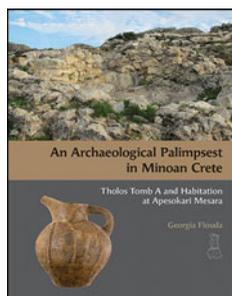


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GEORGIA FLOUDA (ed.). 2023. *An archaeological palimpsest in Minoan Crete: Tholos A and habitation at Apesokari Mesara* (Prehistoric Monographs 70). Philadelphia (PA): INSTAP Academic Press; 978-1-931534-35-2 hardback \$95.



Over recent decades, the regions of southern Crete have received increased scholarly interest (e.g. Oddo & Chalikias 2022). *An archaeological palimpsest in Minoan Crete* continues this trend by exploring the area around the modern town of Apesokari in the north-central foothills of the Asterousia Mountains, which contains a Minoan tholos tomb (Tholos A) and a settlement on nearby Vigla hill. These sites are dated roughly from the late third millennium to mid-second millennium BC, corresponding to the Late Prepalatial through Protopalatial periods and, in the case of Vigla hill, into the early Neopalatial period. Ultimately, the volume focuses on a

re-evaluation of the landscape, architecture and finds from these sites, which have been largely neglected since their initial excavations in 1942.

The book is divided into three parts. Part 1 (Chapters 1–8) documents the architecture and finds of Tholos A, providing introductory remarks about the sites, overarching research questions and methodologies, as well as several specialist studies. Part 2 (Chapters 9–12) surveys the Vigla hill complex, primarily focusing on the architecture and material culture. Part 3 (Chapters 13–15) situates both Vigla hill and Tholos A in the wider local and regional diachronic histories of the domestic and mortuary spheres. The volume concludes with two appendices: Appendix A catalogues several seals from a private collection purported to be from Apesokari; and Appendix B includes a petrographic characterisation study on numerous stone objects from Tholos A and Vigla hill.

Following a brief overview of the tholos and settlement, Georgia Flouda frames the research in terms of the archaeology of communities in order to “ascertain whether permanence of residential and burial spaces and participation in group-strengthening rites of the mortuary sphere can be examined at a synchronic and a diachronic level” (p.9). The primary interest is, therefore, to define the social identity of the rural community and explore how it was formed and negotiated through the reification of social memory (funerary ritual) and territorial demarcation (monumentalisation).

The architectural analysis of Tholos A, detailing the circular burial chamber, its abutting rectangular annex and adjacent paved area, is preceded by a short chapter on its excavation history. This chapter contains information on the original excavator, an Austrian officer named August Schörgendorfer, who was stationed in Crete during the Second World War. Put bluntly, his methodologies and later (limited) publication of the material had significant implications for the renewed study due to poor contextual documentation.

Chapter 6 presents a room-by-room catalogue of Tholos A’s clay and stone objects. Flouda provides in-depth discussions for room-specific assemblages and a chronological overview of

the material, in which she attributes certain groups of artefacts to individual burial horizons or identifiable strata. Collectively, the stylistic analysis indicates that the structure was built in Early Minoan III Late (c. 2200–2100/2050 BC) and burials were actively interred until Middle Minoan IIB although activity in the burial chamber ceased around Middle Minoan IIA (c. 1875/1850–1750/1700 BC). The paved exterior area also appears to have been active until Middle Minoan III (c. 1750/1700–1700/1675 BC).

The specialist studies include two studies on human remains and one GIS study. The aDNA analysis, in particular, is a notable contribution to the volume. Unfortunately, the results were largely inconclusive with respect to genetic relations and only two samples were able to distinguish non-maternal relations. On the other hand, the inter-visibility study proves more fruitful in situating Apesokari in a network of intraregional exchange and interaction. Viewshed analyses indicate that Tholos A was positioned as a waypoint overlooking major communication arteries that connected the Mesara plain, the Asterousia Mountains and the south coastline. Furthermore, it is significant that had the tholos been positioned just 50m to the east, it would not have been seen along these routes. Thus, the placement of the tholos privileged its role as a visual marker over sightlines with an adjacent tholos (Tholos B, not detailed in this volume) and Vigla hill.

Part 2 first covers the complexity of the architecture at Vigla hill, followed by a discussion of the ceramics from the site. Due to the accidental mixing of contexts while in storage in the 1980s, original assemblage groupings were lost. To remedy this issue, Flouda reconstructs ‘deposits’ from boxes of artefacts on the basis of surviving labels, pottery cross-joins between boxes, wear patterns and ceramic dating. The chapter is organised into discussions of these ‘deposits’ with useful overviews of chronologies, minimum number of vessels, total number of sherds and more information. Clay and stone objects are drawn (figs. 31–91) and/or photographed (plates 14–25). Chapter 11 attempts to link deposits to spatial contexts, including storage and residential areas, upper-floor collapse debris and so on; Chapter 12 covers stone and shell objects.

Part 3 summarises and contextualises the information presented throughout the volume within local and regional developmental trajectories. The Vigla hill settlement is described as a self-sustaining small rural agricultural hamlet that survived into the early Neopalatial period, and the following chapter reconstructs several centuries of ancestral memory and lineage through place of burial as well as funerary rites and reverence. The final chapter returns to the question of the social identity of the inhabitants of Apesokari, convincingly arguing for a deliberately constructed identity as demonstrated by the continuous occupation, exploitation and transformation of the landscape, in addition to intra- and extra-community interaction.

Overall, *Apesokari* adds to a growing corpus of re-studied tholos cemeteries in south-central Crete, highlighting variability in mortuary behaviour between the third and second millennia BC. By concretely linking the tholos with its contemporary settlement—evidence for which has often eluded similar investigations of Minoan tholoi (e.g. Legarra Herrero 2011)—the authors offer greater insights into the interplay between the social, economic and funerary arenas within Minoan society. Lastly, this monograph demonstrates the wealth of information that can be extracted from legacy collections with weakly provenanced

material, while highlighting the urgent need to re-evaluate storerooms for similarly understudied assemblages. Together, Flouda and colleagues present a comprehensive site report that scholars of the Aegean Bronze Age will certainly value for its content, methodology and cohesive organisation.

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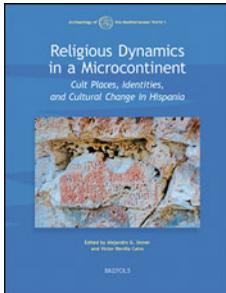
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ALEJANDRO G. SINNER & VÍCTOR REVILLA CALVO (ed.). 2022. *Religious dynamics in a microcontinent: cult places, identities and cultural change in Hispania* (Archaeology of the Mediterranean World, vol. 1). Turnhout: Brepols; 978-2-503-59545-0 paperback €110.



The book *Religious dynamics in a microcontinent: cult places, identities and cultural change in Hispania* presents an in-depth review of religion in the rural Roman world in Hispania. It also addresses the importance of urban cults and other forms of religiosity carried out by urban institutions, such as the minting of coins or the celebration of the imperial family cult.

Compiled by Alejandro Sinner and Víctor Revilla Calvo, this volume is divided into two well-organised sections, preceded by a thorough Introduction. The Introduction explains the philosophy behind this editorial project and the theoretical framework that underpinned the selection of chapters and the organisation of the sections. The theoretical content is based on post-colonialism views, with the clear aim of highlighting the role of the diverse indigenous populations of the Iberian Peninsula. This approach of contrasting different ideas of indigenism in the region will be welcomed by many: from those who think that a Celtic and Iberian container is enough to explain the pre-Roman diversity of south–north and east–west; to those who stress the subtle differences both in local identity, ethnogenesis and overall a very diverse social organisation that was encountered by the Roman Republican or Imperial state in the two centuries that it took to effectively complete the conquest of the peninsula. This type of approach has been popular in studies of Greek and Punic expansion in the Mediterranean and on the Iberian Levantine coast, but its application to the Late Iron Age and Roman periods is now necessary. The Introduction also makes a