are locally caught today, and many visitors arrive by air, rather than by boat, following one of the principal maritime itineraries (which do not, as it happens, normally include Gyaros).

More surprising, perhaps, is the fact that Strabo refers to Gyaros at all. This little island, no more than 17km^2 and thus never big enough to provide much of a land-based way of life, even for a small community, lies midway, as the crow flies, between **Kea** to the west, **Kythnos** to the southwest and **Syros** to the south, and is flanked to the northeast by the long chain of islands which in effect extend the mountains of Euboea southeastwards into the heart of the Aegean – **Andros**, **Tenos** and **Mykonos** (**map of the Cyclades**). The geographer was simply articulating a memorable anecdote, according to which the Gyarians sent their own ambassador to Octavian in the hope of getting a reduction of the 150 dr tribute that had been laid on the inhabitants' reluctant shoulders. The Gyarians were not quite as inconspicuous as they wanted to appear in the eyes of Octavian, or as miserable as they looked to Strabo. There are rock-cut inscriptions recording the passage of Gyarians on **Syros**, which belong to post-Antique times (to the fifth to seventh century AD; see Reger [2004] 733, for further references).

The fabric of the islands of the Aegean is rock; rocks are not just the foundation, but the fundamental resource of the island landmasses. Rocks formed the natural environment in which early inhabitants moved and operated. Investigating the rocky landscapes and exploiting the potential of stone was one of the great strengths of the Aegean archipelagos throughout history; cutting, polishing and inscribing rocks were the natural consequences of this familiarity (**Fig. 102**). Much of what



102. Andros, Palaiopolis: rock inscriptions dated to the fourth century BC. © Ministry of Culture and Sport: 21st EPCA.

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