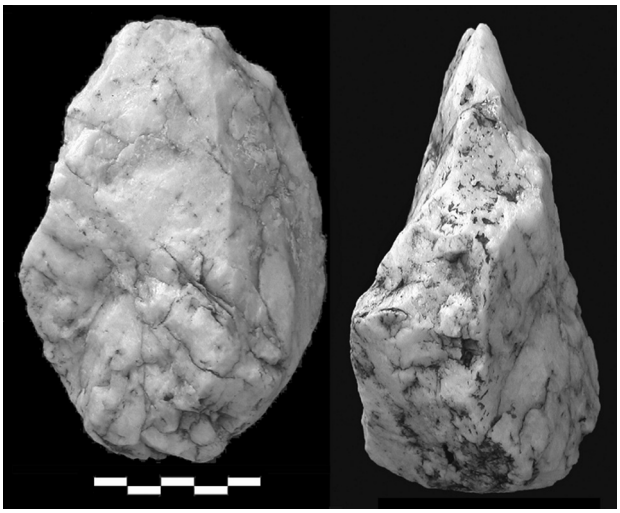


131. Plakias: Pal hand-axes.

Three to 4 sites believed to date to the Lower Pal were identified in locations similar to the Mes sites, to facilitate hunting strategies incorporating access to fresh water and outcrops of raw material. The S-facing cliffs of the Preveli gorge had 2 to 3 sites. Two scatters are close together and after further analysis may be combined. Another site was found on the E side of the Kotsiphos gorge in an area that remains to be thoroughly investigated.

The Pal assemblages employ mostly dull, opaque and blocky quartz, often poorer in quality than that used in Mes times, which is translucent, lustrous and fine-grained. Use of other materials is suggested by a quartzite biface fragment from Preveli 2. The Pal industry is distinguishable from the Mes by the larger size of the cores, debitage, flakes and tools, which are typically 0.08m to more than 0.15m *l.* (**Fig. 131**). There are also technological differences: cores are typically unidirectional, bifacial or flat with centripetal flaking. Flakes were the desired end products of the reduction strategy, averaging about 0.08m in size and very thick (typically 0.035–0.045m) with broad and sometimes dihedral platforms up to 0.03–0.04m *w.* The retouched tool types are distinctive and include bifaces, hand-axes, cleavers, side scrapers, double converging denticulates, pointed flakes, truncations, denticulates, burins and Clactonian notches on flakes.

There was good reason to believe that Mes material would be found on Crete, since sites have been discovered on Kythnos, Youra, Alonnissos and Cyprus. The Lower Pal Acheulean tools are surprising, though lithics of all phases of the Pal have recently been reported from Gavdos. Since Crete has been an island since the Messinian Event almost 6 million years ago, early hominids had to use a sea-craft to reach Crete. This pushes back the evidence for early sea-faring in the Mediterranean to at least 250,000 years ago, and possibly much earlier.

WESTERN CRETE (Nomos of Chania)

Community of Gavdos

Gavdos. Siopata-Katalymata. K. Kopaka (University of Crete) reports on excavations at Katalymata near Siopata, in the complex of about 450m^2 explored in recent years.

Its main period of habitation is LBI, when it was destroyed, very probably by an earthquake, and partly burnt. MBA pottery and some architectural remains are also present. This building hosted mixed activities, as shown by its rich contents, whether fallen or *in situ.* Storage, grinding and pounding, and more specialized industrial work, perhaps related to perfume, metal and pottery manufacture, were certainly among them.

The pottery is mainly locally made and includes pithoi, jars, basins, cooking pots, dishes, jars and many jugs and/or amphorae, but few cups, as well as some small, nicely decorated eye-jugs (**Fig. 132**) reminiscent of Cyc ones, and at least one small stirrup jar. Local clays are generally soft to medium hard, pale and gritty, and the coarse fabrics recall Cretan oatmeal fabric. Despite its obvious M style, the pottery shows long-lasting and conservative local technical and aesthetic features. Thus, handmade vases and pushed-through handles are dominant throughout the 2nd millennium BC, and there is a clear preference for glossy surfaces, often painted with vivid orange-red colours, and with familiar, repeated motifs (for example, crosses, pairs of spirals, groups of pendent semicircles and wavy lines etc.) which point to a Gavdiot workshop.

Among other finds are small stone vases and several stone and clay lids, a few bronze items, and jewellery, including beads in faience, Egyptian blue, rock crystal, steatite, agate

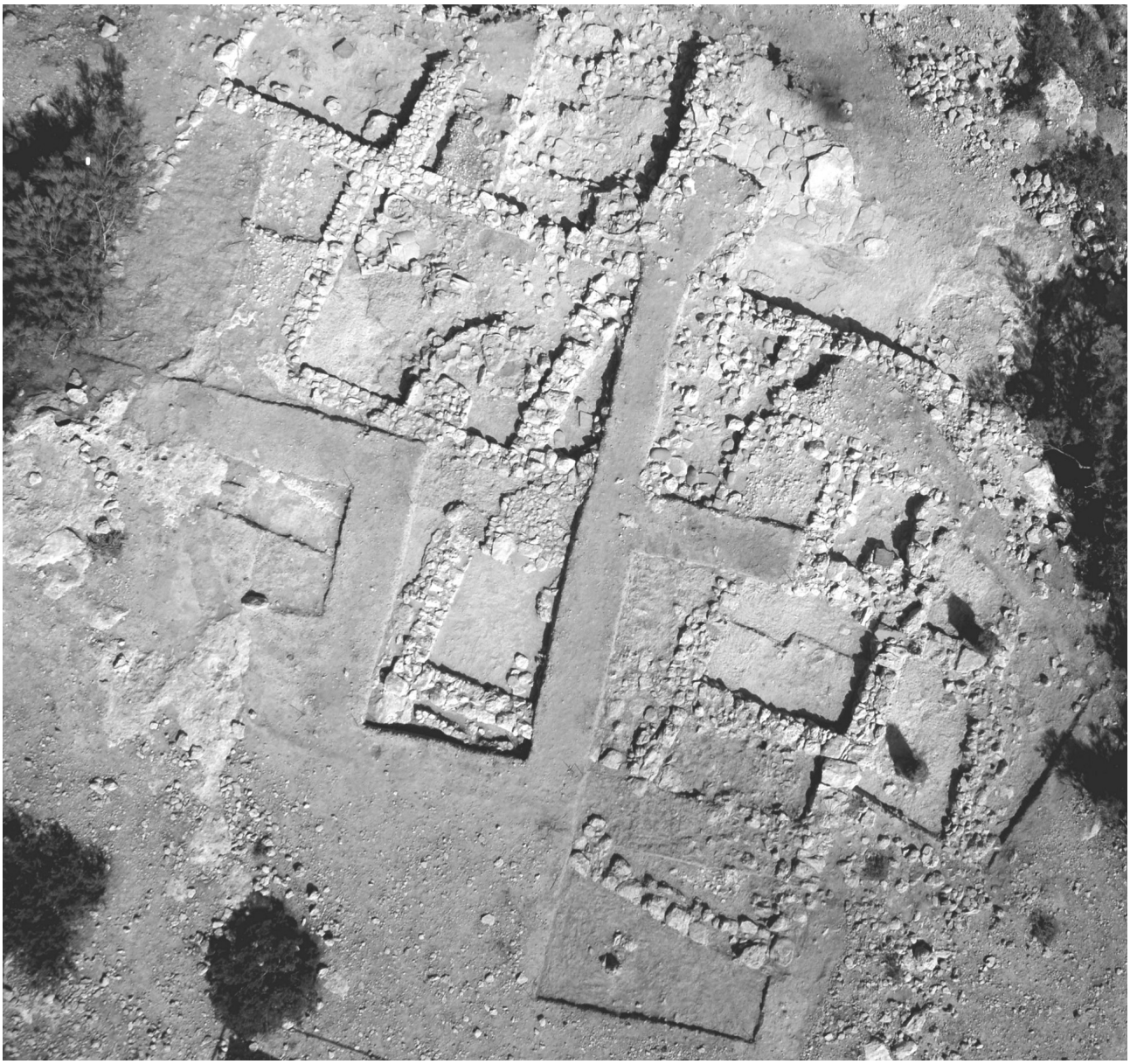


132. Gavdos, Katalymata: two jugs.



133. Gavdos, Katalymata: beads and jewellery.

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134. Gavdos, Katalymata: aerial view of building.

and amethyst (**Fig. 133**). Two seals have been recovered: a MBIII–LBI 'talismanic' seal in veined agate, with a finely executed sailing boat, and a small discoid seal in steatite with random scratching or a cross with filling.

All this reflects considerable comfort in the life of the users of the Katalymata building (**Fig. 134**), and general prosperity in the life of Gavdos; both conditions must be linked to the contemporary cultural acme of Minoan Crete.

Demos of Souda

Aptera
Publication (in Greek and English): V. Niniou-Kindeli, *Απτέρα* (Crete, 35th EPCA 2008)

Demos of Sphakia

Loutro. P. Mortensen (Copenhagen) presents a brief account (*Antiquity On-line Project Gallery* http://www.antiquity.ac.uk/ProjGall/mortensen/index.html) of lithics collected at ca. 150–220masl on the surface of redeposited sediments. Twenty one individual bifacially and unifacially modified cobbles and flakes of coarse white to reddish-brown chert and limestone are described. Consideration is given to the possibility that these are naturally produced 'geofacts', but the pattern of flaking, presence of bulbs of percussion and probable prepared platform on one example, are argued to demonstrate that they are artefacts. The forms represented include choppers, flakes, picks, points, scrapers and a hand-axe. Typologically, the artefacts can be compared with L Lower Pal and E MPal assemblages from N Africa and S Europe.

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