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LM III MORTUARY PRACTICES IN WEST CRETE: THE CEMETERIES OF MAROULAS AND ARMENOI NEAR RETHYMNON

Eleni Papadopoulou

Summary

The aim of this paper is to present data from the two organized LM III cemeteries near Rethymnon, Maroulas and Armenoi, in order to explore and understand the mortuary practices that took place there. The data comes mainly from the cemetery of Maroulas and to a lesser extent from that of Armenoi near Rethymnon.¹ The examination of two burial assemblages is not limited to descriptions of data, but also addresses the functional role of the objects, which can lead to more interpretive approaches, based on a theoretical framework. Looking at the evidence of the two cemeteries, one can deduce that there was a specific burial programme, in which there was an accepted way of treating the dead. Whether the picture portrayed by the burial practices corresponds to social reality, and to what extent it reflects social structures that really existed, is very difficult to verify. There is no doubt, however, that the dynamic course of the relationship of each society with its past creates multiple channels of expression, which, depending on the cultural environment can be represented in complex or simple ways.

1. OBJECT, METHODOLOGY, AND PURPOSE OF THIS RESEARCH

Archaeological excavation and surface surveys with reliable finds have identified only 54 Late Minoan III burial sites thus far in West Crete (Fig. 1). Fifteen of these (28% of the total) are in the Khania Prefecture and 39 (72%) in the Rethymno Prefecture (Papadopoulou 2014, 201-233, 238; Milidakis, Papadopoulou forthcoming). The number is strikingly small compared to the 110 LM III burial sites identified in Lasithi (Psallida 2011, 31). Undoubtedly the steep terrain that characterizes these two prefectures, particularly the great mass of the Lefka Ori (White Mountains) in Khania, was and still is an impediment to the establishment of settlements and their associated burial sites.

The two largest cemeteries of the LM III period, namely those at Armenoi and Khania, as well as Maroulas, were all established at the beginning of LM IIIA or, in the case of Khania, slightly earlier (Löwe 1996, 298-313, no.1050-1131; Andreadaki-Vlasaki 1997; Andreadaki-Vlasaki 2011, 112-121). The two cemeteries under discussion here, Maroulas and Armenoi, like the other 54 burial sites in West Crete, were used until the LM IIIB period, when the number of burials increased. From the second half of the thirteenth century BC, however, most in West Crete were abandoned.²

The identification of changes and variations, such as those reflected in the tomb's form and material remains and, subsequently, in the related funerary practices, rather than the reconstruction of the social fabric, necessitates as a guiding methodological parameter that archaeological data be examined within their micro- and macro-historical reference framework and not under the influence of general rules of universal value. The need for archaeology to restore its traditional ties with history becomes evident, since the purpose of the latter is to understand human behaviour (Hodder, Hutson 2003, 125).

1 It is important to point out that the presentation of the cemetery at Maroulas is more detailed than that of Armenoi, firstly because it has been excavated by the author, secondly it is a small funerary assemblage and therefore more manageable. By contrast, Armenoi constitutes an especially large body of unpublished material for which we have only preliminary reports.

2 According to data currently available, only two tombs in the cemetery of Khania were used for burials after LM IIIB, specifically in the LM IIIC (Protopapadaki 2015) and in the Subminoan periods (Andreadaki-Vlasaki 1997, 1010).

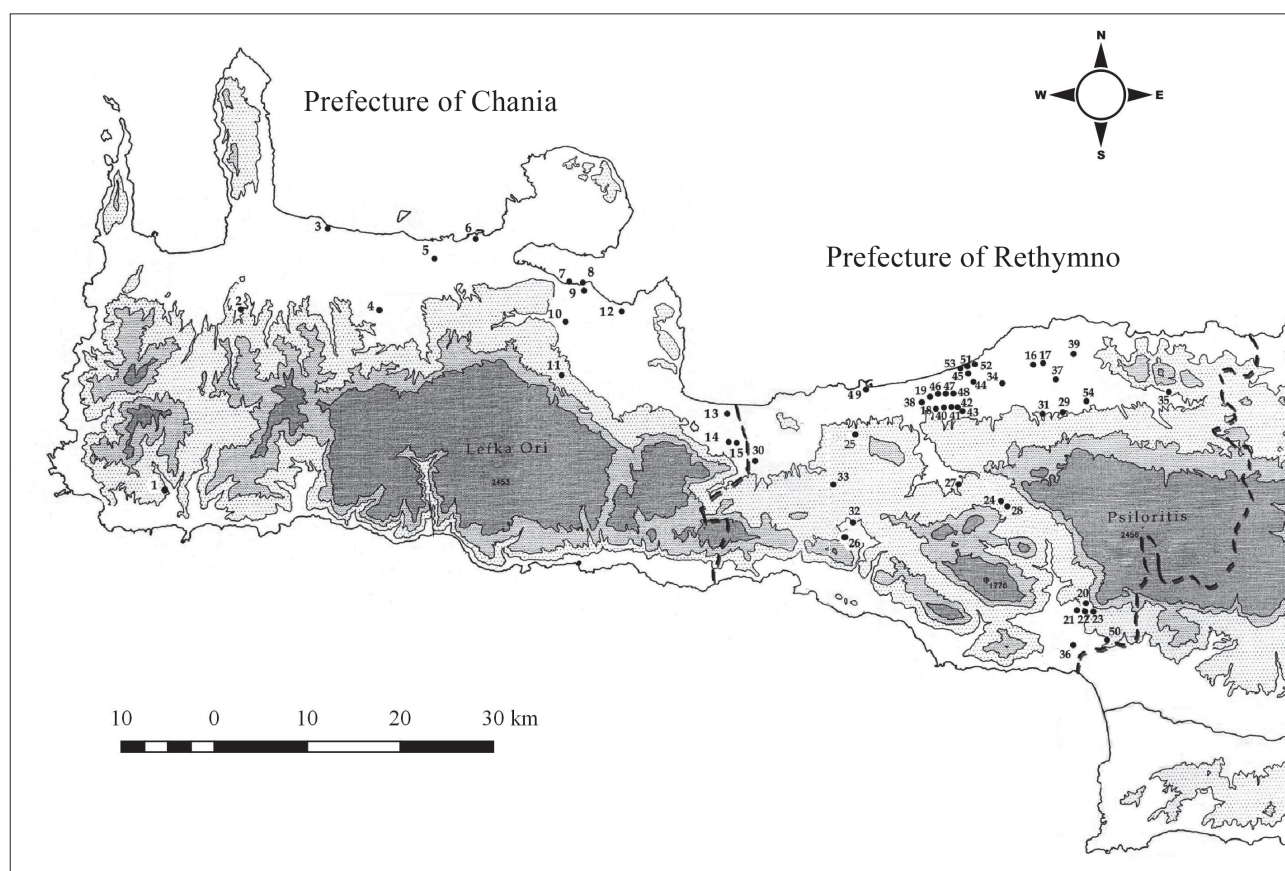


Fig. 1. Map of West Crete with indication of LM III burial sites. 1 Fournakia; 2 Deliana; 3 Maleme; 4 Vatolakkos; 5 Galatas; 6 Khania; 7 Kalami; 8 Souda; 9 Aptera; 10 Stylos; 11 Melidoni; 12 Kera; 13 Dramia; 14 Phylaki; 15 Kastellos; 16 Angeliana-Tsouknis; 17 Angeliana-Plagaki; 18 Ayios Dimitrios; 19 Adele; 20 Apodoulou-Sopatakia; 21 Aigidomantra; 22 Psila Chomata; 23 Frangou to Louri; 24 Apostoloi; 25 Armenoi; 26 Atsipades; 27 Voliones; 28 Genna; 29 Erfoi; 30 Zouridi; 31 Kalamas; 32 Koxare; 33 Koumoi; 34 Magnesia; 35 Makriyianni; 36 Mandres; 37 Margarites; 38 Maroulas; 39 Melidoni; 40 Mesi-Aeras; 41 Mourniani; 42 Fokiana; 43 Lismata; 44 Pangalochori; 45 Arsani; 46 Piyi-Skounti; 47 Grampela; 48 Saounatsos; 49 Rethymno; 50 Sata; 51 Stavromenos-Vigla; 52 Konidi; 53 Sfakaki; 54 Choumeri.

The established view that burials reflect social ideas and not necessarily what really happens in the social and economic life of a community is based on the belief that while customs serve as a means for expressing ideas about various social roles, this does not necessarily imply that a ritual act reflects social reality. At the same time, the picture of a social formation, as reflected in the funerary evidence from cemeteries, is not necessarily completely secure, as its purpose may have been either the constructed confirmation or refutation of the actual position of certain social groups in life (Hodder 1982, 201; Voutsaki 1993, 67; 1995, 56-57; Morris 1992, 28; Preston 1999, 134). Thus, the purpose of our study is not to detect through funerary practices the 'status' that the deceased enjoyed in life, but to establish an interpretative approach toward the representational renegotiation that this 'status' was subjected to during its treatment in death.

Therefore, with this methodological approach and aim in mind, we believe that a well-defined system of classification can determine research fields for examining archaeological data on the one hand and for detecting behaviours/attitudes with analogous symbolic and social dimensions on the other. These general categories are formed through terms/concepts and criteria that we believe provide, as far as possible, the safest and least

subjective information, but also the possibility of identifying combinations that repeat themselves, or not, in particular assemblages. Our methodology generally follows the variables and subsets applied by Michael Boyd (2002, 27-32; see also Voutsaki 2012, 166) for the study of Middle and early Late Bronze Age burial practices in the South and West Peloponnese. In particular, we divided the fourth parameter about the grave goods into six simple subcategories, including pottery, in order to measure a tomb's wealth through the diversity and quantity of its offerings (Voutsaki 1993, 68; 1995, 55-56); the objects deposited in each tomb were classified mainly by function.

Thus, five elements/indicators define the parameters by which we approach human action:³ 1. location, spatial distribution of the tombs, groupings; 2. architectural features of the tombs; 3. treatment of the body, biological and osteological data; 4. grave goods (pottery, jewellery, weapons/tools, implements, vessels, figurines); 5. funerary and memorial ritual acts.

2.1. THE CEMETERY OF MAROULAS

Location

The Maroulas cemetery, 10 km southeast of Rethymnon, at the Mezaria and Prinaries sites (Fig. 2), occupies the perimeter of a verdant ravine, 200 m above sea level, with an unobstructed view to the Cretan Sea. For many years, archaeological finds and information came from minor excavations, chance discoveries, illegal digs, and confiscations of antiquities (Alexiou 1964; Touloupa 1968; Michailidou-Pappa 1972; Papapostolou 1974). From the 1980s onwards, however, systematic investigations revealed several chamber tombs and a few pithos burials (Markoulaki 1982; Papadopoulou 1997; Papadopoulou 2001-2004). These new finds provide evidence for an organized Late Minoan IIIA-IIIB cemetery in West Crete (Papadopoulou 2011). The relationship and connection of the investigated cemetery with Minoan settlement sites has not been clarified so far, despite the systematic survey of the wider area.

The 13 tombs and two pithos burials, some of which were partially destroyed, extend chronologically from the early fourteenth to the mid-thirteenth centuries BC. The chamber tombs form two clusters following the contours of the terrain. The first cluster includes Tombs 1-10, with an east-west orientation (Fig. 3). The second cluster, Tombs 11-13,⁴ occupies the ravine's highest terrace and is oriented north-northeast, as cutting the tombs to this orientation required less time and effort. The pithos burials are arranged at the cemetery's periphery rather than its centre and do not form an organized burial group.

Architecture

All of the chamber tombs (Fig. 4) in the Maroulas cemetery are carefully hewn but simple, without structural details like pillars, benches, or niches. Seven tombs had an earthen floor, and the larnakes were placed carefully inside with small stone plaques under their feet for greater stability.

The surface area of the tombs, including the dromos, varies greatly from 6.15 m² to 17.60 m², while the surface area of the chambers varies from 1.4 m² to 8.75 m² (Table 1). Interestingly, the deceased in all of the 10 tombs for which archaeological information exists were allotted no less than 1.40 m² each in the chamber.

³ It should be pointed out that these five indicators were applied more fully and with greater effect in the Maroulas cemetery than at Armenoi because the burial assemblage is much smaller, the information was better defined and had the potential of linking the finds to specific individuals.

⁴ The plundered Tomb 13 is not included in the detailed presentation and study of the cemetery data, since we have no information about it.

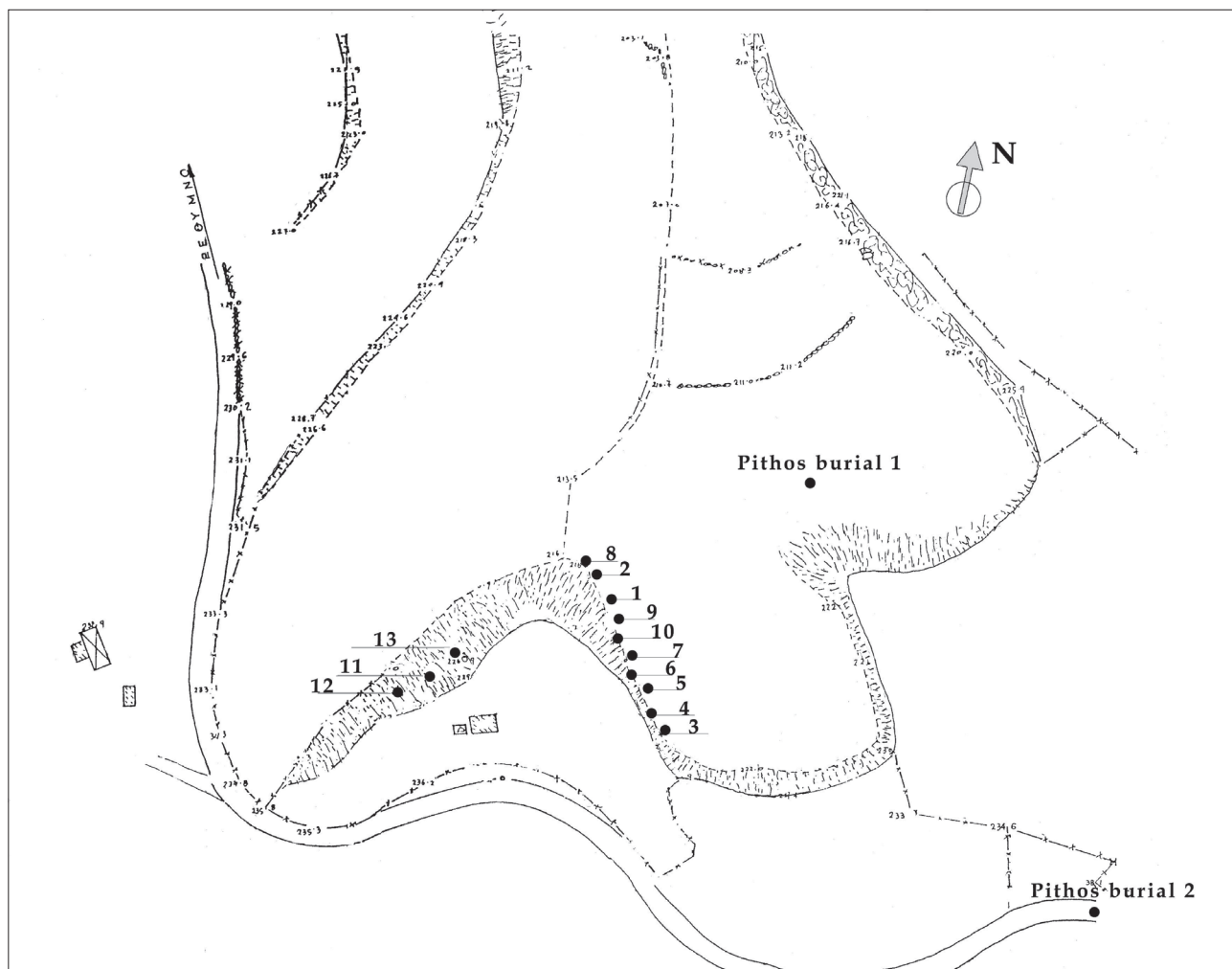




Fig. 4. Maroulas. Tomb 7, from east.

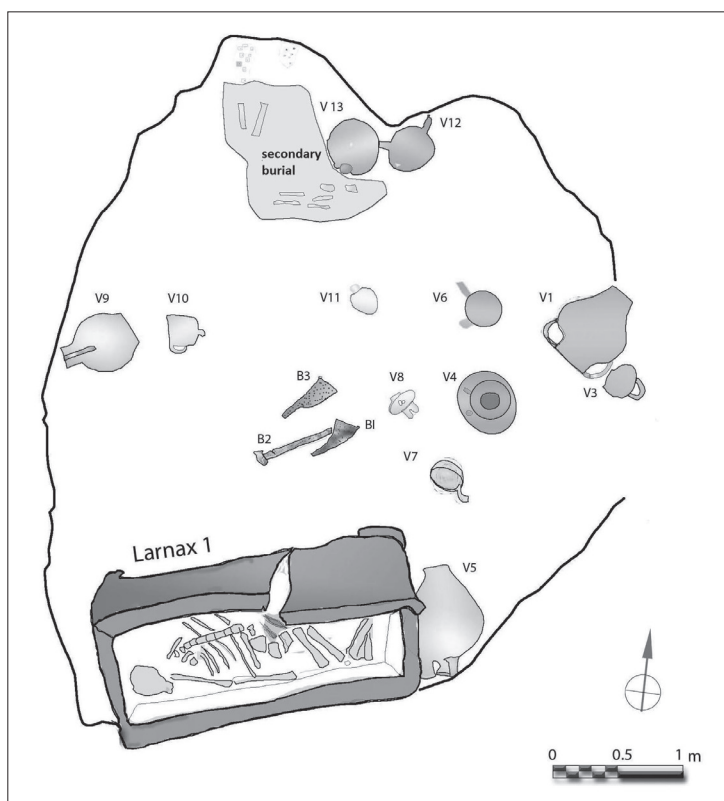


Fig. 5. Maroulas. Plan of Tomb 2.

Tomb		Chronology	Chamber space in m ²	Total space in m ²	No. of burials	Number of categories of deposited objects	Proportion of deceased/space in m ²
1	disturbed	LM IIIB	3	-	1	2	3
2		LM III A2/B	8.75	15.64	2	4	4.37
3		LM IIIB	3.75	10.68	2	2	1.87
4	disturbed	LM IIIB	3	5.8 +	2	2	1.5
5		LM IIIB	5	10.30	2	4	2.5
6	disturbed	LM IIIA2	1.4	3.00 +	1	1	1.4
7		LM IIIB	2	17.60	1	3	2
8		LM III A2-B	3.9	6.15	1	2	3.9
9	destroyed		-	-	X	2	-
10	destroyed		-	-	X	2	-
11		LM III A1/A2	4.9	9.74	1	5	4.9
12	looted	LM IIIA-B	4	8.56	2+	2	2 ?

Table 1. Maroulas. Data of the chamber tombs.

Treatment of body

Most of the tombs at Maroulas had not been subsequently disturbed and they probably represent the burial context as created at the time of the funeral (Boyd 2014, 195). 85% of the burials in the Maroulas cemetery are primary, whereas only one secure secondary burial is known from Tomb 2 (Fig. 5) (Table 2). Single burial is so widely practised that almost half of the deceased had their own tomb. Of the 13 primary burials for whom archaeological information exists, nine (approximately 70%) were placed in a larnax, while in Tomb 8 two larnakes were empty (Papapostolou 1974).

Tomb		Chronology	Primary burials	Secondary burials
1	disturbed	LM IIIB	1 in larnax	
2		LM IIIA2/B	1 male in larnax	1 on ground
3		LM IIIB	1 in larnax + 1 on ground	
4	disturbed	LM IIIB	1 in larnax	1? on ground
5		LM IIIB	1 child in larnax + 1 female in larnax	
6	disturbed	LM IIIA2	1 on ground	
7		LM IIIB	1 male in larnax	
8		LM IIIA2-B	1 in larnax	
9	destroyed			?
10	destroyed		x	?
11		LM IIIA1/A2	1 on ground	
12	looted	LM IIIA-B	2 in larnakes	?

Table 2. Maroulas. Data of the burials from the chamber tombs.

According to the preliminary anthropological study,⁵ two of the 11 complete skeletons belong to men aged 30-35 years (Tombs 2 and 7) (Figs. 5, 6), one to a woman aged 20-25 years, and one to a child aged 8-9 (both buried in Tomb 5) (Fig. 7). The child burial preserved traces of textile over the skull, chest, and pelvis⁶.

Since this was a primary burial and the type of textile was the same on the head and lower body, the textile probably belonged to a kind of shroud, in which the deceased's body was wrapped, rather than a garment. This hypothesis is further supported by the discovery of seven dress pins, three of which were found near to the child's shoulder.

Grave goods

All chamber tombs and all burials in the Maroulas cemetery had grave goods, and all tombs contained a good number of ceramic vases. The chambers and dromoi of the nine undisturbed tombs contained a total of 98 vases for 13 burials, whereas the number of vases per tomb ranges from 5 to 16 (Table 3).

⁵ I want to thank Dr. Argyro Nafplioti for this information.

⁶ It is one of the few cases where fabric traces were found in Minoan burials, with the most known examples from Gra Lygia Ierapetra, Apostolakou 1998, 85-86 and Pylona Rhodes, Karantzali 2001, 15. At Gra Lygia Ierapetra it very likely represents a ritual which was performed when the body had decomposed because fabric traces were identified in the joints of the long bones, Apostolakou 1998, 86. For the funeral activities and the preparation of the deceased before the burial and the depositional phase, Boyd 2014, 195-200.

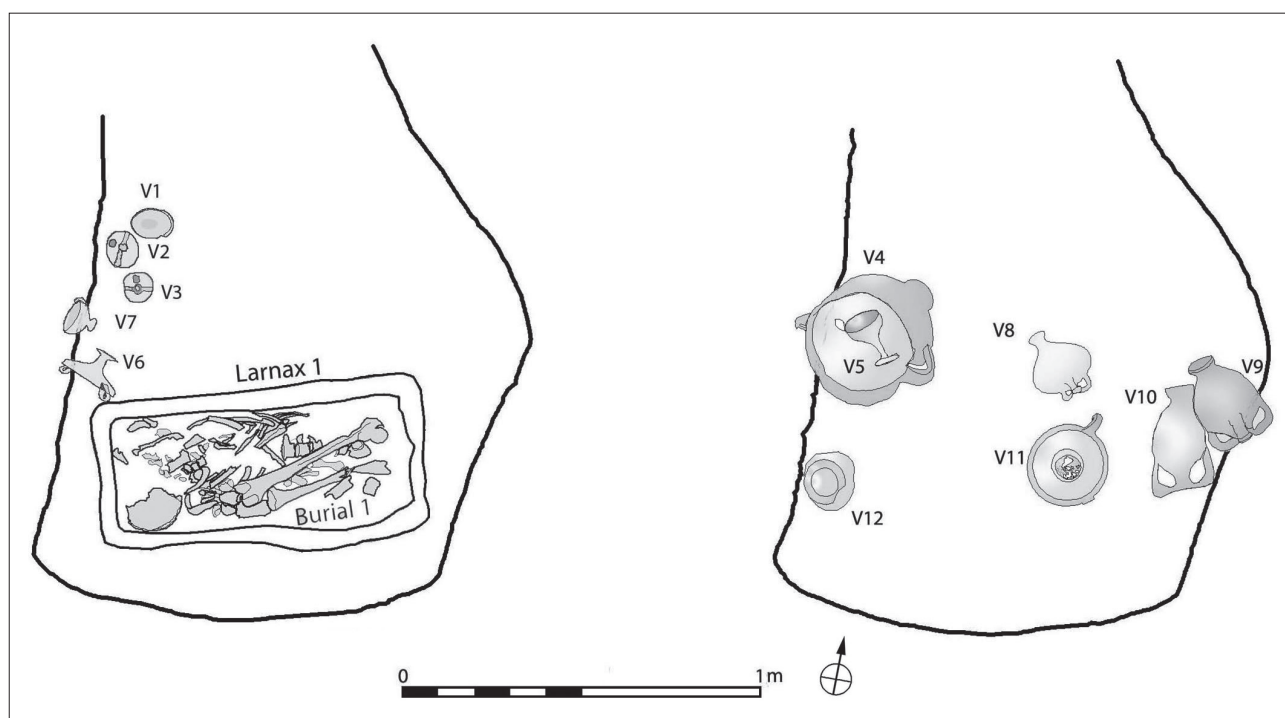


Fig. 6. Maroulas. Plan of Tomb 7. On the left, upper level; on the right, lower level: vessels along and below the larnax.

Tomb	Kylix	Cup	Mug/rhyton	Aryter	Skyphos	Amph.Krater	Alabastron	Stirrup Jar	Amphoriskos	Pyxis	Incense Burner	Thelastros	Double vase	Jug	Kalathos
1		1						4							
2	1	3		1	2	1	1	2	1		2				1
3	2	7					1	2	1		2				
4	1	7						2				1			
5		2					1	2	1		1				
6		3											1	1	
7	2	2				1	1	5			1				
8	1	5	1					1						2	
9															
10															
11	5	4	1		1		2		3	1					
12		1													

Table 3. Maroulas. Data of the grave goods from chambers and dromoi.

The clear preference at Maroulas for drinking vessels is already apparent in Tomb 11, the cemetery's earliest, and continues in later periods. In the cemetery of Maroulas they constitute almost half (49.5%) of the total vessels. The usual number of drinking vessels for a dead is not more than 1 or 2 items (Soles 2008, 196), in contrast to the data of Maroulas, where the deceased were accompanied by 3 to 10 cups each.

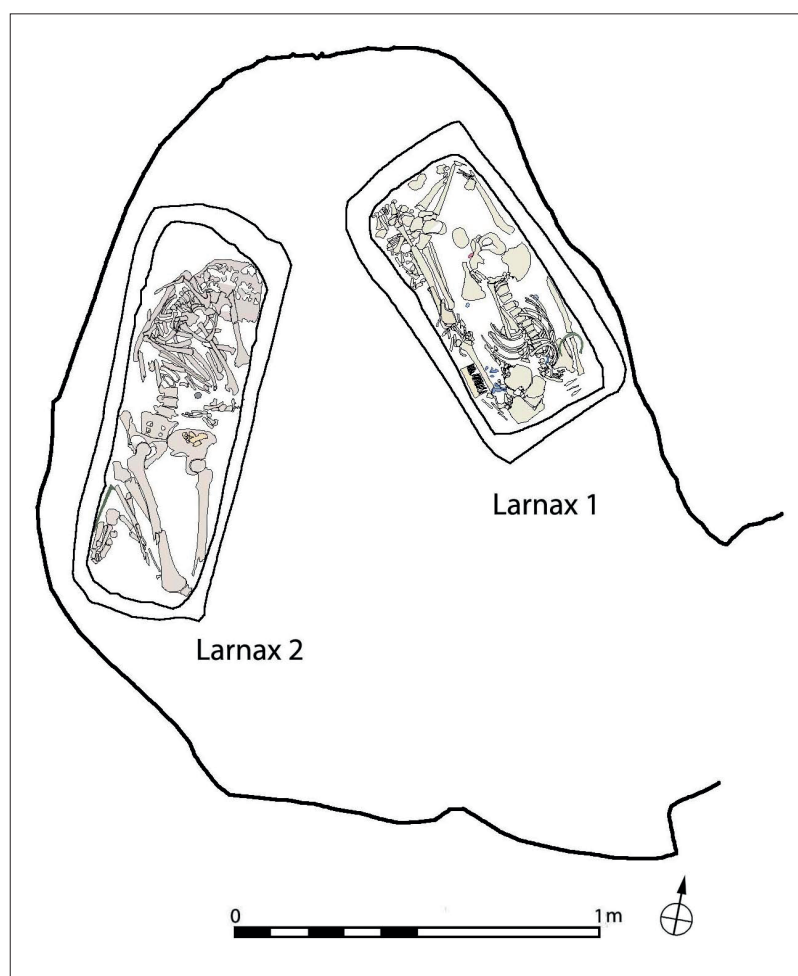


Fig. 7. Maroulas. Plan of Tomb 5.

At the end of LM IIIA1 and early LM IIIA2 small, one-handled and two-handled, block-painted and plain kylikes, cups (spouted cups, deep cups, pulled-rim cups), and three-handled amphoriskoi are the dominant shapes (Papadopoulou 2011). A pyxis and most of the cemetery's tinned vases also belong to this phase. Alabastra, double vase and kalathoi are also present, while two mugs with a hole made in the base probably served as rhyta (Papadopoulou 2011; D'Agata, De Angelis 2016, 219). By contrast, stirrup jars and stemmed kylikes dominate the subsequent phase (Papadopoulou 2011). The preference for drinking vessels evident in the Maroulas cemetery, in addition to the possibility of their ritual use (D'Agata, De Angelis 2016, 216-217) or the provision for the deceased's needs in the afterlife (Protonotariou-Deilaki 1990, 80; Fox 2011, 74), might also be regarded as an indication of the deceased's status and/or role in their social network in life (Karetsou, Girella 2015, 365-366).

Indeed, specific vase types, such as the amphoroid kraters and large or medium sized stirrup jar (Papadopoulou 2011), were associated with male burials. In fact, the two men in Tombs 2 and 7 were accompanied by the cemetery's largest vases, as well as kylikes, skyphoi, and cups, recalling a standard assemblage of drinking vessels known from other cemeteries, e.g. Mochlos (Soles 2008, 196) and Knossos (Alberti 2004a).

The amphoroid krater is considered the vase par excellence around which a social and/or family group gathered. The funerary finds from Maroulas corroborate our image of individuals, specifically men, who appear to have had specific powers and responsibilities within a hierarchically structured society that guaranteed its cohesion (Soles 2001, 232; Wright 2004, 99-100; Soles 2008, 196, 202-203; D'Agata 2015, 93). The presence of large amphorae, a rare burial offering (Kanta 1980, 180; Soles 2008, 154; Smith 2010, 94), further supports the picture of individuals involved in large-scale production processes that were vital for the community's longevity and prosperity, even though the associations of different classes of objects do not necessarily indicate specific roles or relationships to production.

The second most frequently occurring class of grave goods after pottery in the cemetery's ten tombs is jewelry. In addition to necklaces, bracelets, finger rings, and pins, these include cosmetics implements, such as an ivory comb and ointment spoon. Of note is the group of 14 sealstones made from a variety of stones, such as carnelian, rock crystal, agate, amethyst, Spartan basalt (lapis lacedaemonius), but also rare materials, such as glass paste and lapis lazuli (Papadopoulou 2011). Apart from two tombs, 4 and 6, all the other intact chambers were furnished

with seals, a practice also well attested in the tombs at Armenoi. All of the sealstones are antiques, i.e. they are earlier than the burials they accompany.⁷

The distribution of jewellery according to the deceased's sex and age gives a different picture from the pottery. The tombs that contained the burials of men aged 30-35 contained only sealstones, whereas Tomb 5, which contained the burials of a woman and the child, possibly a girl, contained the largest and most varied assemblage of jewellery (rings, necklaces, bracelets) and cosmetic implements (ivory and glass pins, an ivory comb, a wooden pyxis and an ointment spoon). In the LM III period, the deposition of jewellery characterizes female burials more than males, as is evident from published cemeteries for which there are osteological data (Khania: Hallager, McGeorge 1992, 27; Limenaria Mochlos: Soles 2008, 192).

Bronze weapons, tools, and vessels are rather scarce among the grave goods at Maroulas. Such an assemblage (Papadopoulou 2011) accompanied the so-called 'warrior burial'⁸ from the cemetery's earliest tomb 11, which did not preserve any osteological material.⁹ In addition to a sword with cross-shaped grip, a dagger, and arrowheads, the assemblage also included a cleaver, a one-handled bowl, and a closed bronze vessel. Moreover, the existence of alabaster, amphoriskoi and kylikes determining the entire formal framework, which according to Kilian-Dirlmeier (1985, 198) and Alberti (2004b, 124-125) corresponds to a first level 'warrior'.

According to the available evidence, at least 13 clay chest shaped larnakes come from the ten undisturbed tombs at Maroulas (Merousis 2000, 154-157; Papadopoulou 2014, 170-171). To these we can add the three larnakes in the National Archaeological Museum (Touloupa 1968) and two more in the Archaeological Museums of Thessaloniki (Michailidou-Pappa 1972) and the Archaeological Museum of Rethymnon (Kanta 1973), all illicitly excavated in the 1960s – bringing the total to 18.

Ritual acts

Of particular interest is the deposition of vessels lacking a 'vital' part in tombs. More specifically, Tomb 2 contained an amphoroid krater without its base. Clearly, the removal of the base renders the vase unusable, cancelling its utilitarian function.¹⁰ The base may have broken off and been discarded when the vase was placed in the tomb. Alternatively, the vase may have been ritually 'killed', assuming the same condition as its owner, so as not to be reused (Niklasson 1991, 91; Soles 1999; Soles 2008, 201, 207-214; see also Boyd 2015, 155-156). In the latter case, it was the deceased's personal object par excellence, one that could not be passed on, but instead accompanied him into the afterlife, possibly to symbolize the smooth transfer of the deceased's role or power to the living. Thus, the function that the krater had while the deceased was still alive (possibly as a vessel to mark the coming together of a community) was cancelled when the base was removed and its symbolic character lost. This would have made it the grave good of an influential person.

The great care evident in the handling of the deceased at Maroulas is also apparent in the funerary rituals which probably took place in the dromoi of the tombs. Fragments of kylikes and cups were found in seven (2, 3, 4, 5, 7, 8 and 11) out of the nine tombs that preserve a dromos (Boyd 2015, 160-161; Karetsou, Girella 2015, 228). The seashells from the dromos in Tomb 3 and the small pit with grey soil, ash, and seashells next to Tomb 5 were probably associated with funerary offerings and rituals. Of note are the areas of red clay soil in the dromoi of Tombs 2 and 4, where charcoal and fragments of kylikes and one-handled stemmed cups were found. The presence

7 I thank Dr. Olga Krzyszkowska for this information.

8 Burials with weapons are one of the most impressive features of Aegean Bronze Age archaeology, Matthäus 1983; Driessen, Macdonald 1984; Kilian-Dirlmeier 1985; Alberti 2004a. Well known examples come from Mycenae (Mylonas 1973), the Late Minoan cemeteries around Knossos (Evans 1906; Hood 1956; Hood, De Jong 1952; Popham, Catling, Catling 1974), from Khania (Andreadaki-Vlasaki 2011, 116-121) and Mesara (Karetsou, Girella 2015, 368).

9 There are cases, however, where the presence of weapons does not imply necessarily a 'warrior', but might had important symbolic meaning, as they may accompany a child or a woman, or the osteological evidence did not exhibit any combat-related injuries, Muhly 1992, 171-172; Preston 2004a, 141; Kirkpatrick Smith 2009.

10 For an overall discussion of broken or fragmentary preserved objects in tombs, Chapman 2000, 25, 49-104.

of two upturned stirrup jars¹¹ which were placed under the larnax in Tomb 1, probably filled with oil (Cook 1981; Leonard 1981, 91-92; Boulotis 1996, 41-46), can be interpreted either as part of a funerary rite, for libations, or for anointing the corpse with aromatic oil.

		Chronology	Categories of offerings	Pithos length	Pithos width	Stomio sealing	Deceased
Pithos Burial 1	destroyed		?	1.40	1.00	plaque	1
Pithos Burial 2	disturbed	LM IIIB	2	0.95	0.50	amphoroid crater	1

Table 4. Maroulas. Data of the pithos burials.

Regarding the two pithos burials and the possible remains of a third, these comprised a pithos placed horizontally in a pit surrounded by rocks and sealed with a plaque or amphoroid krater – a common configuration (Table 4). Pithos Burial 1 was destroyed and looted. Pithos Burial 2 yielded very few osteological remains, as well as a pyxis and some jewellery (pins, beads, clay pellets).

2.2. THE CEMETERY OF MAROULAS. GENERAL REMARKS

The excavated chamber tombs of the Maroulas cemetery suggest highly standardized burial practices, with the pithos burials being obvious exceptions. Architecturally, the carefully hewn yet simple, without elaborate structural details, chamber tombs, do not appear to be invested with or to promote symbolism relating to discrimination or competitive tendencies between social groups. By contrast, the investment in time and effort in the sense of ‘high expenditure’ is expressed here by the special treatment of the deceased’s body. The large number of single burials and the care taken so as not to disturb them underline the worth and individuality of the deceased. This tendency is further enhanced by the wide use of larnakes, particularly in the few cases of double burials, so as to ensure the deceased’s individuality.

A first general look at the archaeological evidence shows that both sexes and all age groups buried at Maroulas were entitled to grave goods. These represent a wide variety of forms, techniques, and materials, and most classes of grave goods, as defined by material and function, appear in all burials.

On a second level, the study of the evidence from the Maroulas cemetery suggests that specific funerary behaviours were influenced by the gender and, possibly, age of the deceased (Voutsaki 2010, 81-83). In fact, the three tombs, nos 2, 5 and 7, with osteological evidence showed certain clear differences, which significantly contribute to the investigation of the social identities of both genders and, possibly, of different age groups. For example, cups are present in the tombs of both sexes and all age groups. Other types of vases, however, such as the amphoroid krater and the large stirrup jar do not occur in the burials of the woman or child. Adult burials in general and those of men in particular show the most combinations of vases of different types, function, and size, compared to the burials of the woman and, especially, the child, whose grave goods included only small cups. Similar assemblages from Tomb 15 at Limenaria, Mochlos are thought to characterize state officials, persons with large land holdings, and possibly also high administrative and religious positions in the local community — the so-called *te-re-ta* mentioned in Linear B tablets, the later *telestas* of the Classical period (Soles 2008, 200-202; 1999; D’Agata 2015, 94-96). Three of the Maroulas tombs (Tombs 11, 2, and 7) contained grave goods of similar character (Fig. 8). It is also worth noting that these three tombs are not contemporary but date to three consecutive periods: LM IIIA1/A2, LM IIIA2/IIIB, and LM IIIB. One naturally assumes that the three deceased, of which two were certainly men (in Tombs 2 and 7), held some kind of administrative or religious position in the Maroulas community in different time periods. Either

¹¹ Upturned vases placed inside or outside of tombs are known also from other sites in Crete, Andreadaki-Vlasaki 1992, 574; Soles 2008, 159.

way, it appears that there were specific mechanisms and objectives that regulated the deposition of certain types of vases or classes of grave goods.

The picture changes when one examines other classes of grave goods, such as jewellery, where the woman and child clearly outstrip the men's burials (Soles 2008, 191-192). Even though the sample is small, it is fairly clear that gender affects the choice of grave goods to some extent at least. The absence of what is considered typical jewellery (necklaces, bracelets) from men's burials and its presence in women's and children's burials may have constituted an appropriate symbolic field for transmitting to the community the messages that these embodied (Nikolaidou 1997). If we take this hypothesis further, we are led to the view that, as indicated by the evidence of the grave goods, the production and income-generating processes and the community's gatherings or sympotic activities were associated primarily with men. Thus, we detect specific strategies that indicate a division of roles, different spheres of action, and a separation between the skills of the two sexes. This differentiation between the sexes does not imply that one sex is favoured or exalted over the other, particularly since the hierarchy of the fields of activity within their society is not known (Hodder 1992, 254-261; Parker Pearson 1999, 101-102; Voutsaki 2012, 179-180).

The great care given to the deceased in the Maroulas cemetery is also evident in the ritual practices. The various funerary rituals, which included the apparent consumption of liquid foods, burning organic materials and, possibly, the treatment of the dead body, illustrate a society that invested in burial practices for the maintenance, promotion, and even the formation of its specific identity.

Concerning the pithos burials and what these represented, the absence of evidence indicating whether they contained primary or secondary burials, as well as the fragmentary picture of the assemblages of grave goods, complicates any attempted approach. The available data suggests that their use corresponds to an incident isolated in time though compatible with the cemetery's layout and practices, such as the preservation of the deceased's individuality and the deposition of grave goods.

3.1. THE CEMETERY OF ARMENOI

Location

The cemetery at Armenoi¹² on the Prinokefalo hill, nine km south of Rethymnon, follows the general rule according to which cemeteries during this period were sited on low, visible, and easily accessible hills (Vavouranakis 2007, 91). According to the geological survey of the Armenoi Project the necropolis was built in an area where the bedrock was enough hard and the chamber tombs could be constructed easily and safely (Tzedakis, Martlew



Fig. 8. Maroulas. Tomb 7. A view of the chamber from north.

12 For the first 142 tombs from Armenoi cemetery, Tzedakis 1970, 476-477 (Tombs 1-6); 1971a (Tombs 7-26); 1972 (Tombs 27-64); 1973-1974 (Tombs 65-90); 1976 (Tombs 91-107); 1978 (Tombs 108-120); 1980 (Tombs 121-142). For the largest tomb of the cemetery, Tomb 159: AR 32, 1985/86, 95; for Tombs 177-220, see Tzedakis 1988; 1989/1990; 1991/1993; 1994/1996. For a general description of the cemetery, Tzedakis 1996; Godart, Tzedakis 1992, 85-94 and for a detailed catalogue of the tombs with jewellery, Löwe 1996, 261-297. For a comparative approach to data from the tombs: Merousis 2002, 261-297 and on larnakes from Armenoi cemetery, Tzedakis 1971b; Merousis 2000, 110-117. On a special type of vases, Nezeri 2013 and on the boar's tusk helmet, Banou 1990.

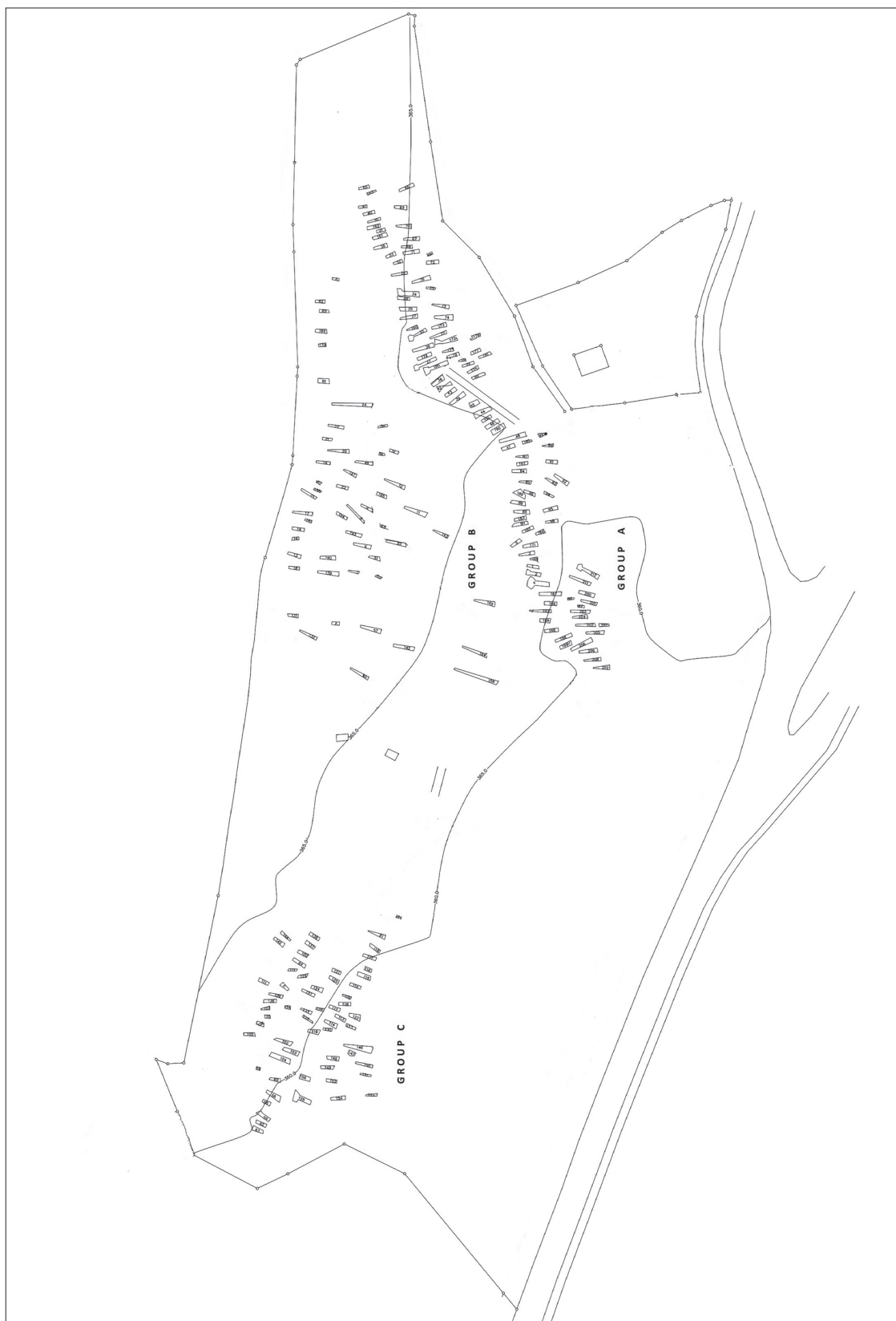


Fig. 9. Plan of the Armenoi cemetery (after Papathanasiou, Hoskin, Papadopoulou 1992). Not on scale.

2007, 70). Its 233 tombs,¹³ of which 225 are considered here,¹⁴ date to LM IIIA-III B; except for tholos tomb Tomb 200 (Papadopoulou 1997), all of the other tombs are rock-cut chamber tombs, some only with a dromos but no chamber (Fig. 9).

Detailed measurements of 209 graves show that almost all face east, towards Mount Vrysinas (Papathanasiou, Hoskin, Papadopoulou 1992, 46–47). Moreover, orientation allows the tombs to be grouped into three major groups/clusters. Group A, with 118 tombs and average of 82.2 degrees orientation, is the cemetery's largest, representing 51% of the total. It extends along the foot of the east side of Prinokefalo hill, with tombs arranged in a curved, double line and closely spaced. Group B, with 47 widely spaced tombs (21%) and average orientation of 104.9 degrees, occupies the highest point of the hill's east slope and its top. Group C, with 60 tombs (27%), normally spaced and oriented to 110 degrees, occupies the hill's south slope.

The variation in the mean orientation between the three burial groups may be the result of the different position that each of them occupies on the hill. These groups were probably formed as a result of a deliberate concentration and conscious proximity of the tombs. However, this practice was not observed throughout the cemetery's long period of use, because in the late phase of LM III B the necropolis was enlarged by interspersing small tombs between the larger ones mostly at the crest of the rise, where Group B was extended (Tzedakis, Martlew 2012, 242). Furthermore, the original date of most of the tombs indicates that the cemetery developed evenly, with all three groups of tombs used simultaneously.

Architecture

In order to classify the tombs in the Armenoi cemetery we took into account each tomb's size including the chamber and dromos.¹⁵ Thus, the tombs with intact chambers fall into the following three classes (Table 5): tombs with the total area of the chamber and dromos exceeding 15 square metres; tombs with an area of 10 to 15 square metres; and tombs with an area of less than 10 square metres.

Group A 118 tombs			Group B 47 tombs			Group C 60 tombs		
Area in m ²	Tombs	%	Area in m ²	Tombs	%	Area in m ²	Tombs	%
more than 15	7	6 %	more than 15	13	28.12 %	more than 15	5	8.7 %
up to 15	39	33 %	up to 15	13	28.12 %	up to 15	14	23.9 %
up to 10	72	61 %	up to 10	21	43.75 %	up to 10	41	67. %

Table 5. Armenoi. Classification of the tombs based on their size.

Compared to Groups A and C, Group B is dominated by large tombs (over 15 m²) and includes very few small tombs (under 10 m²). Group B also features the most tombs with impressive architecture and sophisticated structural features, such as pillars, staircases, and benches (Table 6) (Fig. 10). Three tombs, 11, 24 and 159, had large rectangular chambers and were outstanding architecturally. Tomb 24 had a central pillar in the chamber (Fig. 11) and Tomb 11 had a column in relief set against the rear wall and a bench built on either side (Godart, Tzedakis 1992, 87).

¹³ The total number of the tombs and the topographic plan of the cemetery are mentioned in the information panel which is at the archaeological site of Armenoi.

¹⁴ There are no reports for the Tombs 226–233.

¹⁵ For the classification and correlation of the first 142 tombs from the cemetery of Armenoi, based on their dimensions and categories of offerings, see Merousis 2002.

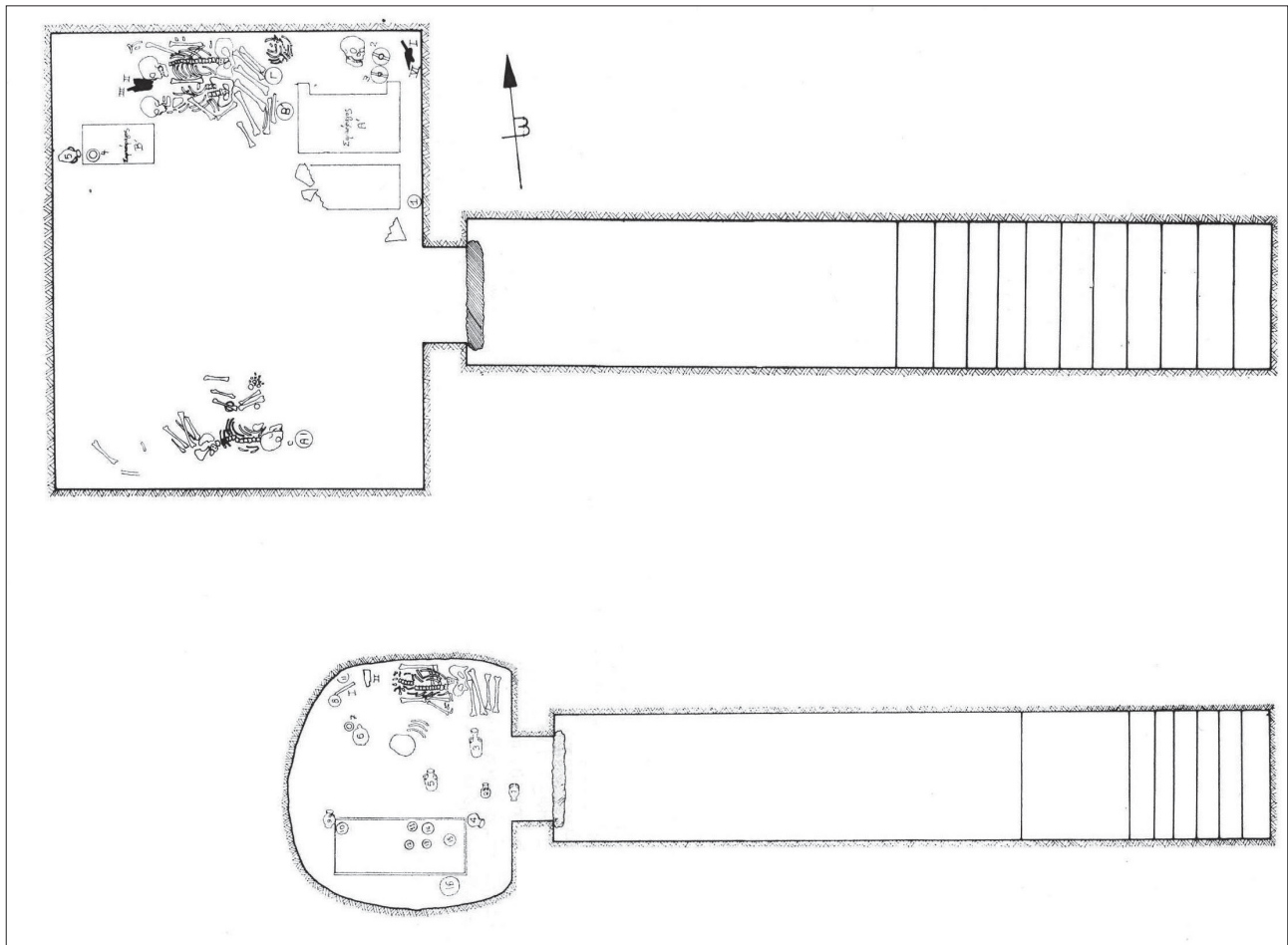


Fig. 10. Armenoi. Plan of Tombs 52 and 55 (after Tzedakis 1972).



Fig. 11. Armenoi. The chamber of Tomb 24 (after Godart, Tzedakis 1992).



Fig. 12. Armenoi. The chamber of Tomb 159 (after Godart, Tzedakis 1992).

The highly sophisticated Tomb 159 is undoubtedly the finest example of funerary LM III architecture in West Crete. The length of its dromos is 15.50 m and the 25 carefully shaped steps lead to an entrance which imitates a house door. The ornate doorway, with a double defining frame (anathyrosis) and square bases at both sides likely to support columns, could probably create a kind of propylon to confer prestige on the grave while it was visible. Tomb 159 had a large rectangular chamber (almost 20 m²), a rectangular niche in the floor, a pillar against the back wall and a carefully carved bench that ran the length of the chamber (Fig. 12) (Godart, Tzedakis 1992, 87-88).

Structural features of the chamber tombs	Group A 118 tombs	Group B 47 tombs	Group C 60 tombs
Steps	15 %	68 %	26 %
Dromos niches	41 %	25 %	22 %
Anathyrosis	10 %	10 %	22 %
Bench	4 %	12.5 %	4 %
Pillar/Semi-pillar	-	9.4 %	-
Pit/chamber niche	4 %	16 %	13 %
Grave markers	7.08 %	19.27 %	1.08 %

Table 6. Armenoi. Structural features of the tombs.

Of note are the tombs without a chamber, which are considered unfinished or hybrid (21% of the total number) (Iakovidis 1970, B', 21; Lewartowski 2000, 11) (Table 7).

Group A 118 tombs		Group B 47 tombs		Group C 60 tombs	
Unfinished tombs	Percentage	Unfinished tombs	percentage	Unfinished tombs	percentage
18	15 %	15	32 %	14	23 %

Table 7. Armenoi. Tombs without chamber.

In Group B all the niches that were carved in the dromoi of tombs, with or without chamber, contained no burial or even osteological remains. The same occurred to the majority of the tombs, unfinished or not, from the other two burial Groups A and C, where niches with traces of bones were very rare, and on the basis of excavation reports, are attributed mainly to child burials (Table 8) (Fig. 13). In a few niches of unfinished/hybrid graves were identified beads or, more rarely, seals.

The existence of mostly empty niches in several of these tombs raises the question as to whether unfinished tombs, in general, were the result of a failed attempt at carving the tomb, unless other information can provide other reasons for their construction. It is possible that these were not unfinished tombs but that their form served different funerary and ritual purposes, perhaps even those of a cenotaph (Papadimitriou 2011, 479-480).¹⁶

¹⁶ The presence of cenotaphs regardless of their size usually requires the deposition of grave goods, as evidenced by the cemeteries in Archanes, Limenaria Mochlos and Gypsades Knossos but also in prehistoric cemeteries of mainland Greece and Southeastern Europe (Sakellarakis 1965; Soles 2008, 194; Mazonaki-Grammatikaki 1997, 987; Persson 1931, 108-117; Chapman 1991; 2000, 174-179). Of course, they may have had perishable offerings placed there or have been the focus of rituals that cannot now be detected.

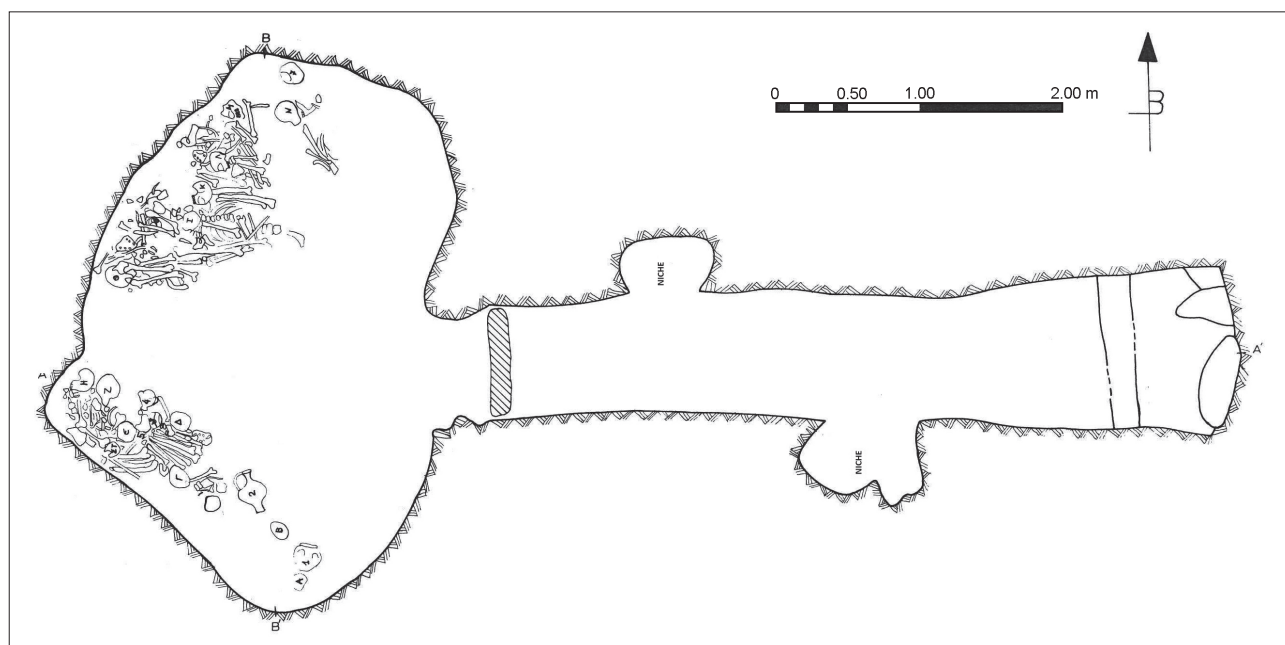


Fig. 13. Armenoi. Plan of Tomb 95 with niches in dromos (after Tzedakis 1976).

Group A 118 tombs		Group B 47 tombs		Group C 60 tombs	
Niches in dromoi of tombs with chamber		Niches in dromoi of tombs with chamber		Niches in dromoi of tombs with chamber	
no burial or bone remains	87.8 %	no burial or bone remains	100 %	no burial or bone remains	100 %
child burial	2.43 %	child burial	-	child burial	-
bone remains	9.75 %	bone remains	-	bone remains	-
Niches in dromoi of tombs without chamber		Niches in dromoi of tombs without chamber		Niches in dromoi of tombs without chamber	
no burial or bone remains	91.66 %	no burial or bone remains	100 %	no burial or bone remains	85.71 %
child burial	8.33 %	child burial	-	child burial	14.28 %
bone remains	-	bone remains	-	bone remains	-

Table 8. Armenoi. Niches in dromoi of tombs, unfinished or not, with bone remains.

Occasionally, tombs are marked with grave markers (Papadopoulou 1996). Although the dense arrangement of the tombs and uniformity of the dromoi would have made grave markers a useful feature, these are rather scarce. So far, 12 grave stelai have been identified, a particularly small number, even if one takes into account that some may have been destroyed or displaced over time. The occurrence and the use of grave stones at Armenoi is limited from the LM IIIA2 period until the beginning of LM IIIB. To the same period are dated the grave stones found at two other Minoan sites: Mavros Spelios¹⁷, Knossos (Forsdyke 1926-1927, 254-255) and Archanes (Kallitziaki 1995). At Mochlos, in two cases a large amphoroid krater was used as a grave marker (Soles 2008, 180).

17 Alberti (2004b, 109) believes that what is considered as grave stone at Mavros Spelios is probably a small millstone.

Most of the tombs at Armenoi are thought to have belonged to families or other kinship groupings. However, the three groups of tombs differ considerably from one another as regards the number and types of burials (Table 9).

Burials per tomb	Group A	Group B	Group C
1-2	8.7 %	50 %	15.62 %
3-7	47.82 %	50 %	68.76 %
8-16	43.47 %	0 %	15.62 %

Table 9. Armenoi. Number of people that have been buried in each burial group.

Treatment of body

The ‘cramming’ of tombs that distinguishes Group A, compared to Groups B and, to a lesser extent, C, also applies to the number of burials.¹⁸ Group A features the greatest concentration of burials in a single tomb (including two tombs with 16 burials each) and the largest number of tombs with multiple burials. Group B is distinguished by a greater emphasis on the individual, with an average of one to three burials per tomb as opposed to three to seven burials for Groups A and C.

According to the excavation reports, more than 80% of the tombs in Groups A and C contain both primary and secondary burials¹⁹ (Table 10).

	Group A	Group B	Group C
only primary burials	12.5 %	56.66 %	16.12 %
only secondary burials	5.8 %	-	-
primary and secondary burials	81.7 %	43.3 %	83.86 %

Table 10. Armenoi. Percentage of primary and secondary burials at the chambers of each burial group.

Very few contain one primary burial, and only four or five only secondary burials. Group B presents an entirely different picture, with more than half of the tombs (56.66 %) containing primary burials. Group B, with fewer but larger and more sophisticated tombs than the other two groups, is also distinguished by the particularly high number of larnakes (16 out of the cemetery’s 32).

The relationship between the size of each chamber and the number of burials it contained is instructive regarding how the deceased were treated both within each burial group and from one group to another, as there are significant differences between them (Table 11).

Group A		Group B		Group C	
Individuals buried	Space that could be used in m ²	Individuals buried	Space that could be used in m ²	Individuals buried	Space that could be used in m ²
12 %	more than 1.00 m ²	66.7 %	more than 1,00 m ²	28 %	more than 1.00 m ²
88 %	less than 1.00 m ²	33.3%	less than 1,00 m ²	72 %	less than 1.00 m ²

Table 11. Armenoi. The relationship between size of chamber and number of burials.

18 The information cited in Table 9 is based on anthropological studies for the Tombs 1-120, while for the rest the information is based on skull count.

19 In most cases the term ‘secondary deposition’ is more appropriate than ‘secondary burial’ as the skeletal parts were not re-buried but they were re-arranged in the same place, on the chamber’s floor (Vavouranakis, Bourbou 2015, 172).

Group B tops the list, with almost 2/3 of the deceased being allotted more than 1 m². Group C follows with 1/4 of the deceased having more than 1 m², and, lastly, Group A, with only 1/8 of the deceased enjoying this much space.

The study of the skeletal remains from a number of tombs made it possible to identify probable family ties between individuals based on common features observed in their physiology and pathology. According to McGeorge (1983, 78, 104-111), who examined the skeletal remains from the 120 tombs excavated between 1969 and 1978, the human remains consist of 143 adult males, 107 adult females and 106 children. Neighbouring tombs also provided relevant data, such as certain hereditary diseases, which were diagnosed in osteological material derived from the first 120 tombs. The data allowed for the identification of family groups and demonstrated that burial groups were also probably formed because of family ties between the deceased (McGeorge 1983, 220-226).

Thirty two clay chest-shaped larnakes have been found in the cemetery of Armenoi. All of the larnakes are decorated, while two of them are polychrome (Tzedakis 1971b). Double axes, sacred horns of consecration and scenes of ritual hunting and of bulls were also found as decoration on a number of them (Tzedakis, Martlew 2012, 243).

Grave goods

At Armenoi, only 7.86% of the tombs had no grave goods (Table 12). More than 800 fine decorated vases have been found, 300 bronzes, sealstones and individual artefacts, such as a boar's tusk helmet, a woven reed basket and a stirrup jar with a Linear B inscription (Tzedakis, Martlew 2012, 239).

Number of categories of objects deposited per tomb	Group A 118 tombs	Group B 47 tombs	Group C 60 tombs
0	9 %	16 %	6.6 %
1-2	51 %	56 %	76 %
3	25 %	18.7 %	10.9 %
4-5	15 %	9.3 %	6.5 %
6	-	-	-

Table 12. Armenoi. Percentage of the 6 categories of objects deposited per tomb in the three burial groups.

The pottery finds included stirrup jars, cups, small jars, beaked jugs, kraters and kylikes, some of which were tin-covered. The ceramics came from various sources including the well-known pottery workshop of LM III Kydonia, the workshops at Knossos and eastern Crete, and local workshops. More specifically the study of the ceramic material of the Late Minoan cemetery of Armenoi reveals the existence of a unique group of closely-related vessels which has quite distinctive local characteristics. The range of shapes is restricted, since the potters reproduced the well-known Mycenaean alabastron in four closely-related varieties. The bulk of the workshop's production is stylistically classified as belonging to the sub-phase LM IIIA2 (Nezeri 2013, 76-106).

Yet, not a single tomb contains all six classes of grave goods (pottery, jewellery, weapons/tools, implements, vessels, figurines). It should be noted, however, that the two largest tombs, 24 and 159, had been looted. The size of the tombs and variety of grave goods increase proportionately as the larger tombs in Groups A and B contain the most categories (4-5) of grave goods.

Differences between groups also appear in the frequency of specific classes of grave goods. Specifically, ceramic vases are the most popular grave goods in Groups A and B, whereas jewellery, including sealstones, which occur in more than 80% of the tombs, appears more frequently in Group C. Pottery and jewellery are the two classes of grave goods that are most frequently combined in the Armenoi tombs. Bronze tools and weapons appear more

frequently in Group A than in the other groups, whereas bronze vessels appear as frequently in Groups A and B, but are rare in Group C. Finally, figurines, which occur rarely in Minoan tombs, are present only in Group B.

Ritual acts

The pottery fragments found in several dromoi are a clear indication of funerary rituals, particularly as they belong to vessels intended for the transport of solid and liquid foodstuffs. Regardless of the form of each ritual, the dromos could probably serve in two ways, a boundary and a bridge/passage between the world of the living and that of the dead, functioning as a guarantee to the balanced connection of the two sides. It was above all a liminal zone, where ritual and memorial ceremonies took place, centring on a farewell to the dead and also on the reinstatement of order in the group after the loss (Gallou 2005, 65; Papadimitriou 2011, 477-479). Furthermore, ceremonial pits were found at the area occupied by Group A and B. The discovery of a pit south of the Tombs 177-178 and a levelled surface, both filled with fragments of kylikes, cups, and cooking pots, as well as the chemical analysis carried out on some of these vessels, showed that rituals involving the consumption of food and drink were carried out in the Armenoi cemetery (Tzedakis 1988, 297; Tzedakis, Martlew 2001, 115-116, 175-176; 2007, 71-72). The construction of the pit seemed to be rough, but the archaeological information is limited.

The absence of human remains from the pit and levelled area excludes their funerary use as spaces for re-depositing earlier burials and identifies them as spaces intended for funerary-commemorative rituals, possibly of collective rather than private character. Their existence can be associated with post-funerary rituals, either of a different nature and purpose, or performed at a different time. That is to say, if we accept that the finds in the fills of the dromoi were associated with the deceased in each tomb, we can assume that the ceremonies carried out in the pits correspond to a larger burial cluster or group, or even to a different moment in time, when each act was performed as a kind of commemorative ritual.

3.2. THE CEMETERY OF ARMENOI. GENERAL REMARKS

The organization and long use of the Prinokefalo hill as a cemetery created a space for the expression and preservation of collective memory, which also functioned as a means for identifying and ensuring cohesion for the living (Dakouri-Hild 2016, 14). Geological survey has demonstrated that the necropolis of Armenoi was built in an area chosen to permit the easy and safe construction of tombs. Thus the inhabitants of Armenoi could realize a specific plan for their cemetery, which was close to their settlement (Tzedakis, Martlew 2012, 241-242). Archaeological investigations have revealed a LM III house complex, Minoan foundations and bases of terrace walls in the modern village of Kastellos, southwest of the Armenoi necropolis (Tzedakis, Martlew 2012, 240).

The study of the five elements defined above shows that the general principles of the specific burial programme were implemented at the Armenoi cemetery for all social groups, as defined by gender and age, without exception. The organization of the tombs within all three clusters and the regularity that their layout presents, in most cases, reflect an acceptance and implementation of specific principles in the cemetery's organization. Their organization into groups based on familial relationships is a reasonable possibility, supported primarily by the available biological data. It is also possible that these various burial groups correspond to different social groups in the same community, thereby reflecting existing differences.²⁰

When compared to one another, the three burial groups display clear differences between them. As regards their architecture, the particularities identified in the three burial groups express all possible levels in quality of construction that a chamber tomb can offer, whereas Group A also includes a tholos tomb. This typological vari-

20 For the distribution of tombs in discrete clusters according to their size, details of construction and finds see especially, Cavanagh 1987, 165-166; Mee, Cavanagh 1990, 231-234.

ation, coupled with the deliberate and manifest tendency to display some elaborate and costly tombs (in terms of construction), may reflect a certain amount of competition not only among the three burial groups, but also within each group.

The architectural complexity observed in some graves from Armenoi, especially in Group B, could reasonably suggest that it was used by certain individuals for their social expression, as they were able to spend more time and energy in constructing their tombs. This does not confirm, necessarily, their privileged social position as it may have been used in order to obscure social reality (Voutsaki 1995, 56-57). However, it appears that the funerary architecture in one way or another can serve as a means of differentiation, as a dialectic relationship between people and structures while it may define and give meaning to the landscape (Vavouranakis 2006).

In most of the tombs examined, the deceased's handling and arrangement of the body, whether articulated or not, consistently follows specific rules that probably transmit a series of messages of social significance. The concept of collectivity, expressed by multiple burials, dominates the funerary practices at Armenoi, but is not universally applied. Group B, for example, is distinguished by its emphasis on the individual as opposed to Groups A and C, where the accent is on the group. The multiple-use tombs with secondary burials can be interpreted as a way of demonstrating and strengthening ties between members of a kin or family group and its deceased. It stems from the human need to declare that they belong and, through their present choices and the perpetuation or legacy of those choices, thereby ensure the group's symbolic continuum through both space and time (Voutsaki 2010, 81).

These two tendencies, individuality and communality, do not necessarily remain unchanged through time, during the cemetery's use. Nor do they constitute two fundamentally contradictory concepts, since both function as paradigms. In the first instance, the individual is honoured as the guarantor of the group's consistency and continuity; in the second the paradigm is projected by the group itself. In both cases, it is the unity and cohesion of a larger group that is promoted. The aim is essentially the same but achieved by different means, because specific persons with emblematic character and symbolic prestige appear to emerge at certain times. The difference lies in the realization that the group that expresses its unity and continuity through an emblematic guarantor shows greater inclination toward display than that governed by the logic of the group.

This inclination is further strengthened by the sporadic, possibly selective use of grave markers, of which the only decorated examples come from the two larger tombs (24 and 159). The use of grave markers in Crete is rather exceptional and reserved for the tombs of prominent individuals, possibly as a reminder of the greater expense and effort spent on them (Kallitzi 1995; Papadopoulou 1996).

When we examine and compare the presence of all six classes of grave goods (pottery, jewellery, weapons/tools, implements, vessels, figurines) it becomes clear that there was a general framework whereby the frequency of their occurrence and their abundance is consistent with the time and energy invested in the tomb's construction. Any deviations from or differentiations of this rule, such as the high percentage of tombs without grave goods in Group B, may imply, apart from the possibility of an act of looting, the existence of expected, to some extent, alternative trends and behaviours within the community (Voutsaki 1995, 59-63).

As for rare, valuable objects, these occur more frequently in Groups A and C compared to Group B. This particularity may imply a different kind of understanding of how particular social groups choose to highlight their position and role by investing in grave goods instead of the tomb's monumentality.

The intention apparent in some of the tombs at Armenoi of adopting characteristics of a majestic past with a view to differentiating and promoting certain social groups as local aristocracies is likely associated with the emergence and consolidation of thriving regional centres after the weakening of the palace at Knossos.²¹

21 After the time Knossos was severely affected by the early 14th-century destruction (early LM IIIA2) there is an increase in the architectural building programmes in settlement contexts, Preston 2004b, 323; Rehak, Younger 1998, 150-151; La Rosa 1997, 255-264; Shaw, Shaw 1995, 397-398; Hallager, Hallager 2011, 429-432. In the same period, there is an increase in popularity of tomb use, which coincided with a changing and more regionalized political geography of the island, Preston 2004a, 141-143; Karetsou, Girella 2015, 27-32. This regional fragmentation may also be reflected in an increasing regional divergence of ceramic production across the island in LM IIIA2, Banou, Rethemiotakis 1997; Popham 1994, 101; Kanta 1980, 288-290.

4. INTERPRETING THE EVIDENCE FROM THE TWO CEMETERIES

The evidence from the two cemeteries suggests that there was a funerary programme, within which the commonly accepted treatment of the deceased manifested itself. The general principles that govern and support this programme were obviously the result of conscious and targeted choices and appear to have remained stable throughout the cemeteries' long life, despite occasional divergent trends and behaviours. The evidence thus highlights the key role of funerary practices in the preservation, reproduction, and redefinition of social identities and structures.

The typological variety attested in both cemeteries, with the tholos tomb at Armenoi and the pithos burials at Maroulas, is only occasional and does not significantly differentiate these tombs from the chamber tombs, since burials were organized according to the same basic principles with similar orientation, handling of the deceased's body, and grave goods.

The continuous use of the cemeteries at Armenoi and Maroulas over a period of approximately 180 years contributed to the affirmation and renewal of the communities' relationship with their past. Despite the difference in their size, the two funerary sites have several key structural features in common, such as the clear demarcation of the site, fixed orientation, strict organization of the tombs, and symbolic treatment of the dead body, even though these common features may not necessarily constitute common ideological and social perceptions. At the same time, the two sites differ in certain elements of the funerary programme, such as the tombs' construction and architectural particularities, the implementation of certain burial practices, and association of the deceased with particular grave goods.

In both cemeteries the site boundaries are clear and strictly adhered to, and do not overlap with other areas of expression and action. At Armenoi, the site is more strictly organized, though not necessarily because of the terrain, than at Maroulas, where space is limited. The clearly-defined arrangement of the tombs at Armenoi emphatically underlines the cohesion of the society that created them, whereas the various clusters of tombs may reflect family ties. The three large groups of tombs and the smaller clusters within these groups demonstrate an interest in the common past of the social group and its symbolic recognition within the funerary context.

Greater differences between the two cemeteries are evident in the principles that define the variety of funerary structures. The Maroulas cemetery is characterized by the simplicity, standardization, and structural uniformity of its tombs. The absence of ostentatious tombs paints a more seamless picture in this field of expression, without issues of implied gradations within social groups or competing trends between them. By contrast, several tombs in the Armenoi cemetery are decidedly grand, with sophisticated architectural elements. Of course, the site on which each cemetery was established is an important, though not decisive, factor for the shaping of the funerary architecture, with the smooth hill slope at Armenoi lending itself to greater architectural variety than the relatively inaccessible ravine at Maroulas.

Regarding the handling of the deceased's body, consistently repetitive behaviours at Maroulas paint a picture of egalitarian treatment of the deceased, without competitive tendencies. Often, however, a marked uniformity in funerary practices within a cemetery is interpreted as an indication of competitive tendencies between social groups, which were led to adopt similar choices (Merousis 2002, 207-208). Nevertheless, mortuary context is not only a field of social competition but also a realm of mourning (Voutsaki 2012, 163-164).

At Maroulas, the emphasis on maintaining individuality, with one or at most two burials per tomb, usually placed inside larnakes, is characteristic. Primary burials are an almost inviolable rule, along with the deliberate and conscious effort to keep the deceased's body fully articulated and unaffected by later alterations. This picture of the care given to each body is further enhanced by the large number and variety of grave goods that accompany the burials. The grave goods show tendencies toward diversification, which are probably based on the deceased's sex and/or age. These two parameters (gender and age) probably defined the factors that influenced the deposition of specific objects, without one factor necessarily prevailing over the other, but obviously in order to transmit messages relating to their distinctiveness within the social group.

At Armenoi, evidence for a more complex social fabric is more abundant and clear; or at least it is easier to identify a tendency for the specific symbolic projection of differences between individual social groups through

their burial practices. The tombs' structural features cover all levels of complexity, from simple tombs with rudimentary chambers to tholos tombs and monumental chamber tombs. The location of the three burial groups on different parts of the hill and the investment of time and effort in the construction of some graves suggest the presence of a group of wealthy individuals that attempted to advertise its power symbolically and safeguard its position at a local or wider level. The fact that 'costly' tombs, like Tombs 24 and 159, are probably singular and limited chronologically to LM IIIA2 may suggest that either the display through monumental funerary structures or the power of the people they belonged to was in decline. However, given that LM IIIB tombs are smaller but feature rock-hewn engaged pillars and even a bench, the first hypothesis is more likely to apply.

Similar indications can be seen in the handling of the deceased. Group B, characterized by a small number of bodies per tomb, the use of larnakes, and a preference for primary, undisturbed burials, places a greater importance on the deceased's individuality as a means of guaranteeing the social group's cohesion and continuity than Groups A and C, where the group assumes the role of guarantor.

Regarding the grave goods, there is a greater homogeneity in the distribution of the finds among the three burial groups. Any differences result from preferences for certain categories of grave goods or the occasional presence of rare artefacts. Also, the available data do not suggest that there was a constant proportional relation between the tomb's complexity and monumentality and the quantity and variety of the funerary goods that it contained.

Funerary and commemorative rituals in the form of recurring standardized events aimed at shaping symbolic religious and social values were held in both cemeteries. Evidence for the consumption of liquid foodstuffs and, possibly, for libations performed by the participants is equally abundant in both cemeteries.²² Of course, vases used for transporting solid foodstuffs, such as cooking pots, and large closed vases for storing liquids are absent at Maroulas. Perhaps, this differentiation reflects the participation of more individuals and more collective character of the funerary ceremonies at Armenoi as compared to Maroulas, where a small number of participants performed specific small-scale rituals. Furthermore, the absence of votive pits at Maroulas suggests an absence of rituals of 'public' character and supports the hypothesis that greater emphasis was placed on the individual rather than the group.

Specific choices and local diversity are evident in both cemeteries, and the common framework of general principles described does not suffice to explain all aspects of the funerary practices that took place in them. The archaeological evidence reveals certain distinctive trends in the way ancestors were treated and in the adoption of behaviours capable of conveying, shaping, influencing, or obscuring the terms of the existence and functioning of social reality. Depending on the ideological and metaphysical concepts of the living, and also, obviously, depending on their specific objectives, such as the way they self-identify in space and time, their expression mechanisms in the funerary field change.

Whether the image projected through funerary practices corresponds to social reality and to what extent it reproduces actual structures is particularly difficult to ascertain. Undoubtedly, however, the dynamic direction of each society's relation with its past, historically determined and changing in the field of social perceptions and practices, creates multiple channels of expression, one of which is funerary practices, which, depending on the level of development of the cultural environment that supply and support them, are represented in complex or simple ways, employing for this purpose more or less complex mechanisms and combinations of elements.

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22 For the use of dromoi for ritual activities, Papadimitriou 2015, 94-104.

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