



## SACRED PROSTITUTION IN MINOAN CRETE? A NEW INTERPRETATION OF SOME OLD ARCHAEOLOGICAL FINDINGS

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### ABSTRACT

*Sacred prostitution remained for several years a taboo topic in the study of the ancient Aegean and Eastern Mediterranean. Despite the fact that some ancient writers refer to it, several scholars doubted its practices in the frame of the noble Greek civilization. Recently, R. Strong put the question, re-interpreting archaeological data from sites reported as places in which sacred prostitution took place.*

*Regarding Minoan archaeology, the single reference to the subject is included in Nikolaos Platon's notes on his lectures for the students of the Thessaloniki University. There, the question is cited, with a positive answer considered possible, especially on the basis that the Paphian Aphrodite's "Tri-partite Shrine" originates from Crete.*

*Some years later, in Zakros, Platon excavated a building, the architecture and the finds of which could be connected with this matter. The paper re-examines the data from this structure, attempting to give a new interpretation of its function and significance.*

*"A question has arisen whether, just as in the Levant, there was a class of prostitutes in the Minoan-Mycenaean region, who served a fertility function by offering to the deity their own bodies. Some indications appear to favor such a possibility."*

Platon 1970, 136

### THE HISTORY OF THE RESEARCH ON THE QUESTION OF SACRED PROSTITUTION IN MINOAN CRETE

Sacred prostitution constituted for several years a taboo topic in the study of the ancient Aegean and East Mediterranean peoples. Despite the fact that some ancient writers, starting with Herodotus, refer in detail to it, there were several scholars who doubted its practice, at least considering the noble ideals of ancient Greek civilization. It was only around the end of the 20th century that Rebecca Strong dared to reopen the question, re-interpreting the archaeological data from sites reported as places where sacred prostitution had taken place in a religious context.<sup>1</sup>

Consequently, it is not strange that this topic was not included until now in the interests of Prehistoric Aegean scholars despite relations between Cyprus – reported as one of the cradles of sacred prostitution – and Crete, and later Mycenaean Greece, having been close. The most extensive reference to this question in the field of Minoan archaeology is in the notes entitled "Minoan-Mycenaean Religion" given by Nikolaos Platon to his students in

the Thessaloniki University. Here, this question is cited for the first time, with a positive answer considered possible, especially based on acceptance that the Paphian Aphrodite's "Tri-partite Shrine" originates from Minoan Crete.<sup>2</sup> Platon considers as further supporting evidence for such a possibility the probable Cretan origin of the "woman in window" motif, which in Cyprus and the Levant has been connected by some scholars with the appearance of priestesses and/or prostitutes.<sup>3</sup>

This hypothesis was not developed further, lacking other excavation or iconographical evidence as well as, certainly, literature sources.<sup>4</sup> Nevertheless, it should be noted that this last type of data, normally absent in the context of prehistoric Crete, constitutes the most secure source of information for the practice of sacred prostitution in Greece and Cyprus of historical times.<sup>5</sup> In consequence, until new, more diagnostic excavation finds on this topic come to light, we are obliged to approach the question mainly on the basis of comparative archaeological evidence from other ancient sites for which the existence of sacred prostitution is confirmed by literature sources.

## THE EAST BUILDING AT ZAKROS: THE “HOUSE OF THE LADIES”

By chance, the same scholar excavated a building in Zakros some years later, the architecture and the finds of which could be directly or indirectly associated with the question under discussion. It is the so-called “East Building”, a structure built on the “Harbor Road”, namely the main road of the settlement, serving also as the official approach for visitors to the Minoan palace arriving by sea.<sup>6</sup> (Figure 1) The rich finds of this structure, connected especially with the toilette and more general grooming of women,<sup>7</sup> led the excavator to call the building initially “the House of the Ladies”, hinting that it could constitute a kind of “brothel” for high status people.<sup>8</sup>

Before we make any hypothesis on the function of the East Building, we should underline its outstanding place among the architecturally separate structures excavated in the Zakros settlement to date, at least as regards its movable finds. In its west part alone, which constituted a structural unit, better preserved thanks to the filling of the basement rooms, were found more than seventy (70) decorated clay vessels, five (5) of which represent the so called “special palatial tradition”; thirteen (13) stone artifacts, most of which are made of rare imported materials; one (1) extraordinarily made vase of faience; an undetermined number of small artifacts made of ivory and bone; one (1) miniature double axe of silver and at least ten (10) small-sized objects made of bronze. The quantity and quality of these finds class the East Building as the richest structure in Zakros apart from the palace itself, suggesting its direct connection with it.<sup>9</sup>

Even more important is the observation that a great part of the above finds appears to be related to the toilette and, more generally, the grooming and dressing of women.<sup>10</sup> These women would certainly have belonged to a high class, judging from the quality of the artifacts used for this purpose.<sup>11</sup> They comprise six (6) pins, three or more of which belong to the hooked type considered to have been used in hair-dressing;<sup>12</sup> (Figure 2) a bone pin probably ending in a schematic human face presented in profile; a clay pin-head of a depressed globular form bearing vertical grooves; a small bronze spatula; another bronze tool with a broad blade curved at one end; a piece of a pair of bronze tweezers; a bronze mirror; (Figure 2) several fragments of small ivory plaques with engraved or incised representations, probably used as inlays in one or more wooden little boxes;<sup>13</sup> (Figure 3) fragments of other little boxes made entirely of ivory;<sup>14</sup> an ivory piece probably from a comb, and two stone rectangular tables probably used for working pigments. The same assemblage comprises also a large number of vessels of small size and capacity, suitable for storing perfume oils or ointments. Among them were a small jug made of faience; a double stone kernos of the “salt and pepper” type; two stone miniature bowls, one of which is made of a fine purple imported material; (Figure 4) four (4) small clay askoi; (Figure 5) at least six (6) little amphorae; nine (9) clay alabastrons of small and medium size; (Figure 6) one (1) stone alabastron made of Egyptian alabaster (Figure 7) and at least six (6) juglets, four of which are of the “milk jug” type.

Most of the objects described above were found scattered in various depths of the filling which sealed Rooms A and B as well as oblong Corridor Δ and are dated to the end of the LMIB period, based on the study of pottery.<sup>15</sup> On the basis of this picture, the excavator considered that a beauty parlor existed on the upper floor of the East Building and, more specifically, over the above named areas.<sup>16</sup> What led N. Platon to associate these finds exclusively with the female sex, though? And further, what indicated, or at least suggested, that the “ladies” probably living in this building could be identified with prostitutes?

Several toilette instruments from the Bronze Age Aegean have been considered to have been used possibly by both sexes: mirrors,<sup>17</sup> combs,<sup>18</sup> spatulae and color tables,<sup>19</sup> but also receptacles for perfume oils and ointments,<sup>20</sup> occur in tombs containing male as well as female burials. On the other hand, the Minoan – Mycenaean iconography connects some categories of toilette and dressing instruments especially with female figures. Among these objects are the pyxides,<sup>21</sup> the mirrors<sup>22</sup> and the pins, especially the hooked type.<sup>23</sup> In addition, the absence of razors from the East Building’s assemblage, an instrument considered as the most typical one for the men’s embellishment,<sup>24</sup> supports the attribution of the total of finds to women. The possible identification of a female figure, as well as the motif of the “sacral knot”, in two of the scenes depicted on the small ivory plaques reported above is similarly suggestive of female use.<sup>25</sup> (Figure 3) The discovery of a large number of loom weights, especially in the east part of the building,<sup>26</sup> declares some weaving activities, traditionally associated also with the female sex.<sup>27</sup>

The religious nature of the ladies’ embellishment is noticeable. Among the clay vases of the abovementioned assemblage there were at least two cup-rhytons, one of which was decorated with double axes. The same symbol occurs also in one of the alabastrons, (Figure 6) which suggestively contained perfume oil, while it appears also in the form of a small silver offering.<sup>28</sup> The presence of a great number of decorated spouted vessels, among which are at least three jugs of the “libation” type,<sup>29</sup> as well as a large group of drinking vases belonging both to the plain conical cup type and to other, more elegant types bearing various decorative motifs, suggest special rituals including serving and drinking liquids.<sup>30</sup> Vessels possibly used for offering of fruits occur also in the same context. At least two clay miniature vases confirm the ritual offering activities. Finally, the repertory of motifs depicted in the relief and incised little ivory plaques, including birds of various kinds flying freely, as well as the motif of the “sacral knot” (Figure 3), obviously had a religious character and was not merely decorative.

Consequently, it seems that the embellishment and dressing in the East Building were associated with the female sex and, further, a class of priestesses. Why should they also be prostitutes, however? The existence of a mainly female priesthood in the Minoan palatial worship is supported by iconographical evidence, although the participation of a class of male priests appears to be also a strong likelihood. The identification of a structure as a place in which a small group of priestesses resided or acted does not

confirm (but also does not exclude) its use for what is known as “sacred prostitution”. It is necessary to examine which other types of data connected with the East Building, including those related to its location, construction and architectural arrangement, could support such a hypothesis.

To start with the location of the building, it has already been mentioned that it was built on one side of the “Harbor Road”, namely the road connecting the settlement and the palace with the sea.<sup>31</sup> This location would make the structure especially suitable to receive important visitors before their arrival and reception in the palace. Probably related to this fact is that among the finds of the building was a small stone alabastron made in Egypt during the reign of the 18<sup>th</sup> dynasty<sup>32</sup> (Figure 7) and a globular object of lapis lacedaemonius, both objects probably directly imported from Egypt and the Peloponnese. Regarding the construction of the building, it is one of very few structures at Zakros presenting at least one ashlar façade made from poros stones. This façade faced the “Harbor Road”, and its construction permitted the opening of carefully made windows on the upper floor level.<sup>33</sup>

Even more important evidence is offered by the interior architecture of the structure. Firstly, it should be stated that the East Building, at least during its last phase of use, did not function as an independent structure, since it constituted a single architectural unit together with the so-called “Building of the Niches” located immediately to the west.<sup>34</sup> (Figure 1) The lack of a real east façade in the latter, combined with the presence of a megalithic wall defining the west limit of the East Building,<sup>35</sup> which undoubtedly is identified with its original west façade, confirms that the Building of the Niches was actually an addition to the original structure. In consequence, we must accept that the two buildings functioned as an architectural unit at least during the LMIB period, a crucial factor in any discussion of their use. The west part of the unit, occupied by the Building of the Niches, appears typical for the Zakros settlement, at least regarding its rooms’ arrangement and function. It was two-storied, suggested by the probable presence of two wooden staircases, and on the ground floor level it had rooms used for living, working and social activities, as well as magazines for storing vessels and agricultural products.<sup>36</sup>

On the other hand, the west part of the East Building presents a non-typical picture: it consisted of three spacious areas connected with each other by a long and narrow corridor.<sup>37</sup> (Figure 1) The first space (A) was actually an ante room, connected with the corridor by an opening the location of which changed at least once during the life of the structure.<sup>38</sup> The ante room was approached by a door opening in the SW corner, while one more opening in its south wall gave access to an open area to the south.<sup>39</sup> The corridor ( $\Delta$ ) led to two relatively spacious rooms (B,  $\Gamma$ ), which were equipped also with doors.<sup>40</sup> (Figure 8)

The use of these basement rooms, presenting an arrangement unique to Zakros, is problematic. Their location and form suggest that they could have been used as magazines for agricultural products, but their movable finds (or the total absence of any) and the narrow approach to the two interior rooms preclude this. The

majority of the beauty parlor finds appear to have come from the upper floor apartments, since they were found scattered in various depths of the filling, and almost exclusively in Rooms A and B, leaving interior Room  $\Gamma$  practically empty.<sup>41</sup> The only finds which could be considered as found *in situ* are a large spouted vat, equipped with a small drainage hole in the side, just above its base (Figure 9), which was found placed in the NW corner of the ante room (A),<sup>42</sup> and a group of large vessels, which would have hindered the circulation in Corridor  $\Delta$ , at least at the time of the building’s destruction.<sup>43</sup> Given this, the corridor’s vases cannot offer anything to the discussion of the original function of these areas. More important appears to be the clay vat of the ante room (A). On the basis of its form, it might have been used for working with liquids, most probably as an oil separator.<sup>44</sup> However, no other vessel relating to the working or storing of oil was found in the same area or in the adjacent rooms. Of the remaining finds of the ante room, the only one which could be directly or indirectly associated with the function of the vat is a bronze pin with hook-like end, found among its fragments, according to the excavation diary.<sup>45</sup> (Figure 2)

Consequently, it seems probable that the clay vat was used as a bath tub. Used water could have been drained through the narrow opening on the south wall of the building. It should be noted that bath tubs of the known oblong shape occur already, though rarely, during the Late Minoan period in Crete, Zakros being one of the few find sites.<sup>46</sup> So, it seems probable that large clay conical vats were normally used for bathing in Crete, occurring in a much larger frequency in domestic contexts.

For the equipment of the two remaining ground floor rooms of this apartment, there is no satisfactory evidence. Nevertheless, it is worth mentioning that in both rooms traces of burning in straight lines have been reported, suggesting the existence of wooden beams or equipment.<sup>47</sup> This equipment could comprise one or more beds, such as the wooden bed found *in situ* in the Spring Fresco’s room, in Quarter Delta at Akrotiri, Thera.<sup>48</sup>

Finally, apart from the contents and the architectural arrangement of the rooms, one more element should be evaluated. This regards “privacy”. The care to secure it is suggested by the existence of a row of successive doors, at the beginning and the end of the entrance way leading to the discussed apartments, as well as by the openings of each separate room, including the ante room. A visitor entering the structure from the “Harbor Road” would have had to pass four or five doors in order to approach the most interior rooms, B and  $\Gamma$ . (Figure 1) Such an architecturally determined privacy could be associated with only two functions of life: the storage of valuable goods and the protection of the private moments of the residents. Given the fact that the interior ground floor rooms of the East Building were found practically empty, the first of the above two functions should be rejected, leaving the second as more possible.<sup>49</sup>

In conclusion, the element of privacy, the probable use of the ante room for bathing and the existence of a women’s beauty parlor on the upper floor, combined with the suitable location of the building and the palatial character of its equipment together



with the items' religious tone, suggested to the initial excavator that the structure was a place given to the practice of sacred prostitution, a logical possibility. In this point, a rough comparison between the architecture and finds of the East Building and similar features occurring in other sites of the Aegean and east Mediterranean, considered on the basis of literature sources as places where sacred prostitution was practiced, could be really helpful.

#### COMPARING THE EAST BUILDING WITH SIMILAR ONES FROM CYPRUS AND GREECE OF HISTORICAL TIMES

Regarding the question of the interior architectural arrangement, any comparison of the East Building and structures in other sites considered as places for sacred prostitution is difficult because of the unique nature of the Minoan architecture, the chronological distance separating Bronze Age Crete and the compared districts, and, finally, uncertainty about the identification, in these districts, of specific buildings as places in which sacred prostitution was really practiced. Of the cases which Strong discusses, the most interesting is that of Building 2 in the area of the South Stoa in Ancient Corinth.<sup>50</sup> The building comprises nine (9) rooms, divided into two units consisting of five (5) and four (4) spaces, respectively. Despite some obvious differences between this structure and the East Building (a symmetry between the two sectors of the Corinthian building, based on the axis of the entrance corridor; similarly shaped and sized spaces arranged in a row), there are some similar features in their architectural plan. These comprise the approach of the rooms from a single entrance area via door openings, one for each space, and the existence of a separate area used as a "bath room". However, these relatively general architectural features cannot be considered as typical for only one category of structures.

On the other hand, some of the movable finds from the East Building belong to categories connected by Strong with sacred prostitution, less on the basis of excavation finds and more on that of an interpretation of some iconographical elements. Among them, the most important are the probable bath tub of the ante room (A), the mirror and the remaining equipment of the beauty parlor, the small perfume oil and ointment containers from the same space and the repertory of the motifs in the little ivory plaques which suggestively decorated small wooden jewelry boxes ('pyxides').

The use of bath tubs in the frame of a special ceremony comprising the bathing of the bodies of the participants, which myths and finds from classical antiquity connect with the worship of Aphrodite,<sup>51</sup> as well as their practical function in preparation for sexual intercourse, constitute two possibilities of equal weight. Natural-sized bath tubs and miniature models of them come from religious settlement and burial contexts, dated to the end of the Bronze Age or the very beginning of the Iron Age, in Paphos as well as in other sites of Cyprus and Mediterranean.<sup>52</sup> It is worth

mentioning that a small clay model of a bath tub with two schematic figurines in it comes from a LMIIIB tomb of east Crete.<sup>53</sup> In the so-called "pinakes" (small clay plaques) from Epizephyrian Locris which Strong connects again with sacred prostitution, among others themes female figures are depicted taking their bath, probably in preparation to practice their obligation.<sup>54</sup>

In connection with the same preparation, women are depicted on the same "pinakes" arranging their hair in front of a mirror, an item which, as we have seen, was included in the equipment of the beauty parlor of the East Building.<sup>55</sup> Miniature models of mirrors dated to the 6<sup>th</sup> century B.C. come from ancient Corinth, a site connected with sacred prostitution by literature sources.<sup>56</sup> Although mirrors in Minoan Crete are found in burial tombs of both males and females, in the iconography they are associated exclusively with women, probably identified with female deities.<sup>57</sup>

A kind of vase used as a perfume container, depicted in the iconographical frame of the so called "Frauenfest theme", which Strong again relates to sacred prostitution,<sup>58</sup> suggests the related use of this type of vessel, which is strongly represented in the East Building assemblage. Finally, scenes depicted on metal bowls from Cyprus, connected also with sacred prostitution,<sup>59</sup> represent female figures and flying birds of various kinds, among others hawks or eagles and aquatic birds, some of which occur also in the iconography of the little ivory and wooden boxes from the beauty parlor of the Zakros building.<sup>60</sup> The probable presence of at least one female figure in the scenes depicted in the little ivory plaques<sup>61</sup> (Figure 3) supports the existence of more composite representations having human subjects.

Two more items found in the East Building of Zakros and its immediate surroundings might be related to the question under discussion. The first is a small perforated ball of Lapis Lacedaemonius, perhaps a kind of a scepter head, an object either imported or made locally but from an imported stone. The rarity of the material and the high execution of this item preclude the excavator's hypothesis that it was a kind of weight, an item with a clear practical use.<sup>62</sup> It should be simply noted here that some small, elegant balls, found in tombs in Lemnos, in a context connected with sacred prostitution by Strong, probably constituted offerings to the deity, on the basis of a belief related to it.<sup>63</sup>

Finally, from the filling of the Harbor Road and almost outside the north façade of the East Building came a peculiar torch-like clay object, which resembles a phallos.<sup>64</sup> Models of phallos were among the items given to those initiated into the mysteries of Aphrodite's worship, as it is suggested by finds from Paphos and Lemnos of historical times.<sup>65</sup> Although the Zakros item is preserved in a fragmentary state and it has no parallels to date, the presence of models of phallos in Minoan shrines and deposits offers support for including it in the same interpretative frame.

COULD ZAKROS BE ONE OF THE CRADLES OF “SACRED PROSTITUTION”?

The above discussion declares that there is some archaeological evidence for the hypothesis that the so-called “East Building” at Zakros could have been used for a kind of sacred prostitution. However, this building itself does not dispose features showing that it really was the centre of the related worship. On the basis of the centralizing nature of the administration in the New Palace Period, the center of such worship should be located in the palace itself, it being also the centre of the political-religious life of the society. Some of the features connected by Strong with sacred prostitution occur also in the palace area, supporting this thought. These are the following:

1. The type of the “Tri-partite Shrine”. An example of this architectural form was recognized recently in the area of the North Stoa of the palace central court.<sup>66</sup> Although it has been doubted, the old idea that the form of the shrine of Paphian Aphrodite originated in Crete remains strong, especially on the basis of the discovery in Paphos of a piece of large stone “horns of consecration”,<sup>67</sup> which constitutes a religious symbol often associated in Crete with the “Tri-partite Shrine” type. Direct contact between Paphos and Bronze Age Crete, and probably especially Zakros, is very probable, since the former has been shown recently as one of the principal gateways for the export of Cyprian bronze<sup>68</sup> and the latter has been proved to be a direct receiver of bronze from Cyprus in the form of ox-hide ingots, a number of which have been found in the magazines of the palace.<sup>69</sup>
2. The mirrors. A big bronze specimen was found in the palace central court, a short distance from the North Stoa.<sup>70</sup> Its large size and the find spot itself connect the mirror with a kind of ceremony, which probably took place in the area of the “Tri-partite Shrine”.
3. The bath tubs. One clay example, having the normal oblong elliptical shape, was found in situ in the ante room of the “Hall of the Cistern” in the East Wing of the palace.<sup>71</sup> We have shown above the probable association of the bath tubs with the practice of prostitution, on religious and practical levels.
4. The gardens. It has been said that rich gardens certainly surrounded the East and the South Wings of the Zakros palace.<sup>72</sup> The gardens have been connected with the worship of Astarte in Palestine, a goddess who was the equivalent of Aphrodite, the Goddess of Love in Greece of historical times.<sup>73</sup> Consequently, it should be suggested that in Zakros an aspect of female deity connected with love and fertility was probably worshipped.

THE PROBABLE POSITION OF SACRED PROSTITUTION IN MINOAN CRETE: DID LOVE CONSTITUTE A KIND OF “TABOO”?

The discussion of sacred prostitution in Minoan Crete raises the related question-whether or not, more generally, human sexual relations constituted a kind of “taboo” for the society. Despite the fact that sexual scenes have been considered as very rare in the art of Bronze Age Crete, an answer to this question is difficult, since it has been generally accepted that the Minoan-Mycenaean iconography had specific purposes and origin and, actually, did not represent the life and behavior of the ordinary people. On the other hand, the recent identification of at least a small number of representations with erotic contents calls into doubt the original picture: an erotic scene is clearly depicted in a pre-palatial seal from Galana Charakia, Viannos,<sup>74</sup> while a sexual activity is anticipated in the representations on two known neopalatial golden rings.<sup>75</sup> A small clay model which depicts sexual intercourse comes from the tomb at Kamilari, Phaistos.<sup>76</sup> In a bronze female figurine from the villa of Makrygialos, the vulva is intentionally depicted with a protruding clitoris.<sup>77</sup> This depiction, obviously intended to emphasize the erotic element of the figure, is securely associated with a religious idea and, probably, a specific ritual. Ceremonies emphasizing the element of erotic provocation, probably during the initiation of adolescent girls at puberty, have been identified recently, on the basis of finds from Piskokephalo, Sitia.<sup>78</sup> Probably associated with fertility, here understood as a sequence of sexual intercourse, were also the probable models of phallos identified either in peak sanctuaries, as in Atsipades Rethymnon<sup>79</sup> and Agios Georgios at Kythera,<sup>80</sup> or in burial assemblages, as found at Koumasa and Platanos, Messara.<sup>81</sup> A deposit in Knossos, obviously ceremonial and dated to the MMI period, comprises a large group of clay phallus-like objects of undetermined function.<sup>82</sup> A large-sized also phallus-like object is depicted in front of a couple, a man and a woman, on a sealing made from a signet ring found in Zakros.<sup>83</sup> Finally, Sakellarakis has supported the probable phallic symbolism of the scorpion motif, which occurs in a large number of representations on Minoan and Mycenaean seals of all the periods,<sup>84</sup> among which is one preserved on a sealing from the palatial archive of House A, also at Zakros.<sup>85</sup>

From the above examples it becomes clear that, at least as regards the frame of the religious rituals, sexual relations did not constitute a “taboo”, since although they are not often depicted, they are often hinted at. In consequence, it seems logical that the practice of prostitution, if it really constituted a social practice in Minoan Crete, had the protection of the commanding religious elite.

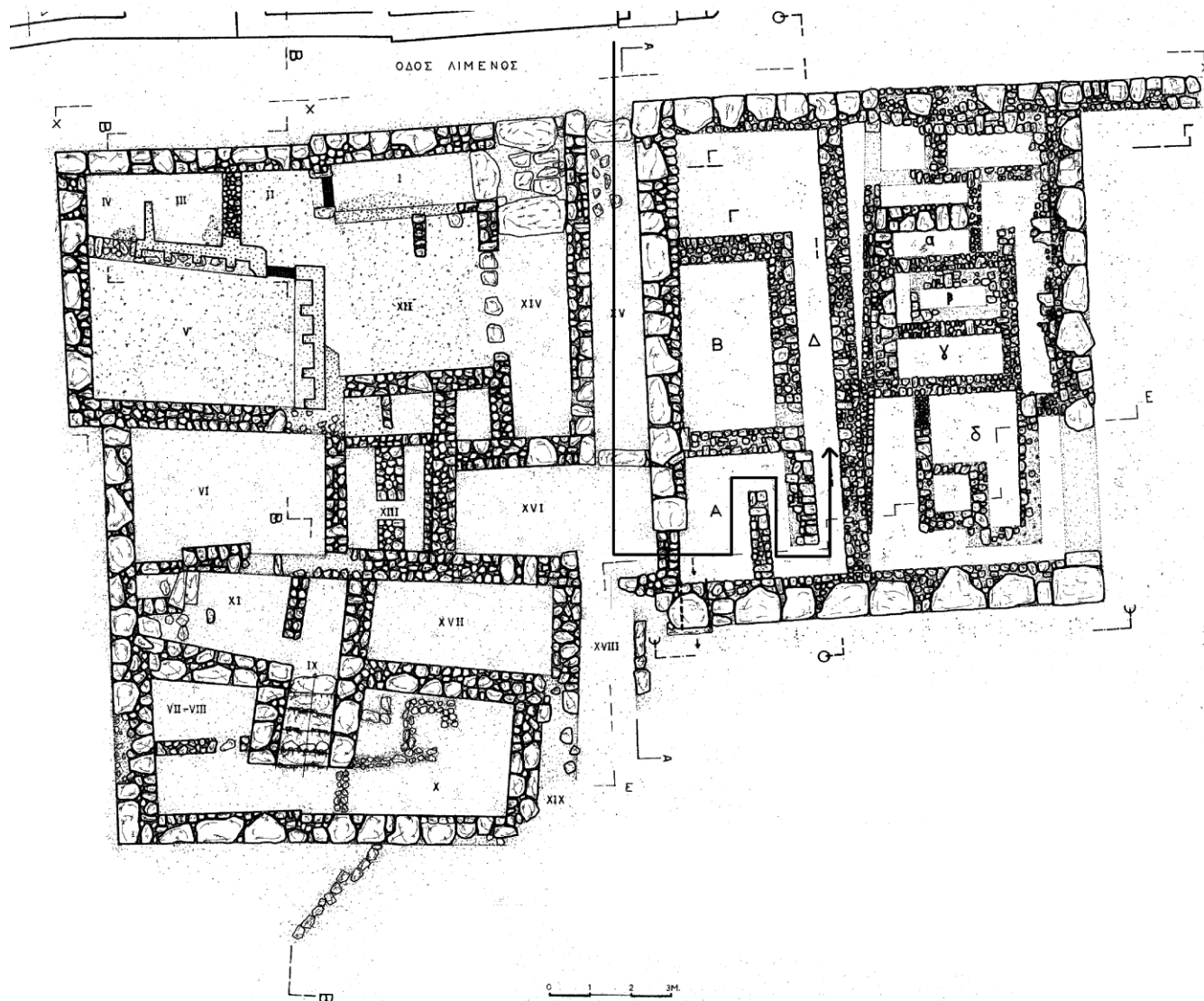


Figure 1: Zakros. The East Building (to the right) and the Building of the Niches (to the left)





Figure 2: Bronze mirror and pin with a hook-like end



Figure 3: Fragments of small ivory plaques probably depicting a female figure and the motif of the sacral knot



Figure 4: Miniature vessels of stone, probably used as containers for ointments





Figure 5: Small clay askoi, probably used as perfume vessels



Figure 6: Small-sized clay alabastrons from the East Building, Zakros



Figure 7: Small stone alabastron from Egypt, found in the East Building



Figure 8: East Building. Corridor Δ





Figure 9: Huge clay spouted vat from the ante-room (A) of the East Building

NOTES

<sup>1</sup> Strong 1997.

<sup>2</sup> Platon 1970, 136. Westholm 1933, 208-209. This proposal, based on the similarities between the depiction of the Paphian Aphrodite's shrine in coins of the Roman period and that of the "Tri-partite Shrine" of the Minoan iconography, is doubted today by those engaged with Cyprian archaeology and especially with the Paphos district. The principal arguments for the disconnection of the two iconographical elements are, on the one hand, the chronological distance separating them (15<sup>th</sup> c. B.C. – 2<sup>nd</sup> c. A.D.) and, on the other, the expressed view that the tripartite form of the depicted structure in the Cyprian coins is imaginary, created by the rendering of perspective of two different structures. Maier & Karageorghis 1984, 85-86, 98, figs. 65-67. Nevertheless, Strong does not reject the Aegean origin of the architectural idea. Strong 1997, 40-41.

<sup>3</sup> See, among others, Fauth 1966, 32. The probable Cretan origin of the motif depicted in a bronze stand from Old Paphos, was firstly hinted by A. Evans, on the occasion of his discussion on a similar iconographical element occurring in Minoan frescoes. Evans 1921-35, II, 602-603. Nevertheless, it should be noted that Evans rejects for Crete any connection of this theme with sacred prostitution. Evans 1921-35, III, 61.

<sup>4</sup> However, it has been used in general discussions regarding the social position and the role of gender in

Aegean prehistory. Kokkinidou-Nikolaidou 1993, 109-110.

<sup>5</sup> Strong 1997, 10, 195.

<sup>6</sup> Platon 1977, 421-434. Platon 1978, 260-268. Platon 2009, 50-51.

<sup>7</sup> Platon 1977, 433. Platon 1987, 221-222. Papaefthymiou-Papantimou 1979, 297.

<sup>8</sup> It is probable that this temporary naming, which was finally confined to the circle of N. Platon's collaborators during excavation, was inspired by the name of a more or less contemporary building at Akrotiri, Thera. Nevertheless, in that case, the naming of the building by Sp. Marinatos (cf. "House of the Ladies") was obviously based on the theme of the homonymous fresco found in it, without containing a similar hint. Marinatos 1972, 11-15. Marinatos 1974, 8-10.

<sup>9</sup> For understanding better this supremacy, the above numbers could be roughly compared with those regarding a building located almost across the "Harbor Road" known as "The House of the Polythyron". From this building, which was one of the most important at Zakros if we judge from its architecture and size, come less than ten (10) decorated clay vases, none of which belongs to the "special palatial tradition"; six (6) small stone vessels exclusively made from serpentine, a rather common material in Crete; and only one (1) bronze item of small size. For "The House of the Polythyron",

- see Platon 1976, 432-439. Platon 1977, 434-442. Platon 1978, 269-282. Platon 1979, 295-300. Platon 2009, 52-53.
- 10 Platon 1977, 433.
- 11 It is to be noticed that Platon preferred to call the residents of the building “ladies” instead of “women”, making clear his position on their social status.
- 12 Papaefthymiou-Papanthimou 1979, 208-217.
- 13 Platon 1987, 222.
- 14 Platon 1987, 221, ph. 9.
- 15 Platon 2011, 599-601.
- 16 Platon 1977, 433.
- 17 Papaefthymiou-Papanthimou 1979, 157.
- 18 Papaefthymiou-Papanthimou 1979, 200-201.
- 19 Papaefthymiou-Papanthimou 1979, 269.
- 20 Cf. Papaefthymiou-Papanthimou 1979, 277.
- 21 Papaefthymiou-Papanthimou 1979, 63.
- 22 Papaefthymiou-Papanthimou 1979, 159-160.
- 23 Papaefthymiou-Papanthimou 1979, 216. Illuminative for this question is a fresco representation from Xeste 3 at Akrotiri, Thera. Marinatos 1976, 35, cl. pls. I', Θ' and pl. 64.
- 24 Although its use also by women is probable.
- 25 Platon 1987, 219, fig. 4a, ph. 6.
- 26 Platon 1977, 424.
- 27 The weaving and offering of a veil, probably to Aphrodite, is also associated by Strong with temple prostitution in Greek cities. Strong 1997, 248.
- 28 Platon 1977, 432.
- 29 For the pottery type of the libation jug, see Platonos-Giota 1995, 781.
- 30 Strong considers it possible that small scale symposia took place in the frame of rituals connected with temple prostitution. Strong 1997, 245.
- 31 Platon 2009, 48.
- 32 For a close parallel from Knossos, see Warren 1969, 112: P608.
- 33 Platon 1977, 423. Some poros blocks, certainly coming from the northern façade of the building, were found fallen in the interior of the northern room (Γ). Platon 1977, 433. The probable existence of carefully made windows opening to the main street of the settlement permits the connection of the “woman in window” theme with this building. Evans 1921-35, II, 602-3.
- 34 For the “Building of the Niches”, see Platon 1975, 355-69. Platon 1976, 422-32. Platon 2009, 48.
- 35 Platon 1976, 430.
- 36 Briefly for the “Building of the Niches”, in Platon 2009, 48. The publication of the finds from this building is in the last stage of its preparation.
- 37 Platon 1977, 423. Platon 2009, 48-50.
- 38 Platon 1977, 426.
- 39 Platon 1977, 426. That the area to the south of the building was an open space is suggested by the construction of the south façade from large, roughly-worked blocks. Platon 1977, 422.
- 40 Platon 2009, 50.
- 41 Platon 1977, 428-433.
- 42 Platon 1977, 425.
- 43 Platon 1977, 427.
- 44 For the probable use of such vases as oil-separators, see Kopaka & Platon 1993, 81. Platon 2002, 9.
- 45 Platon 1977, 425.
- 46 Cf. Platon 1967, 165, pl. 154b.
- 47 Platon 1977, 433. As regards Room Γ, the information comes from the excavation diary.
- 48 Marinatos 1971, 22-4, Pls. 34b, 35-36. On the use of beds in the Bronze Age Aegean, see Kopaka 1987.
- 49 In this function, sleeping is also included. Nevertheless, the archaeological data for the domestic architecture of Minoan Crete show that such areas would have been located mainly on the upper floor. Such a hypothesis has been done also for the two-storied houses in Akrotiri, Thera. Michailidou 2001, 381. For a more general discussion on resting places in Minoan architecture, see Kopaka 1990.
- 50 Strong 1997, 85-86.
- 51 Strong 1997, 57, 245.
- 52 Maier & Karageorghis 1984, 133-134. Strong 1997, 64.
- 53 Platon 1959, 389.
- 54 Strong 1997, 134.
- 55 Strong 1997, 134, 246.
- 56 Strong 1997, 97.
- 57 Papaefthymiou-Papanthimou 1979, 159-160.
- 58 Strong 1997, 92.
- 59 Strong 1997, 52.
- 60 Platon 1987, 214-217.
- 61 Platon 1987, 219.
- 62 Platon 1977, 427.
- 63 Strong 1997, 236.
- 64 Platon 1980, 310.
- 65 Strong 1997, 216.
- 66 Platon forthcoming.
- 67 Maier & Karageorghis 1984, 99.
- 68 The above position was supported by Maria Iakovou, in a recent paper on Old Paphos, given in the frame of the Cyprian seminar, in the Museum of Cycladic Art at Athens (1/12/2014).
- 69 Platon 2014b, 293. Kassianidou 2014, 310.
- 70 Platon 1965, 193.
- 71 Platon 1967, 165, pl. 154b.
- 72 Platon 1980, 297. Platon 1983, 335-338.
- 73 Strong 1997, 194.
- 74 Platon 1969, 529. Kochl 2001, 239.
- 75 Pini et al. 1975, 154. Pini et al. 1988, 41.
- 76 The find from Kamilari was presented in a paper by L. Girella titled “The Tholos Tomb at Kamilari near Phaistos: new light in an old excavation” (March 12, 2009), which was offered in the frame of the “Minoan Seminar” in Athens.
- 77 Mantzourani 2012.
- 78 Platon 2014a.
- 79 Peatfield 1992, 75, fig. 23.
- 80 Sakellarakis 2013, 72.
- 81 Xanthoudides 1924, 41-42, 97.
- 82 Platon 1955, 566.
- 83 Platon et al. 1998, 9.
- 84 Sakellarakis 1997, 433-441, 461-462.
- 85 Platon et al. 1998, 121.



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