

Staging Death

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Funerary Performance, Architecture and Landscape
in the Aegean

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DE GRUYTER

Undertaken with the assistance of McIntire Department of Art and the College of Arts and Sciences,
University of Virginia

ISBN 978-3-11-047578-4

e-ISBN (PDF) 978-3-11-048057-3

e-ISBN (EPUB) 978-3-11-047919-5

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

A CIP catalog record for this book has been applied for at the Library of Congress.

Bibliographic information published by the Deutsche Nationalbibliothek

The Deutsche Nationalbibliothek lists this publication in the Deutsche Nationalbibliografie;
detailed bibliographic data are available on the Internet at: <http://dnb.dnb.de>.

© 2016 Walter de Gruyter GmbH, Berlin/Boston

Printing and binding: Hubert & Co. GmbH & Co. KG, Göttingen.

Typesetting: jürgen ullrich typesatz, Nördlingen

☼ Printed on acid-free paper

Printed in Germany

www.degruyter.com

Maria Chountasi

Funerary Ritual-Architectural Events in the Temple Tomb and the Royal Tomb at Knossos

“Of the extent and the tragic nature of that catastrophe, a moving record has survived” (Evans 1964: 988)

Performance theory, ritual and architecture

Performance studies emerged as a postmodern movement that amalgamated a number of interdisciplinary approaches in the 1960s and 1970s (Fernandez 1965; Goffman 1967; Goody & Watt 1968; Burke 1973; Turner 1974; Cohen 1979). It was then that theatre and performance was connected for the first time with the wider forces of ritual that thread through many spheres of human culture. It was suggested that the notions of theatre and performance were key metaphors and practices with which to rethink gender, language, fine arts, economics, war, culture and self. In the field of religion, the performance approach made some very important historical and epistemological contributions, which gave the study of ritual and religion in general a new dimension. Particularly, performance theory stressed that religion, as a state of mind rather than as practical knowledge of institutions that guides behaviour, is a rather modern phenomenon (Asad 1993: 41). It also challenged the traditional epistemological dualism between thought (religious beliefs) and action (ritual), fusing the two by focusing on ritual's dynamic role as an emotion-driven and physical action which leads participants to structure religious beliefs and to confirm or modify their cultural values.¹ Although this was not the first time that interest shifted to ritual,² performance theorists made some provocative suggestions as to how ritual is correlated with physicality, how performance and ritual come to structure cultural ideals and, in turn, how these cultural ideals are embodied in social attitudes. By shifting analysis from what ritual means to what ritual actually *does*, performance theory transitioned from the static representation of ritual to the exploration of “non-intellectual dimen-

1 The dynamic role of action in forming conceptual categories has been highlighted by George Lakoff, who demonstrated that kinesthetic schemes and physical action are crucial factors in experiencing conceptual categories as real and sufficiently stable, so as to be the building blocks of shared knowledge systems (Lakoff 1987: 32–7, 46, 200).

2 The so-called ‘myth and ritual school’ emerged in the end of 19th c. and was the first approach to stress that ritual is the original source of most of the expressive form of cultural life. Robertson Smith’s work notions on totemism and primal sacrifice, as well as Sir James George Frazer’s theory of myth as secondary remnant or survival of ritual activity, laid the groundwork for the historical and cultural primacy of ritual (Bell 1997: 5).

sions of what ritual does, that is the emotive, physical, and sensuous aspects of ritual participation” (Bell 1997: 73).

Contrary to the functionalist view, according to which religion and ritual are conventional strategies for maintaining the integrity of sociopolitical systems (Robertson Smith 1969; Durkheim & Mauss 1967; Durkheim 1965; Radcliffe-Brown 1945: 33–43; Lévi-Strauss 1963; Gluckman 1963: 110–36; Firth 1967: 23; Leach 1968: 524), a performance-oriented approach upholds that the relationship between ritual and society is complex and volatile, since the participants in ritual proceed through various and fluid states of being which have a great impact in their comprehension of social structure. For performance theorists, ritual is structured by the human senses and movements and conceptualised as a passage that directs participants to the core of society with a renegotiating and regenerating attitude (Schieffelin 1985; Schechner & Appel 1989; Grimes 1995). Ritual introduces chaos into ordered perception, produces shock and disorientation, ‘destroys’ cultural reality and recomposes it. According to Walter Puchner (2003: 256–7), this process is not just about reversing the social status quo, but also experimenting with alternative realities.

That ritual enables community to continuously revise and renew itself can be traced back to the complex emotional states that it induces in participants. These states of being are characterised by liminality, *communitas*, intersubjectivity and fluidity of identities. Liminality is a term that Arnold Van Gennep first used in the beginnings of the 20th c. to correlate geographical progression with the ritual marking of cultural passages. He defined rites of passage as “rites which accompany every change of place, state, social position, and age” (Van Gennep 1960: 14). According to him, these transitions are marked by three phases: a) separation, b) margin (or *limen*, signifying threshold in Latin), and c) reincorporation. During the intervening liminal period, the ritual subject passes through a cultural realm that has few or none of the attributes of the past or coming state. Victor Turner, one of the most influential performance theorists, further developed this concept (Turner 1967: 93–103; 1969: 94–6). According to him, ritual marks the transition of an individual from one state to another and manifests a liminal state of being for the participants. Turner noted that ritual subjects are secluded from everyday life and experience liminality. During this phase the sense of time and space is disrupted and the ritual subjects become liminal personae, i.e. agents of an ambiguous, transitional phase as “they are neither here nor there; they are betwixt and between” (Turner 1969: 95).

For Turner, all ritual subjects as liminal personae experience ‘sameness’, wherein sociostructural distinctions between the ritual subjects disappear in favour of an absolute equality. This is what Turner called *communitas* (1967: 93–111). He noted that during a ritual performance participants are all treated equally, deprived of all distinguishing characteristics of social structure, constituting a ‘community or comity of comrades and not a structure of hierarchically arrayed positions’ (Turner 1967: 100). During the liminal phase, subjects create intense emotive bonds and experience a sentiment of ‘humankindness’ and togetherness.

Communitas is a complex state experienced intersubjectively: during a ritual performance subjects constitute a public before whom they present themselves and hold multiple roles with very different development cycles exposed alternatively to *communitas* (Turner 1969: 97). During ritual performance, and especially during moments of emotional intensity and communion, every participant brings his/her own world to the event (ideas, emotions, memories, subconscious), while at the same time being directly or indirectly influenced by other participants. It seems that through a unique confluence of intersubjectivity the impressions and reactions of participants converge (Schechner 1977; Grimes 2004). Furthermore, *communitas* is a dynamic and dialectic process, i.e. a recurrent situation in which people transition from stability/structure to instability/antistructure, eventually returning to the former. According to Turner, *communitas* is antistructure, appearing where structure does not. It is exactly this aspect of performance that accounts for ritual's potential in cultural and social negotiation. Ritual 'destroys' positions, statuses and social structures through *communitas*, enabling participants to renegotiate cultural values and social identities.

This aspect of identity building is the main feature of *communitas* and liminal rituals. Rituals of vital crisis generate an essential 'us' that involves all possible relationships among participants. Ritual performance effects a transformation of the emotional state of participants and the surrendering of the I-self and merging with the Us-self (Schechner 2007: 24). Of course, this essential 'us' is liminal and temporary in nature. A persistent and thus institutionalised Us-self is impossible, given the fact that *communitas* is always a unique experience structured intersubjectively and thus temporarily. Us-self building through *communitas* is a difficult object of academic study because it is felt during ritual, rather than a concrete understanding. Participants enter a liminal state of being with a double consciousness: "I am in a liminal emotional state and also performing a Brechtian 'alienation effect'. I am doing and watching myself doing [...]. I did not invent these actions, but in doing them, I am reinventing them" (Schechner 2007: 24). By presenting these dramaturgical-ritual actions to themselves and to other participants and by reinventing them, ritual subjects break down stable social identities and experience *communitas*. They 'autotransform',³ returning to social structure having experienced antistructure intensely as Us-selves. The outcome of this process is rather unpredictable, as it allows either the affirmation or the total breach of established cultural values and social identities.

The above analysis shows that for performance theory ritual is not merely a means to socialise human beings and thus a strategy of reconciliation in a world of well-organised social values, but a process of deeper transformation. In a funerary

3 According to Castoriadis, the human subconscious consists of endless and inexhaustible instincts and feelings and it can be 'autotransformed', meaning it can produce and reproduce deeply rooted human desires by engaging features of real world (1981: 409).

context, ritual practices become particularly dramatic, as they involve persons who experience acute grief due to the trauma of loss, thus entering the ritual activities in a highly unstable emotional state. In this context, liminality and *communitas* are experienced even more intensely than in other rites of passage. During a funerary ceremony, all participants involved (deceased or living) are transformed into liminal personae: the deceased leave the world of the living and enter the world of ancestors, while the living abandon life with the deceased and enter a new state of being without him/her. It is in this ambiguous, intermediate state of being, that *communitas* emerges. Participants have neither concrete social statuses nor ordinary social identities. The deceased enter a world with totally different cultural values (albeit ones articulated by the living). The living experience equality by facing the fact of the death and sharing intense and traumatic sentiments. *Communitas* cultivates a sense of belonging by sharing emotional experiences and through communal participation in cultural fermentations.

The research challenge in archaeology is to explore the relationship between these aspects of ritual performances and material culture. One of the most important questions that performance theory has raised is how architecture contributes to the production and transaction of meanings, particularly in the context of ritual, and how researchers might come to terms with such mechanisms. It is suggested that this question is very important for Aegean archaeology, since architecture is typically regarded as a straightforward manifestation of religious beliefs and social status in this field.

Architecture is a very visible and powerful means both for expressing and stimulating religious sensibilities; it should not be comprehended as pure representation, but rather in performative terms, i.e. as a category of material culture with inexhaustible performative dimensions. Buildings do not reflect concrete social structures; rather they are defined spaces with the potential for performance during ritual. According to Hans-Georg Gadamer (2013: 157), the study of architecture is based on architectural occasions, rather than architectural objects; it is this comprehension of architecture through occasions and human practices that “explodes that prejudice of the aesthetic consciousness according to which the actual work of art is what is outside all space and all time, the object of an aesthetic experience” (Gadamer 2013: 158) and brings about the eventful character of architecture. This phenomenological approach stresses that buildings do not have timeless meanings, but ‘reception histories’ built through complex interactions between them and people: “the house is one of the greatest powers of integration for the thoughts, memories and dreams of mankind” (Bachelard 1994: 6). The body itself becomes the focus of built structures: by moving around, performing activities and using the senses, bodies give meaning to their surrounding space.

This notion is directly relevant to cultic architecture, which tends to be fluid and continuously structured by ritual events. But the diversity and fluidity of the reception histories of cultic spaces and the fact that built forms in general evoke different meanings and responses in different audiences, may impede the performance-oriented study

of architecture. However, detailed analysis of ritual taking place within buildings, such as Lindsay Jones' work (2000), can be illuminating. Jones focuses on aspects of human experience that endow ritual with situated meaning within the built environment of tombs. In an effort to trace down the eventful character of architectural organisation, Jones introduces the term 'ritual-architectural event' and creates a framework that 'aspires to have heuristic relevance to any human experience of cultic architecture' (Jones 2000: 2). Orientation, commemoration, and ritual context are some dimensions⁴ that construct the reception history of cultic architecture and associate it with performance taking place within. Performance in the context of funerary architecture represents a particular challenge, as the interrelationship of buildings, rituals, senses and emotions is very complex and discursive. The enactment of ritual dramas is circumscribed by the senses and emotions; at the same time, performance can produce sensory experience and elicit a series of emotive responses. Every movement, transitional space and routine or experimental practice becomes crucial for the interpretation of the tomb itself. Oppositional schemes (inside/outside, ascending/descending, light/dark etc.), transitional zones such as fixed podia and thresholds, spaces suited for stationary assemblies of onlookers, and processional, interactive spaces suited for ceremonial movement, are all important dimensions of the rituals performed within tombs.

Funerary ritual-architectural events in the Temple Tomb and the Royal Tomb at Knossos

The present paper explores two Late Minoan tombs, the Temple Tomb and the Royal Tomb at Knossos based on the above theoretical framework. The preservation of these two buildings and their architectural complexity present us with a useful configuration that illuminates the link between funerary architecture and ritual performance. Following Jones' methodological scheme, it is suggested that in these tombs a fusion of sacred, theatrical and commemorative elements is witnessed, in the form of ambience, exclusiveness/inclusiveness and affectivity.

First, people interact with architectural configurations dialogically, with the latter playing the role of stages and backdrops for rituals acted out. The hermeneutical experience of architecture engages the whole ritual context and ambience, rather than just built forms. Performers participating in these events are not concerned with the buildings per se, but rather the general ritual atmosphere. Indicatively participants have difficulties in describing details of the physical aspects of the ceremonial environment following a ritual performance, as they get lost in the abstract and total ritual experience of which architecture is only a part (Jones 2000: 268). Other aspects

⁴ For a detailed explanation of the framework, see Jones 2000: 296–332.

that contribute to such ambience and the overall allure of the experience are movements, gestures, even preserved and stored bodily remains. In most cases body remains relate to a desire for communicating with the beyond (Jones 2000: 170), constituting part of a wider strategy to create a transcendental ritual environment.

Secondly, funerary events are characterised by exclusiveness or inclusiveness: enclosed spaces delineate the inside from the outside, create a zone of restricted access, and mark areas as either off-limits or suitable for participation. Liminal, inbetween spaces play the role of frontier between two ways of being (inside/participant vs outside/non-participant), and create gradations of sacred spaces. According to Van Gennep (1960: 20), “the door is the boundary [...] between the profane and the sacred worlds in the case of the temple. Therefore to cross the threshold is to unite oneself with a new world”. A series of liminal architectural features enables passage of the deceased and the transitioning of the living to a transcendent reality.

Finally, funerary events entail active involvement of participants in terms of emotions and affectivity. Even though emotions are difficult to pin down, in ritual contexts they can be regarded as a means to differentiate ‘from more formal concepts of world-view or ideology’ (Williams 1977: 132). Emotions are culturally embedded, bringing together domains usually set apart and traceable in the performance of intersubjective relationships, such as ritual (Rosaldo 1984; Lutz & White 1986; Lyon 1995; Kovecses 2000). Emotions are fundamentally social, linked to the interpretation and evaluation of particular events (such as funerary rituals) and cultural configurations (such as architectural forms). Affective elements (e.g. impulse, restraint, tone) triggering emotions of mourning, melancholy, healing awe, fear and wonderment are evoked through complex relationships between architecture and funerary ritual.

The present paper attempts a double reading of the Temple Tomb and the Royal Tomb at Knossos: firstly, it adopts a hermeneutic approach distinct from the functionalist perspective; secondly, on a more general level, it offers a new methodological framework for approaching funerary architecture. It is argued that this performance-oriented approach has great potential in archaeological hermeneutics, as it is a suitable interpretive framework for combining the individual and the collective dimensions of ritual: on one hand, being based on the physicality of the human body and experience of space takes into consideration individual agency; and on the other hand, it highlights the communal nature of a ritual performance, tracing broader cultural fermentations in society.

The Temple Tomb

The Temple Tomb (Evans 1964: 964–1018) at Knossos **[Fig. 1]** was apparently connected through a paved road with the complex of the House of the High Priest, which comprised an enclosed court and a building with a pillared forehall, an antechamber with two cists and an inner room with limestone altar and two double axe stands

(Pendlebury 1954: 59; Evans 1964: 207–9). It was used from the beginning of the New Palace period (Middle Minoan IIIB/Late Minoan IA). After an earthquake in Late Minoan IA, repairs were carried out in different parts of the building, which was reused from Late Minoan II until Late Minoan IIIA, when it was abandoned. The ground floor comprised an entrance passage (1) leading to a roofed two-columned portico (2), the terrace of which was accessed through a small entrance at the north part of the building. This portico led to a paved court (3), on the west end of which was a narrow entrance leading to the inner hall (4). At both ends of the inner hall two doorways provided controlled access to the pillar crypt (5) and the rock-cut chamber (6) to the west of the latter. Restricted access to the latter two spaces is evident by the fact that the doorway at the east end of the inner hall could be locked only from the inside: the inner face of the stone jamb to the left of this doorway has holes and perforations corresponding with those for bolt and lock, while a bronze key with a blunt and a pointed end was found in the inner hall (Evans 1964: figs. 945–7). The inner hall flanked on either side by two bastion-like chambers, the southern one of which (7) contained a staircase providing a private access to the pillar crypt and the rock-cut chamber from the upper floor.

In this upper floor there was a bicolonnar space with limestone horns of consecration between the two columns, interpreted as a sanctuary (Evans 1964: 965). This upper space stood in connection with the basement rooms (pillar crypt and rock-cut chamber) through the staircase (7), as well as with the terrace above the inner hall (4) and the terrace above the portico (2) through a series of steps. The upper space was approached either privately by the staircase (7) or publicly through the roof terraces without entering the complex of the basement rooms of the building. After the Late Minoan IA destruction and ensuing repairs, access to the rock-cut chamber was further restricted by the turning of the entrance jamb of the eastern door of the inner hall through 90° (Driessen & MacDonald 1997: 167), while changes in the ritual actions performed in the inner rooms can be traced in the remodelling of the pillar crypt into a corridor-like design through the construction of thin partition walls between the pillars, which formed a small compartment accommodating numerous burials. The remodelled pillar crypt continued to give access to the rock-cut chamber through a diagonal, narrower passage. A pit inside the rock-cut chamber was found to contain a group of objects dated to Late Minoan IIIA, including a golden ring, two bronze knives, part of an ivory comb, two alabaster vases, a jug, and a flask. While the finds would be suitable grave furnishings, they were not associated with human remains (Driessen & MacDonald 1997: 167).

The arrangement of the rock-cut chamber and the pillar crypt, the columned courtyard, the windowless areas cut into the natural rock, the lack of evidence for primary burials, and the use of compartments as ossuaries for secondary burials in Late Minoan IA suggest a primarily cultic use for the building. The small columned courtyard would have accommodated a limited number of people (no more than 40), who would have accessed the space through the main entrance. The latter created a

dramatic, if ambiguous, separation between the interior and the exterior: while the open area outside the tomb would have permitted a much larger group of people to attend, the courtyard constitutes both an open-air space and an architecturally defined one due to its surrounding walls and the adjacent roofed portico. From the courtyard, visibility to the western part of the building is limited to the inner hall and the pillar in the pillar crypt. The rock-cut chamber was invisible, reachable through a series of openings between the paved court and the inner hall, as well as between the inner hall and the pillar crypt. As described above, one of the most intriguing architectural attribute of the building was the fact that the eastern doorway of the inner hall (the doorway between the paved court and the inner hall) could be locked only from the inside, hence isolating the crypt and the rock-cut chamber. Strictly controlled access to these spaces indicates that they accommodated ritual activities to be witnessed by only a few people [Fig. 1]. Restricted ceremonial activities may have also taken place in the upper floor room connected to the staircase (7): only those who had access to the inner hall could have reached the upper floor without getting noticed from the courtyard congregation.⁵ Movement from the exterior/visible/well-lit spaces to the east, to the interior/invisible/dark spaces to the west, and vice-versa, further structured ritual practices through a series of spatial juxtapositions.

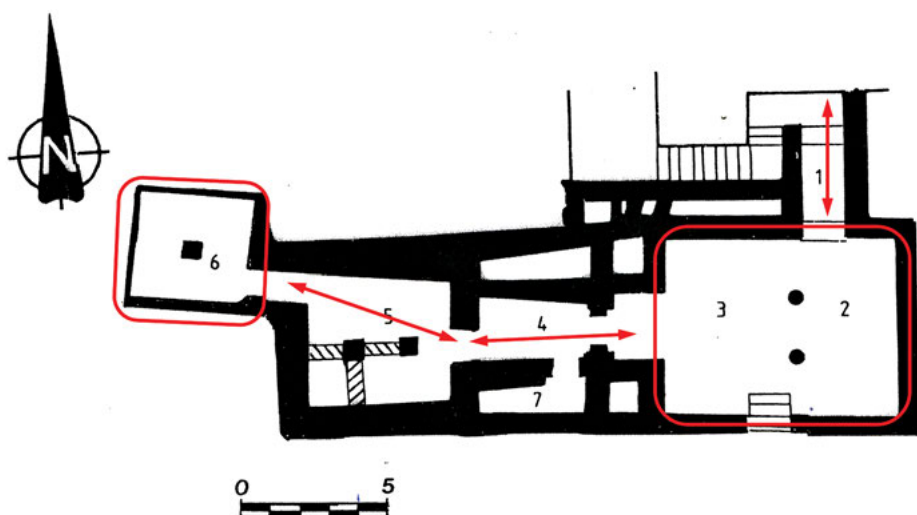


Fig. 1: Spaces of the Temple Tomb (after Driessen & MacDonald 1997: fig.7.33, modified by author).

⁵ Alternatively, the upper floor could have been reached from a rock platform on the northern part of the tomb, bypassing the more public portico and courtyard route.

The Royal Tomb at Isopata

The Royal Tomb at Isopata (Evans 1906: 136–172) [Fig. 2] was mostly used in Late Minoan II-early Late Minoan IIIA, although there are clear indications that it was used until Late Minoan IIIC. Architecturally, it combines features of Neopalatial and Final Palatial tombs. It features a spacious burial chamber evoking Late Minoan I tombs at Poros, Knossos, and a very long dromos usually associated with Late Minoan III tombs. Unlike the circular chamber and hemispherical vault of Late Minoan I tombs, however, the Royal Tomb has a rectangular chamber and a keel vault. The long rock-cut dromos (10 × 2 m) of the tomb is its most striking and defining characteristic. It leads to a narrow vaulted antechamber (6.75 × 1.58 m) with a corbelled arched door on each of its long sides and niches for secondary burials and offerings. Set at an angle to the antechamber is a rectangular, originally keel-vaulted, sizeable chamber (approximately 47.80 m²). A rectangular built cist, internally plastered and covered with stone slabs, was cut into the floor at the northeast corner of the main chamber.

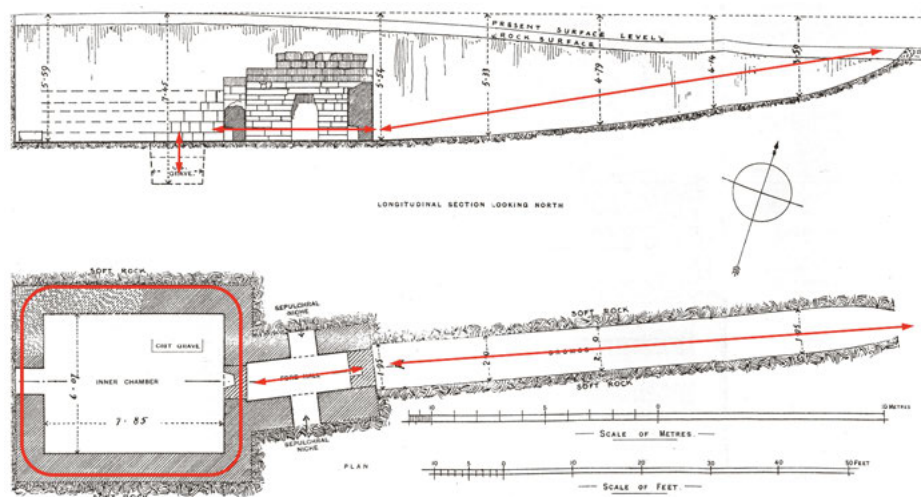


Fig. 2: Spaces of the Royal Tomb (after Evans 1906: pl. XCIII, modified by author).

The gradually sinking dromos, reaching 5.50 m in depth at the tomb's entrance, emphasises physical movement from the exterior to the interior and from the ground surface to the underground space occupied by the chamber. The dromos would have marked the most crucial phase of the funerary performance, the gradual entrance and descent into the domain of the dead. Ritual performance would have included processions from the dromos into the rectangular liminal space of the antechamber, which constituted an extension of the dromos. The performance would have con-

tinued inside the main chamber, the dimensions of which allowed the gathering of a significant number of people (potentially up to 40) close to the burial cist. This procession to the main chamber and gathering inside of it would have been imbued by the contrast between the exterior/shallower/visible/well-lit space outside the tomb and the interior/deeper/invisible/dark chamber and anteroom [Fig. 2]. The ambience of the tomb engendered through such juxtapositions would have allowed complex psychological processes to take place that grappled with divergent remembrances of the past and reinserted the collective body of ancestors in community.

Inclusiveness, exclusiveness and hybridisation of public and private spaces

The Temple Tomb and the Royal Tomb represent a combination of public and private ritual spaces that both include and exclude. The fusion of elements of inclusiveness and exclusiveness especially in the transitional rooms of the two tombs signifies a hybridised architectural form of semipublic and semiprivate spaces. Ritual activities performed in relatively open, public spaces, such as the Temple Tomb's portico and court and the Royal Tomb's dromos and antechamber, suggest that these ritual performances were semipublic, i.e. they were accessible to a considerable number of people but not necessarily to everyone, as the public spaces of both structures were clearly defined by walls and entrances. Inversely, ceremonies held in more private, difficult to access spaces, such as the Temple Tomb's inner hall and rock-cut chamber and the Royal Tomb's main chamber, would have been off-limits to most participants even though they were spacious enough to accommodate a limited number of people. Thresholds marking entrances demarcated liminal spaces and constituted the frontiers between two antithetical ways of performing (Van Gennep 1960: 3, 189; Bourdieu 1977: 114–27); doorways signposted gradations of inclusivity and exclusivity in ritual performance.

In the Temple Tomb, two doorways introduce successive boundaries and therefore degrees of separation between the inner spaces and the courtyard [Fig. 3]. The fact that the upper room ('sanctuary') was connected on one side with the inner staircase leading down to the inner basement rooms, and on the other side, by means of a series of steps, to the rock platform forming the starting point of the whole entrance system, indicates that this upper room would have been both exclusively and inclusively accessible, perhaps during different phases of a ritual performance (or different ritual performances). On one hand, a limited number of participants may have had access to the basement rooms (which, as mentioned above, could be locked from the inside); on the other hand, a potentially larger group could make their way to the upper sanctuary almost directly from the entrance and without entering the sepulchral system of the building (Evans 1964: 965). Thus, the upper floor afforded various levels of exclusiveness and inclusiveness associated with the inner, private

rooms and the outer, more public spaces. Furthermore, the open spaces such as the court (3) and the pavilion (2), are not freely accessible as they are surrounded by thick walling and entered through the main entrance (1).

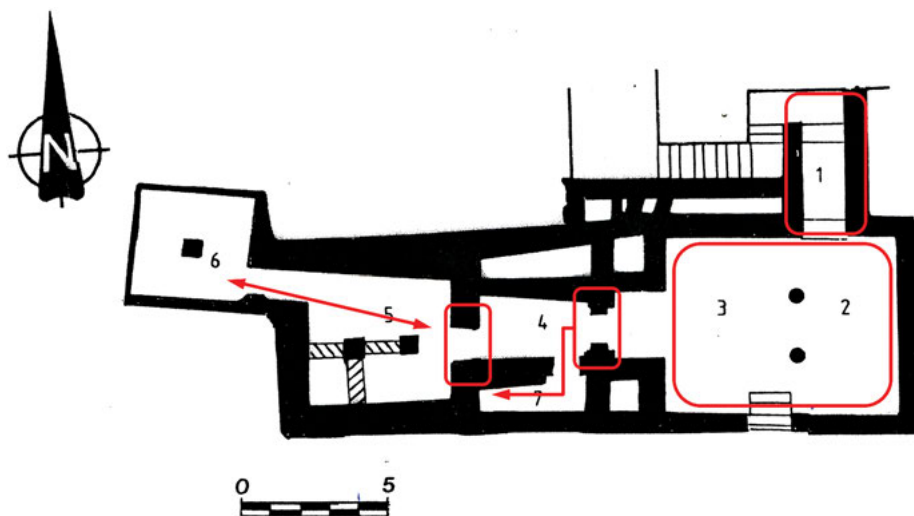


Fig. 3: Inclusiveness and exclusiveness at the Temple Tomb (after Driessen & MacDonald 1997: fig.7.33, modified by author).

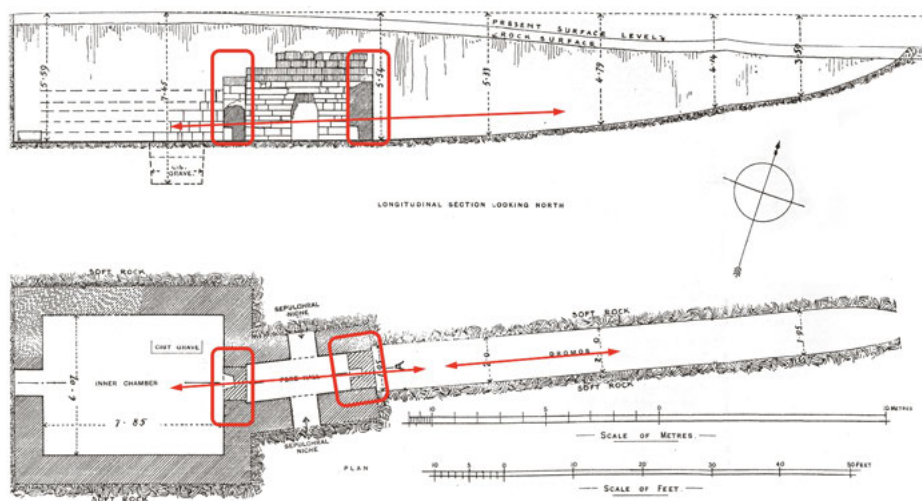


Fig. 4: Inclusiveness and exclusiveness at the Royal Tomb (after Evans 1906: pl. XCIII, modified by author).

Accordingly, in the Royal Tomb the dromos is a free passage leading to the more restricted antechamber through a doorway. Another doorway leads to the main

chamber, a semipublic space based on its capacity and visibility from the dromos with both passages unobstructed [Fig. 4]. These doorways and passages mark a series of transitional spaces, representing a blend of inclusive and exclusive characteristics, and likely constituted the architectural background for respectively inclusive and exclusive dramatic enactments that contributed to such ambiguity and blurring of clear-cut boundaries.

Choreographic options, gradations of sacrality and liminality

Ritual space and time are constructed through a wide and complex range of choreographic options performed in a built environment, i.e. “experiences of movement, whether gestures made in using an object or the shift of visual attention across lines, colors, and patterns” (Buchanan 1989: 103). Thus, the ritual nature of space does not depend on a vague concept of ‘sacredness’; the latter is not necessarily a permanent or absolute quality of a ritual site,⁶ but is created through an event or a performance involving stationary participation or processional movement. A series of transitional zones between the inside and the outside, such as entrances, thresholds, steps etc., can further elicit participation by spectators and contribute to an interactive engagement with the buildings themselves. In this section, I argue that ritual movement in the Temple Tomb and the Royal Tomb, whether as part of primary or secondary burial rites, delineated ritual space performatively and transiently. Some spaces of the Temple Tomb and the Royal Tomb are suitable for relatively static gatherings where performers and onlookers are separated, whereas others afford more active participation in activities contributed to both by ritual actors and spectators.

In the Temple Tomb, the paved court is subtly separated from the inner hall, by means of a low step raised above the level of the court, drawing a potential audience gathered in the court closer to the inner hall (Evans 1964: 995, fig. 948). The narrow entrance leading to the latter and the bastions projecting on either side of the entrance enhanced the visual impression of depth by casting shadows, through which actors would have gradually emerged or vanished into, blending actors with the audience and the dark interior with the well-lit court⁷ rather than presenting the audience with a flat ‘stage’ [Fig. 5]. The audience would not have had a direct view of the tomb’s interior, which would have been within hearing range of activities, however. Of special importance are steps establishing liminal and gradual transitions in the

⁶ For example, DeBernardi 1992, on the Chinese temples of Amoy; Cobo 1990, on the Inca’s festival called Coya Paymi; Powers 1982, on the so-called ‘sweat lodges’ of the contemporary Oglalas.

⁷ Evans regards these bastions as vantage points for spectators on the roof terrace (Evans 1964: 949).

building: apart from the staircase connecting the inner hall and pillar crypt with the upper floor, there is a series of external steps, such as 12 steps outside the building leading to the entrance platform, two steps up from the entrance platform to the roofed terrace just above the inner basement rooms, three steps up from the roofed terrace to the upper room ('sanctuary'), three steps up from entrance platform to the roof terrace of the pavilion (Evans 1964: fig. 950), as well as a series of internal stairs: the staircase (7) and a high step between the interior staircase and the inner hall (Evans 1964: 944). The structured, multidimensional space created in this way would have enhanced gradual ritual movement throughout the building and may have introduced an element of surprise through unexpected appearances from the inner and darker rooms to the upper and more open spaces. All these stairs in combination with the more open spaces of the court and the pavilion suggest a fusion of stationary participation and ambulatory movement in ritual performances. Gatherings in the court and the pavilion would have been combined with gradual enactments through stairs and terraces, stressing a gradual passage between antithetical architectural configurations, such as from dark/interior/basement rooms, to light/exterior/upper spaces and vice versa.

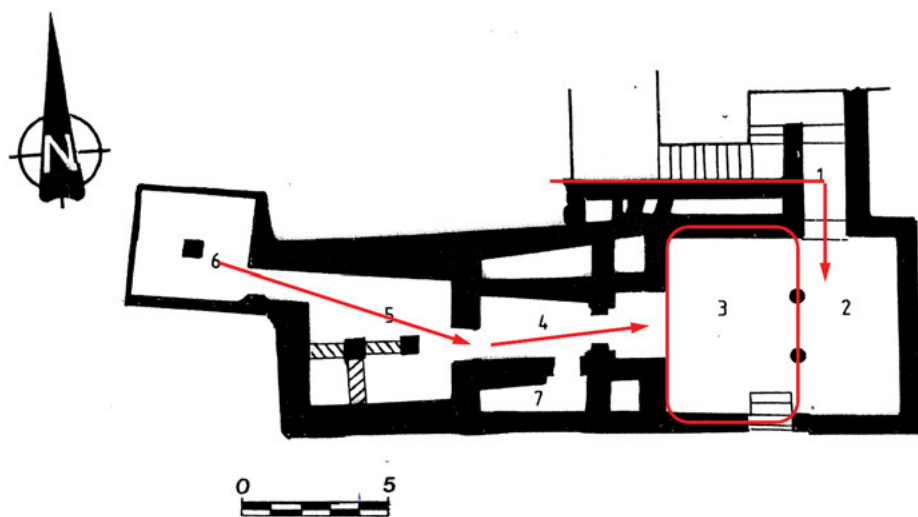


Fig. 5: Choreographic options at the Temple Tomb (after Driessen & MacDonald 1997: fig.7.33, modified by author).

Inversely, the Royal Tomb's long dromos provides a fixed route from the exterior to the interior of the tomb, imposing the direction and sequence by which it can be experienced. However, this arrangement also physically mobilises participants, inviting them into a processional scheme and eliminating the perceived distance between spectators and actors even further. Processions in the dromos would have continued in the narrow space of the antechamber. The long and spacious dromos, which

descended considerably just outside the blocked arch of the antechamber, reaching 5 m in depth below the level of the surface of the rock, and the narrow arch-shaped antechamber with its side walls sloping inwards and its two doorways communicating with the dromos and the main chamber, operated as theatrical scenery for ritual movement. Eventually the procession would have continued into the spacious inner chamber, where participants would have gathered between the cist and the niche on the back wall [Fig. 6]. Compared with the analogous spaces of the Temple Tomb, some differences concerning the physical movements of the participants can be observed: in the case of the Temple Tomb the most spacious rooms, where 30–40 participants could have had gathered, were the outer and lighter court (3) and pavilion (2); whereas in the Royal Tomb the most spacious room was the inner and darker main chamber. The narrowest and most restricted spaces in both buildings are the inner and controlled chamber (6) in the Temple Tomb (approximately 16 m²) and the transitional antechamber in the Royal Tomb (approximately 11 m²). The architectural configuration of the Temple Tomb seems to afford predominantly stationary rituals involving a larger number of participants in the outer spaces, while a limited number of performers had access to the inner rooms; the latter may have played a more active role in the rituals, utilising mostly the vertical axis of the building (transitional zones of stairs and terraces) and choreographic contrivances such as sudden or gradual appearances and disappearances. On the contrary, in the Royal Tomb movement along the horizontal axis seems to have predominated, calling for ambulatory choreographies. The liminal zones of the Royal Tomb, i.e. the dromos and the antechamber, gradually prepared participants for entering the main chamber, where ritual probably culminated. That said, a considerable number of spectators could have stood outside the tomb.

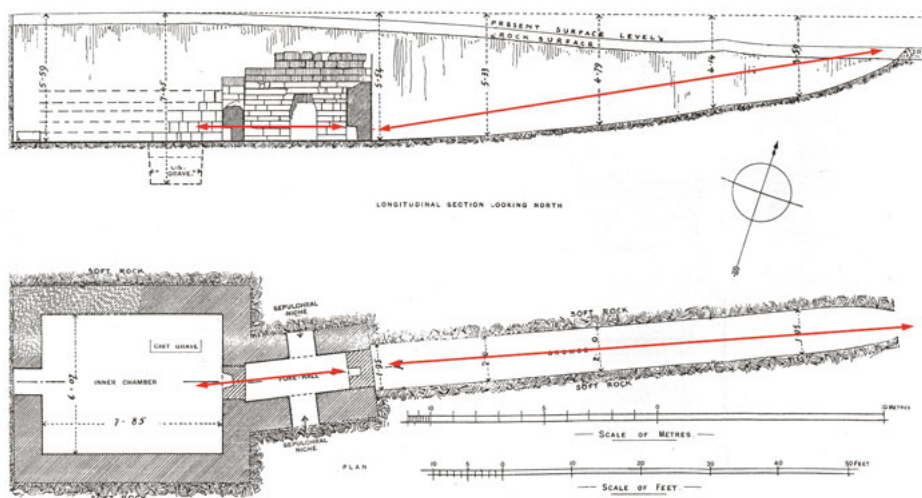


Fig. 6: Choreographic options at the Royal Tomb (after Evans 1906: pl. XCIII, modified by author).

Allurement and affectivity

Apart from the choreographic arrangements analysed above, ritual allurement entails dramatic architectural spaces that seduce, affect, or amaze participants; such allurement can be produced by intensifying affective responses through interaction with the composition of viewing spaces, lighting, timing, costuming and so forth (Jones 2000: 201). These features not only enhance comprehension of the ritual performance, but also invite spectators to be involved in ritual and to be emotionally moved.

In the funerary context, grief, melancholy, fear and wonderment may be evoked by the overall funerary ambience and not just the loss of a specific person per se.



Fig. 7: Structuring allurement at the Temple Tomb: façade as seen from the paved court (after Evans 1964: fig. 948).

In the case of the Temple Tomb, the façade of the entrance leading to the inner hall [Fig. 7], which resembled a tripartite shrine with a variety of hewn, built and painted features offers powerful visual and tactile allure: for example, the deeply carved

mason's marks in the form of double axes on the walls of the inner hall (probably Middle Minoan III), the shallower marks in the form of tridents on the entrance bastions (probably early Late Minoan IA; Evans 1964: 971, 995), the gypsum jambs of the entrance of the upper sanctuary, the green schist paving of the terrace just outside the upper sanctuary, the extensive use of timber floor supports in the pillar crypt, the central gypsum pillar, the gypsum paving and the deep blue stuccoed roof in the rock-cut chamber, the green schist paving of the inner hall and the gypsum jambs of the entrance between the court and the inner hall (Evans 1964: 965, 968, 975, 992, 995). Furthermore, the fact that rock-cut chamber is hewn entirely out of bedrock, unlike the entrance and the inner hall, as well as the two massive wooden beams resting on the top of the central pillar and crossing the ceiling of the chamber from north to south and from west to east leaving visible only four square fields of the original rock ceiling (Evans 1964: 974–5) create a somewhat claustrophobic effect. Changes in acoustics and light and temperature conditions must have been noticeable, and would have further contributed to the special ambience and feeling of gradual transition from the outer parts of the building to the rock-cut chamber.

In a similar vein, walking down the Royal Tomb through the dromos [Fig. 8] allows one to descend into a deeper, much darker and colder place than outside and to be exposed to a variety of sensory experiences. Because the inner dark chamber is mostly invisible from the dromos, encountering the unseen would have been an unnerving experience for procession participants and would have enhanced the ritual allure of the tomb. Accordingly, the narrow antechamber is a liminal zone between the naturally lighted dromos and the dark main chamber. Already from the descending west end of the dromos, i.e. the part closest to the entrance of the antechamber, the participants would have experienced the lack of natural light standing almost 5 m underneath the surface. Artificial lighting through lamps would have been necessary to proceed inside the burial chamber, which likely cast moving shadows of the participants and shone off the mason's marks on the inward side walls and the vaulted roofs of the antechamber and the main chamber.⁸ It is not only the shape of the marks, but also their location that is of interest here: placed on transitional architectural features (entrances) and on the stones of the niches (where they would certainly require artificial lighting to be seen), they produced a strong visual as well as tactile effect, inviting textural exploration under the low lighting conditions.

⁸ Notably, the mason's marks are placed on prominent parts of the walls: the double axe on the north wall of the main chamber entrance and twice in the north niche of the antechamber, while a branch mark is carved on a block near the entrance of the antechamber (Evans 1906: 166–7). In addition, a block that may have formed the coping stone of the niche in the main chamber was carved with four mason's marks, i.e. a branch, a double axe, a trident and an eight-rayed star (Evans 1906: fig. 146).



Fig. 8: Structuring allurement at the Royal Tomb: route to the antechamber through the dromos (after Evans 1906: fig. 121).

Moreover, the entrances at both ends of the antechamber are visually arresting features emphasising antithetical movement (entering/exiting). The vaulted roof of the antechamber and the burial chamber, the apex of which stood 8 m above the floor (Evans 1906: 163) **[Fig. 9]**, would have created stunning visual and acoustic effects during ritual performances. Echoes, resonances, natural and artificial vibrations produced in the main chamber (even in the burial pit dug almost 1.50 m beneath the floor), in conjunction with the dull lighting of lamps, would have created an atmosphere of mystery and reverence.

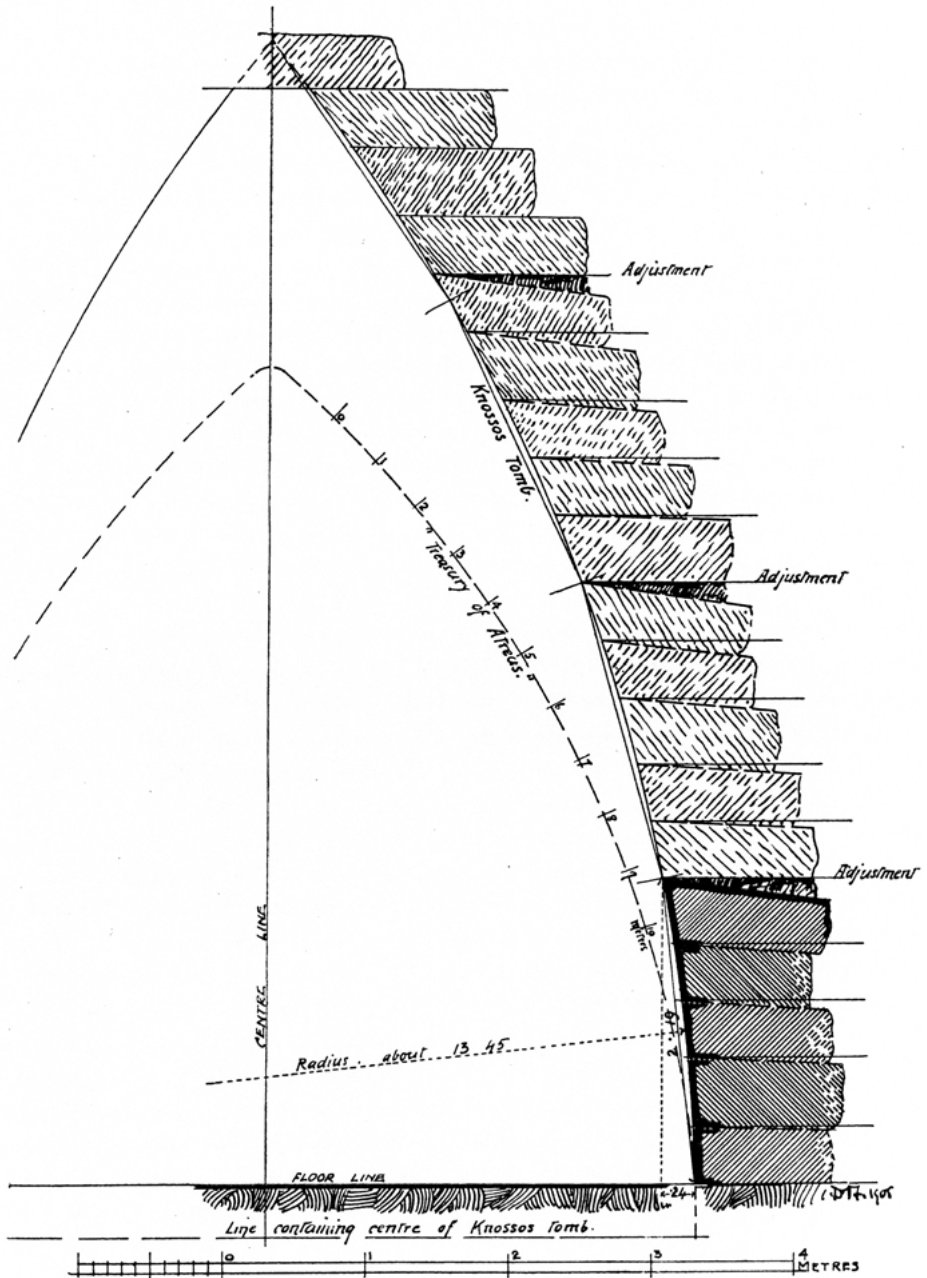


Fig. 9: Structuring allurement at the Royal Tomb: section of vault at the main burial chamber (after Evans 1906: fig. 145).

In sum, visual and tactile features such as mason's marks, variously textured and coloured materials, built elements and space layout, as well as contrasts pertaining to entrance and egress, light, temperature and acoustic conditions brought about by the architecture, did not merely express ideologies and beliefs, but constituted important elements of interactive performance and strategies for allurements. Such features in the architecture of the Temple Tomb and the Royal Tomb helped intensify experiences, elicit emotional reactions and evoke collective memories. They created a heterotopic ambience and shifted emphasis from cognitive human functions, such as comprehension of the words themselves and interpretation of their meaning, to more subconscious and affective responses, such as emotional processing, deeper reflection, sensuous apprehension of funerary rituals and experimentation with alternative cultural realities. As Lawrence Sullivan (1986: 5) stresses, what characterises ritual performance is a 'quality of knowledge' experienced in those situations. Indeed, alluring architectural arrangements are a most efficacious means for heightening awareness of a cultural reality. By creating illusionary effects, exaggerating contrasts and enhancing sensuous and affective responses, architecture not only intensifies ritual, but also creates an experiential and poetic frame of knowledge through which cultural reality is continuously reinterpreted and revised.

Conclusion: anthropocentrism, belonging and monumentality

Analysing the architectural configuration of performative ritual in the Temple Tomb and the Royal Tomb at Knossos suggests a fusion of elements, complex modes of inclusiveness and exclusiveness, and gradations of sacrality, liminality and affectivity. If such an analysis is to "enable us to perceive and understand the dialectics of permanence and change, to settle ourselves in the world, and to place ourselves in the continuum of culture and time" (Pallasmaa 2005: 71), the cultural values articulated and monumentalised by these two buildings need to be considered also.

As argued previously, the theatrical mode is mainly concerned with eliciting emotional responses. Theatrical strategies of allurements, complex combinations of movement choreographies and liminal transitions manifest a preoccupation with participants and onlookers and their involvement in ritual proceedings. This mode, seen in both tombs, can also be seen as anthropocentric (Jones 2000: 192) in that it promotes interpretations of reality through wonder and awe, sensuous and emotional experience. Furthermore, both tombs are designed around a conceptual distinction between 'us' and 'the other'. Clear boundaries create a sense of belonging among participants and alienation among non-participants. Elements such as doorways, passages, and transitional spaces, both contain and keep out, structuring shared experiences on the basis of which a sense of community can be developed: "depend-

ing on one's view they either welcome or rebuff" (Jones 2000: 292). What may be sacred and safe for the insider/participant may be forbidding and dangerous for the outsider/non-participant. However, the 'inside' does not exist without the existence of the 'outside' and similarly a sense of belonging cannot be cultivated without alienating 'the other' in tandem. Moreover, in both tombs the boundaries between the interior and the exterior distinguished between two worlds: that of the everyday life with its routines, concerns and social strategies, and that of *communitas* where people confronted their deepest metaphysical questions relying on emotions and reevaluated cultural realities as a group at the site of the tomb.

Finally, monumentality seems to be an important dimension of ritual-architectural events at these tombs. Understanding monumentality in purely representational terms (sizeable dimensions, plan complexity, quality of materials, fine craftsmanship), i.e. as the production of "knowledge that maps, mirrors, or corresponds to how the world really is" (Pickering 1995: 5) and as grandiose material manifestations of high social status or attempts to renegotiate status, is limiting. From this perspective, funerary practices, the tombs themselves included, are thought to represent 'ideology, the way people think about themselves and choose to represent themselves [...] funerary practices allow us to discern the organising principles that govern social life' (Voutsaki 1995: 57). In this representational paradigm, funerary architecture is a mere symbol or tool for political power. Ritual is deemed to be an arena where political identities are constructed and legitimised, a social mechanism distanced from cultural experimentation and play. People are portrayed as shadows of themselves (Pickering 1995: 6), disembodied, emotionless and lacking sensuous apprehension of their cultural environment.

By contrast, the performative approach upholds that the empowering potential of ideology is manifested in the performance of social practice: it "cannot be treated strictly as a liability, an obstacle we must overcome before proceeding with the business of true knowledge, a mere negativity. It should equally be thought of as a positive force, as the element that empowers practice, the constitutive condition of practice" (Fotiadis 2006: 8). Thus, funerary ideology and its material manifestations (monumentality included) should not be understood in terms of sociopolitical representation alone, but as part of broader cultural processes; social life is not merely the outcome of acting out cultural rules, but founded upon the continuous reproduction and reshaping of culture through human agency. From this perspective, monumental tombs are not just symbols, a series of signs, or works of art, but constituted by what may and may not take place within them: the "opposition between inside and outside, as indicated by thresholds, doors and frames, acoustic, gestural movements, chains of meanings, breaches opening onto limitless perspectives, all are organised into a monumental whole (Lefebvre 1991: 224). Monumental space is constructed through a continuous back-and-forth between private/subjective and public/intersubjective utterances and is actively engaged in the construction of cultural meaning; through repeated embodied experience and sensuous encounters, monumental space be-

comes a form of local knowledge that constructs place. Though seemingly imperishable, timeless and atemporal, monumental tombs introduce temporality by creating a time-specific interpretative framework that both structures funerary ritual and is reproduced by it. They attempt to escape mortality by translating fear about the passage of time and anxiety about death into awe for the timeless and the infinite.

The Temple Tomb and the Royal Tomb, although different in appearance, share a mode of presentation that utilises inclusiveness versus exclusiveness, choreographic options and various methods of allurements meant to elicit sensory responses. While the buildings undeniably constructed flow, visibility, acoustics, participation etc. in performance through architectural design, they also acquired monumental ambience through performance: they became monumental, not just by virtue of spectacle and the qualities of the architecture as representation/symbol, but also through the kinesthetic and multisensory experiences of participants that produced an embodied, emotional and spiritual total. Their monumentality can be regarded as the transient outcome of a sensed totality and an inexhaustible metasensory resource, which was (re)remembered and (re)activated through successive funerary performances or analogous performance in other frames of social life. Their monumental character transformed them into memoryscapes, i.e. sensed, embodied spaces inseparable from human experience and loci of shared memories that enabled the 'sensory reception of history' (Seremetakis 1994: 4).

Acknowledgements: The author is grateful to the editors of the volume, Anastasia Dakouri-Hild and Michael Boyd, for their insightful comments and advice. The paper has also benefited from helpful suggestions from the participants at the 2012 Archaeological Institute of America Annual Meeting. Moreover, the author is especially indebted to Kostas Kotsakis, Michael Fotiadis, Stelios Andreou, Emily Bonney, Clair Palyvou, Despina Catapoti, and Elina Kardamaki for their helpful advice and constructive conversations. The usual disclaimer applies.

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