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Institute of Archaeology, University of Warsaw

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„Methods – Researches – Perspectives”

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that the abstracts are published in the form in which they were submitted by their authors.



The Evidence of the use of Composite Bows in the Mycenaean World

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Evidence for the use of the bow as a weapon in the Aegean area can be found from the Neolithic period, even though the Minoans and Mycenaeans never equaled the importance that bows generally had in oriental societies like in the Egypt or the Near Eastern military powers.

From the Aegean Bronze Age period, two main types of bow are known: the simple wooden bow (self-bow), and the composite bow made of wood, layers of horn and animal sinews. The combination of those materials enhanced the capability for longer distance, powerful shots, and increased the stability of the draws. This evolved the simple self-bows into a more lethal weapon able to confront with great effectiveness heavy armored infantry, while also supporting the use of Chariots as a platform of mobile-archery.

The presentation will focus on specific, but rare archaeological examples of the use of those advanced weapons in the Mycenaean Armies from the beginning of the Helladic Period to the Collapse of the Mycenaean Palatial System while trying to answer critical questions:

- ✓ How composite bows were used against specific enemy units, and what was their effectiveness against various types of armors.
- ✓ Was it a rare weapon that was accessible only to the elite warriors or was it available the mass of the common warriors?
- ✓ What were the various types of the Mycenaean composite bows and how were they connected to relevant types found in Egypt and the Near East.
- ✓ Is there any connection between a possible mass usage of Composite bows and other light infantry weapons, with the Bronze Age collapse?

The presentation will be supported with a series of recent unpublished experimental reconstructions of Mycenaean armors, weapons and bows that will enhance the arguments.

***Outskirts of the Mycenaean world:
Helike and Achaia in the end of the Bronze Age***

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According to many antique written sources, a reach ancient city Helike was totally destroyed by earthquake in 373 B.C. The city was to be located in Achaia, on the southwest shore of the Corinthian Gulf, about 7 kilometers east from Aigio, on the plain between the Selinous and Kerynites rivers. For over 20 years that area (currently occupied by the villages Nikolaiika, Rizomylos and Eliki) has been a subject of archaeological investigations, conducted by the 6th Ephorate of Prehistoric and Classical Antiquities in Patras and, independently, by the archaeologists from the Helike Project. The excavations resulted in discovery of dozen sites dated to the Classical, Hellenistic and Roman periods. However, the history of occupancy of the Helike Plain is much longer. Researchers discovered the remains of two settlements of the Early Bronze Age and the remnants of buildings dated to the Proto-Geometric and Geometric periods. Moreover, in the nineties of the last century, a few Mycenaean chamber graves were uncovered nearby Nikolaiika. In 2009, on the area just below this cemetery, the remains of the Mycenaean settlement were brought to light. These discoveries may indicate that Helike could have played an important role in the region in the end of the Bronze Age.

The Mycenaean settlements in Achaia, developed far from the great palatial centers of Argolid or Messenia, is still hardly recognized. In this part of Peloponnese only a few LBA settlements have been discovered so far. To the most important sites belong Chalandritsa, located in western part of Achaia and Aigeira, in the eastern outskirts of the province. In addition, the remains of Mycenaean buildings were unearthed in the areas of Patras and Aigio. The newly discovered settlement in Nikolaiika may provide valuable information and data concerning the Mycenaean occupants of Achaia.

As yet, the archaeologists have exposed only a small fragment of the settlement which may cover an area of more than 20.000 square meters. Excavations yielded the remnants of houses made of stones and mud-bricks. In one of the building, consisting of two chambers, a good deposit of table and kitchen pottery was found. The remains of Mycenaean pottery have

also been discovered in several other places on the “Helike Plain” which may suggest different settlement sites once existing there.



Larnax burial in the LMIII period in the Western Mesara region

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The study of larnax burial in the LMIII period in the Western Mesarà, has the main aim to analyse the differences which characterise the burial customs in this period in this specific region.

The research starts with a survey of the LMIII tombs in this area, with the purpose of identifying in which is possible to find burial in larnax dated LMIII.

The results show 83 larnax burials for the western Mesarà. It is possible to analyse these data from different point of view:

- from the geographical distribution of the artefacts emerges that burials in larnax are localised in the north and central region of the Western Mesara;
- thanks to the chronology of the context in which larnax burials were found, it is possible to identify when larnakes were adopted as burial custom in this area;
- a contextual approach to larnax burial could allow us to understand how “larnakes” develop as an artefacts in this regional context during LMIII, and how this specific burial receptacle “fits” in the context of Mesarà Region from a typological point of view (typological variation of the object), a cultural point of view (adoption of “larnax burial package”), and a social point of view (adoption of larnax burial as distinctive for a social group).

Show me your house and I'll tell you who you are.
Architecture and a social change in the Aegean Neolithic

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However transparent in archaeological record the ceramics, agriculture and permanent settlements are, the New Stone Age is not only about it. A vital part of the Neolithization process was a social and ideological change. The problem is that they do not leave direct traces that can be found during excavations. Archaeologists are able to describe social changes only by combining clues from discovered remainings of material culture.

The analyzes of residential architecture often are very helpful. The size of settlements, the number and the location of buildings inside of them and the differences among houses may help to answer lots of questions concerning social structure. Moreover, the knowledge about division of labor may be gained by studies on distribution and sizes of rooms in each house.

I will try to investigate how residential architecture in the Aegean has changed from the end of Paleolithic to the end of Neolithic and what social changes it reflects.

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***Write a hand like a foot..., the worship of the Mother Goddess in Crete
in the Bronze Age and the Dark Ages***

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The religious life of the Minoans is related mainly to the worship of nature's forces. The atmospheric phenomena, which were hard to explain for people at that time, were taken as a "response from the gods" who inhabited high mountains and darker caves.

At the beginning, mountains and caves were main places of worship. In the second millennium BC an important change occurred – rites were "moved" from mountains and caves to palaces and special places separated for this activities (small stone altars or places of their possible location were found on palaces' courtyards). Time was passing through and, probably, the religious needs of a larger group of people increased and caused the appearance of individual cult in separate rooms in private houses.

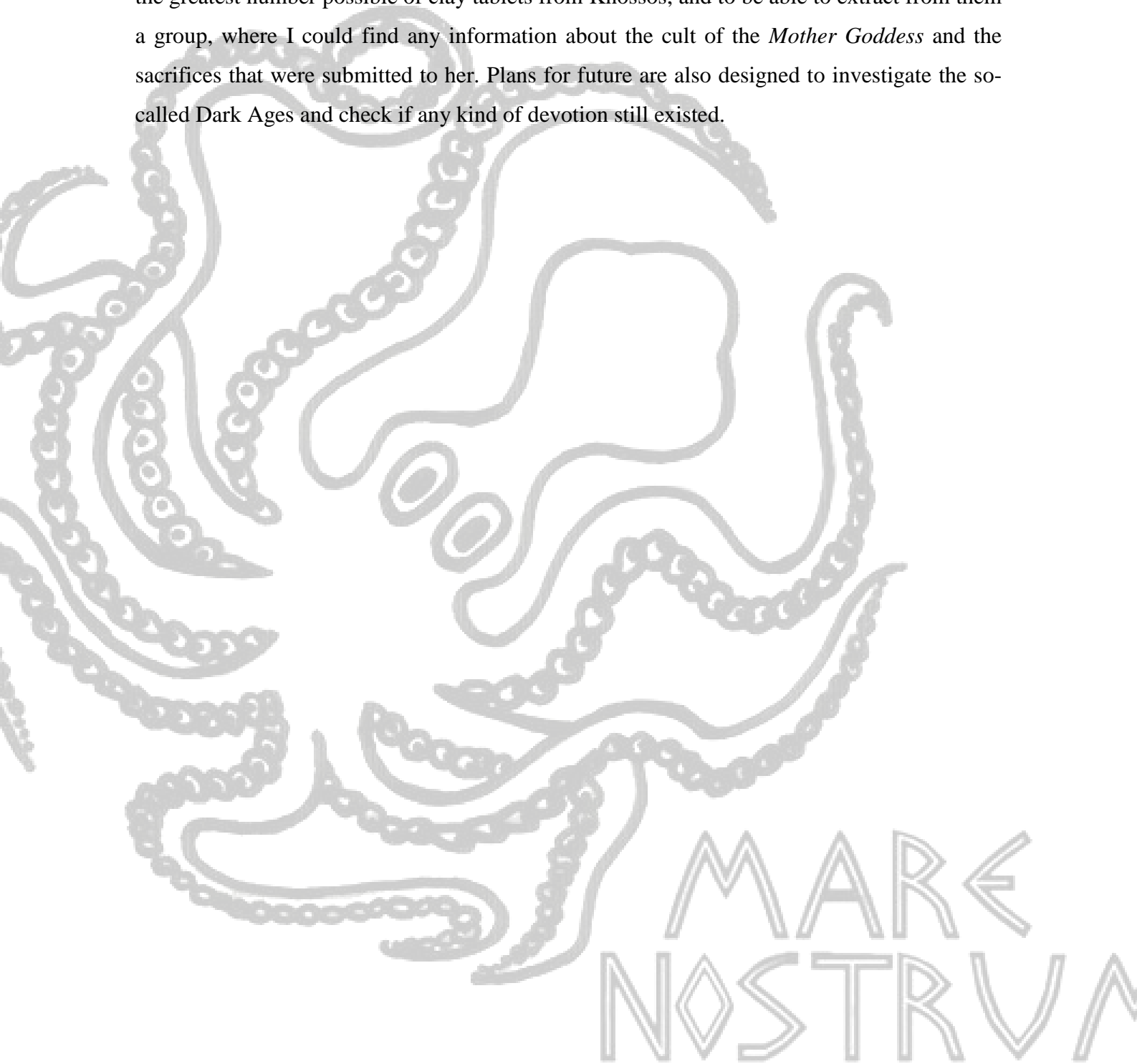
Polytheism on Minoan Crete is quite obvious, although, at the beginning, it seems to be the concept of a goddess, so-called *Mother Goddess* (also known as the *Queen of the mountains*, the *Minoan Artemis* or *Rhea*). Each of the "followers" personified *Mother Goddess* as the protectress of flora and fauna, and also as the patroness of harvests. The cult of the Mother Goddess was probably "taken" by the inhabitants of Crete from the areas of today's Asia Minor and Syria and theirs *Meter Oreia* or *Matar Kublai*.

A number of gods and goddesses of the Minoan pantheon are known from glyptic and seals. As it turns out, analysis of clay tablets with Linear B script can provide a lot of valuable information about Minoan divinities and forms of worship (in this case, the type and amount of folded offerings). Thanks to the study conducted by M. Ventris and J. Chadwick, it is known that the tablets recorded, in a simplified form, commercial transactions (both imports and exports), contents of palatial magazines and, in fewer cases, information about offerings folded to gods.

Names of gods (among them Zeus, Hera, Poseidon, Hermes, Athena, Artemis) and the type of folded goods appear e.g. on tablets from Knossos. The above mentioned names of deities are known also from later times, as they were described well and repeatedly both by ancient and contemporary authors writing about Greek

mythology. However, a number of gods' names still cannot be identified (even though they appear on tablets related to offerings) as they are not mentioned in any of the myths.

Activities that I want to carry out through the next two years are designed to examine the greatest number possible of clay tablets from Knossos, and to be able to extract from them a group, where I could find any information about the cult of the *Mother Goddess* and the sacrifices that were submitted to her. Plans for future are also designed to investigate the so-called Dark Ages and check if any kind of devotion still existed.



Geoinformation methods application in Aegean archeology.

Verification of written sources

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Presentation concerns the usage of geoinformation methods in carrying visibility analysis for the Aegean Sea.

Main research topic is the reliability of a written source explanation of sending the signal with the information about the victory of Agamemnon from Troy to Mycenae described by Aeschylus in the Oresteia. This signal was transmitted by fire signals at various points in the Aegean Sea and its shores, creating a kind of ancient optical telegraph. Identification of these fireplaces position is problematic.

After the detailed analysis of the text, based both on original sources and philological analyzes (Quincey 1963, Reaburn/Thomas 2011) the location of fireplaces were identified. Due to this, using geoinformation methods and their analytical tools it was possible to verify the reliability of a written source of Aeschylus and the later conclusions of philologists.

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Re-discovering Gournia.

The latest excavations in a Minoan town

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The site of Gournia is located in East Crete, on the northern coast of the Ierapetra strip, in the Mirabello Bay. The strategic location of the city, on the crossroads of communication and trade routes makes Gournia, as well as its surroundings, a region of particular interest for archaeological research.

First excavations were carried out by Harriet Boyd in 1901-1904. She discovered a Late Minoan Town with about 50 well preserved households connected by paved roads. Today the site of Gournia is the best preserved Minoan city on Crete. In the last 10 years a series of projects has been undertaken by the American School at Athens with the aim to verify and broaden our knowledge on the site itself as well as its region. Among these projects was a survey of the Gournia region, excavations carried out in the harbor of Gournia and lately excavations on the site itself. Thanks to the participation of experts from many fields of Minoan archeology the research is focused on various topics.

The article presents the results of the latest works carried on the site as well as around it. The main points of focus of current research, as well as their implications, are being discussed. Because of the field of interest of the author, a special attention is paid to the pottery from the so called “North Trench” and its role in the understanding of pottery sequence in EM III-MM IIA in Eastern Crete.

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***Human figure in Aegean painting:
distinctive features, iconographic types, the canon***

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Anthropomorphic representations are one of the central motifs in the Aegean art, however the field of research concerning these representations is not very well structured. In part it results from the very nature of this art which is spontaneous and presents naturalistic approach and as such is difficult to quantify and to be described by means of mathematical formulas of proportion and symmetry. Nevertheless, numerous attempts have been undertaken and there is no doubt that there exist a possibility of further systematisation and a deeper insight in this field of research.

The current presentation concerns the way of representing the human form as such, its formal characteristics and the artistic means applied. The stress is put on possibly universal traits that are being present in all or a great majority of visual representations. In addition, it seems necessary to summarise the chosen accounts on the anthropomorphic representations present in the current literature of the subject. As a result of the lacks in the pictorial material I will refer to the comparative sources, namely the Aegean glyptic.

The attempts of systematization of human representations consist in the formulation of general types relative to the scenes in which they occur, or as regards to the gestures that they make- hence we can make interpretations of the social and religious identity of these characters. In this case, any account of the subject requires presentation of the main types of human figures, and their possible classification by means of comparison. The most substantial distinction in Aegean art is made between a male and a female figure. Further typology is in fact subordinate to this primary division. In reference to that I let myself to present the most common types of scenes including the anthropomorphic representations and I will make an attempt of their classification. I have to mark the difficulties in establishing a uniform canon of the human figure. One of the most essential problem seems to be the stylistic difference between the Cycladic and Creto- Helladic art. Despite this fact it is impossible to avoid the collective treatment of these subjects.

In conclusion, I will make an attempt of formulation of the Aegean canon of human figure based on a former trial of establishing of so called 'Minoan canon' of human form. (Obviously I will limit myself to the presentation of no more than a sketch). The latter, drawing an analogy with the Egyptian art, seeks out strict mathematical regularity in proportions. My task will be to point out the objective obstacles for generalisation of such procedure to the whole Aegean art, which are immanent in the source material, namely the huge differences in proportions. In the next step I will draw a perspective for further research based on existing repetitive regularities. I will present arguments for the sake of the catalogue of the canonic features and stylistic regularities, what is more I will try to demonstrate how to find general proportional interdependencies for the specific types of human figures.



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Aegean frescoes – techniques, methods and reconstructions

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The goal of this presentation is an explanation of the problems concerning methods of creating an Aegean fresco, its technological process and challenges of reconstruction, in relation to the state of preservation and specific history of excavations. In particular the analysis will focus on materials used in this technique (such as pigments, binders and plaster cast) and their interactions with each other. The main problem that the presentation attempt to present is the plaster cast - its proportions, composition, the way of preparing it and spreading it on the wall, which in turn leads to the question of classification of the technique itself. I will try to answer a still open question if Aegean wall paintings should be called frescoes at all (buon fresco) or if they should bear a name of fresco secco.



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Landscape Changes in Northern Greece Prehistory.

State of Research and Further Perspectives

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The dynamics of the natural environment changes of Greece since the end of the Pleistocene is concern as one of the most crucial in the discussion of prehistory and history of discussed area. This is demonstrated by number of paleogeographical elaborates in light of archaeological data.

One of the regions that offers efficient and promising research potential is Macedonia. Since now the natural environment reconstructions concerned mostly areas of western side of the Thermaic Bay, and lands close to the Epirus region. The result of these works presents a high rate of the dynamic of landscape formation processes such as the seas transgressions, accumulation processes of Axios (Vardar), Strymon and Aliakmon rivers and vegetation coverage. Recent researches are being held in the Chalkidiki Penninsular and are strictly related with AVAP (Anthemountas Valley Archaeological Project). Their aim is to reconstruct the changes of the landscape (also the cultural landscape) for *carte blanche* – as it is for now – eastern side of the Thermaic Bay.

Presented paper will show both the problematic of the paleogeographical approaches in relation to archaeology in case of Northern Greece and also the presentation of the preliminar results of the most recent Polish investigations in the Anthemountas Valley. Moreover the research perspective for next few years will be discussed on the basis of National Science Centre of Poland financed project : “Landscape of prehistoric settlement in the Anthemountas Valley (Central Macedonia, Greece) in terms of archaeological and paleogeographical data”.

***Ancient Warrior Reenactment in the Context of Experimental Archaeology,
testing theories and attempting to provide answers on the mysteries
of Ancient Warfare while popularizing Archeological Science and History***

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- Ancient sources give us description of fighting. Sometimes though doubt can be cast upon poetic descriptions.
- Ancient historians and give mostly tactical info of group movement but they seldom go into detail.
- Ancient military manuals instruct about group movement and preserve ancient commands but they do not give details on the ancient weapons usage.
- Artistic depictions of warriors and conflict are subject to various interpretations and lots of theories, sometimes contradicting each other, have been formulated. But have they ever been tested and how?
- Information is anecdotal and fragmented thus hindering scholars in forming a clear picture on what ancient warfare condition really were.
- Can re-enacting ancient life and people who do living history help the academics in solving the mysteries of ancient warfare?
- According to Plutarch re-enacting older history started in the Archaic Era.
- When properly guided by the scholars in order to ensure academic integrity and validity of data and processes re-enactors can offer their help in scientific research.
- The knowledge of re-enactors in using reconstructed historical items can aid the scholars to simulate and in some cases recreate the conditions that existed in the ancient military affairs and thus new insight can be gained and new knowledge can come forth..
- Understanding Medieval, and 17th to 19th century warfare has progressed a lot because of the cooperation of re-enactors and academics. It can very well show the path for academics and living history enthusiasts have to take in the study of ancient warfare.
- Successful examples like Trireme Olympias and reconstructed ancient was machines can be used as an example.

***Bronze Age Aegean Weaving Techniques and Experimental Archeology
in the Institute of Archaeology, University of Warsaw.
Some Remarks on Teaching, Research and Methodology***

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In nowadays studies on the ancient textile production experimental archaeology is universally applied as a prospective and valuable research method. Archaeological experiments are designed to explain the functionality of textile tools and they help to understand all chains of a rather complicated *chaîne opératoire* of the textile production. Some of the experiments are close to scientific laboratory tests, like those focused on the studies of wear marks on textiles, or on decomposition processes running in the soil. There are also increasing attempts to reconstruct social settings of the textile production, with a special attention to spinning and weaving as long lasting and rather communal activities.

The main aim of the experiments undertaken with our students is to teach Bronze Age Aegean weaving techniques and textile terminology by practice. Therefore, experimental archaeology is used by me as a teaching tool, giving the basic body knowledge of weaving. That kind of experiments could be defined as experiential/exploratory experiments giving 'hands on' experience. The body knowledge of a craft or skill is entirely different from the knowledge gained thanks to academic studies. The students who acquired it, can perceive weaving by means of their own senses and, consequently adopting the perspective of craftspeople from the past, they are able to assume a new research viewpoint.

In my paper I would like to present some methodological assumptions concerning our experiments and to point out their indispensable limitations. I would also like to stress, that despite of the fact that students–experimenters cannot become experienced craftspeople, some of our tests, designed to answer a specific research question or questions, are of more scientific than exploratory value and can be applied in the academic discourse.

Epiphanies in antiquity: Neopalatial ritual and the cult of Great Gods

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Epiphanies are confirmed as a structural component of many religious beliefs, but their performance could happen in different way. Here I would like to focus on the way it was performed in the Minoan and in the Greek world in two specific cases: the Neopalatial official religion and the cult of Great Gods at Samothrace.

For the Minoan world we know from iconographic evidence of the Neopalatial period the existence of a specific rite of evocation of the female goddess which was peculiar of high social classes, since it is represented in wall paintings, but also in gold rings. This was performed in two different ways – 1. in ecstatic epiphanies the appearance of the goddess was probably more a matter of psychological illusion caused by dance and, perhaps, drugs; 2. in enacted epiphanies, on the other hand, it was a kind of theatrical mysteries where a priest or a priestess, dressed as a goddess, appeared to the faithful according to a specific ritual.

A very important element of this ritual was a wooden structure, perhaps platform or bench, where a wooden throne was set. Many analogies can be found with the ritual reconstructed in the sanctuary of the Great Gods at Samothrace, especially in wooden structure, where also a throne made by wood was set. The worshipers saw first the ritual of purification and next the epiphany of enthroned person. In this ritual people were dancing around a person, which was a preparation to the next stages of the mysteries. According to the myth the armed Corybantes were dancing around baby Dionysus and drowning out his cry with the noise.

However presented similarities are not due to a real, historical connection between two islands, Crete and Samothrace, even if such relations existed in the Bronze Age¹, but to a similar structuring of the basic concept of epiphany.

1 For example: Linear A inscription found in Samothrace.

***The dualistic nature of the Landscape and Sicilian tholos type chamber tombs.
Approaches and perspectives***

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In 2006, Val Plumwood described the concept of *cultural landscape*, current in the humanities, as one that underestimates nonhuman agency in the process of landscape creation. The term *cultural* stands for *human* or *human-created* and thus ascribes creativity only to people, while *landscape* plays a passive role of space provider, a medium by which people can develop their activity. To overcome this *nature scepticism* and properly appreciate nonhuman contribution in the creation of cultural landscapes, Plumwood proposed the term *interactive* or *collaborative landscapes*, as it expresses the plurality of elements responsible for the generation of Earth surface's present shape and assumes mutual influence of the components. It also allows to *read* human and nonhuman narratives which can be observed in the landscape and deciphered by a number of methods.

From among other humanistic sciences, archaeology seems to be the one which respects creative forces of nature the most (it has elaborated multiple approaches related to landscape research and combines diverse methods of material analyzing taken from natural sciences). On the other hand, as the discipline focuses on anthropological issues, it also makes assumptions about relations existing between people and environment. Archaeology's dualistic narrative and perspective of perceiving cultural landscapes, along with material and nonmaterial (i.e. symbolic) elements that constitute their character, reflects almost completely the premises of Plumwood's *interactive* or *collaborative landscapes*.

This paper is to present a number of archaeological and non-archaeological methods and approaches which allow to understand the landscape in a dualistic way and then place Sicilian Middle and Late Bronze Age rock-cut *tholos* type chamber tombs in a well studied background. Several landscape aspects (i.e. visual, task oriented, meaning embodying) used to define human relations with landscape will also be mentioned. Cross-cultural study will amplify this investigation and provide additional information about the cut-in-rock *tholos* tomb phenomenon in the Aegean world.

Hopefully, this combined methodology will bring us closer to the origins of the Aegean funerary model's implementation in prehistoric Sicily's funerary landscape and allow us to understand complementary perspectives of landscape perception better.



Notes

