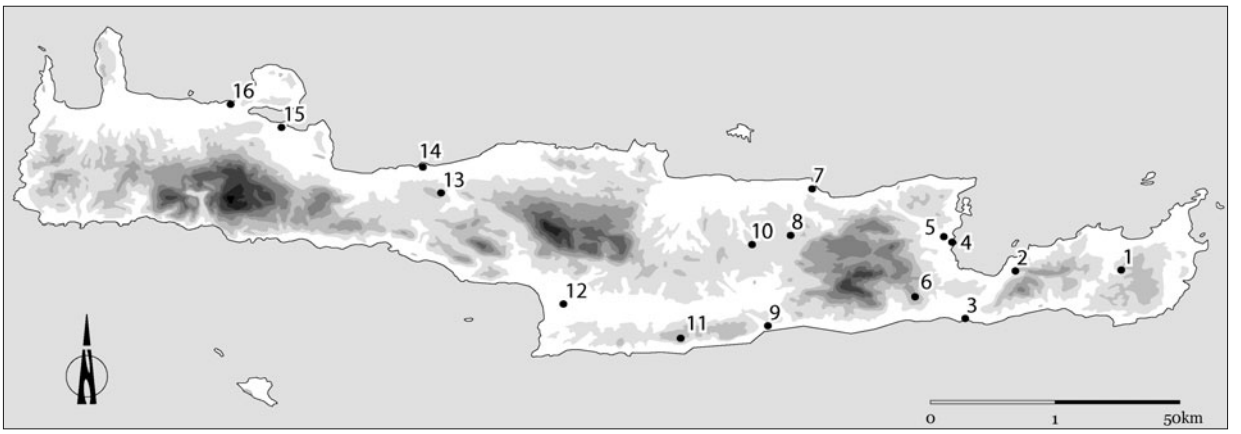
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ARCHAEOLOGY IN GREECE 2013–2014

Crete (prehistoric to Hellenistic)

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Map 4. Map of sites in Crete referred to in the text. © BSA.
(1) Praisos; (2) Azoria; (3) Ierapetra; (4) Agios Nikolaos; (5) Aleuriko; (6) Anatole Ierapetras; (7) Chersonesos; (8) Kastelli; (9) Tsoutsouros; (10) Galatas; (11) Kophinas; (12) Phaistos; (13) Vrysinas; (14) Agia Irene; (15) Aptera; (16) Chania.

This has been a relatively quiet year in terms of newly-discovered Cretan material appearing for the first time in print. The main event was the continued publication of the backlog of *Archaiologikon Deltion* with the appearance of the 2005 volume. This, of course, contained a lot less material than last year's volume, which covered four years, 2001–2004. As a result, the disadvantages of late publication were more apparent, since all the most notable finds will already be known to the wider community from other sources, leaving only the most minor of rescue excavations as truly new material.

Galatas provides a good example as one of the major Bronze Age sites being excavated in 2005 (**ID4536**). The excavation witnessed an important new discovery in the form of a monolithic 'baetyl' and associated exedra to the south of the site's central building. The value of this discovery is that it adds to a relatively small corpus of enigmatic unhewn monolithic stones that appear as focal points in open-air public spaces in Minoan settlements. As such, it adds considerably to our understanding of the type, especially because, more so than in other places, signs of the activities associated with it appear to be preserved. This very important find has already made it into the secondary literature, being one of the primary case studies in Sam Crooks' (2013) book on Minoan baetyls. Less widely known are the results of the Galatas survey (**ID4537**), which appear in this year's *ADelt* in a preliminary form. Intriguing is the statement that the number of sites around Galatas increases sharply in the Neopalatial period, and that many of them are large. Galatas itself has a rather rocky Neopalatial history and in the fullness of time it will be interesting to see whether the story from the site and that from the wider area coincide, or whether there is some opposing or complementary dynamic. Also of great potential importance is the mention of a Minoan mason's mark in a quarry that is interpreted as providing blocks for the central building at Galatas. Masons' marks have been the centre of controversy ever since they were first discovered, with the majority of scholars interpreting them as in some way religious, whilst a few have suggested instead that they had some more practical purpose, relating to the work crews constructing monumental buildings (a good up-to-date treatment with previous bibliography is Begg 2004). If this identification is confirmed, it might significantly strengthen the minority side of the argument.

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98. Vrysinas: terracotta bull. © Ministry of Culture and Sport: 25th EPCA..



97. Vrysinas: bronze figurine.
© Ministry of Culture and Sport: 25th EPCA.

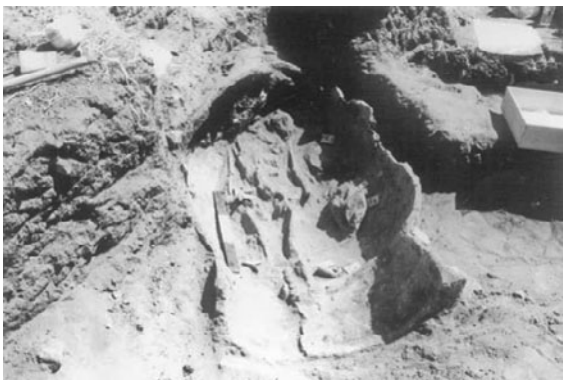
Another very important Bronze Age site that was being excavated in 2005 and which sees its official notice in this year's *ADelt*, but which has already become well known to the wider community in other forms, is the peak sanctuary of **Vrysinas** (**Figs 97, 98**; **ID4529**). The first volume of this site's publication (Tzachili 2011), focused on the relief terracotta vessels, had already appeared and pottery studies by the excavator and by Elissa Faro are also in the public domain (Tzachili 2003; Faro 2008). These latter are of unique importance as the only in-depth studies of the pottery from a peak sanctuary. It is, therefore, very interesting to compare them with the notice in *ADelt* that appeared for the first time this year but which, in fact, predates the in-depth studies. This preliminary notice dates the pottery to the Protopalatial period, in line with traditional dates for the majority of peak sanctuaries. The more in-depth studies have revealed that most of the pottery is Neopalatial, but the proportion of decorated ware diminished from the Protopalatial to the Neopalatial period. This is potentially of great importance for the dating of other supposedly 'Protopalatial' peak sanctuaries, since their Protopalatial dating is dependent either upon surface prospection or simply on the initial, relatively impressionistic dating of excavated material that still awaits detailed study.

From the more up-to-date 2013 notices, the main new discoveries from a major Bronze Age site are those from **Gournia** (**ID4551**). The presence of paved open-air spaces below the later central building is particularly important, as it seems to fit a pattern that has been suggested at major central Cretan urban sites, like Phaistos and Knossos (see, for example, a variety of papers in Schoep *et al*. 2012).

In terms of less widely disseminated discoveries reported in *ADelt*, there is the usual pattern whereby some periods and types of find are much more visible than others. There is, for example, the usual scatter of Late Minoan and Early Iron Age tombs (**ID4526**, **ID4543**, **ID4546**, **ID4547**, **ID4548**) to add to the already considerable corpora (for a review of Late Minoan burial corpus, see Preston 2000; for the Iron Age, see Eaby 2007). Most visible of all are the excavations of extensive cemeteries and other remains

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dating to the Hellenistic through to the Roman period, at sites that were foci, in that era, of coastal urban expansion, and are so again in modern times. For the most part, these supplement the image that has emerged over the preceding years at sites like Chania (**ID 4521**), Chersonesos (**ID 4534**), Tsoutsouros (**ID4533**) and Agios Nikolaos (**ID4538**), which was discussed in last year's *AR* (59 (2012–2013) 68–76). As always, the period between these two spikes in visibility is elusive, so that even the most minor discoveries dating to it, as in the case of an Archaic pit full of pithos fragments discovered at Kastelli (**ID4531**) or the late sixth-century grave at Chania (**Figs 99–101**; **ID4521**; see also Kataki 2009), acquire more than usual importance.



99. Chania: late sixth-century pithos grave.
© Ministry of Culture and Sport: 25th EPCA.



100. Chania: miniature vases from a late sixth-century grave.
© Ministry of Culture and Sport: 25th EPCA.



101. Chania: trefoil-mouthed oinochoe of the Fikellura Style from a late sixth-century grave.
© Ministry of Culture and Sport: 25th EPCA.

At this point it is, therefore, worth mentioning that this year also saw the first preliminary report from renewed excavation in 2013 at the site of **Azoria** (**ID4550**). The ongoing new excavations aim to reveal the development of the site preceding the Late Archaic/Early Classical destruction horizon uncovered by earlier excavations. So far the results seem to be confirming a major episode of settlement reorganization in the seventh century BC, along lines suggested by the excavators and discussed in terms of a polis 'formation event' (Haggis 2005: 84–85). The degree and manner in which this might be reconcilable with a longer process of settlement nucleation on the site identified by others (Wallace 2010: 238–39), on the basis of the earlier abandonment of surrounding Iron Age sites, remains to be seen.

On an island as thoroughly explored by archaeologists as Crete, it can come as a surprise that there remain substantial areas of *terra incognita* belonging to particular periods. The latest *ADelt* contains finds that, while not exceptional in their own right, are important because they fall within these *terrae incognitae*. One such is an area of Middle and Late Minoan settlement excavated at **Aleuriko**, 1km away from Agios Nikolaos (**ID4539**). Although the remains are entirely consistent with normal domestic contexts – walls of unworked stone, mud and lime plaster, beaten-earth floors, pottery including tripod cooking pots, a range of tools, loomweights and animal bones – the site's position on the western arm of the Mirabello bay places it in a region that is only very poorly understood in the period, in spite of being immediately

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adjacent to one of the best understood regions of Minoan Crete, the southern and eastern arms of the Mirabello bay. One can only feel that we may not understand the rest of the Mirabello bay quite so well as it initially appeared until we have a clearer picture of this western side.

Another poorly-understood area is that in the immediate vicinity of modern **Rethymnon**. Well-watered and lying between the long-studied region of Herakleion and the increasingly well-understood region around Chania, the lacuna in our knowledge of this area is likely to be distorting. For this reason, excavation at Agia Irene about 3km from modern Rethymnon (**ID4525**), where Hellenistic buildings have recently been found, is particularly important. The main phase appears to be Hellenistic, immediately underlying which are Late Minoan IIIC remains (a balanced discussion of the potential ritual nature of the LMIIIC deposit was presented by Panagiota Karamaliki at this year's *Third Pancretan Meeting for Archaeological Work on Crete*: on which, see below). The pattern of Hellenistic immediately overlying Iron Age is reminiscent of other sites in central Crete like Knossos, where it is supposed that the remains of intervening periods have been destroyed by the extent of later landscaping and building.

Finally, *ADelt*, as last year, is notable for the snippets of information it provides from the Hellenistic to Early Roman period. This is one of the most dynamic in the island's history; it is one of the best represented periods in the archaeological record, but also one of the least well studied. The most intriguing finds come from either end of the island. At **Aptera** (**ID4522**), works on the city's fortification walls and cemeteries seem to have revealed a great deal about the landscape and activities on the edge of the urban space. It is well known more generally in the Greek world that the fringes of cities were important both practically and symbolically. The excavations and reconstructions have dated the wall to the fourth century and have revealed graves ranging from Geometric times through to the Roman period, including an intriguing mention of the use of Archaic pithoi in a Hellenistic burial, an interesting reflection in the funerary sphere of the now well-established phenomenon of continued use of Archaic decorated pithoi on the island for very long periods of time. More particularly, the excavation seems to have revealed layers related to the martial use of the fortification walls, with large numbers of missiles and other weapons, as well as areas of ritual activity, with large numbers of lamps and animal bones buried together with ash.

At **Praisos** (**ID4545**) in the east, meanwhile, *ADelt* reports the excavation of a large room containing at least eight Archaic pithoi, an amphora, figurines, including one of Kybele, and a hoard of 26 silver coins wrapped in a cloth (these finds are now exhibited in the newly refurbished Siteia Museum: see below). This Hellenistic context, dating perhaps to the period of the site's destruction, is interpreted as a storage area belonging to a public building or sanctuary. It is important not only for confirming the exceptional state of preservation at Praisos, left by the site's violent end, but also because of the mention of a figurine of Kybele. This element of Late Classical/Early Hellenistic international religious material culture, perfectly normal for the time, acquires importance at Praisos: a site which has been notable for its lack of imports dating to this period of globalization and which it is easy to see in exceptional terms as the last bastion of the Eteocretans.

The second big event of the year was the ***Third Pancretan Meeting for Archaeological Work on Crete*** held in Rethymnon between the 5th and 8th December 2013. Thus far the organizers of these conferences have proven to be remarkably speedy and efficient in the publication of the proceedings. As a result, they have all but supplanted the apparently stalled Cretological conferences and we will await the publication before *AGOnline* is updated with the information presented (the full programme is available at www.history-archaeology.uoc.gr/activities/conferences/AEK-3.html). For the moment, however, it is worthwhile highlighting one of the themes that emerged strongly in the conference: the continuing reassessment of Minoan landscapes, which are continually emerging as more complex and diverse than has previously been anticipated. Several excellent papers populated Bronze Age mountains with a startling diversity of activities, ranging from Giannis Papadatos and Konstantinos Halikias' discussion of the important and substantial Neopalatial building at Anatole Ierapetras, which seems to mirror in some ways other substantial Minoan upland settlements like Zominthos, through Sabine Beckmann's discussion of the variety of activities in the Middle Bronze Age uplands around Agios Nikolaos, to Danai Kontopodi, Kostas Georgakopoulos and Michalis Spyridakis' presentation of a brand-new peak sanctuary at Alpiki

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Zoni on Psiloritis, a uniquely high example of the type, unusually distant from areas of settlement, or Alexia Spiliotopoulou's important reassessment of the material from the peak sanctuary at Kophinas. The theme of unusual activities in upland areas extended beyond the Minoan to the Hellenistic period, with a lively discussion around Chryssa Sofianou, Sandy MacGillivray, Tim Cunningham and Nikos Thanos' paper presenting, among other things, enigmatic long stretches of wall cutting across the east Cretan countryside. It was suggested that this might be a Hellenistic phenomenon, paralleled by a stretch of wall high up against the rock of Kophinas (see Karetsou and Rethemiotakis 1992–1993). Lowland landscapes, too, received reassessment, and it will be particularly interesting to watch the fall-out resulting from those papers suggesting a riverine, lake-filled, western Messara around Phaistos, in light of the various surveys that have been done in the area.

Recent years have been a time of considerable flux in Crete's **museums**, with Chania and Rethymnon having to move premises; Herakleion, Agios Nikolaos and Siteia being refurbished; and a new museum being prepared in the Messara. Several papers at the conference dealt with the problems and opportunities faced in this time of change.

This brings me neatly to the final and greatest archaeological event of the year: the full opening of the **Herakleion Museum** (**Fig. 102**). The museum is divided into two main sections: one covering prehistory down to Late Minoan IIIC and the other the Iron Age through to the Roman period. There are also two minor sections: one containing Bronze Age frescoes and the other Archaic through to Roman sculpture. The major explanatory notices have been put up, but a lot of the smaller labels are not yet present, though they are promised shortly. This is probably only a minor inconvenience for most visitors, as the grand narratives are clear, but it will be frustrating for more initiated visitors to see objects with which they are not immediately familiar and not to know their provenance. This is unfortunate, although hopefully only temporarily so, because one of the great benefits of the new museum is the display of material that was not previously exhibited. All modern museums have to tackle the problems of the competing claims of theme and chronology, and art and narrative to the organization of displays. The job of the curators is unenviable, because different audiences will necessarily prefer different solutions. Professional archaeologists on the whole will prefer straight chronological and contextual exhibition, layman visitors might appreciate more thematic presentation. As is appropriate for a major national museum, second only to the National Archaeological Museum in Athens, the Herakleion Museum has taken a balanced approach that aims to satisfy the main audiences by combining an overall chronological scheme with thematic presentations and by dividing off some of the objects, the sculpture and wall paintings, to be displayed in a more gallery-like setting. Contextual display is mostly confined to the sanctuary material. It is particularly successful in the gallery dealing with Iron Age through to Archaic sanctuaries and continuity from the Bronze Age, where, for the first time, material from sites like Kato Syme, ranging from the Bronze Age down to the Classical period, is gathered together, making the process of development at these sites very clear. For this author, being an archaeologist, it would have been nice to see a little bit more contextual display. In the otherwise excellent Iron Age grave galleries, the lack of a single differentiated Iron Age grave context, for instance, was noticeable.



102. Heraklion: Archaeological Museum. © Ministry of Culture and Sport: Heraklion Archaeological Museum.

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In the main diachronic galleries the display cases are large, airy and bright, but full of objects. The result is extremely successful. The rooms are visually appealing and pleasant, when one stands back from the cases; but the objects, even though they are numerous, are easy to view and the sheer volume somehow conjures an accurate image of Cretan archaeology. This is particularly obvious in, for example, the stunning display of objects from the cave at Arkalochori, where the piled masses of weapons are light-years better as a representation of this context than the old museum's selection of only a few.

In the more gallery-like displays of wall painting and sculpture, volume is more understated and the items more separated for individual viewing. Another of the great successes of the new museum is the display of Minoan wall painting. These have been painstakingly cleaned and conserved, and the result is spectacular. Those who remember the dull brown-stained wall painting of the old museum will be particularly impressed by the bright colours that have been revealed. Their display allows close viewing, revealing details that were unclear before. It is, for example, clear now that the dancers on the Sacred Grove fresco do not have shaven heads and top knots, as has occasionally been suggested (Marcar 2004: 234–36) but, rather, appear so because the hair, where it was painted over the white of the head, has worn away. Some might question decisions like that to keep together the fragments of the Lily Prince within Evans's reconstruction that many would regard as flawed (for the most recent discussion of the debate, with references to earlier bibliography, see Shaw 2004; Sherratt 2005). However, a museum like the Herakleion Museum is also a national monument and needs a timeless quality which the reconstruction of the Lily Prince, repeated again and again in the public arena, has achieved; and the label achieves a balance by highlighting the newer interpretations. Elsewhere, the balance between timelessness and new interpretation is more open to question, for example in the reserving of many of the talismanic seals until the Final Palatial galleries, in line with their traditional dating, but not with the most up-to-date opinion; or the display of gold rings in terms of an epiphany cycle.

Another of the great successes of the museum is in the attention paid to, and the highlighting of, the post-Bronze Age material. A good number of very successful choices have been made in the display of this material; one of the best being the display of epigraphic evidence fitting the themes of the sections alongside the archaeological material. Indeed, the relatively large amount of epigraphic material on display is a refreshing boon, and an accurate representation of its importance to Cretan studies. The presentation of a good amount of Hellenistic and Roman data with a clear narrative attached to them is also a worthwhile innovation. The room displaying material from domestic contexts in Hellenistic cities, alongside a narrative outlining the violent synoecisms of the era that left these remains behind, is one of the best examples of a unified narrative and display in the museum.

Having given so much appropriate attention to the Herakleion Museum, it is perhaps worthwhile to close by also mentioning the other museum on Crete that has reopened recently: the Siteia Museum. This museum was refurbished in a short amount of time, with very little money and by reusing the display cases from the Agios Nikolaos Museum. These display cases were always excellent and the result at Siteia is extremely successful. Again, the museum balances chronology with thematic presentation and the display of objects as works of art. The balance is impressive: so, for example, the Palaikastro kouros, displayed as an art object, can be closely viewed from all angles and draws the visitor immediately into the museum, while the, in some ways equally impressive, ivory pyxis from Mochlos is displayed contextually, with its associated jewellery. Eastern Crete has been in recent years one of the most active arenas for archaeological research. Partly as a result, the Siteia Museum is brimming with new material and with material displayed in innovative ways, with clear narratives. Particularly refreshing are the display of Minoan domestic utensils and the display of Hellenistic material from the site of Trypitos, alongside a discussion of trade and the economy. Overall, the result must now be one of the best small regional museums in Greece.

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