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The Late Minoan II–IIIA₁ warrior graves at Knossos: the burial assemblages

Lucia Alberti

The purpose of this study is to compare the funerary assemblages of the Late Minoan II–IIIA₁ necropoleis at Knossos with those in contemporary or slightly earlier tombs on the Mainland.¹ The aim is to identify the intrinsic features of the assemblages present on Crete in this phase, and to determine whether these tombs are indeed in some way similar to the Mainland tombs. Here I shall focus on the associations between the items in the assemblages, the pottery in particular, and shall touch only briefly on the architectural features of the tombs themselves.

THE LATE MINOAN NECROPOLEIS AT KNOSSOS

The Late Minoan necropoleis at Knossos are situated around the Palace within a radius of 2 km (Hood and Smyth 1981, 13, fig. 3; Alberti 1999, 167, n. 2; Grammatikaki 1993). Most of them were established in LM II, some being used only for about two generations, until LM II or LM IIIA₁, others until LM IIIB, and perhaps a few until the beginning of LM IIIC. Some tombs from Mavro Spilio, Gypsades and Ailias, however, were cut in, and had been in use from, the Middle Minoan period. There are a few Middle Minoan tombs in the necropolis of Mavro Spilio, which will be dealt with later. The necropolis of Gypsades (Hood and Smyth 1981, 331), however, contains only one MM tomb (Hood *et al.* 1959, 220–4), all the others belonging to LM III, while it seems that the necropolis of Ailias ceased to be in use after MM III (Hood and Smyth 1981, 257) and so will not be analysed here.

I shall also look at the Katsambas necropolis situated near to the presumed site of the Knossos harbour because it is relatively close to the Palace, and the contents of the tombs have an important bearing on this study (Alexiou 1967, 1970). The recently discovered tombs in the nearby coastal area, however, which contain rich assemblages including jewellery and weapons, will not be examined here because they have been dated to LM I, and therefore do not come within the scope of this paper (Muhly 1992; Dimopoulou 1999), although their discovery has considerably changed our frame of reference.

I shall discuss only the LM II–IIIA₁ tombs within these necropoleis — about 50 out of a total of some 170

in the Knossos area — omitting the monumental tombs, which problems of dating, plundering and scarcity make unsuitable for this comparison. Of these 50, I shall take a more homogeneous group of 30 which display evidence of similar burial practices. The group is also limited by the necessity to include only tombs which have a similar chronology, type of structure and state of conservation and excavation. That there are only 30 should not come as a surprise. We must not forget that, apart from the Zafer Papoura cemetery (Hood and Smyth 1981, 36) of 100 tombs, 50 of which were found completely empty, the Knossian necropoleis consist of very small groups of tombs (four in Sellopoulo, seven in Isopata, etc.), and some scattered single tombs, like the Acropolis tomb (Hood and Smyth 1981, 149). In addition, most of them have been plundered, and most were excavated in the early 1900s.

The Isopata cemetery has a total of eight tombs (including the two chambers in T. 1 and the so called “Isolated Deposit”, if it is a tomb), seven of which belong to LM II–IIIA₁ (TABLE 8.5). Sellopoulo has two out of four, Ayios Ioannis two (Hood and de Jong 1952; Hood 1956), the Venizeleio four. And out of a total of 21 tombs, Gypsades has only two, to which two others can perhaps be added, from the period between LM IIIA₁ and IIIA₂. Zafer Papoura is a special case: almost all of the 50 tombs which were not found completely empty could be dated to LM IIIA₂–IIIB, and only a few seemed to date back to the previous period; but research by Eleni Hatzaki, whom I thank for this personal communication, seems to indicate an earlier date, that is LM IIIA₁. Then we have the isolated tomb discovered by Evans on the Acropolis, the one published by Hutchinson, and the Katsambas cemetery consisting of six LM II–IIIA₁ tombs out of the total of eight.

¹ I wish to thank the British School at Athens, who made it possible for me to present my research on this occasion and allowed me to study, in particular, the Mavro Spilio cemetery. Special thanks also go to those who, in our discussions over the past few years, have given me precious advice and suggestions, and in particular Claudia Rutherford, who revised the English text with great competence and dedication.

MIDDLE MINOAN BURIAL PRACTICES AND THE LM II–IIIA₁ TOMBS

Before we look in detail at the assemblages in these tombs, we should first briefly discuss the architectural differences which distinguish the LM II–IIIA₁ tombs from those that preceded them. The Mavro Spilio necropolis (Hood and Smyth 1981, 251) serves as a good illustration of the contrast, as it was first cut before the Late Minoan period (Forsdyke 1927). The materials datable to LM II–IIIA₁ are not very numerous — those from LM IIIA₂–IIIB certainly prevail. Unfortunately, some interesting LM II–IIIA₁ vases, not published by Forsdyke and now in the Stratigraphical Museum, cannot be ascribed to any tomb at present. However at least four tombs were in use in LM II–IIIA₁, and four others either at the end of LM IIIA₁ or at the beginning of LM IIIA₂.

Analysis of the material, which is still in progress, indicates that the multi-chamber tombs discovered here belong to the Middle Minoan period, and were often re-used. The single-chamber tomb, however, with its perpendicular dromos often characterised by inward sloping walls, started to appear at Mavro Spilio only at the beginning of LM II, or perhaps at the end of LM IB.

The dating of the multi-chamber tomb type to the Middle Minoan period is also confirmed by the MM II–III assemblages in the Ailias necropolis,² and by the newly discovered tombs at Poros. It seems, therefore, that the multi-chamber tombs with a common entrance are of Minoan origin. There are tombs of the same type found on Kythera dated to LM I (Coldstream and Huxley 1972), but it is important to make it clear at this point that the tombs on Cyprus, that are sometimes mentioned as a useful comparison, are only apparently similar, and are actually structurally very different (Pini 1968, figs. 32–3).

The few multi-chamber tombs found on the Mainland have completely different features from the Minoan tombs, and their shape cannot originate from Crete. The chambers tend to have a quite regular quadrangular shape, and the second chamber is always perpendicular to the axis of the first. Even when there are three chambers with a single dromos and a large central chamber, they are situated axially and perpendicularly (Niemeier 1985, 206–7, fig. 69). In the multi-chamber tombs on Crete, however, the chambers almost look like artificially enlarged natural caves: they have an irregular shape, but tend to be round and radiate from the antechamber or the entrance. The dromos is usually very short (Forsdyke 1927, 256, fig. 8, 265, fig. 19).

In addition to the new single chamber tombs, another possible new element is the appearance in the necropoleis at Knossos, though probably in a slightly later phase, of shaft and pit graves, albeit far fewer than the chamber tombs.

These new types of tombs are characterised by a low number of depositions, usually from one to three —

which contrasts with the earlier Minoan tradition of tombs with multiple depositions dating back to the Middle Minoan necropoleis and the Mesara tholoi. In fact, the Middle Minoan tombs at Knossos all show traces of re-use over many generations, except for a few rare examples subject to specific situations, such as the collapse during MM III of the vault of Mavro Spilio T. 6, which sealed off the contents (Forsdyke 1927, 259). An exact tally of the depositions is lacking for Mavro Spilio, although its multi-chamber tombs undoubtedly contained many, as is clear from the burial assemblages, the number of larnakes and the few remains of skeletons recorded at the time of the excavation (Charles 1965, 85–94). Ailias, too, is an interesting example: in one tomb more than 50 skeletons were found, many of them in jars or larnakes (Cook and Boardman 1954, 166), or heaped up almost as if to make parts of the tomb look like ossuaries, as in the small antechambers of the Mesara tholoi.

Against this background, the appearance of the new Knossian necropoleis provides a striking contrast as most of the tombs contain only one deposition, and hardly any of them has more than four depositions of the same date. This new procedure has been interpreted by some scholars as evidence of an actual Mycenaean presence at Knossos from this period. According to this theory, either Mycenaeans had taken control of the Palace or the rulers at Knossos had Mycenaean mercenaries in their service (Popham *et al.* 1974, 255–7). Others have interpreted these new burial practices as merely the adoption of Mainland customs (Niemeier 1985, 255).

I am not going to argue here for or against either of these interpretations. My intention is to look objectively at the assemblages, and particularly at the associations between objects in the Cretan tombs, and to compare the results with their Mainland counterparts.

THE KNOSSIAN BURIAL ASSEMBLAGES

We can divide the Knossian tombs into two groups based on their assemblages and chronology. The cemeteries with tombs dating to LM IIIA₁ and continuing into the subsequent periods, such as Gypsades and probably Zafer Papoura, contain completely different grave goods with different associations from what we find in necropoleis that started in LM II and continued until LM IIIA₂ at latest, such as Katsambas and Isopata. The two groups can be distinguished most clearly by the pottery shapes. The later group of tombs is characterised by types of vases such as stirrup jars, side-spouted jars, shallow cups, spouted cups, with new associations between them, while types such as alabaster

2 I should like to thank Sinclair Hood for giving me access to all the documentation concerning the Ailias necropolis and for his kindness in discussing it with me.

and piriform jars, which mark the earlier necropoleis, are less common.

I shall not discuss the later necropoleis cut from the end of LM III_A1, but consider in more depth the group of tombs which belong exclusively to LM II–III_A1. A good example of this type of burial assemblage is the tomb excavated by Hutchinson (1956; Hood and Smyth 1981: 324), which is one of the richest discovered at Knossos, and which contains many types of items also found in other assemblages. It has a large group of vessels, including a piriform jar, some jugs and a kylix, two squat alabastra, a tall alabastron, stone vases, the cup made of gold and silver which gave the tomb its name, a pin, a small cuirass-shaped stone vase and a sword. The table listing the items (TABLE 8.1) shows the large number of clay vessels, an element not always present in Knossian tombs, and in particular the presence of the piriform jar, alabastra, kylix and jugs, four types of vessels often associated with braziers in other tombs. This is obviously one of the many “warrior graves” from this period. The first person to use the term was Sinclair Hood in the 1950s, as he mentioned during the Conference. Although this definition may be misleading, it has now become traditional, as it highlights in a phrase the particular importance given to the weapons in the warrior graves from the end of the LM IB period, and the same applies to bronze items, especially vases, in the “graves with bronzes”. We must always keep in mind, however, that it is merely a definition of convenience. In fact in all periods, there were probably warriors in Aegean society or people who might have wanted to be buried as such, with a greater or lesser degree of emphasis on the military. This seems to be borne out by the assemblages with weapons and jewellery recently found in Poros and the distribution of weapons in Ayia Triada and Phaistos from Early Minoan to Late Minoan (La Rosa and Militello 1999).

METHODOLOGY

For this analysis I have laid out all the items in a table, as has already been done for this type of tomb (Kilian-Dirlmeier 1985, 1988; Poyato Holgado and Vasquez Hoys 1996) and as is a common method in studies of Italian Bronze Age archaeology. Kilian-Dirlmeier’s study gave particular emphasis to the weapons and jewellery in the assemblages in order to try to define the social status of the dead person. With the same purpose, Poyato Holgado and Vasquez Hoys entered all the elements of the tombs — tomb shape, items, number of depositions, date — into a database, which demonstrated the high variability of the assemblages.

Here we can see that other types of items furnish us with more information, in particular the pottery vases which until now have not been given as much attention as the more valuable objects. As the variability of objects in the assemblages is very high, especially for the pottery (indeed we often have shapes of vase, or other

objects, which occur only once in the many Knossian tombs), I have selected the items which occur most frequently. In fact, from a methodological point of view, it was necessary first of all to categorise as one type vases often given different names, but having a similar function. For example a set of drinking vessels (goblets, champagne glasses, stemmed cups) has been defined as kylikes. The same applies to piriform jars, which include three-handled jars and Palace Style jars. In addition, all the different types of jugs have been categorised as one single group.

TABLE 8.1: Knossos LM II–III_A1 warrior graves: Hutchinson’s Tomb assemblage.

HUTCHINSON’S TOMB

Tomb	Chamber
Depositions	2/3

POTTERY

Piriform Jar	•
Alabastron	• • •
Kylix	•
Jug	• • •
Brazier	
Cup	•
Other types	• • • •

BRONZES

Sword	•
Dagger	
Spear head	
Arrow heads	
Knife	
Razor	
Other weapons	
Vase	
Other bronzes	

JEWELLERY

Beads	
Ring	
Pin	•
Seal	
Kylix	•

STONE VASES

Bowl	• • • •
Jar	
Alabastron	
Other types	• • •

TRACES of WOOD

Bier/Larnax	
Box	

THE ASSEMBLAGES

I shall address in particular the tables referring to some of the more significant necropoleis. In all, five tombs were discovered at the Venizeleio (Hood and Smyth 1981: 71), four of which dated to LM II–IIIA₁ (TABLE 8.2). There are three single-chamber tombs with perpendicular dromos, and one shaft tomb. Two of the chamber tombs contain two burials each. In this necropolis there is quite a large number of clay vessels, together with mainly weapons, bronze items and seals. But, of all the materials, the most significant element is the pottery. In fact the frequency of alabastra, associated with piriform jars, kylikes, jugs and braziers, is notable. Other types of vessels are less numerous. As

for the weapons, we can see that the occurrence of important pieces, like the sword, is associated with a low quantity of pottery, and this, too, is in common with many of the Knossian tombs — the large groups of bronzes in general, and most importantly the weapons, are associated with few clay vases. It is not certain that the traces of wood found here come from biers or larnakes; they could be from small boxes or containers.

If we look at the Katsambas cemetery (TABLE 8.3), where six out of eight tombs belong to LM II–IIIA₁, the picture is completely different (Alexiou 1967, 1970). There are practically no weapons, unless we want to consider the two knives found in Tombs B and E as such. The bronzes, too, are far from numerous, particularly compared to other Knossian tombs. Here the

TABLE 8.2: Venizeleio assemblages.

VENIZELEIO	T. 1	T. 2	T. 3	T. 5
Tomb	Chamber	Shaft	Chamber	Chamber
Depositions	2	1	2	1?
POTTERY				
Piriform Jar	• • •		• • •	
Alabastron	•	•	• •	• • •
Kylix	• •		•	
Jug	•	•	•	
Brazier	•		• • •	
Cup				
Other types	• •		• •	
BRONZES				
Sword		•		•
Dagger			•	
Spear head	•	•	•	•
Arrow heads			•	
Knife				
Razor			•	
Other weapons				• • •
Vase				
Other bronzes	•		• •	• • • •
JEWELLERY				
Beads				
Ring				
Other types	•		• •	
Seal	•		• • • •	
Vase				
STONE VASES				
Bowl				• •
Jar				
Alabastron				
Other types	schist frag.			
TRACES of WOOD				
Bier/Larnax		• ?		•
Box			(ivory frag.)	

TABLE 8.3: Katsambas assemblages.

KATSAMBAS	T. A	T. B	T. Γ	T. Δ	T. E	T. Z
Tomb	Chamber	Chamber	Chamber	Chamber	Chamber	Chamber
Depositions	6	1	1	2	2	2
POTTERY						
Piriform Jar	•••••			••	•••	••
Alabastron	••			•	•	•••
Kylix	••		•	•	•	
Jug	•	•		•		•••
Brazier	••	••••••••				•
Cup		•••	•		•	
Other types	•••	••				••
BRONZES						
Sword						
Dagger						
Spear head						
Arrow heads						
Knife		•			•	
Razor						
Other weapons						
Vase	•	•				
Other bronzes	••	••			•	
JEWELLERY						
Beads						
Ring						
Other types	•	•	•			•
Seal		•				
Vase						
STONE VASES						
Bowl		••				
Jar						
Alabastron						
Other types		•	obsidian frag.			
TRACES of WOOD						
Bier/Larnax	•	•	•	•	••	••
Box						(ivory frag.)

pottery represents the majority of the items, and in at least four cases out of six, we have the classic association between piriform jars, alabastra and/or kylikes and jugs. In Katsambas, it is important to note the traces of wood from biers or larnakes in all the tombs. We can safely say this because a rectangular bed-sized print was discovered there. In at least one case, it was noted that the wood must have been painted blue. The traces of wood were not found in all Knossian tombs. This may be due to the fact that the traces were not noticed at the beginning of the 1900s, or that they had not been preserved, or perhaps some tombs did not contain them.

The necropolis of Sellopoulo has four tombs (Hood and Smyth 1981: 28–9). Tombs 1 and 2 were excavated

in the 1970s, but have not been published. From the brief notes in *Archaeological Reports* the two tombs, which were found plundered, belong to the second group dated to LM IIIA₂ (Hood 1958, 24–5). Tombs 3 and 4, however, which have been fully published, are LM II–III_{A1} (Popham *et al.* 1974; TABLE 8.4). T. 3 was found partly plundered, while T. 4 was intact and contained three separate depositions, each of which had its own assemblage. Both tombs are characterised by a very rich and unusual set of bronze items, and in particular by a very high number of bronze vases in comparison to other Knossian tombs, which very rarely contained so great an accumulation of the metal. We must not forget, however, that a very high percentage of tombs

TABLE 8.4: Sellopoulo assemblages.

SELLOPOULO	T. 3	T. 4 (I)	T. 4 (II)	T. 4 (III)
Tomb	Chamber		Chamber	
Depositions	?	I	I	I
POTTERY				
Piriform Jar	••	•		
Alabastron				
Kylix	••••	•	(• •?)	
Jug	•	•		
Brazier				
Cup			(• ?)	
Other types		•		•
BRONZES				
Sword		•	•	
Dagger			•	
Spear head		••		
Arrow heads	•			
Knife			••	
Razor	••	•	•	
Other weapons		•	••	
Vase	••••••••	••••••••	••	•••
Other bronzes	•	•	••	•••
JEWELLERY				
Beads		•	•••	•
Ring		••	•	
Other types	•	•	•	••
Seal			••	
Vase			•	
STONE VASES				
Bowl				
Jar				
Alabastron				
Other types				
TRACES of WOOD				
Bier/Larnax		•	•	•
Box				

at Knossos were found plundered. The pottery vessels are not very numerous, but belong to the types considered characteristic of this group: T. 3 contained two piriform jars, four kylikes and a jug; deposition I in T. 4 had a jug, a shallow bowl, a small piriform jar, a kylix and, probably, a conical cup and others two kylikes; depositions II and III contained only one clay vase each.

The Isopata necropolis (Evans 1914; Hood and Smyth 1981. 1) displays the same characteristics, if in a less homogeneous way (TABLE 8.5). Only five out of seven tombs contain one or more of the three ceramic

shapes, i.e. piriform jars, alabastra and kylikes, along with other types which are hardly ever present in other Knossian assemblages. The most significant tomb of the group, however, the Tomb of the Double Axes, contains a classic assemblage, with many ceramic vessels, among which are four piriform jars, one alabastron, one kylix, three jugs, one brazier and one "ritual" goblet with lid, besides weapons, jewellery and a steatite rhyton. This tomb is likely to have belonged to a high ranking person, to judge from its monumental architecture: it had been cut out of the rock and had traces

TABLE 8.5: Isopata assemblages.

ISOPATA	Isolated Deposit	T. 1	T. 1A	T. 2 (Double Axes)	T. 3	T. 4	T. 5	T. 6
Tomb Depositions	? ?	Chamber ?	Chamber ?	Chamber 1	Chamber ?	Chamber ?	Chamber 1	Chamber "2"
POTTERY								
Piriform Jar				••••		••		
Alabastron				•	•	•••	••	•
Kylix				•				
Jug			••	•••			•	
Brazier		••	•	•			•	
Cup								
Other types		••	•	•			••••	••••••
BRONZES								
Sword	••			•				•
Dagger								
Spear head	•		•••		•			
Arrow heads			•	•	•			
Knife	•			••	••			
Razor					••			
Other weapons				•••				
Vase						•		
Other bronzes				•				•
JEWELLERY								
Beads		•	•	•	•			•
Ring		•					•	
Other types			•		•			••
Seal		•	•	•	•			•
Vase				•				
STONE VASES								
Bowl								
Jar	•							
Alabastron	•••							
Other types				•	•			
TRACES of WOOD								
Bier/Larnax								
Box								

of a vault, as well as a central pillar, benches and a double axe shaped cist dug in the floor. There were many symbols which probably have religious or cult significance: the double axe (besides the shape of the cist, three bronze double axes were found), the pillar with column in relief, and a strange vessel perhaps used in rituals, as its form does not seem to suggest any practical use.

T. 5 is also highly significant, to judge from its extraordinary finds: two very large tin-covered alabastra, a jug (also with tin), a brazier and four polychrome gob-

lets with figure of eight shaped handles. The only possible comparison to the goblets might be some undecorated vases found in the Palace of Zakros (HM 13927, 13993-8, 14006-7). Although they have the same profile and identical 8-shaped handles, they also have a sort of inner "strainer" with a large central hole surrounded by slightly smaller holes just below the rim, as in some modern flower vases. This tomb had been plundered, too, and apart from the pottery only a simple bronze ring was found. If we believe that these vases were meant, at the time of the funeral, to look like metal

vases — silver or even gold depending on the melting process used (Gillis 1990, 28)³ — their presence is highly suggestive. As the goblets are of Minoan origin in shape and decoration, while the alabastra belong to the ceramic tradition deriving from the mainland, we have in T. 5 an assemblage intermediate between Minoan and Mycenaean burial customs. The assemblage from T. 3 includes only one clay vase — an alabastron; T. 4 contained two piriform jars and three alabastra; and T. 6 one alabastron, a double vase and fragments of a polychrome vase. Here too, therefore, although the Isopata cemetery is distinctly unusual, the most common vessels are once again piriform jars, alabastra and braziers, whilst the least common are kylikes. Accordingly, we can state that, despite some differences, the LM II–III A1 necropoleis at Knossos are characterised by single-chamber tombs, all of which contain assemblages in which there is a strong association between piriform jars, alabastra and kylikes, with the occasional addition of braziers and jugs.

THE LH II–III A1 BURIAL ASSEMBLAGES ON THE MAINLAND

At this point let us try to make a comparison with other necropoleis and burial customs. As far as we know, not many tombs have been found belonging to this period on Crete. It is, therefore, necessary to refer to the Mainland cemeteries, those with which comparisons were made at the time of discovery of the first warrior graves.

To simplify comparisons, I use the same system as above, with tables to illustrate the burial assemblages. Here too, we are dealing with mostly single chamber tombs with perpendicular dromos and inward sloping walls, as at Knossos. In TABLE 8.6, I have selected tombs from the necropoleis of Athens and Prosymna (Immerwahr 1971; Blegen 1937), most of which are dated to the same period as the Knossian cemeteries, and a few to slightly earlier. For clarity, and as other studies, mentioned above, have dealt specifically with the more precious items, only the presence or lack of arms or jewellery will be indicated here, omitting details (for which see Kilian-Dirlmeier 1985, 1988). This is only a sample, as assemblages of this type are actually very common on the Mainland. They can also be found, for example, in the chamber tombs of Mycenae and Dendra, in Attica, and elsewhere (Alberti 1999, 172–3).

The Prosymna cemetery has many tombs dating over a broad period and dispersed in groups over a large area. Therefore, the state in which they were discovered, their chronology and our ability to identify the assemblages inside each tomb, are very varied. For this reason I have selected here only a few examples which, from the point of view of dating and preservation, can provide a more meaningful comparison, even though more assemblages with similar features were found in this cemetery. I have

made a selection along the same lines from the tombs at Athens.

The four tombs of Prosymna contain many burials and, therefore, a high number of vessels. In the Athens tombs, however, apart from T. 7, the number of burials is slightly lower. From tombs with and without weapons, the most striking thing we notice is that there is the same association of pottery types as at Knossos, that is, piriform jars, alabastra, kylikes, jugs and drinking vessels.

As we have seen in the various assemblages at the Knossian cemeteries, there are differences between Prosymna and Athens, too, like the marked prevalence of cups over kylikes at Prosymna, versus the almost total absence of cups at Athens. There are also differences between these cemeteries and the Cretan assemblages. The total absence of braziers, for example is highly significant, as they are a typical Minoan feature present in Cretan burials previous to the LM II period. What is also lacking in the Mainland tombs is traces of wood (except for T. 40 at Athens), but this might simply be the result of bad preservation or hasty excavation. Stone vases are also less common. But despite these differences and the presence of other vase shapes on the Mainland, the majority of the vessels in each tomb belongs to our main types: the piriform jars, alabastra, kylikes and jugs that are fundamental to the assemblages of the LM II–III A1 necropoleis at Knossos.

CONCLUSION

I have tried to emphasise the structural and chronological differences between the Middle Minoan and Late Minoan tombs: the changes from multiple chambers to single chambers, and from multiple depositions to one to four per tomb, and the differences in the assemblages in the same two periods, especially among the ceramic items. In fact, despite the emphasis given in the past to weapons in the warrior graves, the method I have used of focussing on groups of vase shapes occurring in the tombs seems to give greater results. We can see that the most common vessel types at Knossos associated with precious objects are the same types as those found in Mainland cemeteries, where they were in use in the same period, if not slightly earlier, and were much more widespread than in Crete. We must not forget, however, that the Knossian tombs contain some items from the purely Minoan tradition, like braziers, or types common to both Minoans and Mycenaeans. Neither must we forget the many other changes that took place at Knossos and in the Aegean in this period.

3 At present we can say that tin-covered vases first appeared in Knossian cemeteries in MM III/LM I, with one conical cup in Mavro Spilio T. 9 — in other words, before they appeared on the Mainland.

So, although we are not yet able to answer the question of who was buried in the warrior graves of Knossos, we are able to say that the similarities between Mainland and Knossian cemeteries are undeniably close. Not only do the Cretan tombs display typically Mainland assemblages but they are also cut according to Mainland tradition which, from a cultural point of view, is very important. Even if these burial practices are merely "imported" from the Mainland without some sort of Mycenaean influx into the area, we must assume that a significant religious and cultural upheaval took place in the Minoan World.

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