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Materialization of Mycenaean Ideology and the Ayia Triada Sarcophagus

BRENDAN BURKE

Abstract

The political geography of Late Bronze Age Crete has been the subject of much recent research. In this article, I argue that the well-known painted sarcophagus from Ayia Triada dates to the earliest period of a Mycenaean presence on Crete and is an artifact connected to an emergent Mycenaean ideology. A contextual analysis of the burial chest is presented by examining it not as an isolated work of Aegean "art" but as an expression of power by sophisticated Mycenaean elites who were asserting political, ideological, and economic dominance by means of cultural hybridity. Similarly, the architecture of LM III Ayia Triada retains Minoan features that forge a strong link with its past. By appropriating images from the Minoan past and combining them with contemporary Mycenaean elements, the creators of the sarcophagus produced a monument that linked the Late Bronze Age present on Crete with a well-crafted view of the Middle Bronze Age past.*

The painted sarcophagus from Ayia Triada on Crete is one of the best-known works of Aegean art (figs. 1–4).[1] It was found by Roberto Paribeni in a small enclosure, tomb 4, on 23 June 1903, during excavations at the site of the Minoan villa (figs. 5, 6) and is now in the Herakleion Museum. The chest dates to the Early LM IIIA2 phase (ca. 1370–1360 B.C.), in the Final Palatial period on Crete.[2] During this time of the Aegean Bronze Age there is a shift in cultural and economic hegemony on Crete, when new burial customs derived from the Mycenaean mainland are introduced, primarily in the region of Knossos.[3]

The four panel paintings that decorate the sides of the limestone chest are standard texts in all discussions of Aegean Bronze Age religion; yet, in this article, I do not offer another reading of the sarcophagus iconography. Rather, I argue for a contextual analysis of the burial chest in conjunction with an examination of contemporary Mycenaean expansion throughout the Aegean, including major building projects at Ayia Triada.[4] The sarcophagus is analyzed

* I am grateful to several friends and colleagues who have commented on this paper at various stages, especially Bryan Burns, Nicola Cucuzza, Camilla MacKay, Sarah Morris, Tina Ross, Caitlin Smith, and Aleydis Van de Moortel. I am also grateful to the Editor-in-Chief and the anonymous reviewers of the *AJA* for their helpful comments and criticisms. None of them should be held accountable for errors of fact or interpretation. Ideas presented in this article have been delivered in talks at the University of Toronto, Wellesley College, UCLA, and the University of Victoria. The research for this article was done at the American School of Classical Studies at Athens and at the University of Pennsylvania, and I would especially like to thank Charles Williams for his support during this period.

[1] Herakleion Museum, inv. no. 396. Originally published in Paribeni 1903; see also Paribeni 1904, 1908. The most thorough study of the sarcophagus is Long 1974. The panel paintings are also discussed by Levi 1956; Matz 1958; Immerwahr 1990, 100–2, cat. A.T., no. 2; Pötscher 1990, 171–94; Löwe 1996, 23–41; Militello 1998, 154–5; La Rosa 1999.

[2] Excavations at Ayia Triada by the Italian School of Archaeology in 1997 established the construction of tomb 4 with the sarcophagus to Early LM IIIA2 based on distinctive ceramic cup fragments in the foundation deposit (La Rosa 1999; 2000a, 90; 2000b; DiVita 2000, 480). There is little disagreement between the low and high chronologies for the LM IIIA2 period. For the low Aegean chronology, see Warren and Hankey (1989, 149), who date LM IIIA2 to 1360–1330 B.C.; for the high chronology, see Rehak and Younger (2001, 391), who give a date range of 1370–1320 B.C. The term "Final Palatial" is defined by Hallager (1988).

[3] Following the LM IB destructions throughout Crete, there is a major interruption in Minoan culture, with the exception of Knossos. Some scholars, such as Niemeier, view this change as signaling a Knossian takeover of major centers on Crete in the Postpalatial or Final Palatial period (see Rehak and Younger 2001, 384 n. 5). I agree with Hallager (1977) and Niemeier (1982, 1983), who see the post-destruction period as the beginning of the Mycenaean occupation of the island that culminates in an extensive economic network of centers administered by the palace at Knossos. Already in the LM II period at Knossos, the Linear B texts from the Room of the Chariot Tablets attest to a prominent Mycenaean Greek presence, perhaps even the establishment of religious activity focused on the mainland Bronze Age goddess of Athens (*a-ta-na-po-ti-ni-ja*) (see Driessen 2000; Gulizio et al. 2001). For discussions of Mycenaean Crete in general, see Kanta 1980; Niemeier 1982; Hood 1985; Driessen and Farnoux 1997; Rehak and Younger 2001, 441–65; Cucuzza 2004; Preston 2004a, 2004b.

[4] This idea is explored somewhat by La Rosa (2000a, 91): "By linking the settlement and the Sarcophagus Tomb, it is possible to argue that whoever built the tomb was the same person as built the *Casa delle camere decapitate* (a luxurious version of a *Corridor House*), and initiated the building of the settlement area on a more monumental scale." Preston (2004a, 2004b) also advocates a contextual approach to mortuary data from Late Bronze Age Crete and focuses on an island-wide survey of the larnax without highlighting the extraordinary finds from Ayia Triada. Preston's analysis is highly instructive, although her dating of the collapse of the "Knossian regime" to the early 14th century (2004a, 323 n. 14) follows the traditional British School interpretation and does not seem to take into account more recent work, such as Driessen (2000) and Gulizio et al. (2001).

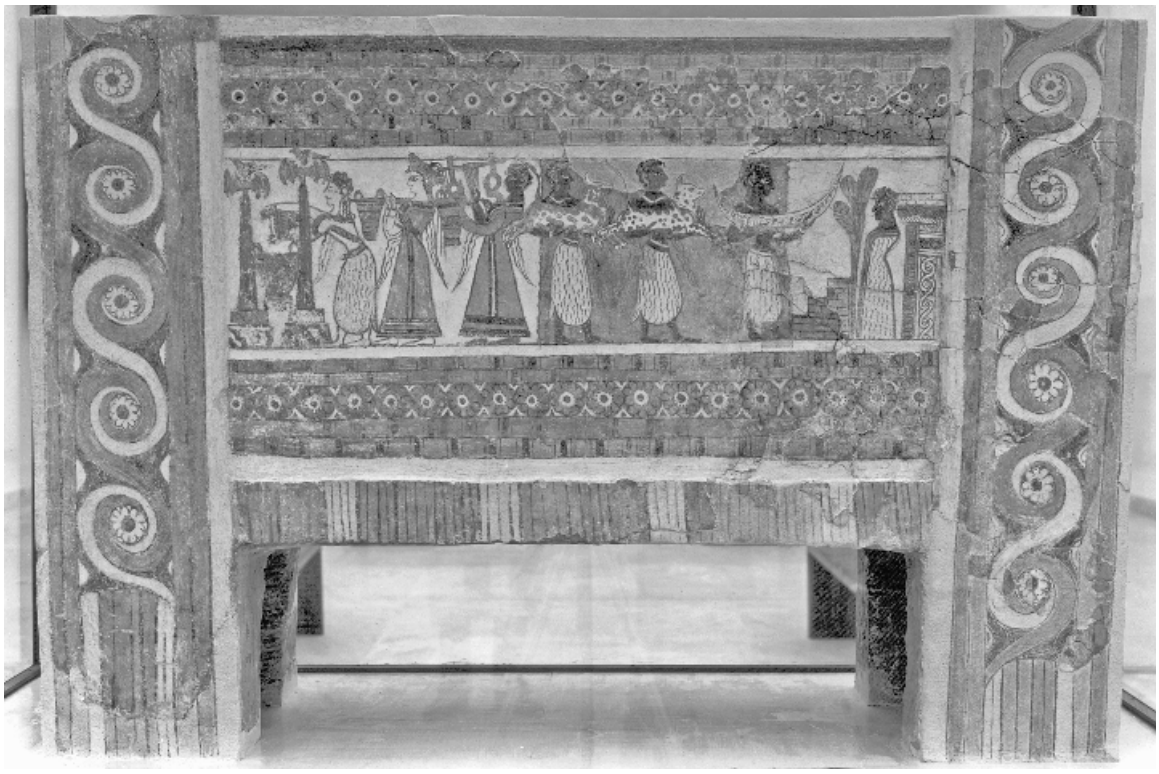

Fig. 1. Ayia Triada sarcophagus, side A, libation and presentation. Herakleion Archaeological Museum, CR 8. (Alison Frantz Photographic Collection, American School of Classical Studies at Athens)

Fig. 2. Ayia Triada sarcophagus, side B, procession and sacrifice. Herakleion Archaeological Museum, CR 9. (Alison Frantz Photographic Collection, American School of Classical Studies at Athens)

Fig. 3. Ayia Triada sarcophagus, end view, chariot with griffins. Herakleion Archaeological Museum, CR 16. (Alison Frantz Photographic Collection, American School of Classical Studies at Athens)

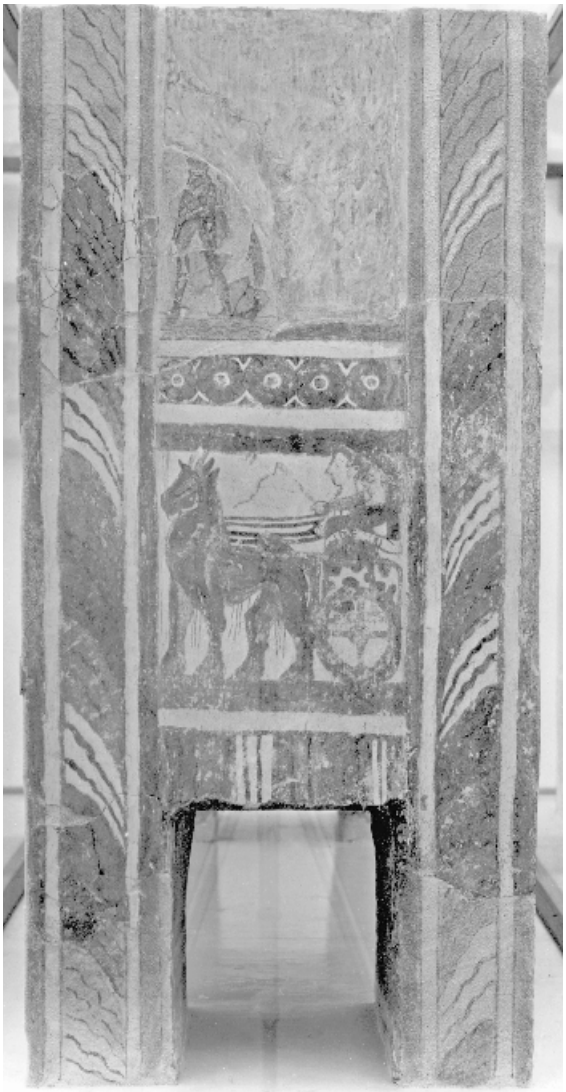

Fig. 4. Ayia Triada sarcophagus, end view, chariot with *agrimia*. Herakleion Archaeological Museum, CR 15. (Alison Frantz Photographic Collection, American School of Classical Studies at Athens)

not as an isolated work of Aegean "art" but as an expression of power by sophisticated Mycenaean elites who were asserting political, ideological, and economic dominance by means of art and architecture in religious settings. The use of older Minoan symbols and themes on the Late Bronze Age sarcophagus creates a complex cultural hybrid.[5] Fourteenth-century Crete witnessed coexisting spheres of cultural interaction; by appropriating images from the Minoan past and combining them with contemporary Mycenaean elements, the creators of the sarcophagus produced a monument that linked the Late Bronze Age present on Crete with a well-crafted view of the Middle Bronze Age past. This ideological program of cultural hybridism is evident in the form of the megaron, in tomb 4 itself, and in the iconography of the sarcophagus.

ARCHITECTURAL AND CULTURAL CONTEXT

Minoan Ayia Triada

Artistic elements characteristic of the mainland Mycenaeans and the Cretan Minoans can be found

[5] In a similar vein, Renfrew (1998) discusses the retention of certain Minoan words in early Greek vocabulary. He looks at the Minoan language of Linear A and its contribution as a linguistic ad stratum for Mycenaean elites in the Aegean.

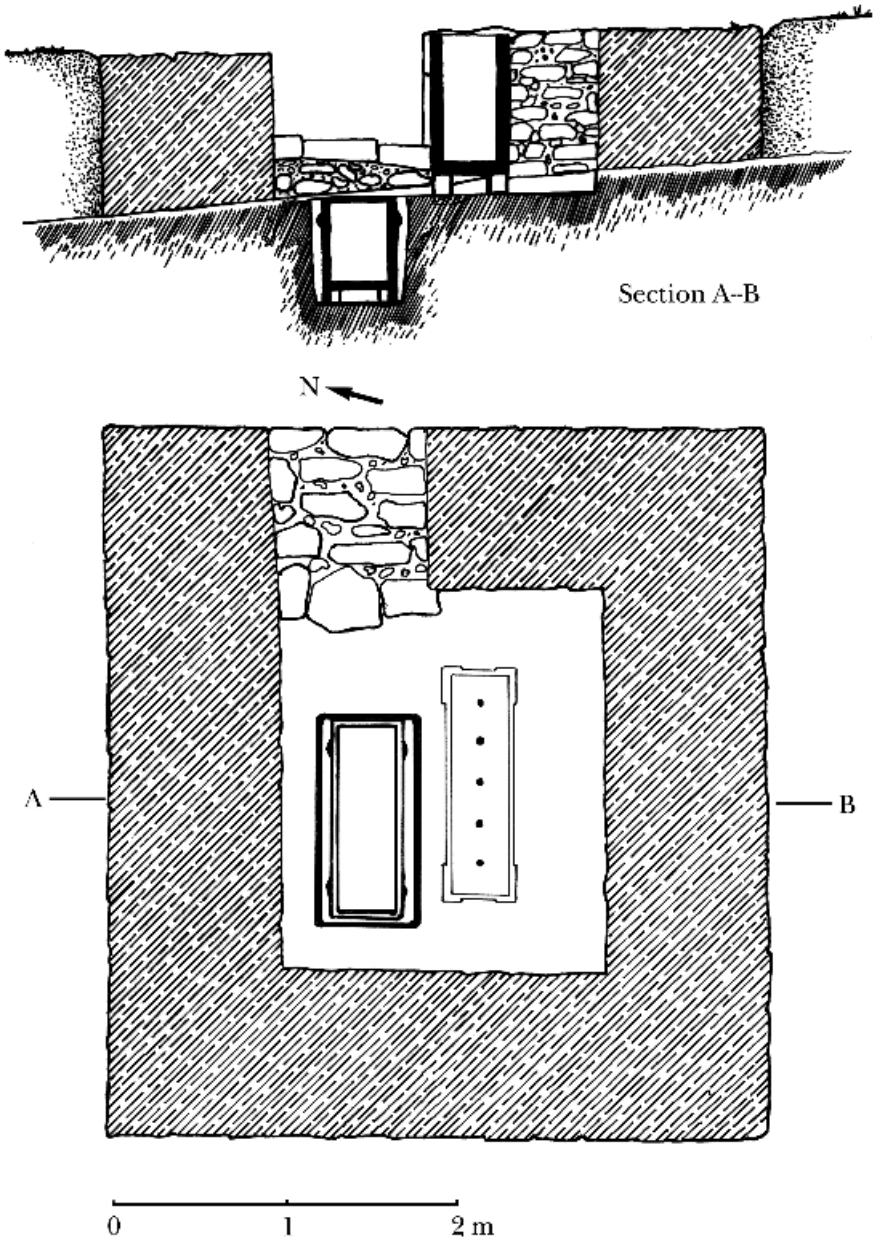

Fig. 5. Plan and section of tomb 4. (Drawing by T. Ross) (After Paribeni 1904, fig. 19)

in the iconography of the painted chest. Similar to the visual references on the sarcophagus, the contemporary Mycenaean building project at Ayia Triada in the LM IIIA period (fig. 7) retains architectural elements of older Minoan traditions in combination with contemporary Mycenaean forms.[6] This intentional hybridization in art and architecture is a conscious demonstration of power that allows the reconstruction of complex status relations between the indigenous and the foreign.[7] Rather than high-

[6] See McEnroe 1979; Preziosi 1983, 186–7; Hayden 1987, 213–6; La Rosa 1993, 1997b; Cucuzza 1997, 2001b, 2003, 2004.

[7] See Preston 2004a. For a theory of place and temporality, wholly applicable to the Mycenaean period on Crete, see Thomas (1996, 91), who notes that "places are consumed as well as produced in strategic ways, and all of the relations of meaning in which human beings are enmeshed are also relations of power."

Fig. 6. Ayia Triada site, early 20th century. (Courtesy DAI Athens, neg. Kreta 42)

lighting wholly intrusive mainland influences to stress a Mycenaean ethnic character for LM IIIA2 Ayia Triada, or looking for reactionary indigenous precedents with Minoan qualities, this analysis changes the debate and allows us to explore more interesting ideas of cultural identity and expressions of power on Late Bronze Age Crete.

The architectural remains at Ayia Triada have been variously interpreted since excavations began over a century ago by the Italian School of Archaeology at Athens.[8] Located in the western part of the Mesara, the main complex of buildings is 6 km from the Libyan Sea, and the monumental architecture shows that the site was an important center throughout the second millennium, particularly in the Neopalatial period (fig. 8). Toward the end of the Late Bronze Age, the site gained regional prominence, perhaps causing the decline of the nearby Minoan palace at Phaistos, just 3 km to the west.[9]

The Minoan buildings were first described as the country seat of the lords of Phaistos or as a villa by the sea for the rulers of the Mesara.[10] The abundant use of decorative gypsum, the many Minoan masons' marks,[11] and the unique works of art found in the excavations demonstrate that this was a center for Minoan elites. Canonical Minoan palace features, such as a western paved entrance, a central court, and large storage magazines, however, are lacking.[12] In current scholarship, the major complex of Minoan buildings is still referred to as a Minoan villa but with the understanding that this is a specialized building type found throughout Crete during the Neopalatial period for the administration of the surrounding countryside.[13] At Ayia Triada, two major components make up the villa complex.[14] Similar to

[8] The site was originally discovered by Luigi Pernier and investigated by members of the Italian School while they were working at Phaistos. Federigo Halbherr worked here from 1902 through 1914. The first formal publication of the site, however, did not appear until 1980, and was primarily concerned with the Minoan period remains (Halbherr et al. 1977).

[9] For a discussion on the relationship between Phaistos and Ayia Triada, see La Rosa 1985.

[10] Halbherr 1903, col. 7.

[11] See Cucuzza 1992, 2001a.

[12] Cadogan (1976, 104–7) identifies Ayia Triada as "the most pleasing of the Minoan palaces." Graham (1987, 49–51) also describes the remains as a palace.

[13] E.g., see the villas at Tylissos, Amnisos, Nirou Chani, and Vathypetro. See the proceedings of the conference held at the Swedish Institute at Athens, which focused on the topic of the Minoan villa (Hägg 1997).

[14] McEnroe (1979, 122–4) has suggested that there were two residential quarters at Ayia Triada rather than one single structure. These are known as villas A and B. Watrous (1984, 123–34) identified a physical break between the two buildings. Hitchcock and Preziosi (1997) suggest that both buildings follow a pattern of main unit and annex that they have discerned at other Minoan villa sites such as Knossos and Tylissos. La Rosa (1997a) and Driessen and MacDonald (1997, 200–5) argue against the idea of separate villas at Ayia Triada.

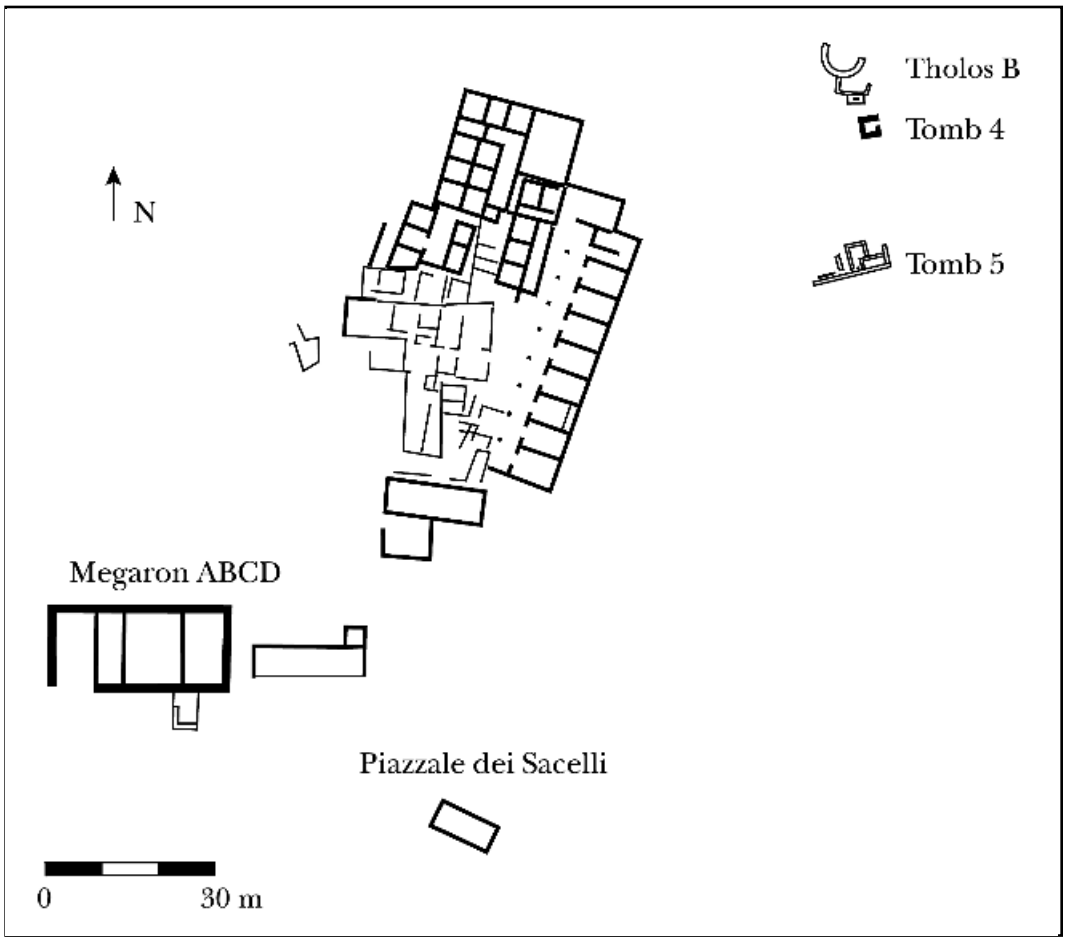

Fig. 7. Plan of Mycenaean Ayia Triada. (After La Rosa 1997b, pl. 2)

many other sites on Crete, the complex was destroyed by fire in LM IB.[15]

Mycenaean Ayia Triada

After the LM IB destruction, an extensive Mycenaean building project was centered over the ruined remains of the Minoan villa at Ayia Triada, demonstrating that the site continued as a center of some importance during the Final Palatial period.[16] This building program created a ceremonial center at Ayia Triada, with the foundations of megaron ABCD constructed directly over the walls

[15] For a summary and catalogue of all the LM IB destructions on Crete, see Driessen and MacDonald 1997. For changes in the production of material culture, see Rehak 1997a, 1997b. The villa at Ayia Triada does not seem to have been looted, and several impressive objects were preserved in the LM IB destruction level, demonstrating the suddenness of the Minoan collapse and the high quality of craftsmanship during the Neopalatial period. These objects included a hoard of 19 copper ingots (556 kg) and relief vases of serpentine with carved scenes showing what appears to be ritual action, such as the Boxer Rhyton, the Harvester Vase, and the Chieftain Cup, all dateable to the LM IA period. The largest collection of Linear A tablets (140 documents), written in the Minoan language, also was found at this level. Many of these goods are listed in Watrous 1984, 127.

[16] No Linear B tablets have been found at the site, however, and unlike some Mycenaean sites, we do not know what it was called. Based on tablets found at Knossos, some have associated Ayia Triada with the Mycenaean toponym *da-wo*. Supporting evidence for this identification includes tablet KN F 852.1, which records at least 10,300 units of grain (over 800 tons) stored at a site called *da-wo* that was most likely on the Mesara plain. *Da-wo* is coupled with the place name *pa-i-to* (Phaistos) on a document recording sheep (KN Dn 1094) (Driessen et al. 1988, 68; Bennet 1990, 210). An alternative theory suggests that the Mycenaean name of Ayia Triada was *pa-i-to* (see La Rosa 1985, 54; 1997b, 255; Bennet 1992, 97 n. 96; Cucuzza 2001b, 172–3; 2004, 244–7). According to this theory, at some point in the post Bronze Age era, the name *pa-i-to* was transferred along the ridge 3 km eastward and became associated with the archaic and classical site of Phaistos, built above the Minoan palace.

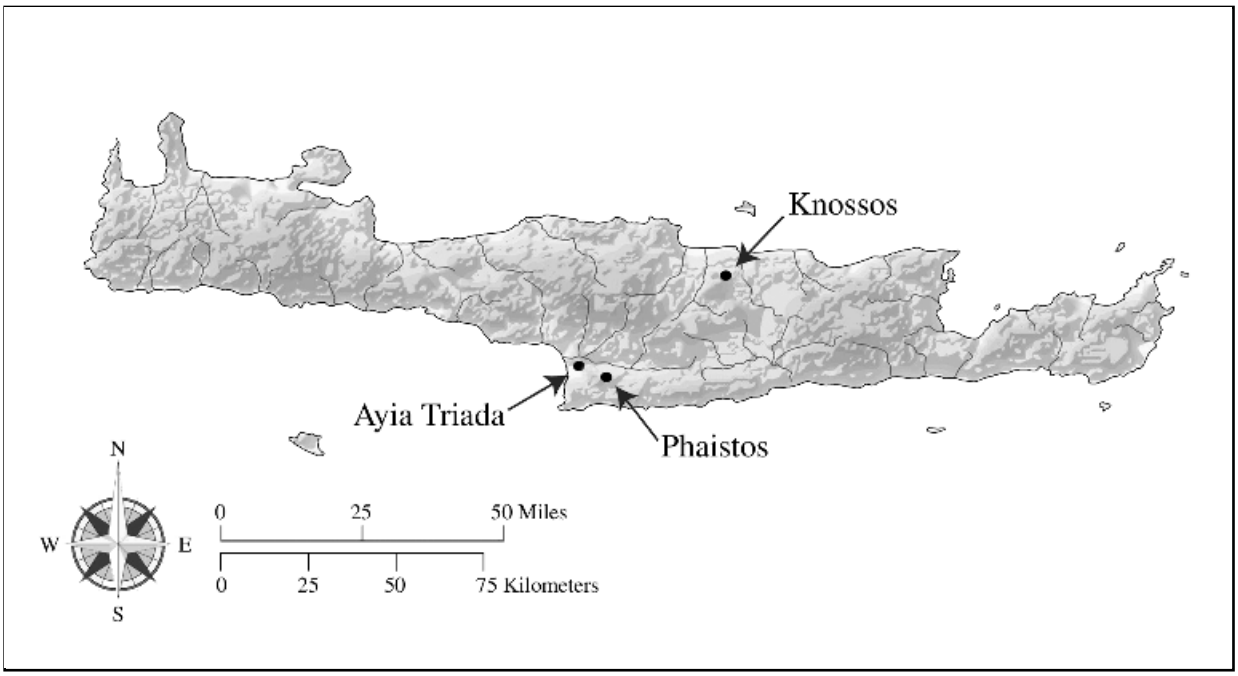

Fig. 8. Map of Crete, showing locations of sites. (Modified from Elliot 2003) (© 2003, Ancient World Mapping Center)

of the Minoan villa soon after the LM IB destruction.[17] Construction of the megaron is contemporary with shrine building H; stoa FG was built just after, in an early phase of LM IIIA2, and at a slightly different orientation from the megaron building.[18] These structures enclosed an open courtyard space and probably served to shelter participants in ceremonies taking place in the *Piazzale dei Sacelli*.[19] This period also marked construction of the *Edificio delle Camere Decapitate* to the north, the reuse of the Early Minoan tholos B, and the building of tomb 4, which contained the painted sarcophagus.[20] These structures indicate a carefully planned, extensive building program for public gatherings and ceremonies, signaling a dramatic change from the Minoan period in terms of the organization and design of the settlement.[21]

Megaron ABCD is perhaps the most impressive structure of the period at Ayia Triada; its dimensions of 15.15 x 24.35 m make it as large as any known Mycenaean hall found on the mainland.[22] It was built on deep foundations and intentionally placed directly above the wing of the earlier Minoan villa. There were other areas of the site that the

[17] Research over the last decade has done much to sort out the complex stratigraphy of the site, and the Italian scholars have distinguished several subphases of Late Bronze Age occupation, including early Final Palatial (LM II–LM IIIA2 early) and late Final Palatial (LM IIIA2 late). See Cucuzza 1997, 2001b, 2004; La Rosa 1997b, 1999.

[18] La Rosa 1997b, 256–8. The central axis of shrine H is intentionally oriented to the midpoint of the southern wall of megaron ABCD (Cucuzza 2001b, 170). Minoan architectural elements are found in the shrine, such as a polythyron and a painted fresco floor (Hitchcock 2000, 158).

[19] See Albers (2001) for a discussion of the role of the Mycenaean megaron in ceremonies.

[20] Cucuzza, pers. comm., 2002. I thank Dr. Cucuzza for generously providing information about the site of Ayia Triada during the LM III period.

[21] La Rosa (2000a) connects the burial architecture and the public buildings at Ayia Triada with a historical narrative. He suggests that tomb 4 was constructed about the same time as the penultimate destruction of the palace at Knossos, contemporary with Amenhotep III, and that the tomb was used only for a short time and then the original occupant was subject to a *damnatio memoriae*. This individual owned or received as a grave gift the scarab seal of Queen Tiyi and other prestige objects, which were removed from tomb 4 and placed in tomb 5, the *Tomba degli Ori*, up the slope from tomb 4.

[22] Cucuzza (1997, 74 n. 9) is very clear in his presentation of the LM III monumental architecture at Ayia Triada, which indicates, as he states, "a Mycenaean influx which is stronger than what has so far been brought to attention." Other contemporary Late Bronze Age structures at reoccupied Minoan centers on Crete include building He 31–38 at Gournia and buildings A and B at Plati. See Niemeier 1982, 175–6; Preziosi 1983, 176; Hayden 1987, 210–1. On the mainland, compare megaron ABCD's dimensions with the megara at Pylos (13.5 x 26.5 m), Tiryns (13.5 x 26.0 m) and Mycenae (13.5 x 24.0 m).

rebuilders could have chosen, but they maintained the former location of the villa as one of the primary areas of focus by constructing the megaron there.

The megaron form is a new type of architecture to Crete in the Late Bronze Age and was probably brought by Mycenaean elites from the mainland. There are, however, Minoan aspects to the architecture of megaron ABCD, including masons' marks, a specific type of column base in room E, paving slabs set in mortar, a double window, and a gypsum bench with triglyph designs. The two double-axe masons' marks, Minoan in character but contemporary with the LM III building project, were carved on pavement slabs in front of megaron ABCD.[23] In addition, certain mainland features, such as flanking corridors, auxiliary rooms, and an enclosed courtyard, are absent from the megaron at Ayia Triada. This characterizes the building program as a hybrid of Minoan and Mycenaean architectural traditions.

Hayden provides three possible explanations for this hybridization: "1) an absence of a thorough understanding of Mycenaean palatial architecture and the survival of Minoan building techniques; 2) an unsuccessful attempt to combine disparate architectural traditions; 3) the difficulties presented by placement of this large structure on the steep slope of a hill (suggesting a compelling reason: political?, religious?, for placing the building directly above the LM I complex)."[24]

The view that this was an "unsuccessful attempt," however, excludes the possibility that the newly arrived Mycenaeans were purposefully employing a hybrid of architectural styles to establish authority in the Mesara by using familiar, local architectural features in a Late Bronze Age context. In other words, I argue that the megaron and other contemporary structures were a materialization of Mycenaean authority over the local population, an architecture of memory and power that linked them to the past.[25]

Tomb 4 at Ayia Triada

The painted sarcophagus was contained in a small rectangular stone-built structure known as tomb 4, located in an area with earlier Minoan tombs to the northeast of the main settlement.[26] Tomb 4 was situated close to other burials at Ayia Triada: tholos tombs A and B, originally dating to the Prepalatial period but reused in a later period; an area for larnax burials; and one other tomb of Neopalatial and Postpalatial date.

The tomb measures 3.8 x 4.2 m (fig. 5). The walls were preserved to 0.65 m and 1.20 m, but each ended at the surface level since the tomb was located on a sloping hill. There was a single step entrance 0.87 m wide on the north end of the east side. The floor was bedrock, slightly cut away on one side to create an even interior surface. There was no indication of superstructure or painted plaster from the walls, and no traces of a roof were reported in the original excavation.[27]

Tomb 4 appears in some ways to be a Late Bronze Age version of the earlier Minoan house tomb.[28] Viewed another way, however, contemporary parallels for this type of tomb also occur on the mainland and in Crete. Two rectangular Mycenaean tombs excavated by Verdelis at Pharsala in northern Greece were similarly built aboveground within an enclosure wall.[29] A closer parallel found on Crete is at Archanes-Phourni in the LM IIIA2 grave enclosure, less than 50 km from Ayia Triada.[30] The Mycenaean enclosure at Archanes, although larger, is similar to tomb 4 in construction and relative size

[23] While there are Minoan masons' marks found in the Late Minoan period, they are extremely rare after LM IB (Cucuzza 1992; 2001a, 111; 2001b). These blocks at Ayia Triada may have come from Minoan structures and were in reuse, as is seen also at Petras (Tsipopoulou 1997; Tsipopoulou and Papacostopoulou 1997, 211). Or these blocks with Minoan masons' marks were in their primary use, like the ones known from Messenia, at the tholos of Peristeria, and on an ashlar block of the building that preceded the palace at Pylos. These Mycenaean structures may have been constructed by Minoan architects or, as I would argue, by Mycenaeans who intentionally wanted to forge a link with Minoan palace architecture.

[24] Hayden 1987, 214–5.

[25] See Day and Wilson (2002) for a discussion of the power of memory in Prepalatial and Protopalatial Crete. Thomas (1996) stresses the importance of "place" for sustaining multiple meanings in the interpretation of space.

[26] The tomb was recently reinvestigated by the Italian School in 1997. See La Rosa 1999; DiVita 2000, 480–2, fig. 12. For an overview of burial customs in the LM III period, see Cucuzza 2003.

[27] Long 1974, 12. Tomb 4, however, is reconstructed as roofed by the Italian scholars working at the site who have relied on the tomb architecture represented on the sarcophagus itself for their reconstruction (La Rosa 1999, fig. 9).

[28] Soles (1992, 116–27) includes tomb 4 in his catalogue of house tombs on Crete, and La Rosa (1999, 187) also sees tomb 4 in the tradition of Minoan house tombs.

[29] Verdelis 1952, 197–8; Long 1974, 12.

[30] For the date of the grave enclosure, see Kanta 1980, 33; Kallitsaki 1997, 220. For more on Mycenaean Archanes, see Sakellarakis 1970; Sapouna-Sakellaraki 1990; Sakellarakis and Sapouna-Sakellaraki 1997, 189–93. Preston (2004a, 334–5, table 3) discusses LM IIIA tomb types at Ayia Triada, Kalyvia, and Archanes-Phourni, although she categorizes tomb 4 as "other" rather than a grave enclosure.

for the number of burials. It contained the remains of at least seven individuals, as indicated by the clay larnakes. Both the grave enclosure and tomb 4 were rectangular funerary structures entered from the east.[31] Not only is the Archanes enclosure contemporary with tomb 4, but both structures housed larnax burials and were located near long-lived Minoan cemeteries.

Like Grave Circles A and B at Mycenae, tomb 4 and the Archanes grave enclosure are reserved burial areas for a limited social group. This feature of separate spaces for the Mycenaean elites is the marked difference between Mycenaean and Minoan burials, as Dabney and Wright have shown.[32] The similarity in date, plan, and function to the grave enclosure at Archanes suggests that tomb 4, albeit smaller, served to distinguish in death certain individuals from the general population, and that both burial structures were part of an emergent ideology in central Crete for Mycenaean elites.[33]

When tomb 4 was excavated, the painted sarcophagus was found disturbed, lying on its long side, resting on the bedrock floor. Nearby, a small cist cut into the bedrock contained a plain terracotta larnax, modest in size and workmanship. Both chests presumably had lids, although none was found. The sarcophagus was constructed with two slightly irregular limestone slabs, 1.375 m and 1.385 m in length, fitted together with two shorter slabs, 0.437 m and 0.45 m each.[34] A row of five holes was drilled along the bottom of the sarcophagus, presumably to allow the liquid from a decomposing corpse to drain.

Few grave goods were recovered from the excavation, suggesting that the tomb was robbed in antiquity. The partial remains of three individuals were found: two skulls in the painted sarcophagus itself, and one in the plain larnax.[35] A serpentine bowl and pieces of a triton shell were also found.[36] Of chronological significance is a fragmentary upper torso of a female terracotta figurine from the tomb.[37] Tomb 4 was used only for a short period of time, perhaps a generation, and there is no indication of later cult activity here.

THE PAINTED PANELS

The iconography of the sarcophagus is generally thought to reflect some aspect of Aegean Bronze Age death ritual. Some scholars have reconstructed a cult for the dead, where the deceased is deified and subsequently worshipped, as suggested by

[31] The construction of the Mycenaean grave enclosure at Archanes has been compared by Kallitsaki (1997) to mainland Helladic traditions. Kallitsaki cites Grave Circle A as the only comparable parallel to the Archanes enclosure. To my mind, however, there is a great conceptual difference between the built circle at Mycenae, which might be connected to traditions of tholoi or caves, and a built square, which is closer in shape to a residential structure; one is associated with death, the other with life. The comparison of the Mycenae grave circles with the enclosure at Archanes is also problematic, since the chronology of the two are so different—the original tombs at Mycenae date to the beginning of the Mycenaean period and the rebuilding close to the end. Finally, the major type of burial in the grave circles, inhumations in shaft graves, differs substantially from larnax burials at Archanes (see also Sakellarakis and Sapouna-Sakellaraki 1997, 191).

[32] Dabney and Wright 1990. Similarly, Branigan (1995) has noted some changes in burial patterns in the Early Minoan period, which also shows a marked increase in individual burials contemporary with the emerging Minoan elites.

[33] The walls at Archanes, like those of tomb 4, are thick for the size of the area they enclose, measuring between 1.25 and 1.75 m. Tomb 4's walls are 0.90–0.95 m thick, and they enclose a space 2.39 m east–west by 1.95 m north–south.

[34] Long 1974, 16.

[35] The plain sarcophagus postdates the painted chest based on two finds inside: a carnelian lentoid seal (Herakleion Museum, inv. no. 339; Platon and Pini 1984, no. 118) showing a pouncing sphinx and a single-edged straight-back razor, both with characteristics dating to the LM IIIA2–B period. A second bronze blade of similar form and date was found in the southwest corner of the tomb (Long 1974, 13). Some have suggested that this type of blade had replaced the Minoan leaf-shaped razor and indicates the presence of Mycenaeans throughout the island (Smee 1966, 162). This new type of razor was originally called "triangular" by Evans (1906, fig. 98), based on examples at Zapher Papoura, but is now referred to as "leaf-shaped." While it is dangerous to equate a single artifact type with ethnic groups, this is one more piece of evidence for the changes on Crete in the Late Bronze Age. For more on ethnicity, see Hall 1995; Jones 1997.

[36] The shell may have been used in a libation ceremony as a rhyton, or it could have functioned as a kind of horn. Similar examples of triton shells were found in chamber tombs at Sellopoulos on Crete, and at Mycenae and Dendra (see Persson 1931, 86, fig. 59, Mycenae chamber tomb, ANM 2366; Warren 1969, 32). See Åström and Reese (1990) and Konsolaki-Yannopoulou (2001) for a discussion of triton shells used for libation in Mycenaean cult.

[37] Paribeni (1904, 717) and Long (1974, 14) believed this was an intrusive find, which had slipped down the slope from tomb 5 (*Tomba degli Ori*). But according to La Rosa (2000a, 88–9, fig. 2), using the excavation daybooks housed at the Italian School archives, this figurine came from the interior of the sarcophagus itself. D'Agata (1999a) has studied all the figurines from Ayia Triada and concludes that this female dates to the LM I period, well before the construction of the tomb, and that it was probably an heirloom of the deceased stored in tomb 4 with other "more prestigious ancient artifacts, and later thrown out" (D'Agata 1999a, 23–8). The figurine is HTR no. 0415, 30.747. See also La Rosa 2000a, 91.

Nilsson.[38] Nauert sees the sarcophagus as an illustration of ritual centered on a young vegetation god, where death and rebirth are the central aspects of the cult, comparable to the later Greek worship of Hyakinthos.[39] Laffineur interprets the scenes in relation to Homeric burial and necromancy.[40]

The painter of the sarcophagus used a palette of red, blue, white, black, pink, yellow, and green to decorate the two major panels on the long sides (fig. 1, side A; fig. 2, side B) and two smaller panels on the short ends (figs. 3, 4). Each is framed horizontally by two rows of red and blue bead-and-reel designs, which are above and below a running rosette frieze. Framing the long panels are vertical running spirals; a scalloped design surrounds the chariot panels on the ends. The artist was skilled in wall-painting techniques, which show similarities to contemporary paintings at Knossos and elsewhere at Ayia Triada.[41]

Side A is the long panel that would have been first visible upon entering tomb 4 and illustrates two ritual events: one of libation and the other a presentation scene, presumably to the dead. The libation scene, on the left side, shows three figures in profile, moving in procession toward two double axes on stepped stands with birds atop each. At the far left, a white-skinned woman wears a baggy white skirt with markings that suggest an animal hide. She brings a decorated vessel filled with some liquid offering and pours it into a blue cauldron, possibly representing a silver amphora, positioned between the axes.[42] The woman behind wears a blue robe decorated with simple bands and an elaborate headdress. She carries two containers balanced on her shoulders by means of a pole. A red-skinned, male musician in a yellow robe follows behind the women in procession, playing a seven-stringed lyre, or *phorminx*, with duck-head finials. This type of lyre is similar to the one shown on a fragment of the Ayia Triada procession fresco, found in association with megaron ABCD, and it is like the lyre held by the seated bard painted on a wall just outside the throne room at Pylos.[43]

The action of the presentation scene begins in the middle of this long panel with a change in direction from the libation scene to the left. The right half of the panel shows three men clad in white hide skirts that are similar to the one worn by the pouring woman of the libation scene. The men not only face a different direction but are marked off from the other scene by a blue background. This difference in background color has been taken by some to indicate different times of day for the ritual action: yellow for early morning, white for daylight, and blue for night.[44] The figures are shirtless and they carry what are thought to be two spotted animal figurines and a model boat.[45]

The last individual on the right of the presentation scene is the most difficult on the sarcophagus to interpret, but it is almost certainly some representation of the dead. This male figure has red skin and short, curly dark hair and is placed before a white background. He is smaller than any of the other individuals, and we cannot see his arms or feet.[46] His garment is a combination of the two types shown on the sarcophagus—the white hide with brown vertical patterns but in the form of the long robe with pronounced banded decoration on the edges. He has been identified as a variety of things, including a deity, a mummy, and the spirit of the

[38] Nilsson's (1950, 426–43) "heroization" of the dead man assumed that he was a Mycenaean overlord. Since there is no evidence for hero worship at the site, I do not follow this interpretation, but I do support the identification of the elite individuals shown on the sarcophagus as "Mycenaean."

[39] Nauert 1965. See also Pötscher 1997.

[40] Laffineur 1991.

[41] Fragments of a procession fresco at Ayia Triada illustrate musicians and deer, which originally decorated either the megaron or stoa FG. The style and technique of these fragments are so similar to the sarcophagus panels that most scholars agree that the same artist created them. See Paribeni 1908, fig. 21; Immerwahr 1990, 102, cat. A.T., no. 3; Militello 1998, 154–5; 1999, 345–52; Rehak and Younger 2001, 447. For earlier Minoan frescoes at Ayia Triada, see Rehak 1997b.

[42] Long 1974, 36–7. For the libation scenes, see also Marinatos 1986, 25–7.

[43] Carter (1995) has cataloged most examples of lyres and representations of lyres from the Bronze Age Aegean and notes that birds are summoned by musicians as "visualizations of a divine presence" (Carter 1995, 307). For these instruments, see Immerwahr 1990, cat. A.T., no. 3; Py no. 14, pl. xviii; Militello 1998, tav. I; Younger 1998, 66–9, pls. 10–12; Cucuzza 2004, 249–50.

[44] Pötscher 1990, 173–6; 1994, 1997. However, Marinatos (1992) does not believe this theory is supported by Aegean evidence.

[45] For discussions of the boat, see Johnston 1985, 140, cat. rep. no. 1; Wachsmann 1998, cat. 606. The boat is peculiar for Aegean funerary ritual, and some scholars have seen parallels also with Egyptian cult practices for the dead at Ayia Triada, comparing the presentation of a model boat and perhaps animal effigies to the dead to similar scenes found in tombs at Egyptian Thebes (Watrous 1991, 291). See Long (1974, 48–50) for further discussion of foreign influence on the Ayia Triada sarcophagus.

[46] Rehak and Younger (2001, 448) compare this figure, presumed to be the deceased, to *La Parisienne,* who is also armless, appears at a different scale from associated figures, and wears an unusual garment.

deceased.[47] The structure he stands before is interpreted as a tomb, possibly even tomb 4.[48] Watrous has stressed the similarities between this figure and Egyptian funerary depictions, which show the deceased receiving last rites before his tomb.[49]

The other long panel, side B, illustrates a procession and the sacrifice of a bound bull on an altar, with dripping blood collected in a rhyton stuck into the ground.[50] A double-aulos-playing man performs behind the bull, and two wide-eyed deer sit below the altar. The musician leads from the left a procession of five women toward the bound bull.[51] To the right another woman stands at a smaller altar wearing a white hide skirt decorated with a crocus-petal pattern.[52]

The profile of the woman at the altar (fig. 9) shows pronounced, dark-lined eyes, a large, slightly upturned nose, and forward extended arms, strikingly similar to *La Parisienne* from Knossos (fig. 10), further demonstrating the artistic connections between Ayia Triada and Knossos.[53] She is attending to a ritual at a spiral-decorated altar and is holding a two-handled bowl. A libation jug, or ewer, with a red neck ring and light-on-dark spirals is suspended above the woman.[54] A basket or other open vessel is shown even higher above the woman. She clearly is involved in ritual action and should be understood as a priestess; based on these parallels, we may posit a priestly role for *La Parisienne*.

A large number of votive figurines were excavated at Ayia Triada and recently published by D'Agata. She suggests that the panel paintings represent ritual actions that took place at Ayia Triada, since several bull figurines and some boat models were found in association with the open area in front of the megaron. Stone double-axe bases, like the ones illustrated on the chest, were also found in this area.[55] An LM I paved road from the eastern staircase was maintained into the LM IIIA period, and the entrance to the piazzale was enlarged and modified perhaps to facilitate processions of chariots during funerary ceremonies, as is alluded to on the short sides of the sarcophagus.[56] Presumably the architecture of this piazzale area created a performance space for funerary rites as illustrated on the sarcophagus panels.

Vessels such as the rhyton below the sacrificed bull, the libation jug above the altar, and the vessels carried in procession on the libation panel (fig. 11) were deliberately shown with archaic features.[57] The polychrome, banded decoration suggests that they are Middle Minoan or LM I vessels, rather than contemporary LM IIIA2 ware.[58] The best comparisons for the vessels shown on the sarcophagus are

[47] Long 1974, 44–50.

[48] Long 1974, 73; La Rosa 1999, 186, fig. 9.

[49] Watrous 1991, 291.

[50] Mantzourani (1995, 127) identifies this vessel as a two-handled vase and does not believe it is a rhyton stuck into the ground. I am following Long (1974, 36) and Immerwahr (1990, 101 n. 7) in identifying it as a rhyton.

[51] One of the female figures is often reconstructed wearing an elaborate headdress, although there is no evidence for this.

[52] Unlike the other hide skirts, hers has a triple-petal pattern, very similar to two robes painted at Pylos, one worn by a seated figure in the Wallpaper frieze and the other worn in procession. For the Wallpaper frieze, see Immerwahr 1990, Py no. 12, pl. 75. For the procession fragment, see Long 1974, fig. 46. This pattern is also preserved on a fragmentary bull rhyton from Psychro (Hogarth 1899–1900, 104, fig. 33; Watrous 1996, pl. 26.3). The faience plaques from the Temple Repositories at Knossos also show dresses with similar crocus petals (Barber 1991, 320, fig. 15.6).

[53] The likeness in facial details and shoulder pose of the two women suggests that they may have been involved in a similar activity.

[54] Cameron (1974, 79, pl. 52a) suggests from the coloring on this vessel that the potter attempted to imitate the variegated patterns of a stone vessel.

[55] D'Agata 1997. See D'Agata (1999a, 222 and nn. 228, 618) and Cucuzza (2001b, 172) for the double-axe bases. An alabaster boat model from the Minoan villa, room 13, is illustrated in Halbherr et al. 1977, 90, fig. 56.

[56] Cucuzza 2001b, 172.

[57] The vessels on the Ayia Triada sarcophagus are discussed in Mantzourani 1995, 123–41, esp. 127–8. The analysis does not show convincing parallels but merely notes that there are some decorative details that also appear on LM III pots. Mantzourani (1995) cites the wavy bands decorating the *kalathoi* held by the woman in front of the lyre player and compares it to Furumark (1972, motive 53:4–5) and Betancourt (1985, 177, fig. 123.l). Most significantly, no Late Minoan vessels of similar shape are cited.

[58] For the transition from Minoan to Mycenaean, based on ceramic evidence, see D'Agata 1999b. See also Boulotis (1987) for comments on the use of older ceramics carried in the procession fresco from Knossos. For Late Bronze Age pottery elsewhere on Crete, see Watrous 1992; Hallager and Hallager 1997. Either the jug is a double-beak vessel (Rehak 1997a, 55) or the lines around the spout are part of lug attachments found on some Middle Minoan jugs. In MM IIB contexts at Knossos and from one of the oldest shaft graves in Grave Circle B, comparable vessels have been found. For the Knossos examples, see MacGillivray 1998, cat. no. 542 (K.656), pl. 90, 543 (K.657), pl. 91. Similar clay vessels from Mycenae are illustrated in Davis (1977, cat. no. 29, figs. 106–7) and vessels from Mycenae, grave Alpha, NM 8569. The jug on the sarcophagus also compares well with a recently found Minoan pitcher from a child's stone cist grave at Troy, dated to the Early MM IIIA period (ca. 1760–1730 B.C.) (Korfmann 1997, 9, 36–7, Abb. 29–32). A. Van de Moortel (pers. comm. 2002) informs me that this jug probably belongs to the MM IIB period because of the polychromy and the lavish use of white on the neck, which occurs at Phaistos only in the MM IIB period.

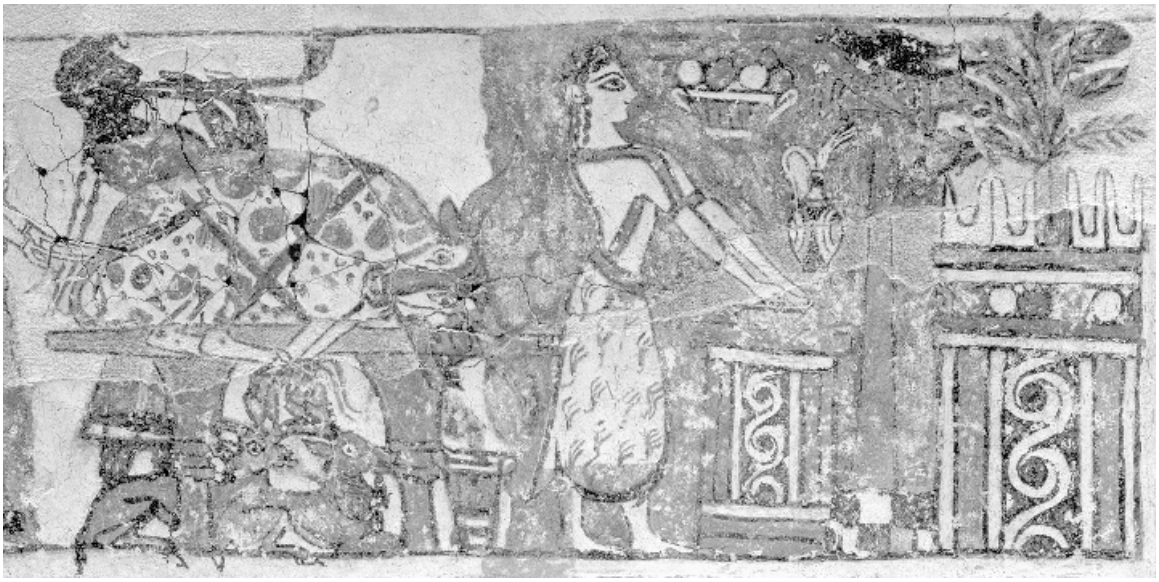

Fig. 9. Ayia Triada sarcophagus, detail of side B. Herakleion Archaeological Museum, CR 13. (Alison Frantz Photographic Collection, American School of Classical Studies at Athens)

found in the area of Ayia Triada and date to the Minoan period. A single-handle rhyton found at Selì, near Kamilari, shows similarities to the rhyton under the sacrificed bull and dates to the Neopalatial (LM IA) period, approximately 100 years before the chest was painted.[59] Also found near Phaistos is a polychrome MM IB spouted jug with two loop handles (fig. 12), which could have been carried by a pole over the shoulders, as illustrated on the libation panel (fig. 11). A Neopalatial vessel with high loop handles from magazine 72 of the Minoan villa at Ayia Triada is also similar to those jugs carried in the procession.[60] These comparisons show that the artist of the sarcophagus depicted archaic-looking polychrome vessels, similar to Kamares ware. Anachronistic vessels from the Middle Bronze Age past, typically associated with palatial elites and funerary ritual, intentionally were used in the ritual illustrations of the sarcophagus. These vessels played a key role in the iconography of the painted panels and would have retained sacred connotations for a local "Minoan" populace during the Mycenaean period.

We must note also the side panels of the sarcophagus (figs. 3, 4). In contrast to the archaic Minoan ceramics on the sarcophagus, contemporary Late Bronze Age chariots and female drivers, which are paralleled in Mycenaean art, decorate the side panels. The chariots are the dual type, first identified by Furtwängler and Loeschke in 1886, and they are the most commonly represented type of Mycenaean vehicle, according to Crouwel.[61]

One of the side panels, the east end (fig. 3), has features that associate the female drivers with the supernatural realm. Their chariot is pulled by winged griffins, animals from the other world, and above them is an elaborate, stylized bird. In Bronze Age Aegean art, birds often are interpreted as indicators of the divine world or manifestations of a divinity.[62] Further distinguishing the female drivers

[59] La Rosa 1973–1974, fig. 307, pl. 683c. Long (1974, 62–3) notes the archaic quality of the Ayia Triada rhyton as well. See Koehl (2000, 94–100; 2004) for a recent discussion of Minoan rhyta.

[60] See Halbherr et al. 1977, 173, fig. 110.

[61] The Ayia Triada examples are significant in the corpus of chariot representations since they show a platform wide enough for two overlapping figures rather than the more usual view of a driver and passenger standing one behind the other (Furtwängler and Loeschke 1886, 27; Crouwel 1981, 40–1, 64). Crouwel (2004) believes "the horse-drawn chariot came to the Aegean from the Levant at some time during the first half of the second millennium B.C., and quite probably first to the Minoan palace states of Crete in the course of peaceful contacts. From Crete the chariot was then adopted, like so many elements of military and other material culture, by the warrior chiefs of the Greek mainland, where the vehicle was prominently illustrated." For more on these frescoes, see Cameron 1967, 330–44.

[62] Examples of Bronze Age birds in various media with sacred connotations include the bird sitting on the terracotta horns of consecration from Ayia Triada (Long 1974, fig. 36), the carved birds on the sanctuary rhyton from Kato Zakro (Platon 1971, 165, 167–8), and the bird in flight accompanying the lyre player outside the megaron at Pylos (Immerwahr 1990, Py no. 14, pl. xviii).

Fig. 10. *La Parisienne.* Knossos. (Herakleion Archaeological Museum)

on this side are their unusual robes with diagonal bands and their ornate headdresses. The red background is also remarkable since it does not appear elsewhere on the sarcophagus and may, as Pötscher suggests, signify a liminal zone where divinities appear.[63] At Knossos, this background color is used with the griffins in the throne room and on the so-called priest-king fresco, suggesting some special association for the representations.[64]

On the other short panel, the west end (fig. 4), are two panels. Below is another chariot driven by two women, pulled by Cretan wild goats known as *agrimia.* Paribeni originally identified these draft animals as horses, but Rodenwaldt noted the curved horns and the long hairs on the neck distinctive of Cretan wild goats.[65] The small size of an *agrimi* does not make it the best choice to pull a chariot, and it may be that goats would have been used only for special ceremonial occasions. The choice of griffins and agrimia as draft animals perhaps is not meant to be taken literally. The artist contrasts two different traditions: the griffin, common in Late Bronze Age Mycenaean art, and a specifically Cretan animal, the agrimi, represented more commonly in Middle Bronze Age Minoan art. A pair of bronze agrimia was found within the villa at Ayia Triada. [66]

Often overlooked is a second panel, above the agrimi-driven chariot group, showing a procession of at least two men. The figures wear pointed blue kilts with pink- and white-hatched borders around a net pattern that is similar to figures painted in fresco at Knossos showing cup bearers and other men in procession.[67] Garments such as these kilts and the robes and hide skirts on the long panels are an additional element of the iconographic text from which we can read cultural institutions, religious practices, and ethnic identities. As a coded language of the Aegean Bronze Age, costumes encourage examinations of social hierarchies, representations of power, and cultural interactions.[68] The hide skirts and the plain robes worn by figures on the sarcophagus are much simpler garments than the finely crafted, elite costumes usually worn by individuals of Minoan art.[69] Plain, solid textiles elaborated only with decorative edgings or bands are the most common type of garment shown in frescoes of the mainland, and they are the predominant type on the sarcophagus.[70]

AEGEAN LARNAKES AND THE SARCOPHAGUS

Burial chests of the Aegean Bronze Age generally are categorized as either Minoan or Mycenaean. Larnakes are of central importance to the discussion of a Mycenaean presence on Crete, and similarities and differences between Minoan and Mycenaean iconography and funerary practices are

[63] Pötscher 1990, 175, 181–2; 1994, 1996.

[64] Immerwahr 1990, Kn no. 28, pls. 47–48.

[65] Rodenwaldt 1912, 138–9 n. 2. This point was also made by Nauert (1965; 1972, 437) and Small (1972, 327). Younger (1995, 164) identifies the animals as horses.

[66] Long (1974, 74) also suggests a Minoan association for the agrimia. For the bronze agrimia, see Halbherr et al. 1977, 126, fig. 87.

[67] Immerwahr 1990, Kn no. 22, pls. 38–39. See also Boulotis (1987) for a revised reconstruction of the Knossos fresco. Based on the Knossos parallel, Long (1974, 54–5) has suggested that the kilted men on the sarcophagus are carrying an offering.

[68] Barber 1991, 312–30.

[69] Barber 1997, 515–9.

[70] See the costumes of the women in a chariot and the hunter from the Boar Hunt fresco at Tiryns (Immerwahr 1990, Ti no. 6a–b, pls. 68–69); the lady known as Mykenaia, from Mycenae (Immerwahr 1990, My no. 3, pl. xx); and the chariot driver from Pylos (Immerwahr 1990, Py no. 10, pl. 67).

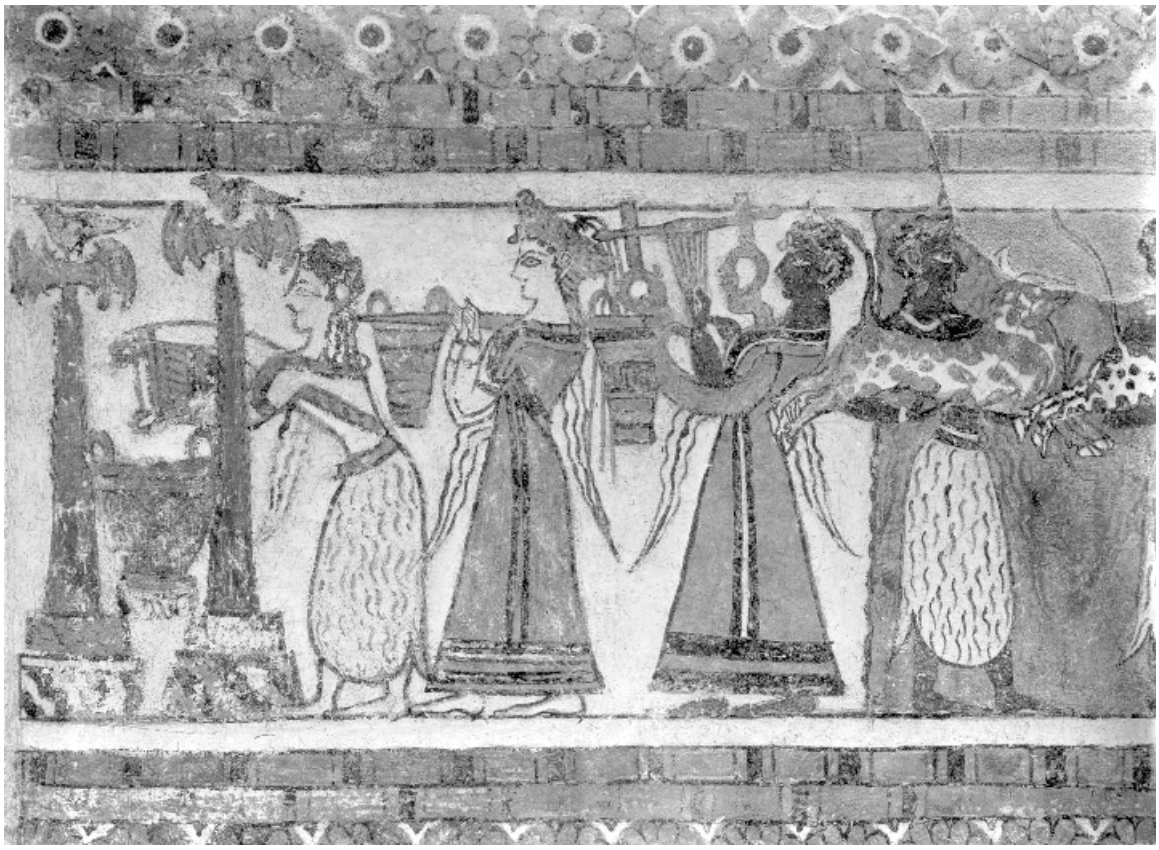

Fig. 11. Ayia Triada sarcophagus, detail of side A. Herakleion Archaeological Museum, CR 11. (Alison Frantz Photographic Collection, American School of Classical Studies at Athens)

often debated.[71] Many studies have referred to the Ayia Triada sarcophagus as an exceptional example of the Aegean larnax, and almost all have classified it as a Minoan example. When describing the funerary scenes illustrated on the sarcophagus, Watrous states, "Painted for a high-ranking Minoan, the Agia Triada sarcophagus illustrates the older Minoan painting tradition, naturalistic and narrative, that the artists of the clay larnakes drew upon and transformed."[72] Preziosi and Hitchcock describe the sarcophagus as "another fine illustration of Minoan narrative frieze painting, of a type that, as we have seen, vividly and poignantly portrays the crisply synopsized characteristics of a story or social ceremony, and with which—if the fragmentary evidence we have is indicative—the Minoans literally and liberally covered the spaces of their lives."[73]

Davis also notes the exceptional nature of the Ayia Triada representations on the sarcophagus and considers it a Minoan creation, suggesting that it was made by a Minoan craftsman for a Mycenaean patron.[74] While acknowledging that "the movement of the figures abruptly changes direction in a manner uncharacteristic of Minoan art," Davis and many other scholars do not consider the sarcophagus a Mycenaean product. Marinatos, for example, views it as a Minoan work, and she has stated that the two side panels contrast chthonic and celestial divinities, while the long sides show the cycle of life, death, and rebirth, with aspects of sacrifice. She describes it as "one of the most valuable pictorial documentations of the Minoan cult of the dead that we possess."[75]

Not only is the sarcophagus part of a contemporary Mycenaean building program at Ayia Triada

[71] Vermeule 1965; Rutkowski 1968; Dabney and Wright 1990; Watrous 1991; Immerwahr 1994; Marinatos 1997; Preston 2004a, 2004b.

[72] Watrous 1991, 290. Watrous also notes the uniqueness of the chest and believes the iconographic program was influenced by Egyptian funerary ritual, as suggested by Paribeni (1908).

[73] Preziosi and Hitchcock 1999, 180.

[74] "Such an offering scene was most likely requested by the patron, apparently one of the Mycenaean 'warriors' whose presence we detect in Crete at this time from their elaborate burials" (Davis 1995, 14).

[75] Marinatos 1993, 31.

Fig. 12. Middle Minoan vessels. (Feiler) (Courtesy DAI Athens, neg. 1973/927)

and, consequently, I would argue, made for Mycenaean elites but, following iconographic criteria presented by Marinatos,[76] it can be demonstrated that the limestone funerary chest is better classified within the sphere of Mycenaean art. The limestone construction and fresco plaster decoration of the sarcophagus are characteristic of Mycenaean works, and the only comparable object of painted limestone is Mycenaean—the repainted grave stele from Mycenae, which dates toward the end of the Mycenaean period.[77]

Minoan chests typically show scenes of fantastic landscapes, marine creatures, terrestrial birds, and plants.[78] Mainland sarcophagi, however, often depict funerary rites by human agents, most often women. The Ayia Triada sarcophagus includes large-scale figures in procession, with a prominent role given to female actors involved in funerary rites of sacrifice and libation. There is no allusion to a fantastic, terrestrial, or marine landscape. In addition, the decorative details of the painted chest are closer to Mycenaean craftsmanship; elements such as the running spiral, which frames the painted panels of the sarcophagus, are found throughout Mycenaean funerary art, beginning with the carved grave stele reused as a base from grave Alpha of Grave Circle B, and spirals are carved on the stomia of tholos tomb 2 at Prosymna and on the Treasury of Atreus at Mycenae. Spirals very similar to those on the sarcophagus are painted on mainland larnakes, such as the one from tomb 22 at Tanagra, dated to the LH IIIB period.[79]

This exercise of isolating primary cultural authorship, however, may not be particularly useful given our broader understanding of interactions in the Late Bronze Age Aegean.[80] The intentional fusion of mainland and Cretan elements is what makes the sarcophagus such a remarkable work of Aegean art, documenting the Mycenaean presence on Crete, quoting the foreign while at the same time making them indigenous.[81] The elaborate decoration of the chest suggests high prestige for both the deceased and those attending to the funerary rites connected with the chest. As a Mycenaean

[76] Marinatos 1997.

[77] The stele comes from chamber tomb 70 at Mycenae. See Tsountas 1896, 1–22, pls. 1, 2.2; Immerwahr 1990, 151, My no. 21, pl. 84.

[78] Marinatos (1997, 290) notes that the marine motives may allude to a Minoan custom of burial at sea, and the regenerative qualities of squids and octopuses were an appropriate image for such funerals.

[79] For Mycenae, see French 2002, fig. 7; for Prosymna, see Blegen 1937, 2, pl. 39; for the Tanagra larnax, see Immerwahr 1990, pl. xxiii.

[80] Preston (2004a, 2004b) also makes the point that the situation on Crete is more complex than a simple displacement of the Minoans by the Mycenaeans in the LM IIIA period.

[81] See Feldman (2002, 14–7) in reference to the exotic goods from Ugarit.

object it exemplifies an intensification of displays of wealth and power typical of mainland elites beginning with the people of Grave Circle B.[82] The performative aspect of the sarcophagus—men and women in procession, including two musicians, and elite figures brought in by chariots—along with the contemporary public architectural program, implies ritual events associated with a funeral. The sarcophagus almost certainly was part of a ceremony for the dead that reaffirmed the elite group identity of the Mycenaeans in the LM IIIA2 period, and visually transmitted symbols of power to a Cretan populace. To quote Feldman, "the adaptation of foreign iconography associated with strong, centralized kingship . . . was consciously directed inward at an indigenous population rather than outward to an international audience."[83]

IDEOLOGY AND ICONOGRAPHY

What does the Ayia Triada sarcophagus tell us about the Late Bronze Age on Crete? The decorated limestone chest, unique among mortuary data from the Aegean, was excavated from a funerary structure dating to the LM IIIA2 period and located very close to a Late Bronze Age center. This site was built on an earlier Minoan villa complex. The panel scenes illustrate funeral rites, sacrifice, and libation, using cult equipment that seems to predate the archaeological context by a few centuries. The individuals shown in action are, however, depicted in contemporary Mycenaean dress and drive chariots that have parallels in mainland art.

Ritual actions embody ideology, and the panel paintings on the sarcophagus are our best illustration of ritual performance from the Aegean Bronze Age.[84] The scenes decorating the sarcophagus depict a death rite, and the combination of archaic and contemporary elements transmits a complex Late Bronze Age ideology. I argue that the sarcophagus is an ideological tool of a newly installed Mycenaean elite. The purpose of this ideology was to manage group labor and control access to the benefits of communal activities, including military, economic, religious, or political actions.[85] This ideology, like religion, is concerned with power, and the sarcophagus as a hybrid is a manifestation of social power in physical form. The ritual scenes illustrate actions perhaps not wholly unfamiliar to the Minoan populace, but actualized in a Mycenaean style.

An instructive parallel is found during the Late Medieval period involving the transition from Byzantine to Venetian hegemony on Crete.[86] The newly arrived Venetian colonists established positions of authority on the island by manipulating and adopting Byzantine traditions for their own imperial ideology. According to Georgopoulou, "The colonial experience of the Venetians in Crete was doubly successful: it provided them with material rewards in the form of territories to be exploited commercially, and most important, it offered them new cultural treasures. This armature taught the Venetians how to advertise their empire . . . to the world at large."[87] Similarly, the Ayia Triada sarcophagus was one tool among many in the Mycenaean ideological "armature" on Crete.

The scenes represented on the painted sarcophagus from Ayia Triada maintain and transmit Minoan symbols to a local group in order to communicate Mycenaean power to a broader population. The original intent or meaning of the scenes on the sarcophagus will remain uncertain; what is significant, however, is that the medium and the Minoan symbols, including the double axes, the archaic elite vessels, and Minoan masons' marks, were intended for an audience familiar with these cultural signifiers. The new manner in which these items are represented, with actors in Late Bronze Age dress in processional offertory scenes carrying musical instruments and riding in contemporary Mycenaean chariots, for a ceremony in front of the new megaron, was also intentionally construed to convey a social message: cultural hegemony at Ayia Triada had changed. Like the architectural features of tomb 4, which contained the sarcophagus, and the contemporary megaron building and related

[82] Dabney and Wright 1990, 50.

[83] Feldman 2002, 17. Although this is in reference to Ugaritic art of the 14th century B.C., I believe the contemporary Ayia Triada sarcophagus was created in a similar way for Mycenaean elites on Crete.

[84] See, e.g., a discussion of the *wanax* ideology in Kilian 1988. Knapp (1996) demonstrates that ideology plays a crucial role in rituals connected to political authority on Cyprus.

[85] See DeMarrais et al. 1996; Knapp 1996.

[86] Georgopoulou 1995.

[87] Georgopoulou 1995, 496. Georgopoulou (1995) describes the public ceremonies and processions that were part of the Venetian campaign to create a harmonious coexistence with the local Byzantine population. These are comparable also to rites illustrated on the Ayia Triada sarcophagus. "The massive participation of the population in these regularly repeated occurrences portrayed the new social order of the colony: the harmonious coexistence of Venetians and Cretans under the sage government of the Venetians. The well-orchestrated civic rituals attempted to conceal any dissension between Venetians and Greeks" (Georgopoulou 1995, 490).

structures built over the older Minoan villa, the iconography of the sarcophagus is a hybrid of Minoan and Mycenaean elements creating a powerful continuity between a Minoan past and the Mycenaean present.[88]

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[88] For further discussion of uses of a constructed past for ideological purposes, see Renfrew 1998; for later Greece, see Whitley 1995.

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