A MORTUARY APPROACH TO CULTURAL INTERACTION AND POLITICAL DYNAMICS ON LATE MINOAN II-IIIB CRETE

Volume I

Laura Julia Preston

PhD

Institute of Archaeology
University College London

2000

ABSTRACT

This thesis analyses the published evidence for tomb burial practices on Late Bronze Age Crete, focusing on the problem of understanding the political and cultural significance of the introduction of tomb use on the island from the Late Minoan II period (c1450 BC) to the end of Late Minoan IIIB (c1200 BC).

The adoption of tomb burial customs was one element within a broader cultural re-orientation towards mainland Greece occurring on Crete in this period that has resulted in the common application in archaeological literature of the epithet 'Mycenaean' to the island. It also coincides with at least two horizons of political upheaval within the island, the first resulting in Knossian hegemony over much of Crete from LM II and the second in decentralisation and regionalisation in LM IIIA2. However, while mainland-derived cultural influence on Crete has frequently been observed, and the internal political changes recognised, the reasons behind these developments have never really been explored or problematised, beyond recourse to traditional models of invasion and migration.

The purpose of the present thesis is to explore how the cultural and political dynamics of the island were negotiated through changing mortuary practices. The development of the mainland-inspired strategy of tomb ostentation as a medium for high status advertisement is charted from its initial introduction at Knossos to its appropriation by regional centres in LM IIIA2 and LM IIIB. It is argued that invasion or migration hypotheses are not necessary to account for the developments in tomb use in Crete, though these may have been contributory factors. Crete was participating within a broader Aegean trend of cultural 'Mycenaeanisation', though it was simultaneously deploying the burial sphere for internal political negotiations that also involved the development of a specifically Cretan mortuary vocabulary – particularly in terms of deposition methods and standards of monumentality.

CONTENTS

VOLUME I:

LIST OF TABLES

LIST OF FIGURES

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The first three years of my thesis were funded by an AHRB grant, and the final year of completion was undertaken holding the MacMillan-Rodewald studentship at the British School at Athens. During the course of my research, I also received several travel grants for fieldwork and conference attendance from the Institute of Archaeology and the Graduate School of UCL. I am very grateful for all of the above awards.

There are a number of people to thank for help during the course of the PhD, but the first to be acknowledged must be my supervisors, Dr Cyprian Broodbank and Dr Todd Whitelaw, for their exceptional and continual advice and guidance. I am also grateful to Professor Jerry Rutter for valuable help and tuition on LM ceramic chronology, Dr Jan Driessen for allowing me access to unpublished work and Dr Carl Knappett for kindly reading through early drafts of certain chapters.

I benefited immensely from spending four years at the Institute of Archaeology, which I have come to consider as my home. Of my peers at the Institute, thanks must go particularly to Andrew Gardner for encouragement and motivation throughout the duration of the PhD, in good times and bad, and also to Lucinda Reeves for practical and moral support, including proof reading.

I am, of course, particularly grateful to my parents for their continual support, understanding and, not least, patience throughout my postgraduate studies. Finally, I must also give my thanks to the Giannourakos family for exceptional levels of support during the final, difficult months of writing the thesis in Athens.

0.1 Introduction

The present study is concerned with the themes of agency, cultural interaction and death in the archaeological record of the complex society of Late Minoan Crete. This particular context is well suited to such a project, by virtue not only of the political and cultural upheavals that took place here, but also of the wealth of archaeological data it has yielded. A number of the most significant developments in archaeological theory over the past few decades were initially inspired by a perceived lack, rather than abundance, of data. Yet the consolidation and refinement of these approaches and methodologies ideally require constant interaction with a large and diverse body of material evidence, and the present context provides just such an opportunity.

Through the medium of the burial evidence, the thesis will explore the cultural and political dynamics of Late Minoan II-IIIB Crete. It will be argued that the latter two themes were closely linked, as strategic negotiations of borrowed and indigenous cultural practices played a key role in the creation of new high status ideologies in this period of ongoing political changes on the island. The model that will be proposed here regarding our understanding of movements of specific ideas, practices and symbolism seeks to challenge currently prevailing interpretations of LM II-IIIB Crete, within which certain long-standing explanations have hardened into orthodoxies but have failed to explain the material culture patterns satisfactorily. It will be argued that the traditional migrationist explanation is unsatisfactory and that the evidence for intensive cultural interaction within the Aegean and eastern Mediterranean generally during this period, especially at high status levels, needs to be taken into consideration. Furthermore, even in those cases where such cultural interaction has been recognised and explored, its causes and effects, and the subtleties of the negotiation of borrowed ideas, have often been under-problematised. A further aspect of the contribution of the present study, therefore, is to build upon the model of elite networks of symbolic interaction and prestige artefact exchange, but to emphasise cultural borrowings as being by active, knowledgeable individuals within changing social and ideological arenas.

The mortuary record provides an ideal focus for the present study for several reasons. First, as will be argued below, tomb burial comprised a principal arena (and certainly the best documented so far in the surviving material record) for political negotiations on Crete. As such, it constitutes an important archaeological resource for their analysis, just as has been demonstrated to be the case for the contemporary Greek mainland (Voutsaki 1993). Second, the mortuary record constitutes a substantial proportion of our overall archaeological data for Crete in this period. There are 814 tombs within the data set that can be securely dated to within the Late Minoan II to IIIB phases, as set out in Appendix E, while Appendix F lists a further 249 that possibly (and in most cases, almost certainly) belong within this period. Not least, these data provide a key resource for our understanding of the settlement geography of the island (though principally in the latter, LM IIIA2-B, part of the period – see Chapter 6). For example, of Bennet's catalogue of 444 locations on Crete that have produced LM II-IIIB evidence (Bennet 1986: Appendix II), 46% (202 locations) were definite mortuary locales only (that is, without any associated settlement evidence). At the upper limit, certain and possible mortuary evidence (either alone or in association with settlement evidence) was recorded at 63% (278 locations) of the total. By contrast, as Kanta (1980: 1) has observed, settlement excavation (and, just as importantly, publication) for this period is limited outside regional centres such as Knossos, Archanes, Agia Triada, Phaistos, Palaikastro and Chania. Despite the number of instances of probable and certain settlement locations that have been recovered through chance finds and rescue excavation (Kanta 1980: *passim*), interest in settlement evidence beyond the centres is still scarce (Hayden (1997) and L. Platon (1997) providing examples of the rare exceptions). Thus the significant quantity of published tomb material available following a century of archaeological investigation across the island not only complements the settlement data of the regional centres, but just as crucially, provides a window onto the larger population that dwelt outside these foci, in LM IIIA2-B at least.

The present thesis constitutes the first in-depth analytical study of burial practices on Late Bronze Age Crete as a whole. In marked contrast to the contemporary mainland, and despite decades of excavation and data accumulation, interpretative analysis of mortuary practices of Crete in the post-Neopalatial period is still under-developed. Two catalogues of Late Minoan tomb data have been published (Pini 1968 and Löwe 1996), which are the only studies so far to address the Late Minoan funerary evidence across Crete as a whole, but both are primarily descriptive, rather than analytical, in their

discussion of the evidence. Indeed, more generally, treatment of the social and ideological significance of Late Minoan mortuary data (as opposed simply to the publication of excavated material) has been rare, and is invariably limited geographically, chronologically or thematically. In terms of the data themselves, neither of the previously published catalogues was detailed enough for the analytical purposes of the present study, though Löwe's was the most comprehensive and up-to-date list, to which few new tomb discoveries or publications can be added. The data compiled during the present study and set out in the appendices are intended to complement, rather than to replace, Löwe's catalogue, but incorporate more detailed information in certain respects, especially regarding assemblage composition.

0.2 Spatial and Chronological Frameworks

As mentioned above, the mortuary data from Late Bronze Age Crete have been somewhat neglected, especially by comparison with the contemporary mainland, and this was one reason for choosing to focus specifically upon this island. However, the choice was not occasioned by any assumption that within the Late Bronze Age Aegean, Crete formed either a bounded or internally homogeneous cultural territory, nor that it was politically self-contained. In fact, although the selection of Crete for this study follows a traditional line of demarcation within Aegean research, between Crete, the Cyclades and the mainland, it was devised rather to explore the extent to which such a division is justified for this particular period. The convenience of the island as a sea-bound land mass, presenting clear geographical borders, should not lead us to assume that political and cultural affiliations were (or were always) similarly spatially defined. Such models of boundedness in the past have often tended to promote invasionist explanations of changes that display external links, but a main concern of the present thesis is to move away from such a model in accounting for the cultural interactions between Crete and overseas societies. The extent to which the data justify or contest the idea of Crete as a cultural or political unit will be considered during the study, and can be used to inform future modifications of our perceptions of the political and cultural map of the Aegean at this time.

Turning to the chronological parameters of the present study, the Late Minoan II, IIIA and IIIB phases are clearly definable archaeologically through their ceramic type

fossils, although the distribution of diagnostic LM II material is still relatively restricted (and its high status associations mean that it is only likely to occur in limited contexts, primarily in the regional centres). The establishment of the limits of the study at LM II and LM IIIB incoporates a period of roughly two and a half centuries which witnessed important changes in the political structures and cultural orientations of the island. LM II is usually characterised as marking the onset of these changes, but although this is indeed a genuine horizon of transformation in more than one respect, this picture does require some qualification. Thus Chapter 3 provides a background study of Neopalatial mortuary practices, which is then integrated and contrasted with the LM II data in Chapter 4. The establishment of the lower chronological limit of the study at the end of LM IIIB is intended to allow the investigation of the longer-term effects of the LM II innovations in mortuary practices and to explore their interaction with the changing political dynamics on the island during this period. The cut-off point at the appearance of LM IIIC ceramics is due to the new phase of socio-cultural changes that took place on Crete at this time, a subject which would require a separate thesis to itself.[1]

The absolute chronology that will be employed here is presented in Table 0.1. It conforms more closely with the High Chronology, advocated by Manning (1988, 1990a, 1990b and 1995: 217; Housley *et al.* 1999), Kuniholm (1990; Kuniholm *et al.* 1996), Niemeier (1994: 72-4), Rehak and Younger (1998: 98), Bennet and Galaty (1997: 83) and Betancourt (1987; Betancourt and Michael 1987; Michael and Betancourt 1988), than with the Low Chronology preferred by Warren and Hankey (1989: 169), Popham (1990), Driessen and Macdonald (1997: 22-3), Cadogan (1987) and Muhly (1991). However, the end of LH IIIA2 has recently been shifted later than previously supposed by either side, on the basis of the ceramic and dendrochronological data from the Ulu Burun shipwreck (Shelmerdine 1997: 540-1; Wiener 1998), and the dating of LM IIIA2 has been adjusted accordingly.

Although this debate between the proponents of the High and Low Chronologies remains unresolved, its relevance to the present study is, fortunately, limited. Table 0.2 sets out the most recent estimations for the dating of the LM IA to LM IIIB phases by the principal advocates of each position, and it can be seen that the discrepancies

[1] And indeed, such a study would be highly desirable, since the mortuary story of Crete continues into LM IIIC and the Early Iron Age, with numerous references to the preceding, LM II-IIIB, practices.

between the two proposed sequences are not as serious for the ceramic phases with which we are concerned as for the earlier, Neopalatial, period. Moreover, to fix these ceramic phases in relation with the mainland sequence and to estimate their relative durations in terms of human generations are more relevant concerns for the present study than to establish their absolute dates. The correlation with the mainland sequence is relatively secure, wherein, from LH I onwards, the mainland and Cretan phases, as set out in Table 0.3, are closely contemporaneous, though LH IIA, IIB and IIIA2 at least appear to start a little earlier than their Cretan counterparts (Cummer and Schofield 1984; Schofield 1984a; Warren and Hankey 1989: 98; Warren 1990: 25-6, for LH IIA/LM IB and LH IIB/LM II; B. Hallager 1988 and 1993; Warren and Hankey 1989: 84, for LH IIIA/LM IIIA). The relative duration of each phase is also generally agreed upon, and these length estimations need not be very precise, since their relevance is mainly to allow us to estimate the number of human generations with which we are dealing (see Table 0.1).

0.3 Thesis structure

The thesis is structured into four parts. Chapters 1 to 3 constitute Part I, which sets out the context, aims and theoretical approach of the study, including an overview of the preceding, Neopalatial, mortuary practices on the island. Part II, comprising Chapters 4 and 5, explores the evidence from the Knossian area specifically, as the first region on Crete to introduce tomb use as a high status strategy on a significant scale. The Knossian data also comprise the most detailed published evidence on the island to date, as well as one of the highest densities of tomb occurrence, thus allowing a depth of analysis not possible elsewhere. Part III (Chapters 6 to 10) then moves on to the wider Cretan evidence, which is almost entirely confined to the LM IIIA2 and IIIB phases, to explore the ways in which tomb use was adapted and deployed across the island in this later stage, and its implications for our understanding of both the political infrastructure and cultural dynamics of the island. Finally, Part IV (Chapter 11) sets out the conclusions of the study and their implications for our understanding of, and future research into, cultural interactions within this specific context and the prehistoric Aegean more generally.

PART I CONTEXT

Chapter 1

The Context

1.1 Introduction

The discussion in this chapter of the broader Cretan and Aegean context within which the LM II-IIIB mortuary data are situated is intended not merely to provide a descriptive backdrop to the funerary analysis. Although the mortuary data constitute one of our main sources for investigating this period on Crete, a consideration of their context is crucial in order to highlight the specific problems which this thesis seeks to address and to which the mortuary analysis will be directed. This consideration will begin with a broad overview of the Aegean context as it is currently understood (section 1.2) and then move on in sections 1.3 and 1.4 to a critical analysis of the particular issues that have been deemed most relevant to Late Bronze Age Cretan research in the past. For these debates and controversies have largely channelled, and often constrained, the interpretation of various aspects of the archaeological evidence, not least the mortuary data.

1.2 MM/MH III – LM/LH IIIB: a general outline of the Aegean context

In the Late Bronze Age, Crete and the Greek mainland were but elements within a broader cultural and economic continuum embracing the eastern Mediterranean. These close links were built upon and perpetuated by a network of complex diplomatic and trade exchange systems between the small-scale states and larger empires in the Aegean, the Levant, Cyprus and Egypt, as best exemplified by the heterogeneous contents of the Ulu Burun shipwreck (Knapp 1990: 120; see also papers in Bourke and Descoeudres 1995; Cline and Harris-Cline 1998; Davies and Schofield 1995; Gale 1991; Hägg and Marinatos 1984; Karageorghis and Stampolidis 1998; and Phillips *et al.* 1997). Indeed, according to Dickinson, "a striking feature of the third Palace Period is the increasingly international flavour of the evidence for trade, which is such that attempting to isolate the contribution of particular cultures, let alone identify one as

dominant, is a hazardous and potentially futile process" (Dickinson 1994: 250). Intensive and sustained interaction at different social levels (but particularly among the elites) resulted in frequent instances of cultural exchange in various spheres of social practice and symbolic expression. Within this framework of common vocabularies for symbolic communication, however, regional variations in many aspects of material culture are certainly distinguishable, and the significance of these *differences*, and of the locally specific social and cultural circumstances behind them, requires special emphasis and consideration. Indeed, it is one of the main contentions of the present thesis that the use of similar ideas and practices within different geographical areas by no means precludes their differential deployment and significance, according to the regionally specific historical context.

The Neopalatial/Early Mycenaean period (MM/MH III-LM/LH I)

Any understanding of the social, cultural and political context of Crete from LM II onwards requires an awareness of the situation in the preceding, Neopalatial period, for two reasons. The first is that this provides a framework of reference for appreciating the extent of the subsequent changes; the second, closely related point, is that it is largely through such contrasts (explicit or implicit) with its more 'illustrious' predecessor that our perception of the LM II-IIIB period on Crete has been constructed and continues to be viewed.

The Neopalatial period is seen as having been one of Crete's most prosperous phases in terms of wealth, prestige and cultural influence. The main administrative script, Linear A, has not yet been deciphered, but a complex regional political hierarchy is known to have been in place within the island. Although the internal political geography may have fluctuated during the period, it seems generally to have comprised closely interacting but politically independent states centred around a number of palace centres, along the lines of Renfrew's Peer Polity Interaction model (Cherry 1986). This hypothesis is supported by the proliferation of such centres from the start of this period, the wide distribution of Linear A archives (Bennet 1990) and the differing administrative practices at each centre (Dickinson 1994: 73; Driessen and Schoep 1995: 660-2; Weingarten 1989: 40). However, the spatial proximity of some of these centres, especially Knossos and Archanes, and Phaistos and Agia Triada, suggest that this model is not universally applicable, and that more complex power structures were in place in certain parts of the island, perhaps changing during the course of the period. Moreover,

as will be discussed further below, it has been argued that Knossos in particular may at some point have enjoyed a political hegemony on Crete beyond its immediate region, to judge by the frequent attributions of many of the cultural innovations of the period to this source (Rehak and Younger 1998: 129).

Whatever the nature of the political boundaries in place on the island, they were bridged by the existence of a common elite symbolic vocabulary. The elites at the different centres consistently defined and maintained their privileges through the same economic and ideological mechanisms, such as the control of production and exchange of prestige artefacts (within and beyond Crete), religious authority and architectural grandeur (Knappett and Schoep 2000; Moody 1987b; Peatfield 1987, 1990: 130), though apparently not, in contrast to contemporary Mycenae, through the practice of ostentatious tomb burial. The common symbolic system through which these strategies were enacted, and by which the elite created their self-identity, has come to epitomise a distinctive 'Minoan' culture in modern eyes.

Yet in this period certain elements of Cretan material culture and social practices are also frequently observed in the archaeological remains from the other Aegean islands and the Argolid and, to a lesser extent, the Levant and Egypt (see particularly Dickinson (1989: 135, 1994: 245-8) and contributions to Davies and Schofield (1995), to Hägg and Marinatos (1984) and to Hardy *et al.* (1990)). These wider distributions of Cretan material culture, symbolism and behavioural practices have been variously interpreted as the result of trade, influence, political control or settlement, as will be discussed in the following chapter, but they are universally viewed as indicators of the cultural prestige and the extensive exchange and diplomatic networks maintained by Cretan elites in this period.

On the mainland, partly as a result of these cultural influences from Crete, marked social changes become conspicuous in the archaeological record for the MH III-LH I ('Early Mycenaean') period. Voutsaki characterises this phase as one of marked social instability on the mainland, partly prompted by "mounting political or ideological pressures by the New Palaces" on Crete (1993: 156). This resulted in the previous organisation of social relations, which had been "embedded in the nexus of kin relations" (Voutsaki 1993: 61), giving way to an increasingly stratified system, most noticeably in the Argolid and Messenia. This emergent social stratification is most clear

in the funerary record, with mortuary ostentation taken up as a medium for both the establishment of an elite identity and competition between elites of different centres. In LH I, the climax of Shaft Grave ostentation at Mycenae, the distribution of mortuary wealth in the Argolid appears to have been very unequal both within and between communities, with Mycenae standing out clearly by virtue of its access to prestige goods (including exotica), as well as its more ostentatious tombs. It is not clear whether this early phase also saw the establishment of 'palatial' type central buildings (Dickinson 1989: 131; Mylonas 1957: 66; Shelmerdine 1997: 558-9), but the construction and definition of elite status was certainly both promoted by and negotiated through the circulation of prestige artefacts, often of Cretan origin, and mortuary display.

The Cretan Final and Post-palatial/mainland Palatial periods (LM II/LH IIB-LM/LH IIIB)

On Crete, the Neopalatial period has generally been supposed to have reached its zenith in its final ceramic phase (LM IB) before an abrupt end with a series of destruction horizons across the island which heralded the Final Palatial period. Recently, however, Driessen and Macdonald (1997) have advanced the hypothesis that LM IB was in fact characterised by longer-term economic, cultural and demographic decline and political instability as a result of the impact of the Theran eruptions, leading ultimately to the collapse of the palace states. This challenge to the traditional picture of LM IB as a phase of stability and, indeed, prosperity, is a hypothesis that requires further investigation, though it has not met with universal acceptance (*e.g.* Soles 1999: 60-61). Either way, though, the *immediate* causes, and the agents, of the destructions that ended this phase and saw the downfall of every palatial centre except that of Knossos remain unknown.

Following this horizon, clear changes are observable in the political geography and administrative system of Crete, whereby Knossos assumed a degree of political and economic control over much of the central and western areas of the island. This period is known variously as the Monopalatial (Bennet 1987: 311), Third Palatial (Dickinson 1994) and Final Palatial (Rehak and Younger 1998: 92; also the present study). The political map and economic structure of the Knossian system are fairly well understood through studies of the archival evidence and changing sealing practices (Bennet 1987; Driessen 1990; Driessen and Schoep 1999: 390-2; Palaima 1987; Weingarten 1990). On

the basis of the archival material, it appears that wool and textile production was one of the mainstays of the economy (Killen 1985; Shelmerdine 1997: 569), though the archives deal also with agricultural produce, livestock, manufactured goods and raw materials. Importance continued to be attached to the production and exchange of prestige goods for the maintenance of the palatial system and the expression of high status, including stone vessels, weaponry and ivory artefacts (Halstead 1992; Macdonald 1987; Poursat 1997: 388; Tournavitou 1997: 445). Despite this, however, a general decline in craft specialisation in this period, in comparison with the Neopalatial, and of elite advertisement through public architecture and the ritual sphere, are frequently lamented (*e.g.* Rehak 1997).

This period of Knossian control gave way to a 'Post-palatial' phase[2] in either early LM IIIA2 or LM IIIB. The political landscape of this period is obscure, partly because of the disputes over the date of its inception. High status activities at the regional centres become archaeologically visible from LM IIIA2, and Chania held Linear B archives in LM IIIB1, if not earlier, while 'inscribed stirrup jars' of west Cretan provenance and similar date make reference to a *wanax*. However, if a later destruction date is preferred for Knossos, these developments could be embraced within the Final Palatial period and a continuing Knossian hegemony.

Regarding the cultural orientations of Crete in this period, striking changes are apparent in the archaeological record from LM II onwards, as elements of mainland-derived material culture and social practices, including burial customs, begin to appear in significant quantities. This was principally a Knossian phenomenon to begin with, but occurred increasingly elsewhere on the island by LM IIIA2-B. Indeed, the general proliferation of artefact types, iconographic elements and social practices with mainland parallels or antecedents is so marked throughout LM II-IIIB that the island in this period is commonly referred to in the archaeological literature as 'Mycenaean' Crete (*e.g.* Farnoux and Driessen 1997; Driessen and Schoep 1995: 663; Palaima 1987). This label contrasts directly with the common characterisation of the preceding Neopalatial period as being essentially 'Minoan' in its cultural character.

In fact, the trend towards increasing cultural overlap with mainland practices on Crete from LM II onwards was part of a wider process of 'Mycenaeanisation' within the

[2] A term that relies upon the assumption that there was no palace at Chania in this period.

Aegean generally. This also involved the usurpation of Crete's Neopalatial trade prerogatives and cultural influences in the eastern Mediterranean by one or more of the mainland polities, though the reasons for this shift from the Cretan to mainland centres as the primary cultural innovators in the Aegean and the leaders in trading initiatives currently remain unclear. The export of Cretan pottery certainly declined in the LM II-IIIA phases, though it picked up again in LM IIIB – largely, it appears, as a result of Chania's trading activities, since many of the exported ceramics are traceable to western Crete (Jones and Mee 1986: 477-94). By contrast, mainland ceramics began to be exported on a significant scale to (and locally imitated at) other locations in the Aegean and Near East in LH II, and this external influence reached a climax in LH IIIA2-B1. For example, whereas Neopalatial Crete saw very little importation of mainland ceramics (Dickinson 1994: 245; Voutsaki 1993: 65; Watrous 1993: 82), LM II-IIIA1, and particularly LM IIIA2-B, saw a clear increase in ceramic importation and in imitations of mainland ceramic stylistic elements. Dickinson correctly cautions against the simplistic equation of pottery distributions with trade by individuals from the ceramic source in question (1994: 252), but the economic prosperity of the mainland in this period is nevertheless clear.

LH IIIA2-B saw not only the climax of the economic prosperity and cultural prestige of the mainland, but also of political centralisation, as palatial systems crystallised at various centres. Developments in political geography have been charted by Voutsaki (1993) for the Argolid specifically through an analysis of changing burial patterns. Here, LH II saw a continuation of the political fluidity that had marked the MH-LH I horizon, with different centres increasingly competing for power through the mortuary sphere (though Mycenae retained its supremacy in this respect). This was the time of the introduction of the corbel-vaulted tomb[3] from Messenia, embraced as a high status symbol by high status individuals at Mycenae, Berbati, Prosymna and Kazarma among others, and of a general increase in levels of wealth deposition, in both these tombs and the popular chamber tomb type. LH IIIA-IIIB, by contrast, saw increasing cultural codification and hierarchical consolidation, reflected in the mortuary sphere by the restriction of the use of corbel-vaulted tombs and wealthy chamber tombs until, by LH IIIB, they were confined to Mycenae and possibly Tiryns (Voutsaki 1998: 48). At

[3] 'Tholos' tombs will be referred to throughout the present study as 'corbel-vaulted tombs', in order to embrace within a single category tombs with rectangular and circular chambers. Both versions occurred commonly on Late Bronze Age Crete and there is no valid reason to impose a classificatory boundary between them (*contra* Belli 1997: 252).

Mycenae, this period saw immense programmes of architectural activity, involving both the citadel (Iakovidis 1983: 23-9; Wace 1949: 132) and funerary monuments. With respect to the latter, the political predominance of this centre was symbolically reinforced by the construction of the largest and most elaborate corbel-vaulted tombs to date, by the incorporation of Grave Circle A within the new citadel walls and by a greater concentration of mortuary wealth deposition.

The economic basis of the palaces in the LH IIIA2-B phase is partly understood from the Linear B archives of Mycenae, Thebes and Pylos, and in the case of the latter, the very regional organisation of the administrative system has been reconstructed (Chadwick 1963, 1976: 35-48; Bennet 1995). The state system, and the elite power structure at its heart, were supported both by internal production of, and external trade in, luxury commodities and by regional control over the production of staple goods. The Argolid appears to have been the primary cultural innovator on the mainland during the palatial period, and responsible for most of the ceramic exports at least (Dickinson 1994: 254). However, in LH IIIB2 most of these palatial centres and other principal centres collapsed in destruction horizons, for reasons that remain unclear but which were surely linked in some way to the much wider phenomenon of state collapse in the eastern Mediterranean during this and the subsequent LH IIIC period (see, for example, A and S Sherratt 1991).

1.3 Current debates

1.3.1 Introduction

The above, albeit brief review summarises what is generally accepted as being the wider historical framework for the LM II-IIIB period on Crete, and in particular, it demonstrates that this was a period of political and cultural flux not only on the island, but also in the wider Aegean. Our evidence for the political and cultural dynamics of Crete in this period is actually far more extensive, but any more detailed analysis of the evidence must take account of a series of debates that have surrounded the interpretation of the archaeological record. Indeed, these debates have largely structured the questioning, understanding and presentation of the evidence, and different data, not least the mortuary, have been interpreted in notably different ways according to the stance taken on particular issues. These debates are generally concerned with the

chronological framework of the Final and Post-palatial periods, and with the political structure and cultural character of the island within each of them. These themes are inevitably interlinked, as theories regarding external cultural influence versus indigenous continuity have directed ideas regarding the nature of political control, for example, and event horizons have been used to explain cultural changes. The debates have attracted different levels of controversy, but are generally agreed to be issues fundamental to our understanding of LM II-IIIB. Thus they provide a useful framework for discussion, and will be considered in the following order:

1. The dating, in terms of ceramic phases, of the Final Palatial and Post-palatial periods.
2. The internal political geography of Final and Post-palatial Crete.
3. The cultural character of Final and Post-palatial Crete in relation to the mainland, and the political implications of this.

The discussions of these themes will be of necessity selective, but will draw out the key issues. The bibliography is extensive, partly as some of the debates have been running for decades, with a number of individual scholars restating, modifying and enlarging upon their positions on numerous occasions. Overviews of the current situation with respect to these issues have been attempted recently, such as Farnoux and Driessen (1997) and Haskell (1997). However, a comprehensive review of all the stances adopted, challenged, modified and abandoned would be a major, and not necessarily an entirely productive, task. The aim of this section, therefore, is to discuss each of these issues in turn, to highlight the types of questions that have been considered most appropriate to ask of the data, to review the current state of play with regard to the more controversial debates, and to consider how the data have been expected to contribute to their resolution. Concerning the first theme – that is, debates over our chronological framework – preliminary conclusions will be stated at this juncture, on the strength of the available evidence, as this is necessary to provide a working model for the subsequent analysis. The treatment of the second and third themes, however, will extend into Chapter 2: following the outline of the debates below, specific gaps in the research agendas and foci for contention will be highlighted. This will lead directly into the next chapter, where an alternative model for inter-relating political organisation and material culture expression will be proposed.

1.3.2 Chronology

It is now generally accepted that the Knossian administration, operating through the newly developed Linear B script, had its beginnings in the Late Minoan II phase, although Niemeier (1983) and Catling (1989) have disputed this, proposing a later introduction of the use of Linear B in LM IIIA. This latter argument is not refuted by Driessen's dating of the Chariot Room tablets to an earlier phase than the final destruction of the archives, since both LM II and LM IIIA1 are entertained as possible dates (Driessen 1990, 1997). However, there is no convincing reason to push the start of the administration to LM IIIA, leaving LM II as a political hiatus, as the material culture changes that mark the Final Palatial period at Knossos as a whole begin in this earlier phase.

The dating of the *demise* of this administration has been far more contentious. The debate regarding the timing of the destruction of the Knossian archives, and hence, it is presumed, Knossos' central Cretan hegemony, commenced in earnest in the 1960s. It is polarised around two alternative options: early LM IIIA2 (advocated by Boardman 1963; Driessen 1990: 121; Popham 1970, 1981: 454, 1994; Warren and Hankey 1989: 87-8) and LM IIIB (introduced by Palmer 1963, and taken up by E. Hallager 1977; Niemeier 1982, 1983, 1985a, 1985b; Bennet 1986, 1987: 84-5, 1993: 174; Catling 1989: 7). There have also been a few advocates of a mid-IIIA2 compromise (see Driessen 1990: 6; Olivier 1994: note 49), but this has not attracted much support.

Adherents of the earlier dating acknowledge that the final destruction that took place within the palace was LM IIIB in date, but argue that the bulk of the archival evidence was associated rather with an earlier LM IIIA2 destruction, that saw the end of the centralised administration and Knossian hegemony on the island. Following decades of controversy, it seems that greater consensus is now being reached in favour of this argument, to judge by the papers from the latest conference to address this period specifically (Driessen and Farnoux 1997[4]). The debate itself is complex and this discussion will not attempt to address every aspect of it, as opposed to highlighting the main points of contention.

---

[4] See Banou and Rethemiotakis, 52; Demakopoulou, 102; Godart and Tzedakis, 153; E. Hallager and Andreadaki-Vlasaki, 174.

A significant advance was made in our understanding of the chronology of the archives by Driessen's demolition of the theory of the unity of the archives (1990, 1997), a theory which had first been proposed by Palmer (1963: 170-2) and was seen to be demonstrated by the results of Olivier's work on scribal hands (Olivier 1967). However, this has not resolved the debate, as the final destruction horizon in which tablets were involved is still not agreed upon.

With respect to the evidence from the palace's East Wing, both sides in the debate have argued for an association of the sealing and tablet material with ceramics of the period they favour (*e.g.* Palmer 1963: 131-3 and Bennet 1986: 24 for LM IIIB; Boardman 1963: 54 and Popham 1973: 22-30, 67 for LM IIIA2). Here, either argument seems equally plausible on the basis of the evidence available. However, the main focus of attention within the controversy has been the West Wing, one of the main locations of the archives, and the issue of whether or not it was in use in the final occupation period. Arguments here have mainly revolved around two points. The first is whether the early LM IIIA2 ceramics associated with the tablets in the West Magazines belong to a destruction level which destroyed the archives in this early phase, or whether these ceramics were simply construction fill integrated into the fabric of the palace at some point before the actual destruction of this wing and the archives in LM IIIB. The second, related, point regards the origins of the intact LM IIIB vessels excavated by Kalokairinos in the 1800s. Supporters of a LM IIIB date have argued that this material derived from the West Wing (Niemeier 1985a: 142-7; E. Hallager 1977: 81-7) and argue that these vessels should define the destruction horizon of the archives. The absence of any record by Evans of material of LM IIIA2-B date during his subsequent excavation of the wing is explained by Hallager's suggestion that he simply discarded it (E. Hallager 1977: 90). In reaction, Driessen (1990) has argued convincingly that this material excavated by Kalokairinos in fact derived from South Basements, as also proposed by Popham (1988: 219-20, 1997: 377). Moreover, it is argued, it is implausible that Evans would not have recorded any intact LM IIIB material had he discovered it during his excavations here, especially as he recorded it elsewhere (in the South Basements). In light of this, the sheer lack of evidence for LM IIIB material in association with the tablets renders a LM IIIA2 dating of the West Magazines destruction the more feasible.

Archaeologists have also turned increasingly to the wider Cretan archaeological record to seek further evidence for the resolution of this issue (*e.g.* Popham 1988). Excavations at former (Neopalatial) regional centres across the island have consistently revealed a LM IIIA2 horizon of construction of new central buildings that many have equated with political revival following the demise of Knossian hegemony. These centres include Archanes (Sakellarakis and Sapouna-Sakellaraki 1997: 150), Agia Triada (La Rosa 1985: 52, 1993: 617-20, 1997; Cucuzza 1997), Kommos (J. and M. Shaw 1996: 346, 373, 1997: 433), Chania (E. Hallager 1997: 178) and Malia[5] (Driessen and Farnoux 1994; Farnoux 1997: 147; Pelon 1997). Driessen and Schoep (1999: 397) have noted accumulating evidence for LM IIIA2 to mature IIIB bronze production outside Knossos (at Poros, Malia, Kommos, Chania and Palaikastro). Finally, ceramic repertoires across the island, previously dominated by Knossian influence, begin to diverge from this point into distinctive regional styles, though importation of Knossian ceramics does not cease entirely (Andreadaki-Vlasaki and Papadopoulou 1997: 148; d'Agata 1999: 50; Pelon 1970: 169; Popham 1967: 345, 1981: 460; Sakellarakis and Sapouna-Sakellaraki 1997: 151; Watrous and Blitzer 1997: 513). The first to be recognised, and also the most distinctive of these regional 'workshops', was the Chaniote (Tzedakis 1969: 1971), but others have been suggested for the central and western areas of the island, such as at Kalochoraphitis and Armenoi (Godart and Tzedakis 1992: 91; Kanta 1980: 288-90).

The combination of these changes in LM IIIA2 have been seen to suggest that a shift away from Knossos in the focus of power took place at this point, which would be consistent with an early dating for the demise of Knossos as a power on the island-wide scale, though not necessarily at a local level. Bennet has sought to counteract these arguments, arguing that the ceramic regionalisation may have been a result of increasing economic complexity within a prospering Knossian hegemony (1985: 248, 1986: 106). The corresponding explanation of the architectural activities in LM IIIA2 would presumably be that they actually constituted further reflections of Knossos' increasing political stability and economic prosperity at this time, rather than its demise. To take these points in reverse order: if the effort expenditure poured into the building programmes at the various regional centres were attributable to Knossian resources, it is difficult to explain the lack of similar (indeed, any) architectural investments in the

---

[5] At Agia Triada, these are the Casa delle Camere Decapitate, Megaron, Stoa, Sacello, North-west Building, Building P, West Building and Grande Stoa; at Kommos, Building P; and at Malia, Quartier Nu and the 'Bâtiment Oblique'.

palace or town of Knossos itself in LM IIIA2. Regarding the second point, Bennet's argument that the appearance of regional workshops does not necessarily reflect shifts in political control is an important one: "Pots, as Furumark said, are not political documents, and we should not expect them to reflect accurately the extent of an administration, particularly when that administration seems to have had no explicit concern with pottery production" (Bennet 1985: 248). It is notable that this view is somewhat contradicted by Bennet's own use of pottery distribution patterns to reconstruct Knossos' hegemonic sphere in LM II – for example, the lack of LM II ceramic material recovered from the far east of the island is equated with a lack of Knossian control (1987: 80). In the event, subsequent discoveries of LM II ceramics in eastern centres of the island which were probably not under Knossian control have demonstrated that the equation of pots with power is indeed unjustified. Nevertheless, together with the evidence for architectural investment in the regional centres, the breakaway from Knossian stylistic dominance in the ceramic sphere and developments of regional ceramic workshops do combine to present a plausible argument for placing the political demise of Knossos in early LM IIIA2.

To conclude, therefore, the working hypothesis of the present study will be that the demise of Knossos as a dominant political force in Crete took place early in LM IIIA2, as there are simply more arguments against the LM IIIB date in the evidence from the palace and beyond Knossos than there are in support of it. This does not, however, preclude the continuing existence of a local elite at Knossos. The subsequent occupation of the palace was partial and did not involve an extravagant architectural rebuilding programme. However, in contrast to the gloomy picture painted by Popham (Popham *et al.* 1984: 263; Popham 1994: 97), it should not necessarily be dismissed as merely 'squatter' activity, and the continuing presence of an 'elite' is by no means implausible, even if their influence was now geographically restricted to the immediate Knossos region. Nor was this settlement activity restricted to the palace structure itself: other high status buildings, including the Little Palace and Unexplored Mansion, also saw continuing occupation into LM IIIB (Popham 1994: 97) albeit on an impoverished scale (Popham *et al.* 1984). Moreover, Knossian ceramic vessels continued to be exported to other areas of the island (Watrous and Blitzer 1997: 513), while the local workshop continued to influence ceramic developments elsewhere in central Crete (Popham 1994: 98, 101). Overall, our understanding of the social structure at Knossos succeeding the

LM IIIA2 destruction needs to be moderated by an allowance for the range of different political conditions that may follow upon the collapse of a state system. In particular, elites should not necessarily be expected simply to 'disappear' following a dramatic reduction in the scale of a political centre, since they often survived within the local hierarchy, albeit functioning at a reduced level of power and prestige. This is a subject that would reward further study, particularly with regard to the present context, since all too often generalising post-collapse scenarios assume excessively gloomy conditions regarding levels of social order and prosperity (*e.g.* Renfrew 1979: 481-487; Tainter 1988: 18-20).

Turning to the Post-palatial period, although this is classified as extending beyond the limits of the present study, into LM IIIC (Rehak and Younger 1998), the regional centres that succeeded Knossos witnessed destruction horizons in the LM IIIB phase from which none entirely recovered. The causes are unknown, but the destructions appear not to have occurred within a single event horizon. For example, Agia Triada's excavators perceive a LM IIIB decline in the fortunes of this centre before its final destruction in IIIB1-2 transitional or in early IIIB2 (La Rosa 1985: 52-3, 1993: 620). Chania, by contrast, is seen to have thrived until the end of the LM IIIB phase, despite a IIIB1 destruction horizon (Godart and Tzedakis 1991: 189; E. Hallager 1997: 181, 1999), though it is interesting that all of the archival evidence from Chania has, so far, been retrieved from the IIIB1 horizon rather than the later destruction level. Archanes seems to fall somewhere between the two. This centre thrived until its demise in a destruction horizon at an unknown point within LM IIIB (Sakellarakis and Sapouna-Sakellaraki 1997: 151), but clearly before the end of the period, to judge by the Chaniote pottery subsequently imported to the settlement. At Malia, meanwhile, two LM IIIB destruction horizons are visible, and following the second in later LM IIIB, settlement activity here ceased (Driessen and Farnoux 1994: 60-64). The problem of gauging the temporal sequence and causal relationships of the destructions at these centres is rendered problematic, however, by the extensive duration of LM IIIB (see Table 0.1) and by the continuing difficulties faced by archaeologists in attempting to distinguish ceramic subphases within it. In fact, in contrast to the mainland sequence, Kanta (1997b) claims that no clear distinction is yet possible on Crete between the LM IIIB1 and 2 phases, though a more vague classification into 'early' or 'late' LM IIIB can be made in a minority of cases.

1.3.3 Political organisation

Building upon Chadwick's earlier work (1973), Bennet has set out a detailed and persuasive reconstruction of the political infrastructure and geographical extent of the Knossian regime in the Final Palatial period (Bennet 1985, 1986, 1987, 1993). On the basis of the archival and other archaeological evidence, a site hierarchy of at least three levels of administration has been proposed, with Knossos the only first-order site and only palatial centre. Its sphere of control was concentrated mainly in the central, western and mid eastern regions of the island, but not in the far east – at least beyond Lasithi, if this can indeed be equated with the toponym *ra-su-to* (Bennet 1985: 240). This far eastern area of Crete, meanwhile, appears to have consisted of one or more independent polities, whether due to a lack of Knossian resources to incorporate this area by force (Bennet 1987: 87), or simply because Knossos' existing territory was sufficient to support its economic system, rendering recourse to further expansion unnecessary. Trade contacts at least between Knossos and eastern Crete are apparent from the LM II and IIIA1 ceramics recovered from Palaikastro, but the intriguing suggestion of a more Dodecanesian orientation for eastern Crete in this period (Bennet 1987) deserves further investigation.

As noted earlier, the surviving Knossian archives are heavily concerned with flock management and cloth production, apparently one of the mainstays of the palace's economy. Political and economic control appears to have been administered directly in the immediate environs of Knossos, but elsewhere indirectly, through several regional second-order centres. The archives record the presence of intermediaries located at these centres, variously referred to as 'owners' (Bennet 1993: 99), 'collectors' (Ventris and Chadwick 1973: 201-2) or 'overseers' (Bennet 1985: 240), who managed the administration of flocks and of local textile production on behalf of the palace, and whom Bennet has plausibly identified as members of the pre-existing local elites (Bennet 1993: 97).

The second-order centres in the archives are identified as *se-to-i-ja*, *pa-i-to*, *da-22-to*, *ku-ta-to* and *ku-do-ni-ja* (Bennet 1985: 242). A sixth such centre is *a-mi-ni-so*, but on the basis of its probable association with modern Amnisos and its role within the archives as receiving what are probably religious dedications, its significance is more likely to have been cultic than administrative (Bennet 1985: 242-3). Of the other second-order centres, *ku-do-ni-ja*, universally agreed to be identifiable with the

settlement beneath modern Chania, stands out on account of the higher degree of local autonomy it appears to have enjoyed within the Knossian administration, a deduction based on the greater prominence of the collectors in the records for this area. Although within the Knossian sphere of control until LM IIIA2, therefore, Chania appears to have had its own regional administrative infrastructure (Bennet 1985: 247-9), probably with dependent sub-centres situated at modern Kalami and/or Stylos, one of which may be identifiable with the toponym *a-pa-ta-wa* (Bennet 1985: 247-9, 1986: 104-5; Godart and Tzedakis 1992: 222, 266, 321; Kanta 1984: 13).

The locations of the other second-order centres are more open to debate. *pa-i-to* was probably located in the south central area of the island, and is generally agreed to be equatable with Phaistos, while Agia Triada has been associated with the toponym *da-wo*, on the basis of its consistent association in the archives with *pa-i-to* (Bennet 1985: 247). However, Shaw has suggested that Kommos would be a potential alternative candidate for the location of *da-wo* (J. Shaw 1985: 56; J. and M. Shaw 1997: 432), in which case it may be that *pa-i-to* embraced both Phaistos and Agia Triada. The archaeological evidence of settlement activity at LM II-IIIA1 Phaistos that archaeologists have expected on the basis of the important administrative role ascribed to this centre in the archives is so far lacking (La Rosa 1985), and indeed, Carinci (1989) has suggested that after the LM I period, the pre-eminent position of Phaistos in the Mesara had been usurped by neighbouring Agia Triada. At the same time, however, it must be emphasised that Phaistos cannot be dismissed as a significant site in this period simply on the basis of a lack of architectural remains. Agia Triada is similarly elusive with regards to its settlement and elite activities in the Final Palatial period (La Rosa 1993), again largely due to the lack of architectural reconstructions at the site. Indeed, this absence is hardly surprising, given the fragile and unstable political context, for a Knossian elite consolidating its newly established power on Crete should not be expected to have encouraged former first-order centres to revive their earlier architectural glory. This is especially so in light of the fact that monumental architecture had been used so extensively as a strategy for elite legitimation in the Neopalatial period.

Turning to *se-to-i-ja*, based upon its toponymic associations within the archives, this site is likely to have been located east of Knossos. Malia is the most plausible candidate so far, mainly on the basis of the presence of LM II ceramics here and the site's earlier

status as a Neopalatial first-order centre (Bennet 1985: 242, 243, 1990: 209). Again, as with Phaistos and Agia Triada, there is in fact very little archaeological evidence for architectural activities in this period in the settlement (Bennet 1986: 113) and indeed, Farnoux is very reluctant to attach the toponym to this site (1996, 1997: 147). Yet the same argument applies as in the Mesara, that such evidence should not be expected in order to validate Malia's entitlement to such a status.

da-22-to, meanwhile, is presumed to have been in the west of the island, again on the basis of toponymic associations, but also because of the discovery of a stirrup jar whose clay has a west Cretan profile and which had this toponym written on its exterior (Bennet 1985: 243, 248). Bennet suggests a location on the Rethymnon coastal plain, perhaps in the Stavromenos area. He also notes the potential importance of the settlement associated with the Armenoi cemetery (though the bulk, if not the whole, of the cemetery is Post-palatial), but suggests an association of this site with *ku-ta-to* (1986: 111-2). However, this reconstruction would leave a significant hiatus, in the form of Archanes, a clearly important centre that cannot so far be linked with any toponym. At the time of Bennet's study, no LM II ceramics had been found at this site (Bennet 1985: 243, 1986: 112), but clear evidence of settlement activity in this period has since been uncovered (Sakellarakis and Sapouna-Sakellaraki 1997: 148-50), although, again, large-scale architectural activities are not involved. Therefore, this site could, arguably, be associated with the toponym *ku-ta-to*, which, as Bennet states, provides no clues whatsoever by its archival associations as to its regional location on the island (1985: 244). Within such a scenario, the location of *da-22-to* within the Rethymnon area becomes more ambiguous. It is possible that this toponym is to be associated with Armenoi's settlement, while a contemporary site in the Stavromenos area may have functioned as its harbour town, corresponding with Kommos and Poros for Agia Triada-Phaistos and Knossos respectively, rather than constituting a second-order site in its own right.

The above suggestions are merely speculative, but they do demonstrate that the mapping of the archival evidence onto the physical remains of Crete is not entirely straightforward. However, Bennet is surely correct in his general observation that there was a certain amount of continuity in regional organisation and site hierarchy from the Neopalatial period. Within this scenario, former first-order palatial centres were incorporated into Knossos' administrative system as intermediaries, in a convenient

appropriation of an established structural and admnistrative network (assuming that Knossos was not already dominant in the Neopalatial period). Indeed, there are also elements of continuity in the very administrative procedures being used, despite the change of script and sealing practices mentioned above (Popham 1994: 93; Weingarten 1994). Significantly, this same general site hierarchy (minus its apex) may then have extended into the Post-palatial era, as the demise of Knossos allowed the former second-order centres to regain the pre-eminence they had enjoyed in the Neopalatial period. As noted above, Chania, Agia Triada, Archanes and Malia revived as elite bases on a regional level, and the same pattern of Neopalatial palace → Final Palatial second-order centre → Post-palatial first-order centre may well emerge at the corresponding major settlement of Armenoi when it is discovered (Godart and Tzedakis 1992: 334). Administrative continuity can also be observed in the use of Linear B at Chania in LM IIIB1, if not earlier. However, the transition appears not to have been peaceful, as early LM IIIA2 destructions took place at Phaistos, Agia Triada and Kommos, as well as at Knossos (Watrous and Blitzer 1997: 512), and a late LM IIIA1 destruction at Chania (E. Hallager 1997: 178), though no corresponding event horizon has been observed at Archanes.

Regarding political organisation in the Post-palatial period, a further intriguing development to note is the indications of a closer correspondence between the fortunes of eastern Crete and the rest of the island in LM IIIA2. This phase saw exactly the same revival of architectural activities at the traditional eastern centres as is apparent elsewhere on the island – at Gournia (Hawes 1908: 26, Building He), Palaikastro (MacGillivray 1997: 196) and (albeit on a smaller scale) Petras (Tsipopoulou 1997: 211-2, 242-3, the East and West Houses). It also saw the same contribution to the regionalisation of ceramic styles as the rest of the island, with workshops (operating on varying scales of production and distribution) being suggested for Palaikastro, Episkopi (Ierapetra) and possibly Elounda (Kanta 1980: 288-90). Thus if eastern Crete had indeed followed a different political trajectory in the Final Palatial period, and its cultural orientation had been more towards the Dodecannese, it may well be the case that the Post-palatial period saw this region realign itself with the rest of the island to a certain extent.

What is less certain, however, is the precise political relationship between these new first-order centres across the island, following Knossos' demise. One theory is that the

group in control of Knossos maintained their Cretan hegemony, but now operated from one or more of the previous second-order centres – such as La Rosa's proposal, which involves two new capitals at Agia Triada and Chania (La Rosa 1993: 620, 1997: 264; see also Driessen and Farnoux 1994: 55; Watrous and Blitzer 1997: 516). Others prefer a scenario of several independent regional polities (Godart and Tzedakis 1997: 162; Haskell 1997: 193; Poursat 1997: 389-90). Poursat supports this hypothesis by pointing to the wider dispersal of prestige artefacts among the regional centres than had been the case in the Final Palatial period. Within either scenario, Chania is usually accorded a more privileged status than the other LM IIIA2-B centres, on three accounts. One is the presence of Linear B archives, at least in LM IIIB1 (E. Hallager and Andreadaki-Vlasaki 1997), which have so far not been recovered from any of the other centres. Another is the evidence of its extensive trade contacts, in the distributions of both 'Inscribed Stirrup Jars' (ISJs) with a west Cretan provenance and fine ware products of the Chaniote ceramic workshop (Godart and Tzedakis 1991: 188, 1997). These have been found across the rest of Crete, on the Greek mainland, and in Cyprus, the Cyclades and Sardinia (Godart and Tzedakis 1991: 188, 1992: 35). The third is the written evidence on the ISJs for the presence of a *wanax* at this centre. However, despite this possible pre-eminence, Chania's excavators have been reluctant to start proposing a hegemony for this centre that covered the whole of Knossos' old domain (Tzedakis 1971: 368; E. Hallager 1988: 120-3; Godart and Tzedakis 1991: 189; E. Hallager and Andreadaki-Vlasaki 1997: 174), as opposed simply to a west Cretan kingdom.

1.3.4 Cultural character

Apart from the problems of chronology, dealt with above, questions of cultural character have been the most prominent issue for discussion and debate with regard to LM II-III Crete since Ventris' decipherment of Linear B in the early 1950s as recording Greek conclusively demonstrated the existence of mainland influence on the island. Indeed, the whole period has come to be characterised by this mainland influence, as demonstrated by the common reference to the island in LM II-III as 'Mycenaean Crete', and this feature almost always permeates, and often dominates, discussion of the political and cultural character of the island.

The questions posed of this evidence for externally-derived influence, however, have been somewhat limited, focusing almost entirely on assessing the extent of mainland presence and political control on the island in both the Final and Post-palatial periods.

Thus all arguments regarding the nature and extent of mainland influences in various aspects of material culture and social practice have been ultimately directed towards establishing the ethnic composition of the elite and, occasionally, the wider population. This in turn has virtually dictated the way that the material evidence has been considered. The cultural labelling of an artefact type or an iconographical motif as either 'Mycenaean' or 'Minoan' is often considered its most significant feature, and this ascription is often used to reconstruct the geographical origins of the artefact's producer or owner. This question is currently seen to be more crucial for the Post-palatial period, with mainland domination of Final Palatial Knossos almost universally accepted. However, the debate regarding the Final Palatial is by no means over, as Driessen has observed in a review of the different historical reconstructions that have been proposed: "Every single reconstruction of this period dashes, however, against the same problem: whether or not there were Mycenaean Greeks present at Knossos in LM II" (Driessen 1990: 122-3).

Before exploring the debates that have emerged, it is useful to list those social spheres in which mainland influence has been observed. These are slightly different for the Final and Post-palatial periods, and so it is useful to maintain a distinction between the two here. For the Final Palatial period, the influences are geographically restricted almost entirely to Knossos, apart from in the sphere of ceramics. They include the introduction of Greek as the administrative language, mainland-derived iconographical motifs on various media, a borrowed high status ceramic repertoire and ostentatious tomb use. Within each of these spheres there is a clear increase in emphasis on a high status warrior ideology, which had not been as conspicuous in the preceding, Neopalatial period.

Within the iconographic sphere, new styles are observed in the Knossian palace frescoes of this period, especially the Figure-of-eight Shields, the Throne Room's heraldically arranged griffins and the Chariot Fresco (Immerwahr 1990: 84, 92-5, 99). Within the ceramic repertoire, two new fine ware shapes with mainland ancestry were introduced on a significant scale, both as imports and as local products: namely, the Ephyraean goblet (and its kylix descendant) and the squat alabastron (Betancourt 1985: 151-5; Dickinson 1994: 118, 1996: 66; Popham 1967: 344, 1969: 299, 1994). Mainland influence is also discernible in certain ceramic decorative elements, not least the examples of military iconography, such as boar's tusk helmets, figure-of-eight shields

and weaponry (Crouwel and Morris 1995: 157-8, Plate 23b; Popham 1978: 180, fig. 1a, 1994: 93, 98-101).

In the Post-palatial period, continuing mainland influence is seen in various aspects of the ceramic repertoire (Betancourt 1985: 171; Popham 1967: 347, 1969: 301). There is also continuing use of Linear B at Chania, and further examples of mainland inspiration in choices of burial type (*e.g.* Kallitsaki 1997 for the Archanes Phourni cemetery). New architectural features are incorporated into the LM IIIA2 structures, especially at the regional centres, that are reminiscent of mainland forms, such as megara and hearths (*e.g.* Godart and Tzedakis 1991: 189; E. Hallager 1988: 117-8, 1997: 179-80 for Chania; Sakellarakis and Sapouna-Sakellaraki 1997: 455 for Archanes Tourkogeitonia; Cucuzza 1997 and La Rosa 1997 for Agia Triada; L. Platon 1997: 365 for Kephali Chondrou). Finally, a few mainland-type figurines have been excavated from regional centres, at Knossos, Agia Triada, Phaistos and Chania in LM IIIA2 (Hägg 1997: 167; E. Hallager 1997: 179-80; Watrous and Blitzer 1997: 514).

It is notable that most of these areas where mainland influence can be discerned are associated specifically with the high status sphere, whether in the form of wealthy burials, administrative practices, central buildings or prestige artefacts. Partly because of this, mainland influence has often been directly equated with the presence of an intrusive ruling class of mainlanders, whether ruling on behalf of their original polities or operating independently. Surprisingly few archaeologists have argued that the importation or close imitation of a mainland idea, be it language or material culture, might simply constitute a voluntary appropriation by Cretans within locally specific circumstances (Driessen and Farnoux 1994: 55 providing a notable exception), and possible reasons for this reluctance will be explored in the following chapter. Yet it has always been clear that there are serious practical problems with the straightforward association of material culture with specific population groups in the way that has usually been used in past approaches to this issue. These arise from the fact that the LM II-III period on Crete was one of increasing cultural syncretism that involved the *adaptation* of mainland ideas, which were either combined with what are perceived as traditionally Cretan traits, or else developed in entirely new directions. As a result, features attributed to a mainland origin are often to be observed on the same artefacts as those of supposed indigenous derivation, while in other cases, the integration of Cretan

and mainland ideas is so complete that the origins of the resulting product could be argued with equal validity in either direction.

The potential list of examples of this phenomenon is extensive, and only a few selected ones will be mentioned here, especially as examples from the mortuary sphere will be highlighted in the forthcoming analysis. Among ceramics, the LM II Ephyraean goblet is a good case in point, diverging from its mainland prototype in both form and decoration (French 1997), as did its kylix descendant (Popham 1967: 343-5, 1969: 299, 301). Moreover, there is a difference from mainland parallels in its dimensions that suggests that this form had been adapted to suit Cretan drinking habits, since the Cretan examples are consistently smaller, more in line with the size of earlier Neopalatial cups. The Post-palatial period, meanwhile, saw the development of the champagne cup, a small drinking vessel form with no mainland parallel at all.

In terms of iconography, the Final Palatial frescoes in the Knossos palace include examples not only of clear mainland influence, but also of depictions wherein elements of both traditions are juxtaposed so closely that one might question whether the distinction between the two that is frequently proposed was similarly perceived at the time. In the Campstool and Procession Frescoes of Final Palatial Knossos, for example, Rehak and Younger have noted the juxtaposition of dress and iconographic elements from the two traditions (1998: 155-6, note 449). The Campstool Fresco is particularly interesting, in that both "a chalice of Minoan ancestry" and a kylix are depicted within the same scene as drinking vessels (Immerwahr 1990: 95).

Within the sphere of architecture, where perceived mainland influence is mainly a Post-palatial phenomenon, identification of intrusive features has frequently been hindered by the presence, usually within the same structures, of elements that either evoke Cretan precedents or else are hard to parallel at all. Such 'hybrid' architecture is not peculiar to a minority of buildings, but rather appears to be the norm both at the regional centres and beyond, as observed for Tylissos, Kommos, Agia Triada, Chania and Malia (Cucuzza 1997; Driessen and Farnoux 1994: 55-6; E. Hallager 1997: 185; Pelon 1997: 354; J. and M. Shaw 1997: 433-4). Even more significant is the fact that no two of these structures appear to follow the same model – each is a unique product of fusion and innovation.

Finally, even Linear B itself, which, as will be seen below, is the one 'irrefutable' indication of mainland presence, shows the same characteristics of fusion and innovation. The script itself was a direct descendant of the Cretan Linear A in terms of the written characters and clay medium, but was adapted at Knossos in LM II to record Greek.

In short, it is clear that a number of aspects of the material culture of Crete and the mainland held so much in common by LM III that it is difficult to distinguish between any essentially 'Minoan', as opposed to 'Mycenaean' cultural traits. For example, Betancourt observes regarding the ceramic repertoire that "Late Minoan IIIB is neither Minoan nor Mycenaean: it is Aegean" (1985: 175-6). The picture is further complicated by the fact that the roots of this syncretism actually extended back into the Neopalatial period, when the close trade and diplomatic exchange contacts mentioned above as characterising the eastern Mediterranean generally produced flows of prestige artefacts and cultural ideas in both directions. Even in this period, therefore, problems regarding the attribution of certain cultural elements to either Crete or the mainland have arisen. For example, Niemeier has sought to demonstrate a purely Cretan ancestry for Palace Style ceramics, warrior iconography and sealstone production (1985a: 217, 1985b: 121-6, 1997). More indirectly, Hiller (1984), Evely (1996) and Peatfield (1999) have noted that militaristic artefacts and warrior iconography were not exclusive to the mainland in the Neopalatial period, and indeed, Hiller has argued that their ultimate origin was Cretan. As will be discussed below, some of these arguments are fairly tenuous in terms of the point they seek to prove, especially as the ideological significance of these symbols would surely have altered with their changing historical contexts. However, the fact that these questions have emerged at all does demonstrate that tidy cultural attributions are not always possible even in this period: instead, *joint* contributions to the development of an artefact or symbol are highly likely to have occurred.

Overall, the result of these different factors is a current situation of continuing confusion regarding the cultural identity and population make-up of Crete (and more specifically, its elites) in both the Final and the Post-palatial periods. One concession to these problems of cultural labelling has been to privilege certain types of evidence as being more indicative of ethnic origins than others. In particular, mainland-derived influences in burial customs, religious symbolism and domestic material culture are seen to be strong indicators of the presence of intrusive elements in the island

population. But under attack from those who see these influences in terms of adaptation, voluntary appropriation or even a Cretan ancestry instead, supporters of the invasion hypothesis have fallen back on what is seen as the incontrovertible proof of mainland presence – the use of Greek. According to the commonly held belief that language is a principal indicator of an individual's origins and ethnic identities, the use of Linear B is held to be decisive proof of mainland presence (Dickinson 1996: 67; Driessen 1990: 124; Driessen and Farnoux 1994: 64; Driessen and Macdonald 1997: 117-8; Driessen and Schoep 1995: 664; Hood 1985, 1992: 137; Hiller 1997: 205; Niemeier 1983; Popham 1981: 460, 1994: 89; Soles 1999: 59). This is seen to be further supported by the identification of Greek personal names in the archives, whether of people or of gods (Baumbach 1988, 1992; Hiller 1997).

The situation at present, therefore, is one of universal agreement that mainlanders must have been at least partly involved in the administration of both Final Palatial and Post-palatial Crete, though there is less agreement regarding the involvement of mainlanders in the preceding LM IB destructions (*e.g.* Dickinson 1994: 305; Driessen and Macdonald 1997: 117-8; Hood 1985, 1992: 139; Niemeier 1983, 1994: 88; Rehak and Younger 1998: 148-9). Yet in other aspects of material culture – where mainland elements are not seen to be so straightforwardly announced in the archaeological remains, but rather adapted, or juxtaposed with indigenous or innovative ideas – this mainland-derived elite continues to be frustratingly elusive. In fact, even the theory that Linear B and Greek names indicate the presence of migrants is not unassailable, as will be discussed in the following chapter. The lack of certainty resulting from this impasse is betrayed by the fact that archaeologists discussing LM II-III Crete still commonly feel the need either to state categorically their position with respect to this issue of migration versus indigenous continuity or, at the very least, to ally tentatively with one side or the other.

1.4 Comments

Several themes have emerged from this overview of recent approaches to the political and cultural character of Crete. To take the latter issue of culture first, the theoretical models underlying past approaches will be discussed in the following chapter; the present section is intended to set the scene for this by highlighting some of the empirical

problems that these models have encountered. It is not the intention here to characterise all aspects of material culture as being identical. Ideally, each area requires detailed exploration in its own right, since it will have been active in different social spheres and have carried different ideological connotations, and within the present study such an analysis can only be undertaken for the mortuary practices. Given this, however, a few comments can be made regarding past and potential treatments of material culture on a general level.

We are repeatedly coming to a dead end in attempting to establish the geographical origins of the Cretan elites on the basis of their material culture. The simplistic equation of Mycenaean traits with mainlanders and of Minoan traits with Cretans is not only an inadequate framework for reconstructing what are presumably assumed to be ethnic identities, as will be argued in the following chapter. It is also an inflexible model that cannot cope with the patterns that the data are actually presenting, which are of vibrant, complex and *ongoing* negotiations of different cultural ideas in different spheres of social activity, to the extent that the tidy cultural packages desired are simply non-existent. Thus, to take an example, the attempts of E. Hallager (1997: 185) and Cucuzza (1997) to disentangle the geographical origins of LM IIIA2 architecture at Chania and Agia Triada respectively have inevitably ended in frustration.

Attempts to assess the extent and nature of mainland influence on Cretan material culture are not futile, for these borrowings did, without doubt, take place. Indeed, it is vital to explore the ways in which specific mainland-derived ideas were being introduced in different social spheres at different stages in the Final and Post-palatial periods. The important point is that these cultural innovations need to be situated more firmly within their local context, acknowledging indigenous innovation and adaptation, features that have usually been overlooked in the preoccupation with identifying and isolating the influences. As it is, where elements of adaptation are recognised, they are often simply marshalled as evidence of the presence of an indigenous population, and no more detailed investigation of how or why these particular negotiations of received ideas might have taken place is deemed necessary. Overall, the subtleties of cultural integration are all too often seen as an unwelcome problem, rather than as an opportunity to explore dynamic strategies for defining and expressing social identities. The accumulation of more data will not solve this problem – it will merely reinforce the picture of complex cultural interactions and innovations that are already apparent. We

cannot advance further in understanding this matter unless we re-evaluate our ideas regarding first, the appropriate questions to ask of the data and second, the best way to go about extracting the desired information.

In short, we are little nearer than we have ever been to understanding the complex significance of the cultural changes that took place on Final and Post-palatial Crete. Several proposed solutions to this problem should be addressed here. Bennet has suggested that "if we are really to understand the transformations – call them "Mycenaeanization" or whatever – that affected Crete in LM II and beyond, then we should instead be examining the poorly-understood transformations on Crete in the preceding LM IB period" (Bennet 1999: 555). This earlier phase of interaction between Crete and the mainland is, indeed, also poorly understood. However, a better understanding of the nature of the cultural relations between these two areas in LM IB will not answer all questions regarding their relations in LM II or III. We are dealing with a very dynamic political and cultural landscape, and shedding light on the early contacts between Crete and the mainland will not suffice to explain later cultural interactions in the vastly altered circumstances of Final and Post-palatial Crete.

Driessen and Farnoux (Driessen 1990: 124-5; Driessen and Farnoux 1997), meanwhile, have suggested that to continue to explore evidence for influence or indigenous continuity is in fact futile, as Crete and the mainland were part of a single cultural unit in Late Bronze III. Thus, while many archaeologists overlook the significance of innovation and adaptation in their desire to identify two distinct cultural packages, Driessen and Farnoux's reaction goes to the opposite extreme, playing down the dynamics embodied in these same innovations and adaptations to advocate a picture of a single Aegean cultural entity. Yet it not useful to characterise mainland and Cretan material culture in LM III as one and the same. For example, despite close links and exchanges of ideas with the mainland, the various Cretan ceramic repertoires remain recognisably distinct from those of the mainland in every phase of the LM II-III period. Crete was indeed participating in a wider koine, but with selective borrowings, adaptations and innovations that are highly significant for our understanding of political developments and cultural identities on Crete. They simply need to be approached in an open-ended way, that will allow one to see the logic in the borrowings, rather than to be fitted into preconceived models.

Before leaving the issue of the cultural sphere, some comment should be made regarding the common practice of trying to establish the original geographical sources of an artefact type in order to allocate it to either a mainland or Cretan 'cultural package'. This was the aim of the arguments noted earlier (section 1.3.4) regarding the Neopalatial origins of certain cultural symbols, and there are several methodological flaws that often occur in such approaches. First, such arguments have frequently been influenced by the researcher's sense of allegiance to either Crete or the mainland as their area of specialism (usually Crete). This results in the use of evidence to posit one origin although it could be used with equal validity to argue exactly the opposite case, due to the extent of cultural exchange and therefore parallel input to the development of an artefact type's form and meaning. Second, it is frequently difficult even in the Neopalatial period to decide whether a specific artefact type or stylistic element is Cretan or mainland in origin. This is both because of dating difficulties on the scale of refinement required for establishing priorities and ultimate geographical origins and because the degree of elite cultural interaction in this period would have involved mutual contributions to the development of certain stylistic forms and their ideological attributes. Third, and most important, is that the relevance of establishing the earliest appearance of an artefact type has in itself been vastly overestimated. Establishing the ultimate geographical origins of an idea will not suffice to explain its significance as a cultural symbol in subsequent generations. As will be argued further in Chapter 2, it is the meaning, not the item itself, which is culturally significant and establishing congruence in meanings requires an understanding of the context, not just documenting physical similarities in the artefact type.

Turning now to consider approaches to the political organisation of LM II-IIIB Crete, the most notable omission in research agendas has been the absence of interest in the *strategies* by which political power was acquired, negotiated and maintained. This is despite the fact that such mechanisms must have been of vital importance within a situation of ongoing political change, from at least the LM IB destructions to the demise of Chania as a regional centre in LM IIIB. For example, if, as Bennet (1990) argues, the Final Palatial Knossian hegemony was intrinsically fragile in attempting to control a geographically fragmented landscape from a single centre, it would be interesting to investigate ways in which the elite here might have attempted to consolidate their tenuous power base. Yet this is an area that has only recently started to receive attention. Driessen and Schoep (1999) have suggested that power was maintained by the

combined strategies of administrative control, gift exchange and coercive force, as well as by the *ideological* mechanisms of restricting access to tomb burial, high status iconography and ostentatious warrior display. Such issues deserve far more detailed analysis, in order to explore the extent and nature of their deployment.

Moving forward in time to the political vacuum created by the LM IIIA2 demise of Knossos as an administrative centre, it would be interesting to speculate upon the nature of the political negotiations that took place now, and the strategies used by the regional elites to create and maintain their positions within the new political geography of the island, whatever its structure. It is odd that this issue has not yet received attention, since the power base of the centre or centres that succeeded Knossos may not have been guaranteed, rendering recourse to ideological strategies all the more crucial. This lack of interest in Post-palatial strategies for power contestation and legitimation cannot wholly be accounted for by the fact that archaeologists are only just beginning to arrive at a consensus regarding the date that the period commenced. In fact, there appear to be two different explanations that account for this oversight. One is the preoccupation with establishing the geographical origins of the elites, noted above, which has drawn attention away from other issues regarding the political sphere. The second is an implicit assumption that once the identity of the elite and the political geography of the island have been established, little further investigation of this subject is required. Political regimes are often viewed as static phenomena which changed radically only between periods, rather than as dynamic, unstable situations continually changed by active individuals, which was in fact the case. As a result, the main issue for concern regarding the political character of Final and Post-palatial Crete has been to establish the political structure and site hierarchy, rather than to explore the various symbolic media through which power might have been contested or maintained.

This is not just a feature of LM II-III Crete: a similar approach can also be seen regarding the Neopalatial period. Here the main point of contention regarding the political structure of the island has been to establish whether (and if so, when) Knossos was politically dominant, or whether it was one of a number of independent regional polities (*e.g.* Betts 1967; Cadogan 1984: 13; Dickinson 1996: 64; Driessen and MacGillivray 1989: 100-1; B. and E. Hallager 1995; E. Hallager 1996: 238-9; Hood 1983: 131-2; Koehl 1995: 26-8; Niemeier 1985a: 230-1, 1994: 87-8; Rehak and Younger 1998: 128-30; Soles 1995; Weingarten 1990: 110-112; Wiener 1987: 265-6).

Renfrew's Peer Polity Interaction model (Renfrew 1986), which proposes that neighbouring polities sharing a common culture may compete through a common symbolic system, was cautiously applied to Neopalatial Crete by Cherry (1986). However, his outline of the potential symbolic strategies by which competition might have been enacted between the elites of these regional centres, such as prestige architecture or religious authority, has rarely been pursued further (Hamilakis 1998b constituting a notable exception). Instead, interest in these features has usually been focused on their function as reinforcing elite status on a vertical, hierarchical scale (*e.g.* Moody 1987b; Peatfield 1987; van Effenterre 1987). Inter-elite relations are often seen simply in terms of ideological unity, with little interest in the possibility of contestation through this shared symbolic vocabulary.

The above comments regarding limitations in past approaches to the cultural and political character on LM II-III Crete are inter-linked. If one considers the mainly high status cultural changes underway on Crete as indications of active political strategies, rather than as passive indicators of the geographical origins of the elite, this may provide part of the key to understanding the importation, imitation and complex referencing of mainland-inspired ideas in both the Final and Post-palatial periods. Indeed, it will be argued in the following chapter that the obsession with establishing whether the elites were of Cretan or mainland ancestry is not only futile as a practical end, constituting a methodologically unsound approach to the empirical evidence, but has also hindered consideration of the possibility that certain high status symbols employed by the mainland elites were deliberately adopted and adapted on Crete as one power strategy within a politically unstable environment, regardless of the origins of the individuals concerned.

Chapter 2

The Theoretical and Methodological Framework

2.1 Introduction

The present chapter has two principal aims. The first is to reconsider the traditional approach to cultural influence on LM II-III Crete, set out in Chapter 1, and to justify the alternative proposed for the present analysis. To this end, sections 2.2 and 2.3 will examine the culture historical model that has underlain many reconstructions of cultural interaction in Aegean prehistory, with its implications for explaining transfers of cultural practices and symbols. It will be proposed that a more viable interpretation of the introduction of mainland-inspired material culture into LM II Crete, and of its continuing popularity thereafter, is as a medium for internal political competition. In other words, it is proposed that the aspect of social identity with which the phenomenon of tomb use on Crete was primarily connected, especially in its initial phases, was status rather than ethnicity.

The second purpose of the chapter (section 2.4) is to set out a methodological framework for exploring the mortuary evidence within such an approach. Notions of agency and choice within the structural parameters of complex social systems will be highlighted, as will the potential role of the mortuary sphere as a forum for the manipulation, subversion or perpetuation of political relations.

2.2 Models for integrating material evidence, social identity and cultural interaction

The archaeological discovery and early reconstruction of prehistoric Aegean societies took place in the context of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, the formative era of the culture historical school in prehistoric archaeology. As a result, the early years of Aegean research were strongly conditioned by the aims, models and methodologies advocated by this theoretical approach. In the past few decades,

particularly since the 1970s, there have been widespread challenges to and departures from these culture history precepts in different areas of Aegean research, especially through incorporation of theoretical developments in Anglo-American archaeology generally. Yet despite this, elements of these often unsatisfactory early models still linger on within the discipline, especially those relating to concepts of cultural boundaries, affiliations and interactions. These elements continue, often implicitly, to influence our interpretations of the material evidence, and while they are only just starting to be recognised and problematised, they in fact need urgently to be made explicit and addressed directly if we are to develop more appropriate models for understanding cultural identities, interaction and change in the Aegean. This is one of the aims of the present study.

2.2.1 The culture group model

The 'culture history' school sought to marshal archaeological remains into broad, coherent spatial and temporal units as a means of organising and comprehending the prehistoric past. On the basis of these units, known as 'culture groups', which were reified and popularised particularly by Kossinna and Childe respectively (Trigger 1989: 163-174), discrete populations with distinctive cultural characteristics were reconstructed. These groups formed the empirical core upon which the story of prehistory could be based, in the absence of the more concrete framework that textual sources were presumed to provide. The aim, as Shennan has noted, was to people the prehistoric past (1989: 5-6), and Childe saw the culture historical approach as a positive advance on earlier methods of archaeological interpretation precisely because it allowed one to reach beyond the physical artefacts to their producers (Trigger 1989: 172-3). This ideal of distinguishable population groups with specific characteristics was also very much a product of the prevailing political, social and economic climate in western Europe in this period, wherein identifiable ancestral groups were actively being sought to satisfy nationalist agendas.

The archaeological reconstruction of these groups in the material record was effected through the identification of a small corpus of diagnostic artefact types which was believed to represent the cultural practices particularly characteristic of each group. The social spheres from which these diagnostics derived could vary, but certain types of activity were considered particularly likely to reveal these cultural 'fingerprints'. Foremost among these were ideological beliefs (seen to be most accessible through

religious symbolism, which included mortuary customs), physical appearance (such as jewellery) and everyday habitual activities (such as domestic pottery styles) (Childe 1929: v-vi). These artefactual assemblages moulded modern perceptions of the populations they were seen to represent, by furnishing them with their distinctive appearances and beliefs. But at the same time they were themselves subjective constructs built up on the basis of the *expectation* of these population groups' existence. It was then expected that the members of a culture group, in using the same artefact types, would also have shared the same values and beliefs. This desire to impose a uniform character on a collective group seems to have arisen in some cases from nationalist ideals, but it was also a result of the direct transferral onto the young discipline of prehistory of the standard methodology for approaching historical periods – namely, to construct narratives around individual personalities and lives. Thus "these entities which have been constructed [from patterns in material culture] have been regarded as actors on the historical stage, playing the role for prehistory that known individuals and groups have in documentary history" (Shennan 1989: 5-6).

This idea of normative cultural characteristics was in turn seen to justify the attribution of common ethnic affiliations to the members of these culture groups. In short, the constructs used to place order on the prehistoric past were assumed also to reflect the self-identity of the population groups so reconstructed, in a methodological leap from material culture to people that was not seen to require justification. At the same time, it is important to emphasise again that this ethnic characterisation was not simply an incidental by-product of the culture group construct, or the natural conclusion of a chain of logic that proceeded from the observation of artefact distributions through the hypothesis of common cultural practices to the assumption of collective identities. Rather, ethnicity was embedded within the construct from the start and indeed, was one of the *raisons d'être* for the culture historical paradigm. It was as much the politically motivated desire for ethnic ancestries as the academic challenge of creating order from the chaos of the material record that motivated the development of this model.

Once these culture groups had been established from the material record, reconstructions of their mutual interactions played an important role in archaeological explanation, as such interactions were generally relied upon as mechanisms to account for the phenomenon of change. In the late nineteenth to early twentieth centuries, culture was considered to be fairly static (Jones 1997: 24-5), and change to be 'contrary

to human nature', in an intellectual reaction against Enlightenment evolutionary philosophies (Trigger 1989: 150). A few groups were privileged with superior propensities for development in this sense, usually by virtue of certain features of their cultural tradition that were perceived as being predisposed to facilitate progress. Usually, however, changes in the spatial patterning of the material record were either the cumulative results of long-term 'drift', or, in cases of the rapid, large-scale spread of cultural ideas and social practices from one geographical area to another, were attributed to external impulses subverting the otherwise conservative tendencies of the local population. Such impulses took one of two forms: migration or conquest on the one hand, involving the displacement of indigenous practices by intruders, and diffusion on the other, involving the voluntary adoption of practices (usually technical knowledge) learnt from a neighbouring group.

Despite the fact that the culture history model was in large part a reaction against the evolutionary paradigm, wherein change had been seen as an endemic aspect of human nature (Trigger 1998: 103; Johnson 1999: 137), certain evolutionist ideas did linger on. For example, in the evolutionist model, societies had been considered to be on a naturally progressional route, though at varying rates, according to their differing racial capabilities, towards an ideal of 'civilisation' epitomised by contemporary western Europe and defined by such criteria as industrialisation, monotheism, complex social and political structures and cultural and technical achievements (Johnson 1999: 134). Within culture history, this idea of progress being towards social complexity along a western model continued on a more subtle level, although the process by which it was seen to be realised had altered. Relative levels of cultural achievement also continued to be supposed, though they were no longer considered a central concern of archaeological reconstruction. Thus when diffusion did take place, especially involving large-scale cultural emulation, it was often implicitly assumed to be directed from more to less culturally advanced societies, whether instinctively (on the assumption that the 'benefits' were self-evident) or because the ethnic groups involved similarly perceived their differential statuses on the ladder of progress.

2.2.2 The culture group model and the Late Bronze Age Aegean

The archaeology of the prehistoric Aegean was constructed from its earliest years upon a tripartite geographical division, between the Greek mainland, Crete, and the Cyclades and other islands. In accordance with the conventional culture history model, and based

upon general material culture patternings in the archaeological record, these different areas were associated with distinct cultural systems – particularly the 'Minoan' (Bronze Age Crete), and the 'Mycenaean' (associated with the Middle Helladic III to Late Helladic IIIB mainland). The dichotomy between the Mycenaean and Minoan culture groups particularly was exacerbated and reinforced by professional rivalries between excavators on the mainland and Crete in the first half of the twentieth century, as Evans' strong pro-Cretan bias in explaining political and cultural developments in the Aegean provoked reaction from archaeologists working on mainland sites (Fitton 1995: 150-178). This early division – indeed, opposition – between Cretan and mainland studies has survived within the disciplinary structure of Aegean archaeology and often leads to specialisation in either one or the other area.

Other legacies of this culture historical model affect not only the professional structure of the discipline, but also, more seriously, data interpretation. First, with respect to the Late Bronze Age at least, there has been a predilection for allotting individual artefact types to specific culture group repertoires, demonstrating a "concern with static, pristine cultural entities" that has been observed by Jones to be embedded in western approaches generally to issues of cultural tradition (Jones 1997: 59). Thus, as observed in Chapter 1, there has been little exploration of the possibilities of diverse contributions to the development of different artefact types or of their changing significance in different spatial and temporal contexts.

Second, adherence to the general culture historical trend of directly equating material culture with people can be seen in the extension of the descriptive labels 'Mycenaean' and 'Minoan' from the material evidence itself to include also the human inhabitants of the mainland and Crete. This simultaneously involved the construction of quasi-individual psychological traits for each group, which distinguished and characterised their normative cultural behaviour. The most notorious example of this has been the portrayal of 'Minoans' as peace-loving and of 'Mycenaeans' as aggressive and warlike (Starr 1984; Graham 1987: 19-20). This particular characterisation has been challenged repeatedly in recent years (*e.g.* Bintliff 1984; Evely 1996; Hiller 1984; Wedde 1991: 92), and now carries far less weight within academic circles at least; yet more subtle assumptions have persisted, as demonstrated by certain instances where behavioural *expectations* for individuals from the mainland or Crete under particular circumstances are postulated. Two examples will suffice here to demonstrate this. In the first, E. and

H. Catling argue that two particular LM IIIA tombs at Knossos belonged to mainlanders, on the following reasoning: "'Burial with Bronzes' is not a Minoan habit ..... The attitude of mind reflected by Zapher Papoura Tomb 14 and Sellopoulo Tomb 4 is very Mycenaean; it would have been understood by the men and women for whose benefit so much treasure was buried in the Shaft Graves, but not by their Minoan contemporaries. They were too pragmatic to deprive the living of so much valuable property in the ritual of death" (Popham *et al.* 1974: 253). The second is taken from a discussion of the derivative form of the Ephyraean goblet introduced at LM II Knossos: "No self respecting Mainlander even in exile or colonial service in the wilds of Crete would accept a Cretan Ephyraean goblet as a satisfactory version of the Mainland one, particularly if he could import the original one" (French 1997: 151). The latter quotation particularly exemplifies a commonly held assumption that mainlanders and Cretans actually perceived *themselves* as being culturally distinct from each other, and that they conservatively retained by preference their own material culture and social practices where possible, rather than adopt ideas external to their groups. Incidentally, these two quotations also exemplify the perpetuation, albeit on a more tacit level, of the professional conflicts of the early twentieth century mentioned above, the first privileging Cretans, the second mainlanders.

The third legacy of the culture history approach is its repercussions for the way that long-distance cultural influence and interaction have been perceived. Partly as a result of the disciplinary structure mentioned at the start of this section, while much innovative research regarding the construction of social identities has been carried out within the given culture group boundaries, occasions rarely arise where the problems with their mutual frontiers as presently constructed become apparent. Moreover, even when such occasions have arisen, and the problems inherent in these constructs have become clearly evident, little has been done to challenge the simplistic but deeply embedded associations between territory, populations, material culture and behavioural practices.

To illustrate this, we shall briefly consider approaches to the Neopalatial/Early Mycenaean period. Such a case study would be useful for two reasons. The first is to demonstrate that the use of culture historical explanatory models is not limited solely to the LM II-III context with which this study is immediately concerned. The second is that this preceding period provides the most explicit examples of the use of culture

historical models in Aegean research to explain cultural influence. Within the MB III-LB I Aegean context, then, much attention has been focused upon the mechanisms underlying the influx of Cretan-derived cultural influences into other Aegean islands and parts of the mainland.[6] A limited range of explanatory models has usually been employed, comprising migration, diffusion and trade, and much of the debate has hinged around establishing criteria for distinguishing between physical presence and long-range influence. Moreover, when consideration has been given to ideas of local strategies motivating the adoption or adaptation of externally-derived ideas, archaeologists have rarely attempted to explain why or in what contexts such innovations would have taken place.

The adoption of Cretan burial practices has been considered a very strong indicator of the presence of Cretans (as opposed merely to influence), whether in the form of a colony or of political control by an intrusive minority. In fact, this is one of the main factors underlying the common assumption that Kytheran Kastri was a colony (Coldstream and Huxley 1984; Hood 1992: 135-6; Y. Sakellarakis 1996; see also Hägg 1984; Melas 1988: 51; Schofield 1984b: 47). Other general indicia of migration that have been posited include mundane artefacts (*e.g.* Cadogan 1984; Coldstream and Huxley 1984: 110; Hägg 1984; Schofield 1984b; Wiener 1984: 20, 25) and religious paraphernalia (*e.g.* Hägg 1984; Schofield 1984b: 47; Watrous and Blitzer 1997: 514). Actually, the migration model is so popular in this context that several recent studies advocating diffusion to explain cultural changes in the MB III-LB I Aegean have presented it almost as a progressive alternative (*e.g.* Wiener 1984; Melas 1988: 48). This does not imply that diffusionism is rarely employed as an explanatory mechanism, though. Although seldom referred to by this name, the model enjoys wide popularity, whether under the label of 'influence', 'acculturation' or Wiener's 'Versailles effect' (Wiener 1984). Trade too, especially in luxury goods, is often subsumed implicitly within the diffusion model, as prestige items are deemed to have been desired automatically by inferior elites external to Crete (*e.g.* Hägg and Marinatos 1984: 221-2).

Assumptions of relative cultural achievement can also be highlighted which in turn presuppose directions of influence. As noted above, these ideas were developed

---

[6] This is the main, but not the only, area where the idea of cultural influence in this period is under scrutiny. The hypothesis of migration from north of Greece continues to be advanced by a few individuals to account for the Shaft Grave phenomenon, despite vigorous claims to the contrary (Diamant 1988; Bouzek 1996; *contra* Dickinson 1989).

according to nineteenth and early twentieth century values, and the ideal of 'civilisation' as a western-style complex society is still endemic within the discipline. It is subscribed to even in Renfrew's '*The Emergence of Civilisation*', an otherwise overtly processualist reaction to the culture history paradigm (1972: 15). There, civilisation is defined, following Kluckhohn, according to population size, the use of a writing system and the presence of monumental ceremonial centres (1972: 7). Assumptions of relative cultural levels surface in archaeological literature concerning various periods of Aegean prehistory,[7] but are most conspicuous for the Neopalatial, where Crete is often perceived as being more advanced than the Cycladic and mainland neighbours that it influenced. Indeed, the characterisation of the Neopalatial period as the zenith of Minoan civilisation is well known, while by comparison, the warrior aristocracy of the contemporary Greek mainland is often regarded, explicitly or implicitly, as having been less culturally developed. A few examples from the past two decades should be cited of the cultural contrasts presented between these areas. Graham has described the Neopalatial period as "the last and most brilliant ... phase of the Minoan civilization", in opposition to the "less cultured" mainlanders (1987: 10). More recently, Rehak and Younger have stated that "the Neopalatial period on Crete represented a high point in Aegean culture that would not be reached again" (1998: 149), while Soles (1999: 62) has described the Neopalatial period 'Mycenaeans' as "barbarian raiders", in contrast to the "Minoan civilisation", which "reached its zenith in art and architecture" in LM IB (*ibid*,: 61).

The main point of concern regarding these ideas is that they have been imposed on the past in the expectation that the groups concerned would have perceived their relationships similarly and that the less advanced populations would have acted accordingly to improve their condition. Hood (1980: 237), in accounting for the presence of 'Cretan' swords in the Mycenaean Shaft Graves, writes that "less advanced people coming into contact with a higher civilisation more often than not try and exchange their own weapons for the superior ones about which they have learnt". Melas, meanwhile, advocates a diffusion model to account for Cretan influence in the Aegean on the basis that "such an explanation ..... sees the minoanisation process as an expansion to the heathen backward. Minoans were indeed so far in advance – artistically, technically, etc. – of their neighbours that their products were sought and

[7] See, for example, Dickinson (1989: 133) regarding the "lower cultural level" of Middle Helladic Lerna in comparison with certain other contemporary Aegean settlements.

imitated everywhere, even beyond the Aegean" (Melas 1988: 59). The 'Versailles effect' model too is based explicitly upon this premise that 'inferior' elites would automatically seek to emulate 'superior' cultures. "A 'Versailles effect' is most likely to occur where the cultural prestige of one society within an interconnecting set of societies is great, as was surely the case in the Bronze Age Aegean with regard to Crete from the beginning of the old palaces through LM IB" (Wiener 1984: 17; taken up by Melas 1988: 59; Driessen and Macdonald 1997: 117). In other words, this model simply turns the implicit generalising assumption underlying the diffusion model into an explicit generalising assumption. Local agency is acknowledged through the observation of an active desire to incorporate external ideas, but the model has two flaws. One is that it perpetuates the notion of relative cultural levels and of evolutionist tendencies among Aegean population groups towards social complexity and 'civilisation'. The second is that as a generalising explanation, it fails to consider why, and the different ways in which, specific external individuals or communities might have wished to emulate a Cretan model, according to their individual historical, socio-political and economic contexts.

The above analysis of the different models commonly used to explore Neopalatial/Early Mycenaean cultural interactions helps to explain why an even more limited range of options is usually considered for the same phenomenon on LM II-III Crete. Here again, large-scale and ongoing cultural changes are observed whose inspiration can in many cases be traced to another area of the Aegean – this time, the mainland. However, within this context diffusion is not a widely favoured model for explaining this influence. Instead, migration is almost universally preferred, at least at the elite level. The reasons for this narrowing of interpretive possibilities are twofold. The first is that several of the social spheres to which the intrusive ideas belong match those categories highlighted above, wherein spatial movement is usually ascribed to migration – that is, burial customs, religious beliefs and domestic habits. In addition to influence in burial customs (explored in detail below), alterations in the ceramic repertoire and the mention of supposedly mainland divinities in the Knossian archives have also been observed. A further transferred cultural 'diagnostic', and the one perceived as being most crucial, is language, seen in the administrative use at Knossos of Linear B, an early form of Greek. As observed in Chapter 1, this is seen to have been the decisive factor in demonstrating mainland presence, even by Renfrew (1996), who otherwise attacks the ethnic Minoan and Mycenaean constructs.

A second, and equally important, reason why diffusion has rarely been entertained as a model in this context, either instead of or as well as migration, is that the influence would be travelling in the 'wrong' direction. As noted above, the idea of cultural influence from Crete to the rest of the Aegean is deemed perfectly acceptable, based on Crete's perceived cultural superiority, and for precisely this reason the reverse (i.e. the voluntary imitation in LM II-IIIB by Crete of mainland cultural practices) is less palatable. This has rendered migration (and conquest) the most convincing means of explaining why an elite on Crete would voluntarily be using mainland practices. For example, Dickinson (1996: 65) writes that "a Mycenaean takeover of Knossos could be argued to fit a well-known pattern with numerous historical parallels, the takeover of a wealthy and prestigious centre of civilisation by people who, though less civilised, were familiar with the civilisation and ready to assimilate themselves to it to a great extent". The fact that the alternative, ie. voluntary adoption, has rarely been proposed as a serious consideration for LM II Knossos shows that Dickinson is merely voicing a more widely held, if generally unspoken, sentiment.

2.2.3 Reactions to the culture group model

The processualist approach to social interaction and change, championed within Aegean prehistory by Renfrew (most notably in Renfrew 1972) sought to undermine the normative, static view of cultures advocated by the more traditional model, advocating instead a more dynamic approach to social systems and privileging internal impulses to change. However, this systemic approach to social change did not really challenge the idea of culture groups *per se*, as opposed to shifting the focus of attention to issues within their boundaries that rendered the questioning of those boundaries unnecessary. It was not really until the 1990s that doubts regarding the theoretical validity and empirical practicability of sustaining these culture group models began to emerge in Aegean circles, drawing upon developments in wider archaeological theory (*e.g.* Dickinson 1994: 11; Day *et al.* 1998 for the Early Bronze Age; Knapp 1998: 201-2; Davis and Bennet 1999 for the 'Mycenaeans'). Renfrew in particular has set out a succinct deconstruction of these models (1996), in which he exposes them as modern constructs without satisfactory empirical foundation, and thus as inadequate for reconstructing the ethnic self-identities of Bronze Age mainlanders and Cretans.

In terms of long-distance cultural *interactions*, Davis (1984) is one of the few to have approached the Neopalatial evidence from an angle that not only postulates local agency as a motivation for the acceptance of foreign ideas, but also explores why such receptivity would have been advantageous. He proposes that the Keian adoption of Cretan religious ideology may have been the result of a conscious political strategy on the part of the local elite, whereby "the adoption of a foreign cult to reinforce the power and status of an elite which is becoming increasingly strong would have had special advantages and can be well paralleled historically. A local elite may hold exclusive access to a foreign cult and thus can control access of the people to their gods" (1984: 165). The crucial difference between this approach to cultural influence and diffusionist models is that the former gives weight to the viewpoint of the *borrower* rather than assuming receptivity as a natural consequence of the (presumed) prestige of the inspirational source. In other temporal contexts of Aegean prehistory, similar arguments for the consideration of indigenous agency can also be found, such as the use of Helm's model of privileged access to esoteric knowledge and goods as a strategy for status advertisement (Knapp 1998, derived from Helms 1988; see also Watrous 1987 for Protopalatial Crete; Mee 1998: 145 for LBA Anatolia).

Finally, another form of emphasis on local innovation should also be mentioned. The reaction by Mycenaeanists to proposals of Cretan influence in burial practices has often been to seek internal antecedents, as was successfully achieved in the rather different case of the Shaft Grave phenomenon (Dickinson 1989). This has usually been the response to ideas of a Cretan origin for the mainland corbel-vaulted tomb type in the EM-MM round tombs (Hiller 1989; Hood 1960; Kanta 1997a: 246-7), through emphasising instead elements of continuity from the indigenous tumulus (Dickinson 1989; Voutsaki 1998: 42-3). In other cases, however, where evidence for external inspiration is more compelling, this influence has been acknowledged, but the transformation of the ideas involved within their new political and cultural context is stressed (*e.g.* Voutsaki 1993: 162 regarding the Shaft Grave assemblages; Voutsaki 1998: 43 regarding the origins of the corbel-vaulted tomb).

A similar situation can be observed regarding the context of Final Palatial Crete. On the one hand, there have been arguments that several of the supposedly intrusive practices are actually of indigenous ancestry. On the other, a more constructive approach, which has emerged more recently, has been to accept that these influences were ultimately

mainland-derived, but to suggest that they were willingly accepted by groups within Crete for political purposes (*e.g.* Driessen and Farnoux 1994: 55; Driessen and Schoep 1999). This latter approach is one to which we will return below in outlining the working hypothesis of the present study.

To summarise, the persistence of certain culture historical and evolutionist ideas regarding ethnic constructs and cultural interaction has limited the range of options available for explaining the mycenaeanisation of Cretan material culture from LM II. Diffusion has been largely rejected as a potential model in favour of migration and conquest, and the subtleties of adaptation, fusion and innovation in social practices have frequently been overlooked, being incompatible with the expectation of neat material culture reflections of such movements. Reactions to this model with respect to LM II-IIIB Crete have begun to emerge recently, but they are few in number and clearly constitute a nascent trend in Late Bronze Age Aegean studies. Thus the present study, in order to analyse the mortuary sphere of Crete in this period, needs first to set out a critical reappraisal of the culture group construct. By this means, it is intended to clear the way to proposing the alternative framework for understanding the spatial movement of mortuary ideas that will be advocated here.

2.3 Towards an alternative model

The inadequacies of the culture history school have frequently been discussed, by both processualists and post-processualists, and it is not necessary here to present in detail a case that really should no longer need to be argued. However, an outline of the principal theoretical flaws in the approaches outlined above shall be set out in order to demonstrate the need to consider alternative models for our particular context, and as a precursor to the proposal of the specific framework that will inform the present study.

2.3.1 The problems with the 'Minoan' culture group construct

The culture group model for organising prehistoric populations is now widely accepted to have limited interpretive value. It was an idealistic construction (Johnson 1999: 65), appropriate for a nascent discipline that was just beginning to explore the retrieval of the past through non-textual material culture, but not for the present day, when the complexities of social relations and the subtleties of their relationship to material culture

are clearer. It has been demonstrated on numerous occasions that such a model is incompatible with the complex spatial patternings of material culture, with the idea of agency, and with the contextually-situated roles of material culture in the dynamics of social relations.

It was recognised early in the trend towards post-processualism that material culture distributions do not form neat, mutually reinforcing geographical units that can be tessellated onto a map, especially when considered in all their aspects, as opposed to the few, arbitrarily selected diagnostic artefact types which are usually chosen to represent them (Hodder 1978; Shennan 1978). Different artefact types will produce different spatial distributions in the archaeological record, depending upon their varying functional and symbolic significances, and the types of interaction networks in which they move. As a result, in contexts where close inter-regional contacts are established, as was certainly the case for the Late Bronze Age Aegean, there are problems with presenting "an axiomatic view of the social world as a mosaic of discontinuous and definite cultural *differences*", as opposed to one of "a seamless web of overlapping and interweaving cultural *variation*" (Jenkins 1997: 11-12; italics in original).

Second, in contrast to the traditional model of people as forming monolithic groups behaviourally constrained by a static cultural superstructure (of which they are also the passive carriers), it is now common to view *individuals* as the principal actors on the prehistoric stage (Trigger 1998: 168), whose choices perpetuate or modify the social structures and cultural environment. Thus the focus of interest regarding difference has moved from the relationships between entire population groups to matters of their internal organisation, and in the past two decades, archaeologists have come to view people in the past as active agents able to analyse their social conditions and move to change them. Of course, social 'norms' do exist, although social theorists now give them different labels, such as Bourdieu's 'habitus' (Bourdieu 1977). The important difference from the culture group model, though, is that they can be questioned, deviated from and manipulated – in short, dealt with in different ways by socially aware actors. Moving away from a reification of 'culture' as an inflexible, dominating social force, therefore, the present study works on the premise that culture is, in the abstract sense, a symbolic vocabulary used and reproduced in everyday practice and social interaction, and in the concrete sense, the material reification of that vocabulary. It is

not an inflexible and static structure to which people instinctively adhere, but a dynamic framework that people alter in the course of everyday practice and social interaction.

This dynamism and constant renegotiation of cultural surroundings is the inevitable result of the fact that different individuals have different agendas, dependent upon their social identities and the specific context. Every individual is a unique nexus of multiple, cross-cutting identities, based, for example, on rank, gender, age, kinship or ethnicity, each of which may be prioritised, emphasised or concealed, according to the context, and which can pull the actor in different, sometimes contradictory directions in any given situation (Shennan 1989: 20). Social relations, therefore, are complex networks of both common and conflicting interests, within which both individual identities and general norms are continually reproduced and altered.

Third, social relations are in a continuous reflexive relationship with material culture. Identities are defined and expressed through different types of artefact or social practice, so that material culture is both used within their construction and reproduction and at the same time constantly acts back upon ideas regarding these identities. The nature of the artefacts employed for the representation of different types of identity will not be identical everywhere, but instead will be culturally and contextually specific.

In order to illustrate these points in more detail, recent appraisals of the phenomenon of ethnic identity should be set out in brief here. This will serve also to demonstrate how this specific aspect of social identity is in fact differently constructed and harder to detect archaeologically than the culture historical model assumed. In fact, there have been ongoing debates, particularly since the 1960s, regarding the precise nature of ethnicity (Jones 1997: 56-83), including the extreme standpoint that ethnicity does not actually exist as a distinct, or at least an analytically useful, area of social analysis (Jones 1997: 61-2). There is generally more consensus now, however, following much research into the phenomenon over the past four decades, although numerous problems still persist, regarding the definition, construction and material and social expressions of ethnicity. The following is the widely accepted definition, and the one to which the present study adheres.

Ethnicity is a political phenomenon (Jenkins 1997: 52). It involves the perception of a common social identity between a group of people, based upon and expressed through

shared cultural values and practices. These may include religious belief, language, moral codes, or any other shared cultural practices in everyday life or common values. The most important feature of ethnicity, however, is that it is consciously defined through comparison with or opposition to others outside the group's membership (Barth 1969: 14; Jones 1997: 84,128). The group is often also "at least partly based on a specific locality or origin" (Barth 1969: 15; Shennan 1989: 14) and it can form a distinct geographical unit and be "largely biologically self-perpetuating" (Barth 1969: 10). These features appear to have much in common with the traditional culture group model, which was also seen to be geographically specific, biologically self-perpetuating, dependent upon shared elements of cultural practice and focused upon defined boundaries. However, there are several fundamental differences between the traditional culture group model and the definition of ethnicity followed here:

1. An ethnic group is internally constructed, while culture group classifications were externally imposed (by the archaeologist) and simply *assumed* to reflect self-identity, often without adequate empirical demonstration that this was the case.

2. Ethnic groups deploy, and indeed are largely constructed upon the basis of, shared cultural practices, but are not coterminous with the 'cultures', as was the case for the culture group. Indeed, the very existence of 'cultures' *per se* is a problematic concept, not least because of the differential spatial distributions of different artefact types pointed out above.

3. Ethnicity is *subjectively* constructed, while the culture group model was based upon the assumption of passive and innate adherence to genetically inherited cultural norms.

Following on from the third of these points, we need to avoid reifying ethnic groups in the way that culture groups were reified. Ethnic groups are in fact fluid and open to internal manipulation in a number of respects. One such respect is criteria for membership. In contrast to the absolute boundaries of the culture group, into which individuals are seen to be born and to which they are then bound for life, the boundaries of an ethnic group are both flexible and permeable. They can shift through time with changing criteria for membership, and individuals at least can cross from one group to

another, though they may never be integrated completely within the new group (Barth 1969: 21).

A second is that the nature and significance of the ethnic group will not necessarily be perceived and expressed in an identical way by all its members, especially as each individual has other social identities within and beyond the group's framework against which their ethnic affiliations must be balanced. Third, like other types of social identity, ethnicity can be brought into play or concealed to different degrees in different social situations. Indeed, it may not be a conspicuous element of social relations at all – or indeed even exist as a concept – in many historical contexts (Jones 1997: 123). It will only come to the fore of the individual's (or group's) consciousness, rivalling or superceding considerations of other aspects of their identity, under particular circumstances, such as in reaction to a perceived threat from outside the group's borders that renders internal cohesion the more important to emphasise and deploy in resistance.

The above emphases on ethnicity as being internally and subjectively constructed (as in Barth 1969: 10-11; J. Hall 1997: 19; Renfrew 1996: 1-2; Shennan 1989: 6), and thus allowing for change, agency and choice, are often referred to as an 'instrumentalist' approach to ethnicity. This is usually directly contrasted with the 'primordialist' standpoint, which assumes that a sense of ethnicity has a strongly biological basis, as an involuntary psychological need for group affiliation, so that one's ethnic identity is a characteristic ascribed at birth. Indeed, this latter approach holds much in common with culture historical ideas. Yet it also usefully emphasises the emotive aspect of ethnic group identity. Instrumentalism, on the other hand, has received the criticism that in its extreme form, it is overly cynical in reducing ethnicity to being simply a form of conscious, political manipulation, and there is a perceived need for a satisfactory integration of the two perspectives (*e.g.* J. Hall 1997; Jones 1997).

Yet the opposition between the two positions is not necessarily so stark, and the 'problem' of their integration has been somewhat exaggerated, as argued by Jenkins (Jenkins 1997: 44-8). Clearly, there is more to ethnicity than just strategic manipulation, as real, binding emotions and ties are involved. However, instrumentalism is not as cynical as it is often portrayed, and does not preclude the recognition of such emotions if one accepts that although ethnicity is a subjective construct open to manipulation, actors involved may see it as natural and act accordingly (Jenkins 1997: 44-5). Indeed,

it is this emotion and strength of belief that gives ethnicity its power. This is still far different from the culture historical model, however, which was relatively uninterested in emotions as a whole and which gave all action over to a behavioural imperative.

Finally, one of the most crucial differences to consider between ethnicity and the culture group model (for the archaeologist at least) lies in the way that it inter-relates with material culture expression. Anthropological research has shown that "the kinds of material culture involved in ethnic symbolism can vary between different groups" and "there is very little agreement as to what particular aspects of culture are essential to the category of ethnicity" (Jones 1997: 62). Moreover, the criteria that are used to construct ethnic identity will not necessarily be identical to those physical or material expressions that are used to signify it. As a result, "the expression of ethnic boundaries may involve a limited range of material culture, whilst other material forms and styles may be shared across group boundaries" (Jones 1997: 28) and "we should assume no simple one-to-one relationship between ethnic units and cultural similarities and differences ..... some cultural features are used by the actors as signals and emblems of differences, others are ignored" (Barth 1969: 14). Thus the archaeological retrieval of ethnic identity from such complex spatial patternings of material culture, none of which may be automatically assumed to be diagnostic of this particular social identity, will not necessarily be straightforward. Although ethnicity is expressed through cultural practices, we may not assume that a) it was always present as an active element of social discourse or b) emblems of ethnic identity will survive in the archaeological record (as, of course, is the case for any type of social identity). A further problem is to differentiate between expressions of different identities in the material record, but this should be possible by contextualising the patterns in which we are interested. In other words, in order to distinguish what sort of identities our material patterns may be informing us about, we need to look at what other patterns in the evidence they correspond with. For example, rank differences would be suggested by mutually reinforcing scalar variations in terms of wealth, effort expenditure and so on, whereas ethnicity may be indicated by consistent material patternings with a spatial referent.

From the above comparison it can be seen that the traditional culture group model was overly simplistic and optimistic, and far from adequate for trying to reconstruct ethnic affiliations in prehistory. Ethnicity, where it is present at all, is but one aspect of the individual's complex network of social identities and one which may only come to the

fore under specific circumstances, and so does not determine the social behaviour of all individuals. More importantly, its material expression cannot be assumed to be so easily retrievable, though it is not an impossible task (*contra* J. Hall 1997: 142).

The implication of the above conclusions is that our models of 'Mycenaeans' and 'Minoans' as normative population groups encompassing the mainland and Crete respectively are based on unsound theoretical principles and require thorough re-evaluation. Indeed, until ethnic identities can be demonstrated to have been coterminous with the mainland and Crete, and for as long as all elements of material culture broadly identifiable with one or the other area continue to be labelled generically as 'Mycenaean' and 'Minoan' without any demonstration of their ethnic symbolic significance, it would be advisable to avoid using these labels altogether. There is no reason to reject the idea that ethnicity was an active element in cultural interactions at certain stages in Aegean prehistory. Situations of intensive cultural contacts, such as that of the Late Bronze Age Aegean, are in fact those in which ethnic identity is most likely to become a prominent social issue. However, we may no longer assume that Cretans and mainlanders identified themselves as two distinct and internally unified ethnic groups in the Late Bronze Age, simply because certain elements of their material culture and social practices differed. On the contrary, evidence must be produced to *demonstrate* that these differences acted as emblems of a consciously perceived social distinction between the two areas. It is, in fact, far more likely that any ethnic groupings that existed in the Late Bronze Age formed much more complex geographical patterns than that of the basic mainland-Cycladic-Cretan division usually employed. For example, Renfrew (1996: 3) has suggested that if ethnic identity was a factor in social interaction in Neopalatial Crete, it may well have operated on an inter-polity level (though such a neat equation of political boundaries with ethnic groups is problematical). Equally, it is not impossible to envisage ethnic identities that spanned the geographical divisions between Crete, the Cyclades and the mainland, especially if population movements in prehistory were as frequent as many archaeologists appear to assume. Nor is it unfeasible to imagine more than one level of ethnicity operating simultaneously.

Turning to the specific context of LM II-III Crete, therefore, "The underlying ethnic awareness and identity which [the term 'Minoan'] might be thought to imply cannot in fact be assumed" (Renfrew 1996: 5-6). In other words, the 'Minoan' ethnic group has

not actually been demonstrated to exist. Ethnicity will not be an easy issue to explore archaeologically (as observed by Driessen and Farnoux (1994: 54)). For although ethnic identities may well have been prominent in Final and Post-palatial Crete, not only do we not know to whom they were important or how they were spatially organised within, and externally connected beyond, the island, but we also do not know which aspects of material culture the groups involved might have used to construct or proclaim these identities. For example, the privileged treatment of Linear B as a failsafe indicator of mainlanders at Final Palatial Knossos is hazardous. The principle that commonality of language is often central in the creation and maintenance of ethnic groups is in itself sound, since ongoing communication is the means by which similar values and communal allegiance are reproduced and reinforced. However, two caveats must be noted regarding the use of Linear B as such an ethnic indicator. First, most archaeologists have overlooked the possibility that Crete already contained a multilingual population by LM II, in contrast to the absolutist assumption that two different languages were spoken by Cretans and mainlanders (Bennet, forthcoming). Greek may already have been a common language linking at least parts of the populations of Crete and the mainland by this phase, particularly given the protracted period of previous intensive interaction. A second problem is that Linear B was a fossilised script. It changed remarkably little either spatially, across the Aegean, or temporally, from its inception in LB II to its abandonment in LB III and so does not constitute an accurate reflection of the dynamics of spoken Greek across time and space within the Mycenaean koine. Being so artificial and unrepresentative of spoken language, why should it be relied upon as an ethnic indicator?

For this and other reasons, the textual evidence, which is too often privileged as a source of evidence, is not helpful. Establishing whether personal names in the archives are of Greek or non-Greek derivation is not necessarily going to inform us of either the origins of the individuals involved or their ethnic affiliations, both because names are socially ascribed and changeable and because we have an extremely limited knowledge of the linguistic map of Crete in the Neopalatial and LM II periods. Looking beyond the Aegean, the group names plausibly associated with Crete in Semitic and Egyptian archives or inscriptions (that is, the terms 'Kaptara' and 'Keftiu') should not be interpreted as ethnonyms – they are simply external perceptions of the Aegean that cannot (and perhaps were never intended to) carry much weight in reconstructing the self-identities of the populations concerned. Rather than designating ethnic groups, they

may simply have reflected geographical locations or political entities. Moreover, even if it were to prove the case that 'Keftiu' did indeed refer to a genuine Cretan ethnic group, there is no reason to assume that this group encompassed the entire population of the island.

2.3.2 Movements of material culture – the LM II introduction of mainland-derived mortuary practices

As a result of the arguments presented above, the field is open to consider a wider range of alternative explanations for the movement of cultural ideas to those that the simplistic diffusionist and migrationist models allow. One of the things that we *do* know about the Late Bronze Age Aegean is that different areas, irrespective of their ethnic make-up, were actively exchanging ideas, particularly at the elite level. In the Neopalatial period, specific artefact types and social practices occurred simultaneously in more than one geographical area. Here, therefore, we need to consider how best to analyse transfers of elements of material culture, and a number of theoretical premises may be proposed.

First, the idea of relative cultural levels is, like the culture group model, a modern imposition upon the past that should not be assumed to reflect the perceptions or attitudes of the inhabitants of the Aegean. Second, different elements of material culture may be transfered for different reasons, depending upon their meanings and ideological associations, and the social spheres in which they were active. For example, in the Late Bronze Age, prestige artefacts might be expected to have moved around more widely and frequently (though in more restricted circles) than many other types of material culture, as their users were involved in reciprocal exchange networks.

Third, as Trigger has observed, "the most striking failure of culture-historical archaeologists was their refusal ..... to extend their concern with change to properties of cultural systems that either make innovation possible or lead to the acceptance of innovations coming from the outside" (Trigger 1989: 206). More importance needs to be attached to receptivity – that is, active willingness to introduce and adapt an externally-derived idea or practice into the local cultural, social and political context. Within the culture historical model, agency was implicitly attributed to the group from whom the influence in question derived, either as migrators imposing their practices or as cultural innovators and achievers whose customs and ideas would naturally be

emulated. Neither the diffusion nor the migration model can satisfactorily account for the factors underlying receptivity to external influences, though the former at least opens up the possibility of internal initiative, whereas migration gives it no scope at all (Trigger 1989: 154). For this reason, both models have descriptive validity but limited or no explanatory power.

Fourth, it is also crucial to consider the context that inspired or facilitated the introduction of new ideas, whether or not it was accompanied by movements of people. In particular, the borrowing of external ideas is a conscious decision by specific individuals within a specific context. The idea of inevitable borrowing upon contact is flawed, as innovations (and their successful adoption) are not automatic, but historically contingent, resulting from a perceived need for a certain idea, symbol or technology that is determined more by the immediate local social and cultural context than any intrinsic attractiveness on the part of the idea itself (Torrence and van der Leeuw 1989: 2-3).

Finally, it was stressed above that the meanings attached to various aspects of material culture are flexible. To go further, it is in fact inevitable that the significance, if not the form, of an artefact will shift within its new social, cultural and political context, whether or not such transformations are intended. Migration and diffusion can account for how an idea moved, but neither can in itself explain how those ideas were received, interpreted and integrated within their new social contexts – if, that is, they were accepted at all ("The innovatory new ideology would not necessarily have been adopted, since it is not the question of contact but of structural reasons for adoption which is important" – Shennan 1982: 158).

Several points of immediate relevance for the present context emerge from the above theoretical points regarding the interpretation of cultural borrowings. First, the focus of attention needs to move away from preoccupations about whether voluntary influence was possible, on the basis of artificial constructions determining the nature of inter-ethnic relations. Instead, we need to broaden the range of interpretive possibilities, considering various possible reasons *why* a particular influence might have occurred, on the basis of the specific historical context, the nature of the borrowed ideas, and the ways these ideas were transformed and re-interpreted within their new environment.

There is no reason to dismiss the possibility that migrations occurred. Indeed, we may safely assume, on the basis of the sheer intensity of evidence for inter-regional exchange, that some movements of people in the Late Bronze Age Aegean did take place (*pace* Schofield 1996: 47-8). However, two qualifying points should be mentioned. First, such movements must be put into perspective. "'Cultures' do not migrate. It is only a very narrowly defined, goal-oriented subgroup that migrates" (Anthony 1990: 908). In the case of LM II-IIIB Crete, any such movements were probably not population waves superimposing their customs on indigenous societies, but rather specific limited groups or individuals moving for a variety of purposes, within different social milieux and historical circumstances. Thus the ideas they transmitted would have varied, according to their agendas and to their degrees of contact and influence with the local populations. Second, even this revised migration model will not, of itself, account for the ways the transmitted ideas are received and adapted within their new context. If, as in the present study, more emphasis is placed upon conscious decision-making within specific local circumstances to take up an external idea, then even if the origins of the individuals or groups are significant, the nature of this significance will be determined by the immediate rationale for the innovation within the new context. It is the political, cultural and economic milieu and the strategies of the social actors that constituted it which would make the introduction of a new practice desirable, and which would then determine the degree of success of the innovation and the nature of its transformation.

If, therefore, the data are considered within this framework, an alternative hypothesis can be proposed to account for the introduction of mainland burial practices on Crete. It was observed in Chapter 1 that many of the mainland-derived influences discernible in LM II-III Crete are socially restricted, in that they are predominantly connected with the elite sphere. This is certainly widely accepted to be the case for Final Palatial tomb use at Knossos and, as will be discussed in Chapters 6 to 10, tomb use continued to function as a medium for status advertisement into the Post-palatial phase also, albeit across a broader social spectrum. The use of material culture by high status groups to construct and maintain their authority is a well-known phenomenon and is commonly proposed within Bronze Age Aegean archaeology. Therefore, the active borrowing by members of the LM II Knossian elite of mainland strategies for political competition is far from being inherently implausible, whether these people were in fact of Cretan, mainland or (perhaps most probably) mixed origins.

As mentioned above, this is how the introduction of mainland-derived elements of material culture at LM II Knossos has very recently started to be explained. In particular, Driessen and Schoep have suggested that the introduction of Linear B, and of Greek as the main, if not sole, administrative language of the new political regime, was a conscious political strategy designed to define a new and exclusive elite membership (1999: 392). Similarly, they argue that changes in dress, burial practices, the introduction of chariot use and the greater prominence given to weaponry do not require an ethnic explanation, but were "socially functional" – that is, actively deployed within the creation of a new elite lifestyle to reinforce the hierarchy of the new political regime. Such approaches are exceptional, however, and still do not explore the subtleties of the manipulation of material culture involved. The aim of the present study is to elaborate upon the idea of innovation as a political strategy, and to consider the burial sphere in detail as a forum for political manoeuvring through the manipulation of cultural symbolism.

2.4 The social roles of burial practices

The working hypothesis of the present study, therefore, is that the large-scale introduction of mainland-inspired burial practices on Crete in LM II was a conscious strategy on the part of high status groups within a period of political instability, and that the subsequent role of such practices on the island was to a large extent connected with ongoing political, rather than ethnic, transformations. Within this hypothesis, the origins of the individuals concerned are less pertinent than the ways in which they chose to negotiate their social statuses.

Having set out this hypothesis, it is necessary to outline in more detail *how* the mortuary evidence might support or refute such a proposition. Equally importantly, the concept of 'agency', which has been consistently advocated above as a key to understanding cultural changes, needs here to be defined more clearly, as well as its perceived role within the present context specifically. The first part of this section will review past, current and possible future approaches to mortuary data in Anglo-American archaeology, in terms of how it is expected to interrelate with, and therefore inform us about, social organisation and relations. Drawing upon these ideas, the second part will

then set out the way in which the mortuary evidence will be viewed in this study. Support for such an approach will be cited from studies of LBA mortuary practices on the mainland. Finally, the concepts of agency, structure and innovation will be discussed and their applicability to the present study outlined.

2.4.1 Past, present and future approaches to mortuary practices

The general precepts of the culture-historical approach were set out in section 2.2.1. Within this model, burial evidence, like other spheres of material culture, was seen to reflect the cultural norms of distinct ethnic population units. Indeed, as burial was seen to be a fairly conservative social sphere, not prone to rapid change, it was often treated as a particularly reliable method of tracing a particular culture group's fortunes through time. Craniometric research also frequently lent a racial element to such reconstructions (*e.g.* Petrie and Quibell 1896; Petrie 1901; Read 1896), a feature that lasted into the 1960s and 1970s in Aegean prehistory (Angel 1973; Charles 1965: 135-189). The other main importance of burial archaeology within this era, apart from its frequent role as a culture group diagnostic, lay in the artefacts it yielded, whether for purposes of chronological seriation or reconstructing prehistoric lifestyles. In terms of social differentiation, distinctions between elites and non-elites were often postulated within the normative cultural framework (with a greater interest in the elites), usually on the basis of the relative wealth or monumentality of tombs. However, the ideologies surrounding burial practices were usually considered to fall within the sphere of religious belief (*e.g.* Grinsell 1953) and thus beyond the remit of the prehistorian (Hawkes 1954).

Processualism, especially in the 1970s, claimed to be markedly different from culture-history in its approach to burial evidence, and indeed it heralded positive changes in terms of both the type and the amount of social information that mortuary data could reveal. Drawing upon functionalist and structuralist ideas in other social sciences, its main difference from culture history lay in the transferal of interest "from cultural to socio-political concerns" (Thomas 1991: 103), wherein burial was no longer of primary value for delimiting culture groups and assessing the degree of their inter-relationships, but rather for the measuring of social complexity. Within this new aim, propositions were generated to guide interpretation, from, at the top, the general tenet that diversity in burial customs would directly correlate with the degree of social complexity in the society in question (Saxe 1970; Binford 1971), down to methods for measuring and

interpreting this diversity in the burial record (*e.g.* Hodson 1979; Tainter 1975, 1978). According to Binford's model, burials within complex societies were expected to reveal information regarding their vertical social status (Saxe 1971: 48), in addition to the age, gender and kinship aspects of the individual's 'persona', which were expected to be retrievable in the burials of 'egalitarian' societies. Status was deemed to correlate directly with the numbers of individuals with social obligations to the deceased individual (Binford 1971: 17; Tainter 1975: 2).

Despite this significant change in emphasis, however, four interconnected features of the processualist approach to burial evidence were similar to those of the culture-historical model. To begin with, Binford's hypothesis did not provide an adequate explanation of burial variations. Although criticising the "descriptive lexicon" applied to mortuary variations by culture-historians as a substitute for actually *explaining* them (1971: 6), Binford's alternative proposal, based on levels of complexity in the social structure, was no more of a complete explanation of this variation than the 'diffusionist' idea he also attacked. If mortuary patterns did reflect social complexity rather than cultural influence, he did not explain why they should do so.

Second, burial continued to be accorded a passive role in social dynamics, and was rarely considered an integral element within the interpretation of social change. It was accepted that in different societies, rates of change in mortuary customs vary widely (Binford 1971: 11). However, this was simply part of the wider recognition that levels of social complexity could change at varying rates, rather than constituting an altered perception of the role of mortuary practices relative to other social spheres. Burial customs were expected to be in step with processes of social change, but in the sense of passively reflecting them rather than being intimately connected with or actively contributing to them.

Third, individuals were accorded as passive a role in processualist thought as they had been within the culture history paradigm (Miller and Tilley 1984: 3), though behaviour was now determined by adaptive responses to the interacting structuring elements of the socio-political systems rather than (or more than) by cultural homogeneity (distinct culture groups practising differential mortuary practices were still recognised by processualists, *e.g.* Peebles 1971). It was this passivity that allowed the greater social variability inherent in complex societies to be neatly reflected in the proportionately

greater variability of their burial patterns. 'Noise' (non-conforming small-scale variations, and preservation biases) had to be eliminated, and "all other things" to be made "equal" (from Binford 1971: 14-15). The idea of social 'roles' in the mortuary sphere was central to the processualist concept of the individual, as the particular niche held by the individual within the socio-political structure should be retrievable from the mortuary data. This idea was derived directly from role theory, wherein individuals were related to each other "according to rules and structural slots dictated by the larger social system" (Saxe 1970: 4), and acted in predictable ways in accordance with these different roles. A second use of the idea of roles can be observed on a much broader level – namely, the expectation that all societies would conform to the principle (or cultural law) that burial rituals should mirror these individual social roles. This is seen, for example, in Tainter's tenet that "Mortuary ritual is basically a communication system in which certain symbols are employed to convey information about the status of the deceased" (Tainter 1978: 113). In both cases, the emphasis is on structure and organisation (Tainter 1975: 1), allowing little scope for agency. At the same time, however, it should be observed that ideas of agency were not entirely neglected. The well known Saxe/Goldstein hypothesis that bounded cemeteries reflect resource claims through the legitimation of inheritance by linear descent groups, although involving an element of economic determinism, provided an opening for considerations of social competition (Saxe 1970; Goldstein 1976). Similarly, Renfrew's model of European megaliths serving as territorial markers linked mortuary locations and resource claims, placing increasing emphasis on agency and strategy within the systems model (Renfrew 1976).

Lastly, the processualist approach treated ideology as an epiphenomenon (Hodder 1984: 53). In contrast to the culture historians, however, the problem was not so much that the cultural beliefs surrounding death were deemed inaccessible, though this was a contributory factor. It was more that they were felt to be unimportant, especially if they did not correlate with the anticipated patterns that would reveal the degree of social complexity of the society in question. Thus they became part of the 'noise' obstructing archaeological research. A notable exception is to be found in Deetz's study of New England mortuary customs at the turn of the 19th century (1996). This postulated a direct link between shifts in burial practices and ceramic preferences, on the one hand, and changing concepts of the importance of the individual on the other, thus beginning to explore concepts of agency and cognition.

In the 1980s the focus of mortuary studies shifted again, heralded by calls for a greater emphasis on meaning and symbolism in the funerary record, and for an acknowledgement of both human and material culture agency (Chapman and Randsborg 1981; Pader 1982; Parker Pearson 1982; Shanks and Tilley 1982; Shennan 1982). Cross-cultural laws were rejected, to be replaced by an increasing concern with context and historical specificity, the importance of which had long been pointed out by anthropological fieldwork (Huntingdon and Metcalf 1991: 112; I. Morris 1991; Parker Pearson 1999: 21-23; Shennan 1982; Ucko 1969).

One of the main aims of post-processualism has been to advocate and explore agency, whether on the part of the social groups deploying mortuary behaviour for their political ends, the mortuary sphere acting back on society, or the dead continuing to exert power as ancestors over the living (Parker Pearson 1993). Within the first of these, it was in reaction against processualism's 'behavioural determinacy' (Miller and Tilley 1984: 2) and over-emphasis on structure, that systems theory and 'role' theory as models for understanding social relations and change were now replaced by relations of power and practice theory. The early studies particularly drew upon neo-Marxist ideas of power as "central to the study of social systems" (Parker Pearson 1982: 100). The focus of interest shifted from the structuralist tendency towards synchronic perspectives on social relations to a post-structuralist stance that sought to explain change through competition and the ongoing negotiation of social contradictions. Within this, emphasis was placed particularly upon power relations between different levels of the vertical social hierarchy, partly because, as has frequently been observed, vertical differences are generally easier to reconstruct from the mortuary evidence than horizontal (*e.g.* Chapman and Randsborg 1981: 12; O'Shea 1981: 50, 1984: 302).

Burial ritual was one of the main spheres through which early post-processualist ideas regarding ideology, symbolism and social relations were developed. This domain appeared to lend itself to such an avenue of enquiry, as burial was perceived to be a forum that did not simply passively reflect social change or continuity, but actively created it, especially through its potential to act as a "nexus of conflict and power struggle" (Parker Pearson 1999: 23). Since the early years of the twentieth century anthropologists had been commenting on the unique threat that death forms to social cohesion (Radcliffe-Brown 1922: 285-6; Malinowski 1948: 34-5; Hertz 1960: 78-9;

Goody 1962; Bloch and Parry 1982; Huntingdon and Metcalf 1995: 79-81). As such, it is an occasion when social roles must be brought into the open for re-evaluation and the social order restructured in the face of the loss of a member of the community (I. Morris 1991: 150; Parker Pearson 1982: 101; Voutsaki 1998: 45-6). Thus the (often multiple) rituals surrounding death have the potential to become not only a focus for the transfer of rights of the deceased to living community members (Goody 1962), but also for the resolution of wider concerns regarding social organisation. In complex societies, it is often the case that certain roles are institutionalised, so that the replacement of individuals will not disrupt the stability of the overall system. However, these institutions are themselves open to manipulation and renegotiation, however immutable they may appear to be.

The means by which these negotiations were conceived as taking place was through ideology, the sphere of beliefs ordering the world, an arena to which burial ritual, like rituals generally, lent itself. "The provision of a final resting place for someone's mortal remains is generally a carefully thought through procedure which may have taken days, months or even years to plan and execute" (Parker Pearson 1999: 5). In particular, emphasis was placed upon strategic manipulations of symbolism by specific groups or individuals, through promoting and naturalising a particular view of the social order, whether to maintain or to challenge the status quo. The ways in which these strategies were envisaged as operating varied. For example, Shanks and Tilley (1982) took a rather extreme Marxist view that the purpose of ideology in the mortuary sphere was to allow the elite to resist change through manipulative concealment of social differences, while Parker Pearson (1982) saw it as a tool that could also effect change, and which could be deployed by minority, as well as the dominant, interest groups. Meanwhile, Shennan (1982) concentrated on how ideology can act back upon those using it in unforseen ways: in Early Bronze Age Europe, the transferral from community monuments to individualising wealthy tombs as strategies for power display protected elites from challenge by non-elites, but then subsequently opened up avenues for intra-elite competition.

Although emphases vary, there is general agreement that burial ritual activities do not simply reflect any one social reality (in the processualist sense) or distort it (in a Marxist sense). Rather, there are multiple socially constructed 'realities' in different spheres of social interaction, including the desired realities and idealised social

relationships created within this particular 'arena of representation' (Bloch 1971; Goody 1962; Hodder 1982: 197; Miller and Tilley 1984: 2; I. Morris 1987: 8; Parker Pearson 1982: 110, 1999: 4, 33; Shanks and Tilley 1982: 130; Thomas 1991: 105, 107). As a result of all these features, the straightforward correlations between burial patterns and social organisation hoped for by processualists can be seen to be impossible, not simply because mortuary rituals do not necessarily relate to social reality in the way previously thought, but because social reality itself cannot be understood without consideration of ideology.

Since the early 1990s archaeological approaches to burial have reached a plateau, with a broad consensus on the validity of the main elements of the post-processualist paradigm. Yet there is potential for building upon, modifying and further elaborating this paradigm, and some promising directions for future research in mortuary archaeology can be suggested. Three areas are mentioned here, each concerning a *broadening* of scope, rather than a change of direction *per se*. First, the importance of context-specific analysis should continue to be emphasised, using data-rich contexts with refined dating to allow as detailed a reconstruction as possible of mortuary dynamics and subtleties. One method of achieving this would be to incorporate textually documented periods to a greater extent, as a complement to the prehistoric contexts usually considered (cf. I. Morris 1991). Second, it is not necessary to abandon all processualist models for mortuary analysis on the (albeit reasonable) argument that cross-cultural laws are invalid. Morris (1991) has argued persuasively for a reconsideration of the Saxe/Goldstein hypothesis, adapted to incorporate contextually specific variations and the importance of cognition. Equally, there is no need to dismiss entirely Tainter's effort expenditure model. Although simplistic in its original form and in need of cautious application (Wason 1994: 76-80), it is a valid concept that can and has been applied successfully in many contexts.

Third, there is need for more studies of the mortuary patterns of *state-level* complex societies. This is a surprisingly unexplored area – for example, the chapter devoted to 'Status, Rank and Power' in the recent overview of mortuary archaeology by Parker Pearson (1999: 72-94), dealt almost exclusively with chiefdom-level societies. Yet complex societies, with their range of different social groups with interlocking, often contradictory interests and identities, offer great potential for exploring the diversity of

the mortuary sphere (as will be argued for the present context of Late Bronze Age Crete).

A good case study is the different interpretive approaches to 19th-20th century AD English mortuary customs adopted by Parker Pearson (1982) and Tarlow (1992). The former emphasised political power strategies underlying changes in burial customs, while the latter, in reaction, pointed out the significance of other social concerns, such as changing ideas of hygiene, pressures of burial space, religious contentions and the effects of the human losses in the First World War, all contributing to changes in attitudes to death. The value of Tarlow's study is the point that "social relationships are more than power" (1992: 137; see also Tarlow 1999), and that power struggles are not always the dominant force driving mortuary practices. In other words, within the mortuary sphere, there is the potential to explore, apart from power strategies (based, for example, on status, ethnicity or gender), a number of other possible themes, such as culturally conditioned emotional responses to and ways of dealing with death, ideas of selfhood and identity, powers of tradition overriding changing social conditions (cf. Bloch 1971), or the dramatic effects of specific event horizons. The effects of these various factors can influence different aspects of the mortuary sphere in different ways. They may work at varying temporal rates and levels of consciousness, being prioritised by particular social sub-groups, and emerging only within specific historical contexts. Within the archaeologically retrievable burial record, moreover, these multiple elements could subvert or complement each other in terms of the symbolism employed and the meaning assigned to that symbolism; alternatively, they could simply be spatially juxtaposed within the same tomb without having any bearing on each other at all. We need to be aware of such potential multiple discourses, in order that each set of patternings may be interpreted appropriately.

In summary, the mortuary sphere is an incredibly complex arena of beliefs, traditions, changing concerns and immediate goals that would be intriguing to explore in the context of state systems. Analysts studying death in such contexts must be aware of these alternative threads and accordingly acknowledge the partiality of an analysis limited to any one of them, rather than falling prey to the assumption that the 'meaning of death' in that particular society has been satisfactorily 'explained' by the specific angle they have chosen to pursue. It also highlights the point that one must anticipate a lot of 'noise' in the mortuary evidence when one is pursuing a particular line of enquiry

– not irrelevant and dismissable patternings in the processualist sense of the term, but rather patternings that simply relate to other aspects of social relations than that under investigation.

2.4.2 Death, agency and context

The particular aspect of mortuary customs that the present study will focus upon with regard to the complex societies of LBA Crete will be political dynamics. It will draw mainly upon the post-processualist ideas outlined above for approaching this issue, but will also seek to incorporate the above suggestions for future directions in mortuary analysis. In fact, the present study is intended to be only a first step towards a satisfactory understanding of the social roles and significances of burial customs on Crete in this period. Several other themes emerge from the funerary evidence so far gathered, apart from the strategic character of tomb use generally, some of which will be highlighted during the course of the following analysis, when they intersect with the principal theme under consideration here.

While agreeing with Tarlow that political competition is not always the most appropriate explanation for mortuary variations, it will be argued during the following analysis that *in this particular context*, it is justifiable to suggest that this was indeed one of the main discursive functions of tomb burial. This is not, in fact, surprising, given that on the mainland, the area from which many burial innovations were introduced, the mortuary sphere was frequently deployed for exactly this purpose. Of course, this merely increases the likelihood that it had a similar function on Crete, rather than constituting proof in itself, but it is important to be aware of this connection.

The potential of the mortuary sphere to reveal aspects of the political dynamics of the Late Helladic mainland has often been recognised (*e.g.* Cavanagh and Mee 1998; Dabney and Wright 1990; Mee and Cavanagh 1984; Voutsaki 1998), and specific areas where status advertisement has been orchestrated through burial have been pointed out. For example, Antonnaccio (1994: 91) has suggested that encroachment by the 'Clytemnestra' tomb into Grave Circle B at Mycenae was an attempt to claim prestige through association with this older monument, rather than a mark of disrespect that signifies the disappearance of the circle from social memory. The validity of this suggestion is further supported by the fact that Tomb Rho, an LH II re-use of Grave Circle B, is located immediately adjacent to the intruding Clytemnestra tomb. Thus this

section at least of the Grave Circle was probably still known at the time of the construction of the second corbel-vaulted tomb. Similarly, Wright's 1987 study of mortuary symbolism at Mycenae draws upon both iconography and tomb location to propose a visual and conceptual link between prestigious tombs and the citadel, including the appropriation of Grave Circle A into the latter as a legitimation of the current elite through claimed lineage ties. However, the most detailed demonstration of the political role of the mortuary sphere in the Argolid has been by Voutsaki (1993, 1995a, 1998). Exploring the active role of mortuary customs in the process of state formation from kin-based societies, she drew upon diverse aspects of the data, including tomb dimensions, elaboration and wealth (the latter measured through material diversity), the results of which were outlined within section 1.2 of Chapter 1.

Within the framework of the aims and methodology for the present study, set out so far in this chapter, it would be useful to make a few remarks about other theoretical precepts that have frequently been mentioned, but not defined. In the study of the mortuary data, this analysis focuses particularly on the inter-relating themes of agency, innovation and structure, which provide useful models for understanding social change. A brief explanation of how these ideas fit together is required. For example, it has been noted at several points within the preceding and present chapters that LM II saw the introduction of new, mainland-derived elite practices which subsequently became part of the cultural environment on Crete, supplemented by new influences over the course of time. The timing of the initial innovations was explained above as being context-specific, in that they occurred in a phase of political instability. However, it was not explained why a context of social and political fluidity might be more conducive to the acceptance of innovations than any other type of social situation. Ostentatious burial had not been an elite strategy in the previous Neopalatial phase, although Cretan elites were aware of its deployment on the mainland. Arenas for conspicuous display can shift through time (*e.g.* Bradley 1990; I. Morris 1991), but what theoretical explanation can be given for its adoption in LM II?

The present study follows the ideas of agency advocated by Giddens (1979) and Bourdieu (1977), ideas incorporated early on within post-processualist studies (Hodder 1982; Pader 1982). It sees the individual as being born into and living out their life within a society whose already existing structures (physical and conceptual) influence the individual's world view, predispose them to certain responses to certain situations

and channel decision-making processes through the range of options they offer. Giddens (1979: 66) defines structure as "Rules and resources, organised as properties of social systems", while Bourdieu uses the concept of *habitus*, a set of 'dispositions' which conditions the interpretation of new experiences (1977: 72). These structures often operate at a practical level of consciousness, and are not simply restraining (limiting action and perception), but also enabling (Giddens 1979: 69). For agency is not only possible within these frameworks. It is permanently present, as the actions carried out by individuals on a daily basis, and the decisions they make (including decisions to innovate – within the limits of the options provided by the *habitus*), feed back to modify the structures.

It can be seen from this brief description that the range of ideas covered by the structuration and habitus models is vast (Dobres and Robb 2000) and indeed, at one level, innovation is continual. However, the main concern of this study is with decisions made by agents at a discursive level to fulfil a specific aim – decisions that will henceforth be termed 'strategies' – rather than at the practical level with which Giddens and Bourdieu are primarily concerned. It is with discursive innovations that we are primarily concerned because the decision(s) to introduce a new high status mortuary custom to LM II Crete cannot but have been conscious (given the concurrent changes in other aspects of elite practice), regardless of the identities and origins of the individuals responsible. The present study is also concerned mainly with agency at high status levels, and this is an important point, as within any society, some individuals will have more scope for agency than others (*e.g.* Flannery 1999). In our context, the elites of palatial and regional centres, by virtue of their greater social power and the greater range of external contacts (upon which their very status was partly built and maintained), probably had more freedom to innovate than the majority of the population, as well as a *habitus* that provided more options for choice.

The extent and ways in which agency is consciously employed is also conditioned by the historical context, for "where innovation does occur it is at some level a conscious decision in response to a particular situation" (Shennan 1989: 338). As Mouzelis (1995: 124) states in his critique of Giddens and Bourdieu, more emphasis is needed upon the contextually situated nature of agency, especially in order to give more attention to the potential for strategic choice (principally, in his opinion, through the objectivisation of structures). Here one could usefully employ Giddens' 'de-routinisation' model of

change (1979: 220-1), as opposed to the 'incremental'. Within the latter, "Change ... occurs as an unintended outcome of social reproduction itself", while 'de-routinisation' is a more rapid phenomenon, involving the undermining of "an existing set of traditional practices". Within de-routinisation, strategies for dealing with the altered situation might be expected to be more prominent. Thus, although it is often the case that the upper ranks of an established complex social organisation will tend towards conservatism simply to legitimate and maintain the status quo within a rigid hierarchical and ideological system, agency may be less socially constrained in periods of instability or rapid social and cultural flux. Such contexts destabilise the inherited structures and the conventions for their perpetuation and provide a potential for status mobility that would not normally be possible. They also throw into question what would otherwise be considered universal norms, paving the way for alternative choices that could lead in a number of different directions, including ideas previously known but not taken up. Indeed, it is also important to note that the concept of agency carries with it the necessary implication that "at any point in time, the agent 'could have acted otherwise'" (Giddens 1979: 56; see also Shennan 1989: 340).

The phenomenon of de-routinisation has frequently been noted empirically with respect to ostentatious burial practices, which are often seen to increase in times of political and social instability (*e.g.* Bradley 1990: 136; Parker Pearson 1982: 12, 1999: 87, following Childe 1945). It will be argued here that the LM IB-II period on Crete was a horizon that might reasonably be described as a crisis situation on a scale significant enough to induce such strategies, whether in reaction to, or as an exploitation of, social fluidity. Once successfully introduced, this new symbolic arena was adapted to suit its new context, henceforth becoming an element of the cultural structure of Final Palatial, and then Post-palatial Crete. As such, although it received continuing influence from mainland contacts, it became an increasingly established mechanism for use within the ongoing political changes on the island. Indeed, although LM IIIA1-B probably did not witness any horizons of instability on the scale of the LM IB-II transition, this nevertheless appears to have been a period where change was relatively rapid. Within such a context, discursive decision-making processes, again involving a wide range of potential options, are likely to have featured strongly, not only with regard to the issue of whether or not to continue to deploy the burial sphere as an arena for competition, but also with respect to the most appropriate ways to do so.

2.5 Conclusions

Citing the introduction of the Ephyraean goblet as an argument for a mainland political takeover of LM II Knossos, Dickinson stated that "It is *weak* to suggest that the Minoans simply liked the shape – if so, why did they not adopt it before, and why did it become so immediately popular that examples outnumber the native cup form in the Unexplored Mansion LM II deposits?" (Dickinson 1996: 66). According to the approach adopted in the present thesis, the immediate political and cultural context, plus the social position and personal goals of the agents involved, are the crucial elements in answering such a question. In this particular case, political disruption could account for a local elite making strategic recourse to the new ceramic form (potentially with new behavioural customs), which was one element of a broader high status package, in an attempt to replace or side-step the struggling ideological system previously in place. Within such an explanation, invasion and migration from the mainland are neither necessary nor entirely dismissable as models. However, they do become an inappropriate solution for the satisfactory explanation of a complex manipulation of cultural ideas. Whatever the ancestry of the LM II Knossian elite (and it was probably more complex than either purely Cretan or mainland), the important point is how various individuals reacted to the opportunities and challenges that the LM IB-II horizon of instability created. The strategic deployment of a manipulable material culture and its ideological associations within this situation, and also within subsequent political shifts in the Final and Post-palatial periods, would have involved numerous decisions by individuals of different status levels. This would surely have included not just the elite minority, but also the larger populace – the lower ranking (albeit individually invisible) actors at whom the status advertisement was at least partly aimed and whose decisions to accept or support the elites were surely significant. These decisions would have been framed within, but also had to reconcile, diverse factors: personal goals, the immediate social and political context, indigenous cultural traditions and external ideas for status negotiation and advertisement. The results, which were naturally unique and probably varied in the degree to which they were actually successful, acted back on future strategies, conceptions of appropriate action and the high status ideological system, and continually forged new cultural environments on the island. LM II-IIIB Crete is an intriguing context that certainly rewards closer investigation, and which contributes to a more sophisticated archaeological

understanding of cultural interactions, though one that also requires a re-evaluation of some tenacious theoretical models that linger within the discipline.

Chapter 3

Late Minoan I Mortuary Practices

3.1 Introduction

An understanding of Neopalatial burial practices is a prerequisite for exploring the significance of subsequent changes in Cretan mortuary customs. The present chapter will focus particularly on the Late Minoan I evidence, as the immediate precursor of the LM II horizon of change at Knossos, but will also consider earlier, Middle Minoan, customs. It will explore the different types of mortuary activity that survive in the archaeological record, highlighting especially spatial variations and any indications of status competition being enacted through the mortuary sphere, for purposes of comparison with later practices. To begin with, however, some general comments on the social and mortuary background of LM I burial practices are appropriate.

The social context

The Neopalatial period on Crete is often thought to be fairly well understood, because of the abundant settlement data and our knowledge of the extensive exchange contacts between Crete and other areas of the eastern Mediterranean. However, this familiarity is in some respects illusory, as the social and political organisation of the island in this period is in fact still largely unknown. To judge by the scale of the palatial systems that Crete supported, its social organisation was probably far more complex than we can reconstruct (or attempt to conjecture) in the absence of textual evidence. Moreover, there are dangers involved in simply imputing to the Neopalatial polity, or polities, the pyramidical hierarchy based on kingship that we often implicitly expect (an expectation which the Linear B archives have satisfied for the Final Palatial period). Within the following analysis of the burial evidence, therefore, the current opacity of Cretan social organisation must be borne in mind.

MM I-MM III mortuary practices: an overview

As the burial evidence for LM I Crete has frequently received comment on account of its scarcity, some recourse to the MM material is also advisable, simply in order to

supplement the data. Indeed, before commencing the analysis of LM I, a brief overview of burial customs through the first half of the second millennium BC provides a useful background.

The Protopalatial period (ca. 1900-1700 BC) saw continuing use of the communal tombs popular in the Early Minoan period, which appear to have served individual communities and families (Branigan 1970; Whitelaw 1983). They comprise two main types: the 'house' tombs of central and eastern Crete and the round tombs found predominantly in the Mesara region. In both types, the secondary manipulation of human remains commonly occurred in conjunction with large-scale ritual activities at the burial location, involving specialised architectural and artefactual facilities within the tomb complexes (*e.g.* Branigan 1993; Soles 1992: 219-224, 230-236). Burials also took place in caves and rock shelters during both the Protopalatial and Neopalatial periods (for example, at Gournia Sphoungaras and Malia). Interments in pithoi and (far more rarely) clay tub receptacles known as larnakes, first appeared in EM III-MM I. These burial receptacles were placed either within built tombs or in simple shallow pits in the ground. The latter pit burials (henceforth referred to as 'pithos burials' and 'larnax burials') were either clustered around (usually pre-existing) built tombs or grouped in distinct cemeteries.

Over the course of the Protopalatial period, there was a gradual decline in the use of built tombs – that of the house tombs starting slightly earlier than that of the round tombs. This change was paralleled by the earlier emergence of pithos burials in eastern Crete (in EM III-MM I at Pachyammos and Sphoungaras), which spread thence to the centre of the island, reaching the west by MM III (Soles 1992: 207; Walberg 1992: 135-6). There is a general trend from EM III-MM I onwards, therefore, of pithos burials gradually superseding the built tombs as the main burial type, a process virtually completed by the start of the Neopalatial period, when only a few exceptional built tombs appear to have continued in use. It is to this latter period that the most intensive usage of cemeteries of pithos burials belongs, while isolated examples (as opposed to cemetery groups) also occur for the first time in MM III. This gradual transformation in burial practices both reflected and ideologically reinforced significant changes that were taking place in social organisation on the island. The pithos cemeteries and isolated pithos burials involved a change from the built communal tombs in the nature of interactions between the living and the dead. The secondary manipulation of human

remains was not practised in these contexts. Indeed, there is less evidence overall for ritual activity in association with the dead. Although the same ceramic types are found in association with pithos interments as were used in ritual activities at built tombs (Soles 1992: 248-9), their quantities are much smaller, and there are no signs of permanent ritual facilities at the cemetery locations. In fact, it may be the case that all ritual activity associated with pithos burials was now restricted to the occasion of primary burial, rather than extending to post-depositional ceremonies. The social and ideological causes and implications of this shift remain unclear, though various hypotheses have been advanced (Branigan 1970: 130-131; Petit 1990; Walberg 1987: 58, 1992: 136-7). The issue is beyond the remit of the present study, but it is likely that these mortuary changes over several centuries were more complex than generalising explanations, such as Branigan and Walberg's arguments for an increasing tendency towards individualism, can satisfactorily account for. In particular, more attention needs to be paid to the likelihood of regional-, and even settlement-level variations in social traditions and agendas resulting in different meanings underlying superficially similar mortuary patterns.

3.2 Late Minoan I burial practices

3.2.1 Introduction

The discussion of LM I mortuary practices will begin with summaries of the available burial evidence according to the categories of tomb type, skeletal data and assemblage composition. A catalogue of the known LM I mortuary sites is set out in Appendix A, with identification codes for each, by which they will be referred to in the figures and tables. Due to a lack of published detail, this catalogue is of necessity not definitive. For example, some of the cases included were only probably used in the LM I period, while there is one case, at Smari, where we have a definite LM I context, but it cannot be demonstrated with certainty to have been mortuary.

Table 3.1 sets out the phases of use of different mortuary sites and individual tombs prior to and within the Neopalatial period. Within LM I, tomb use is broken down into three chronological subphases: MM III-LM IA, LM IA mature and LM IB. The first of these subphases is intended to encompass those tombs that could be allocated to either late MM III or early LM IA. I do not intend to enter into the debate over whether the

transition between MM III and LM I should be considered as a ceramic phase in its own right (see Warren and Hankey 1989: 54-65; Warren 1991; Watrous 1990: 158). However, since there are a large number of contexts, both settlement and mortuary, where it has not been possible to distinguish between the two, this is a useful category to preserve for those burials that are only vaguely datable within this range. The 'LM IA' category here, therefore, is intended to signify the presence of clear (and thus usually 'mature') LM IA ceramics.

Several of the LM I tombs in this table cannot be assigned to any of these subphases with certainty, due to a lack of either published information or diagnostic material within the assemblages. Despite these ambiguities, two comments can be made regarding the patterns revealed. First, it can be seen that there was frequent continuity in tomb use from the Protopalatial and MM III periods into LM I. Second, there appears to be a slight decline in tomb use between LM IA and LM IB, with only six cases of definite use in the latter phase. According to whether one follows the High or Low Chronology, this discrepancy would be more or less serious. Using the former, there may not have been much difference in the relative durations of LM IA and LM IB (see Table 0.2), so that weighting the tomb numbers according to period length would not account for the lower number of LM IB tombs. Using the Low Chronology, weighting could partly, but still not entirely, account for the imbalance. However, this issue may in fact be academic, if the very totals presented here are misleading, as may well be the case. For it could be argued that LM IB burials are generally harder to detect archaeologically than those of preceding phases, due to the difficulties of identifying the ceramics of this phase with certainty, against a repertoire which continues largely in LM IA traditions. There are few ceramic type fossils for this phase (Driessen and Macdonald 1997: 19-20), especially for conical cups, one of the most common vessel types in LM I mortuary assemblages (see Appendix B). Moreover, Marine Style decoration, one of the most conspicuous traits of this phase, usually occurs on ceramic vessel shapes other than those most common in the mortuary context, i.e. jugs, rhyta, tall alabastra, jars and basket vases, rather than cup shapes (Mountjoy 1985: 241). The significant number of contexts in Table 3.1 for which no distinction has been made between LM IA and LM IB use is probably due at least in part to this problem. In short, although LM IB may well have seen a decline in formal burial practices, this is by no means assumable on the basis of the existing archaeological evidence.

3.2.2 Burial types, frequency and distribution

The locations of the LM I tomb sites are shown in Figure 3.1, from which it can be seen that most of the known evidence derives from the central and eastern areas of the island. Mortuary practices in the western regions, meanwhile, are still relatively obscure. The distributions of the different tomb types (listed in Appendix A) are shown in Figure 3.2. The vast majority of the known interments were in pithos burials, which had an island-wide distribution. Although none have yet been published from the western Mesara, Branigan (1993: 66) mentions that LM I pithos burials have been found outside the earlier round tombs in this region. Few of these burials are isolated. The only LM I examples are at Psari Phorada and Anopolis, and these may well be remnants of destroyed or otherwise unrecognised cemeteries. Otherwise, cemetery sizes range from two pithos burials (at Gra Lygias) to over one hundred, as seems to have been the case at Sphoungaras and Pachyammos (of which Sphoungaras has only been partially recovered – Watrous and Blitzer 1999: 906). Where information regarding the positioning of the pithoi is provided, they were either inverted, at a fairly shallow depth (at Pachyammos, Mochlos and Gournia Sphoungaras), or lying on their side (at Anopolis, Gazi, Chania and Agios Charalambos). They were often surrounded by stones (at Pachyammos, Gournia Sphoungaras, Gazi and Agios Charalambos), and occasionally had stone slabs sealing their mouths (at Gournia Sphoungaras, Gazi, Chania and Agios Charalambos). As in earlier periods, larnax burials were far more rare than pithos burials, but occurred sporadically. All are assigned dates of MM III-LM IA or LM IA mature, though none were found in secure enough contexts, or with diagnostic artefacts, to confirm these dates beyond doubt.

Deposition in caves and rock shelters also continued from earlier periods, as did chamber tomb use, which had been practised since MM II. It is noticeable that the latter type is very restricted in its distribution from the time of its inception and throughout the Neopalatial period, being an exclusive phenomenon of north central Crete, wherein it was mainly concentrated in the Knossos area.[8] Chamber tombs, like receptacle burials, enjoyed their greatest popularity in the Neopalatial period. Although the Knossian chamber tomb cemeteries at Ailias and Mavro Spelio had their earliest use in MM II (Cook and Boardman 1954: 166; Forsdyke 1927: 246), the main period of

[8] The unpublished chamber tombs 1 to 9 at Mochlos Limenaria were dated generically to LM I-III by Papadakis (1990: 228). However, as all of the tombs that have been excavated subsequently in this cemetery are assigned to LM III alone, it is probable that Papadakis' tombs also belong purely to this later phase (as also implied by Soles and Davaras 1996: 210-1).

activity at these and the other chamber tomb sites was from MM III onwards (Cook and Boardman 1954: 166; Hood and Boardman 1956: 32-3). Again, as with receptacle burials, chamber tombs tended to occur in groups – as at Ailias, Mavro Spelio, the Temple Tomb area and Poros – though apparently isolated examples are also known from the Knossos valley, Episkopi and Stavromenos. The chambers within the tombs tended to be large, often multiple, and irregular. They held multiple burials, on the floor or in pithoi or larnakes. One of the Ailias tombs contained upwards of fifty interments, although in general, they held smaller numbers than did the built tombs of the EM and MM periods.

Neopalatial burials in built tombs are grouped together for discussion here for expediency, although they actually incorporated a diverse range of structures. They were often existing mortuary structures re-used after a period of abandonment, rather than new constructions, but their rarity and the fact that the burials within them were often fairly sporadic and isolated events, rather than ongoing traditions, strongly suggest that their social significance in each case was locally and situationally specific. Among the round tombs, examples include Kamilari (yielding MM III-LM IA, LM IA and LM IB ceramics) and Lebena (dated only to 'Neopalatial' – Alexiou 1969a: 483). Among the house tombs, Mochlos tombs 9 and 20-21 and perhaps Chrysolakkos at Malia saw re-use in MM III (Baurain 1987: 70; de Pierpont 1987: 83), and Mochlos tombs 4-6, 10 and 22 in LM I. A few of these tombs do appear to have shared one common feature, in that they involved the revival of tombs that had enjoyed high status associations in their original periods of use, associations that had survived in local memory. This is particularly relevant to structures such as Chrysolakkos and the Myrtos Pyrgos and Mochlos tombs, though probably less so to the round tombs, unless local perceptions of their social significance had altered with the passing of time. The later burials within these tombs may, therefore, have constituted deliberate bids by specific individuals for the consolidation or improvement of local social status through the appropriation of a prestigious monument. This symbolic strategy, perhaps involving claims to lineage connections with the original burying groups, is well attested in archaeological evidence from various contexts. To take examples from Greece alone, the physical elaboration and incorporation of Grave Circle A within the citadel of Mycenae in LH III was just such a political measure, as were the later venerative cults established at Mycenaean tombs in the late eighth century BC and beyond, though the precise motivations underlying these latter appeals to the 'heroic' past are debated and may have varied in

different contexts (Antonaccio 1994: 90-2; Coldstream 1976; 1977: 341-357; Snodgrass 1982; Whitley 1988, 1991: 59-61).

Finally, there are a few cases of the secondary processing and redeposition of human remains in both mortuary and settlement locales – again, an eclectic assortment of contexts that were surely highly variable in their significance. The Temple Tomb at Knossos and Archanes Building 20 fall within the former category of structures at mortuary locales, and the remains from the Knossos North House and Unexplored Mansion, Mochlos Building B3 and the Zakro palace within the latter (of domestic locales). These cases are discussed individually further below, but it would be useful to address here the long-standing hypothesis that the Temple Tomb was in fact a formal burial tomb in the Neopalatial period, constructed specifically to receive the primary interment of an elite individual or individuals. This idea, first suggested by Evans (1935: 973), has proved remarkably tenacious, despite being based largely upon an imaginative identification of this tomb with a legendary tomb of Minos in Italy, a mythical structure described by Diodorus (Evans 1935: 973, 978). In fact, there is no evidence for the use of this building at Knossos for primary interments before LM II or IIIA1. However, this structure did have mortuary associations of some sort. First, it was located in close proximity to contemporary chamber tombs, beyond the limits of the settlement (Hood and Smyth 1981: no 323). Second, the disarticulated remains of about twenty individuals were found in association with LM IA material in rubble wall fill from a rebuilding horizon outside the rear Pillar Crypt. Evans suggested that these individuals were earthquake victims (1935: 988-90), but an alternative explanation advanced below is that they represent the processing of human remains during mortuary rituals in this structure, in common with practices at neighbouring Archanes Phourni.

3.2.3 Skeletal evidence

The data available regarding skeletal remains from LM I pithos burials show that they were almost universally primary, single and contracted, and the same was probably the case for larnax burials. Both articulated and disarticulated remains have been recovered from chamber tombs. Here, earlier burials often appear simply to have been swept aside or placed in a pit to make room for fresh interments, but possible cases of deliberate selection for redeposition have been noted at Mavro Spelio, in the absence of the skull from a larnax burial in tomb 9, and the positioning of a skull in a niche in tomb 5 (Forsdyke 1927: 256, 264). More obvious signs of secondary manipulation of human

remains are found in Archanes Phourni Building 20, the Knossos Temple Tomb, Knossos North House, Mochlos Building B3 and Zakro, all but the last in connection with ritual facilities. The disarticulated individuals from the Temple Tomb were described above. In Archanes Building 20, pieces of human bone were recovered from the floor of the structure, in association with animal bones and pieces of silver and stone. In the North House at Knossos, child and adult remains were found in various contexts within the structure, sometimes in connection with artefacts associated with ritual activities. The Unexplored Mansion at Knossos revealed three intramural fetus burials dated by the excavator to LM IA. In Building B3 at Mochlos, a structure containing a pillar crypt and 'ritual' artefacts, a skull was found in a basement room. Finally, in the Zakro palace, a child skull was found in one of the walls.

Published information regarding age and sex in the LM I burials is set out in Appendix D. It suggests that males and females were not separated according to tomb type or location, with the exception of Myrtos Pyrgos, with its exclusively male LM I interments. Children, meanwhile, seem frequently to have received differential treatment from adults, though the fact that two of the three recorded MM III child burials were associated with adult interments in chamber tombs shows that mixed deposition also occurred.

3.2.4 Assemblages

Many LM I burials received no accompanying assemblage whatsoever, and can only be dated on the basis of the form and/or decoration of the interment receptacles, where such were used. In some cases this absence of artefacts may be due to looting, or to removal in antiquity during subsequent interments in a multiple tomb. However, many of the burials without assemblages were intact – particularly pithos burials, where there was no secondary manipulation of the body and the tombs are inconspicuous (although at Pachyammos, pithoi were frequently disturbed by later interments on the same spot (Seager 1916: 19)). In general, therefore, it appears that many LM I burials were simply not accompanied by artefacts at all.

In those cases where assemblages have been found, there is a noticeable conformity in the types of artefact deemed appropriate for the burial context. These have been catalogued in Appendices B and C, insofar as publication details permit. The most common artefact type was the ceramic vessel – principally conical cups, followed by

rounded and straight-sided cups. Jugs, bridge-spouted jars and amphorae were also fairly common, and were usually placed *with* cups, rather than being used as alternatives to them. Little temporal variation in vessel preferences within LM I can be observed on the basis of the known evidence. One of the Poros tombs (***POR*** Π1967 in Appendix A) provides the best opportunity for exploring this issue, since this is the only tomb with continuous use throughout the period that has also been fully published. This tomb produced 233 catalogued vessels in total, and their temporal distributions are illustrated in Table 3.2. Most types were in continual use throughout the period. Although the conical cups were difficult to date stylistically, their occurrence in all five of Muhly's main datable contexts, which together represent all of the LM I subphases (set out in Muhly 1992: 115), suggests that this vessel type was in continuous use, and jugs show a similar pattern. Braziers were deposited less frequently, but again, were a continuous phenomenon, found in MM III-LM IA, and in LM IA or LM IB contexts. Bridge-spouted jars are documented more widely as occurring throughout LM I: in MM III-LM IA at Kamilari and Gypsades, in LM IA at Myrtos Pyrgos and in LM IB at Knossos in Tomb 3 of the Temple Tomb area and the North House.

Cup preferences show some temporal variation within the Poros tomb. The datable rounded cups show a slight bias towards MM III-LM IA and LM IA, though the undated remaining six would balance this picture if they proved to be of LM IB date. Straight-sided cups were clearly most popular in MM III-LM IA, decreasing in frequency during LM IA mature and absent in LM IB. Bell cups, by contrast, only came into use here in LM IB. The restriction of straight-sided cups to earlier parts of the period is entirely consistent with datable tomb contexts elsewhere (only at Kamilari is there a possible exception, where they could be either mature LM IA or LM IB). Bell cups, however, do begin to occur in Cretan contexts in LM IA mature (Driessen and Macdonald 1997: 19). This temporal change in cup types was gradual, therefore, and its significance for our understanding of mortuary practices is probably limited anyway. The different cup types probably performed similar functions in the mortuary ritual, so that the change probably reflects a general development in ceramic repertoires rather than any modification of funerary customs specifically. It is notable that all of the most popular vessel types in LM I burial contexts are also found in contemporary settlement contexts, in a similar order of popularity. There does not appear to have been any particular vessel type reserved specifically for, or closely associated with, the mortuary context, as opposed to the spaces used by the living.

Assemblage items other than ceramic vessels are rarely recovered, though this may be partly because they are not possible to date to LM I when not accompanied by ceramics. This problem is particularly conspicuous in the context of tombs with multi-period use, such as at Mavro Spelio (especially tombs 7 and 9), where the LM I assemblages became mixed with those of earlier and later burials, a problem exacerbated in this cemetery specifically by a lack of detail regarding findspots in the publication. Thus, while only diagnostic ceramics can be used as secure evidence of LM I activities here, it is highly probable that much of the other material recovered from these tombs also belongs to this period.

Tombs such as those at Mavro Spelio appear to have been fairly exceptional, however, with most burial assemblages of this period being genuinely restricted in the quantities of material they have yielded. As Appendix B shows, most of the non-ceramic material deposited consisted of body ornaments such as beads, pins, rings, seals and ear rings. A very few sites do stand out from this general picture in terms of the variety of artefact types involved and of the inclusion of more valuable materials: namely, Poros, Mavro Spelio and the Temple Tomb area at Knossos, Archanes, Myrtos Pyrgos and Mochlos. The artefacts found at these locations included bronze weaponry, tools and grooming equipment, while jewellery included items of silver, gold and amber.

It is important to note at this point that it is not always possible to make a neat distinction between artefacts that comprised burial assemblages and artefacts used in mortuary rituals. In many cases, open vessels deposited with the corpse had probably been used for consumption or libation in the mortuary ceremonies surrounding the burial. However, there are a few cases where we can clearly observe the use of vessels and other paraphernalia within what seem to have been extravagant and complex mortuary ceremonies, but which were never intended to be permanently disposed of in the grave. Particularly relevant here are the Archanes Phourni cemetery and Myrtos Pyrgos. The former contained one structure apparently entirely devoted to mortuary ceremonies (Building 4), as well as another (Building 20) in which, as noted above, fragments of silver and stone artefacts were found in association with processed human remains. At Myrtos Pyrgos, meanwhile, the findspots of the ritual paraphernalia suggest that ceremonial activities took place on the upper floor of the tomb, while the interments tended not to receive permanent assemblages. These examples alert us to the

fact that if elaborate mortuary ceremonies took place, for example involving the consumption of liquids and foods and the display of high status artefacts, these are unlikely to reach our attention unless either associated with permanent structures devoted specifically to this function or else leaving material traces in the grave itself. Gournia Sphoungaras is an unusual exception: only fifteen burials in the entire cemetery contained any associated assemblage, but the ten baskets of cup sherds recovered from the site surface suggest that drinking was an important aspect of the mortuary ceremony. In fact, consumption of various sorts may frequently have been an aspect of the burial ritual to which it was considered appropriate to devote greater resources than the furnishing of the grave itself.

3.3 Discussion

3.3.1 Patterns of differentiation in Neopalatial mortuary practices

In order to embrace the diversity of the practices represented by the evidence for Neopalatial mortuary practices, an important issue to which the above thematic overview cannot do justice, several site case studies will be taken in turn. This will demonstrate that the customs in place for the disposal of the dead could vary spatially to the extent that generalisations regarding the social structuring of the mortuary sphere in this period are potentially hazardous.

Pachyammos and Gournia Sphoungaras

These two cemeteries of pithos burials, situated only about 3km distant from each other, both had long ancestries, but their main period of use was Neopalatial (E. Hall 1912: 46; Seager 1916: 9). Their generally close similarities, in terms of interment customs and assemblage composition, suggest that they represented groups of comparable status within two distinct communities, rather than different status levels within the social hierarchy of a single settlement. Their associated settlements have been identified as Gournia town for Sphoungaras and a site beneath the modern town of Pachyammos for the cemetery at the shore there (Watrous and Blitzer 1999: 906). The proportions of their respective communities represented by these cemeteries are unclear at present (as mentioned above, the Gournia cemetery at least has only been partially retrieved). However, if even the lower estimate given by Watrous and Blitzer (1999: 906) for the Neopalatial population of Gournia is considered (400 inhabitants), over a thousand

tombs would be necessary to account for even half of the LM I community.[9] Less than 150 have been retrieved so far, which suggests that formal burial in this cemetery at least was probably restricted according to some criterion (though not necessarily rank).

The differences between the cemeteries are fairly minor. Both display a general absence of assemblages. A very few burials at Sphoungaras contained artefacts including sealstones and jewellery, but such items were generally rare. In fact, two pithos burials at Sphoungaras (one containing a bronze pin and stone seal; the other with two finger rings of bronze with crystal inlay and of lead) account for a significant proportion of the valuable artefacts of wealth retrieved from the cemetery as a whole. The cup fragments indicative of mortuary rituals at this site were mentioned above (section 3.2.4), but overall, while interest in formal burial certainly increased at both Gournia and Pachyammos in the Neopalatial phase, there is no clear evidence for tomb practices constituting a sphere for status competition.

Myrtos Pyrgos

The only mortuary evidence recovered for this settlement so far is the built tomb, which was re-used in LM I after a period of abandonment, to judge by the presence of hillwash separating this later layer from the lower, Protopalatial phase of use (Cadogan 1978: 73). The revitalisation of this structure, prominently located at one of the ascent points to the hilltop, was suggested above to have been a strategy for status assertion and may have been connected with the social group associated with the nearby 'country house', the central building of the settlement in the Neopalatial period.

LM I activities in the tomb appear to have differed from preceding mortuary practices there in several respects. First, the number of interments was far smaller than in previous phases, consisting of only four burials. Second, the upper floor was dedicated to ritual activities which appear to have been purely LM I in character. The artefacts recovered from this stratum included over one thousand ceramic vessels, plus stone vessels, triton shells and bronze daggers. The quantity and extravagance of these ritual paraphernalia indicate a high degree of interest in the mortuary sphere in this phase (though the assemblages themselves were poor), as well as an emphasis on ostentatious mortuary ritual that seems to have differed from previous activities in this tomb (though

[9] Allotting LM I a timespan of roughly 8 generations, as set out in section 3.3.2.

thorough clearing of the upper floor in LM I could have removed traces of earlier ritual activities here).

Mochlos

The Neopalatial period saw the re-use of several of the high status house tombs constructed and used in the Prepalatial and Protopalatial periods. They had probably not been used within living memory, since their latest ceramics prior to the Neopalatial period were MM I. Tombs 4-6, 9 and 20-21 were re-used in MM III, while 4-6 also contained MM III/LM I material. This deliberate association with the earlier high status activities at these burial locations was surely a strategy for status advertisement, a theory supported by the wealthy Neopalatial assemblages recovered from tombs 10, 20-21 and 22.

The nature of the Neopalatial burial activities was probably far different from that of their predecessors. It is unfortunate that Seager gives no details regarding the human remains, as it would be very interesting to know whether secondary manipulation of the bodies of the Neopalatial dead had been carried out, following the earlier practices at these tombs. It is also unfortunate that Seager gives no estimation of the number of interments represented by the finds in these tombs, though the brevity of his comments may indicate that the material was small in quantity. In those cases where the assemblage was wealthy, and therefore prompted more comment, the number of artefacts reported are few, and could have accompanied only a single burial in each tomb. Rather than being a continuous practice, therefore, these burials appear to have been sporadic and exceptional events, probably prompted by local, historically specific circumstances, rather than being the embedded high status traditions that they had constituted in the Protopalatial period.

There was also a small cemetery in the same area as the built tomb cemetery, comprising fifteen child pithos burials. Although entirely lacking assemblages, their spatial association with the house tombs and their very entitlement to formal burial may indicate that these children belonged to families of privileged status. Finally, the anomalous find of a skull in the basement of building B3 should be mentioned. Analysis suggests that the woman died from a blow to the head, and sacrifice cannot be ruled out, but little more can be deduced at this stage.

Knossos and Archanes

In the Knossos area, the mortuary picture is more complex, as this centre presents evidence for a greater variety of deposition practices than observed at any other Cretan site in this period. Tomb types included receptacle burials, chamber tombs and one round tomb. There were also two structures with secondary human remains, one in a cemetery area (the Temple Tomb) and the other within the settlement itself (the North House).

The cemetery of pithos and larnax burials was located on the east bank of the Kairatos (Hood and Smyth 1981: nos 248-250). Three pithoi and one larnax were found in close proximity to each other and to the Ailias and Mavro Spelio cemeteries, and although this area was stated to have been intensively searched (Evans 1928: 554), there may be further burials in the vicinity. The only published details regarding this cemetery concern the pithos burial known as the 'Tomb of the Cow', which contained a child burial in an inverted pithos, accompanied by "a few smaller pots of a plain character" (Evans 1902: 89, 1928: 554).

Turning to the chamber tombs, the Ailias and Mavro Spelio cemeteries are situated near to a small settlement area on the Ailias hill (Hood and Smyth 1981: no.268). However, their proximity to and intervisibility with the palace and its associated settlement may indicate that their links were rather with the latter site. The distinction between the cemeteries was probably based upon horizontal rather than vertical social stratification, as they are similar in most respects. The tombs in both consisted of large, irregular chambers, though the Mavro Spelio chambers were all defined by walls carved from the bedrock, while those at Ailias also used built walls within single chambers to mark off specific areas. It is also noteworthy that in two cases at Ailias these spatial divisions within the chambers correspond to different deposition activities (Cook 1952: 108; Hood and Boardman 1956: 32-33), a feature not noted at Mavro Spelio. The tombs held multiple interments, frequently within pithoi or larnakes, while the use of pits to hold earlier burials swept aside during clearances in the tombs is also attested at both sites (Cook 1951: 252 for Ailias; Forsdyke 1927: 276-282 for Mavro Spelio tomb 17). The two cemeteries contained similar artefact types: mainly conical, rounded and straight-sided cups, jugs and amphorae, and sealstones and jewellery in stone, bronze, silver and gold (Cook and Boardman 1954: 166; Hood and Boardman 1956: 32-33; Forsdyke 1927).

The other chamber tombs in the Knossos valley, at Upper Gypsades (tomb 18), Monasteriako Kephali, the Venetian aqueduct and the Temple Tomb area, are to the west of the river, and thus are more clearly linked with the settlement around the palace. Their periods of use differ, the Gypsades and Monasteriako tombs containing MM III material at the latest and the Temple Tomb group stretching from MM III-LM IA to LM IB. Regarding deposition methods, we have little information, though we do know that the Monasteriako tomb at least contained both pithoi and larnakes, while the Gypsades tomb held neither. The available information regarding assemblages indicates that the Gypsades tomb and the Temple Tomb group were making the same artefact choices as the Ailias and Mavro Spelio cemeteries.

The chamber tomb cemetery at nearby Poros, which was probably associated with the harbour settlement rather than that of the palace, displays both similarities with and differences from those in the valley to the south. The tomb architecture is similar, with the use of multiple chambers, support pillars, and pits for the remains of earlier burials. Assemblage choices were also similar to those of Ailias and Mavro Spelio, though the Poros tombs appear to have been cumulatively wealthier. However, the latter were distinctive in their rejection of clay burial receptacles. Instead, the use of wooden biers is attested in four of the tombs, a mainland-derived practice that was to enter the Knossos valley itself in LM II, as was the practice of burials with weapons also attested in several of the tombs. These important links with the subsequent phase will be discussed in more detail in Chapter 4.

Moving on from the chamber tombs to the Gypsades round tomb, this unusual tomb type for northern Crete was initially constructed in the MM II period. Neopalatial activities at this tomb, however, involved an alteration in mortuary customs here, as a rectangular annexe was now constructed adjacent to the round tomb to act as an ossuary. Rather than involving the ritual manipulation of human remains, however, in the tradition of earlier round tombs, this ossuary is reported to have been intended simply to hold remains removed from the tomb itself to make room for subsequent burials (Hood 1958: 22-3). In terms of assemblages, only ceramics are reported from the tomb, while the more ostentatious objects recorded from some of the chamber tombs in the area are absent.

Finally, the documented cases of secondary deposition of human remains in settlement, ritual and funerary contexts at Knossos were briefly outlined earlier in the chapter, demonstrating the presence of further methods for the treatment of human remains other than straightforward burial. Warren has argued that the North House remains represent sacrificial victims (Wall *et al.* 1986), though the issue is still open and this context remains anomalous. The human remains in the Temple Tomb, however, may well have been the products of high status mortuary processing activities in this structure. This would find a parallel in Building 20 of nearby Archanes Phourni, to judge by the association there of scraps of human bone with animal bones and artefact fragments. The road leading past the Temple Tomb from the palace at Knossos would have provided an ideal forum for public mortuary processions, in which the dead were transported to this building to receive further ritual treatment. It is important to remember that the treatment of the human remains in these structures should not be viewed in the light of modern western conceptions of the appropriate treatment of the dead.

Whatever the precise function of this building, though, the location of the Temple Tomb in a cemetery area demonstrates that it was connected with mortuary activities in some way. Its ritual associations (in terms of architecture and artefactual remains) are, interestingly, reminiscent of specific buildings at two other palatial centres (Building 4 at Archanes Phourni and the so-called 'Tomb of the Gold Objects' at Agia Triada), as well as the Myrtos Pyrgos tomb discussed above. In each of these cases, the structure in question was spatially located in proximity to a high status cemetery. The exclusivity of the Archanes Phourni cemetery is suggested by the extent of the resources being channelled into ritual activities at Building 4 in LM IA. Apart from the large-scale mortuary rituals represented by the 250 conical cups on the portico, other finds from this building include stone vessels, bronze vessels and jewellery. There was also fresco decoration on the upper storey of the east wing (Sakellarakis and Sapouna-Sakellaraki 1997: 430), while room 2 seems to have been used for wine making, probably for consumption in the mortuary rituals. Also, although the published details are vague, it appears that some sort of mortuary activity, if not actual deposition, was also taking place above the pillar crypt in tomb Beta. The 'Tomb of the Gold Objects' at Agia Triada, meanwhile, was also a Neopalatial construction within the settlement's high status cemetery. Here too, ritual activities with mortuary connections have been assumed to have taken place on the upper floor, on the basis of the artefactual evidence

(Soles 1992: 120-2), while there appears to have been a pillar crypt on the ground floor level, at the western end of the building. Thus there may have been similar practices underway at these three palatial centres for the deposition of high status individuals.

Overall, the mortuary evidence from Knossos and Archanes may be summarised as follows. At Archanes Phourni and the Knossos Temple Tomb, the elites of these centres appear to have received privileged mortuary treatment involving large-scale ritual ceremonies. However, straightforward primary inhumations do not appear to have been the ultimate goal, but rather complex mortuary rites involving the secondary processing of the body, whose final destination (or destinations) is presently obscure. At Knossos, formal burials in pithoi, chamber tombs (including those at Poros) and the round tomb complex also provide a window into wider mortuary practices, as well as showing an emphasis on tomb use as yet unparalelled elsewhere. It was noted above that assemblages often seem not to have been the main focus of expenditure in the mortuary sphere (as opposed to other, less visible aspects of the burial process). However, the lack of wealth in these tombs in the Knossos valley (even the Mavro Spelio chamber tomb cemetery, which was cumulatively poorer than the harbour town parallels at Poros), does suggest that they do not represent the highest ranks of the social hierarchy at this centre.

3.3.2 The problem of mortuary invisibility in LM I burial practices

Before summarising the results of this analysis of the Neopalatial evidence, it is worth attempting to put it into its wider perspective by considering the proportion of the original population of the island that is actually archaeologically visible in death. We have around thirty LM I mortuary sites with which to account for the tens of thousands of inhabitants of Crete represented by the dense settlement evidence being accumulated through surveys, excavation and chance finds. A rough calculation of the number of individuals represented by these mortuary sites is presented in Table 3.3, necessarily speculative because of the paucity of published skeletal data. In the few cases where the number of bodies recovered was recorded, this number is used. Otherwise, the calculation of one person per pithos or larnax is fairly secure, since there do not seem to have been any multiple burials in these receptacles. Receptacle 'cemeteries', where no indication of the number of burials is provided, are assigned one hundred interments each. For small, single chamber tombs (with areas not exceeding about five square metres) I have estimated ten burials at most; for large and multiple chamber tombs, built

tombs and caves I have estimated fifty burials for the LM I period as a whole. For the Agios Georgios cave tomb and the chamber tombs in the area of the Temple Tomb at Knossos, where the size of the tomb is uncertain, fifty burials have again been estimated. These numbers are generous enough to make it unlikely that we have *under*estimated the number of burials that took place at these locations. The total reached from these calculations is some 2100 dead for the entire island for a period of one-and-a-half to two-and-a-half centuries. If one were to assume that each generation covered a roughly 30-year time span, and that we are therefore dealing with about 8 generations for the LM I period (according to the High Chronology), we would have 270 people per generation visible in death for the whole of Crete. Although the above calculations are crude, they do demonstrate effectively that so far we have only a tiny fraction of the living population of LM I Crete visible in death.

Admittedly, there are a number of factors that reduce the chances of the preservation and recovery of tombs, both human and natural in cause. Many of these are equally applicable to other tomb types and to other periods, but a few could be argued to be more specific to pithos burials, which comprise the majority of the recovered formal burials in this period. For example, pithoi were often buried at a rather shallow depth, so that those in arable land were susceptible to destruction by ploughing, while those on hill slopes, as at Sphoungaras and Mochlos, could be destroyed by erosion. By contrast, EM-MM built tombs have much better chances of preservation, since they are both better protected by and more conspicuous through their walls, even when these have collapsed. The rock-cut chamber tombs common in LM III, meanwhile, are naturally more robust than pithoi simply buried in shallow pits, as well as more conspicuous if revealed by ploughing or erosion.

Second, one could argue that their small size and the dearth of artefacts accompanying them are factors that render pithos burials unremarkable and have caused them to go unrecognised and unreported. Moreover, their lack of assemblages means they tend neither to attract nor to reward systematic looting (contrast the widespread illegal excavations of EM/MM built tombs and LM II-III chamber tomb cemeteries). It could also be envisaged that some of the LM I burials that come to the attention of archaeologists do not actually reach publication because of the same perceived unremarkable nature of the burials and associated finds, or because they do not fall within the main use period of the tomb, with which the excavator is principally

concerned. For example, the instances of LM I pithoi found outside the Mesara round tombs briefly referred to by Branigan (see section 3.2.2 above) are not found in any of the publications of these tombs.

An equally important factor is that we have probably not *recognised* many of the LM I burials that we have unearthed. The lack of assemblages (especially ceramics) accompanying burials of this phase often renders it difficult to date them with any precision, and many LM I tombs may have been overlooked for this reason. The receptacles themselves are usually not helpful. The pithoi are mostly either plain or decorated with the non-diagnostic trickle pattern (a motif popular on this vessel form from the EM I period). The few burial pithoi which have more detailed painted or relief decoration can usually be dated with more precision, though, and sometimes the form of the pithos can also tell us at least whether or not it was Neopalatial, if nothing more. In the case of larnakes, however, we are in a still worse position: we have no typology for these receptacles which covers the LM I period because so few examples are known, and larnakes rarely occur in domestic contexts.

Another suggestion that deserves consideration is that some of the tomb assemblages that have been assigned to the MM III period may in fact be later. The distinction between MM III as a whole and early LM IA is not always clear, which opens up the possibility that assemblages with light-on-dark ceramic decoration that do not include any of the 'transitional' features are automatically being put into the earlier category. While dark-on-light decoration on a lustrous light background is seen to be a hallmark of LM I, many of the popular shapes continue with little modification. For example, it is difficult to distinguish between MM III and LM IA pithoi on the basis of form alone (Betancourt 1985: 127-8), and the same is often true of the other main vessel types found in burial contexts (that is, conical cups and, to a lesser extent, rounded and straight-sided cups), though some changes do occur. Thus, for example, the straight-sided cups which constituted the entire assemblages of the Gazi and Anopolis burials were assigned by their excavator to the MM III period, and it was only the shapes of the pithoi which prompted him to concede that a later date was possible.

Because of these factors, it is reasonable to assume that we have recovered only a small proportion of the original number of LM I formal burials. However, even taking this into account, it is still unlikely that formal burial accounted for the majority of the

population in this period. Even if we were to multiply the number of known pithos burials five-fold in order to accommodate the factors outlined above, the resulting total would surely still fall far short of the total population of LM I Crete. At this point, it is important to emphasise that this concern with the invisible dead in LM I has been somewhat exaggerated, even if the gap identified is real. In fact, the majority of the population of *every* period of Cretan prehistory is invisible, even in the Protopalatial period, where burial practices are generally considered to be well understood, and this is hardly an unusual situation. On the contrary, deposition of the dead in ways other than formal burial is a commonly noted ethnographic practice. In some cases, certain individuals or groups within a society are not considered fit for formal burial, for reasons that vary cross-culturally (*e.g.* Middleton 1982; Ucko 1969: 267, 270-1). In other cases, tomb burial is neither the norm nor a privilege. Instead, alternative means of disposal are considered more appropriate for the dead, and these, again, will vary in nature and criteria for eligibility according to the individual society (*e.g.* Huntingdon and Metcalf 1995: 141-4; Ucko 1969: 270). The net result of the range of choices for the disposal of the dead, plus hazards of preservation, mean that it is generally the case that archaeologists will be able to retrieve only a small proportion of the original population in death (Parker Pearson 1999: 5).

Considered from this perspective, the emphasis that has been placed on the lack of LM I mortuary material is unwarranted. Rather than identifying a genuine temporal anomaly, this concern with the LM I invisible dead can be attributed to two rather different concerns. The first is that the earlier and later Bronze Age periods have produced a comparative wealth of tomb evidence, in the form of built tombs and chamber tombs respectively, that belies the fact that they too represent only a minority of the population (albeit a larger proportion than in LM I). The second, and probably more pertinent, factor is that the gap in the evidence that is really being lamented is not the invisible majority but the elite minority. The impressive assemblages of the mainland Mycenaean shaft graves have provided a tantalising window into the high levels of technical skill and material wealth devoted to the palatial production of prestige artefacts on Crete. This has inspired a hope for, and indeed an anticipation of, the discovery of similar elite tombs on Crete, and such have continually been sought. Evans' hypothesis regarding the Temple Tomb's original function, discussed above, provides a perfect example of this phenomenon. There is a consequent reluctance to accept the possibility that tomb

burial was simply not considered an appropriate deposition method for the elite of Neopalatial Crete, despite the existence of documented ethnographic parallels for such a scenario (such as the cremations of Balian and Indian elites – Huntingdon and Metcalf 1995: 141-4 and Ucko 1969: 267-8 respectively).

To summarise, we are missing burial evidence for the bulk of the LM I population. This is probably largely due both to the vulnerability of pithos burials and to the use of alternative methods of deposition, such as exposure (on land or in water), or burial in the ground without assemblage or protection from decomposition agents in the soil. The idea of burial at sea merits comment, as it has in the past been suggested as a possible solution to the problem (*e.g.* Rehak and Younger 1998: 110). However, it should be noted that, according to the distribution pattern of the known LM I burials, our problem is less with locating the tombs of the coastal populations than those of the populations further inland. Whatever the answer, it should be borne in mind that complex variations in mortuary customs may have been in place across the island, with different practices carrying different ideological and social significance according to the region.

3.4 Conclusions

It is an unfortunate fact that we still do not understand satisfactorily, and perhaps never will, the ways in which the dead engaged in the practices of the living on Neopalatial Crete. This is partly due to the fact that we have not recovered (or recognised) much of the archaeologically retrievable evidence, particularly in the form of pithos burials. Yet it is also due to the fact that most deposition practices of the period are probably not archaeologically retrievable at all. However, on the basis of the evidence that is available, the following observations regarding LM I mortuary practices can be made.

- In general, burial appears not to have been a closely coded or developed domain for display. The Neopalatial period did see some interest in the potential of formal burial practices for purposes of status advertisement, but this was very rare – so far, it can only be documented at a handful of sites. Nor, it appears, was tomb burial practised by the highest status individuals at the palatial centres. However, this does not preclude the likelihood that the mortuary sphere played as important a role in the perpetuation and contestation of elite power as did the more commonly cited and archaeologically

conspicuous strategies of monumentalising architecture and control of the religious sphere. It is simply the case that the rituals surrounding death at this social level, probably associated with the processing of human remains but apparently not with tomb burial, are largely irretrievable, though hinted at by the evidence from Archanes Phourni, Agia Triada, Myrtos Pyrgos and the Knossos Temple Tomb.

- There was general continuity in mortuary customs and trends from the Protopalatial into the Neopalatial periods, in terms of the tomb types and customs preferred (but not necessarily the social significance of these types or customs). The structuring and significance of mortuary practices may well have varied spatially, however, with, for example, different communities negotiating social identities differentially through superficially similar practices. The diversity that is apparent in the evidence from different sites may indicate that the Neopalatial period was a time of experimentation in the mortuary sphere more generally, with a comparative lack of tight restrictions and standardisations that allowed different centres to develop their own strategies for creating and expressing social identities through death rituals.

- Within this climate of experimentation, Knossos stands out from the other centres on the island in the extent of its recourse to tomb use and its level of diversity in terms of tomb types, which may help to explain this centre's subsequent receptivity to the new tomb practices introduced in LM II. This centre's greater willingness to innovate and experiment is in line both with the frequent suggestion that this centre was leading the way on the island in the cultural spheres generally in the Neopalatial period, and with its intensive external trade contacts. In particular, the receptivity to external ideas (i.e. weaponry burials and burials on wooden biers) displayed by the users of the Poros tombs will be explored in the following chapter, and it corroborates the wider evidence for some aspects of mainland symbolism and ideologies filtering into Neopalatial Crete through elite exchange/gift giving systems. Overall, therefore, the mortuary evidence from Neopalatial Knossos so far is suggestive of a complex and active social arena, rather than a normative and static tradition whose usurpation by new practices in LM II must perforce reflect physical intrusion by migrants.

PART II KNOSSOS

Chapter 4

The Knossos area, Late Minoan II

4.1 Introduction

The devotion of the first two chapters of the mortuary analysis specifically to the Knossos area is justifiable on two counts. First, virtually all of the Cretan mortuary evidence for the LM II and IIIA1 phases (that is, almost the entire Final Palatial period) is located in this small area. Possible cases of LM II-IIIA1 tomb use elsewhere will be discussed in Chapter 6, but even if they prove genuine, they were extremely rare.

Second, partly because of this earlier adoption of tomb use on a large scale at Knossos, but also due to the high proportion of excavated tombs here that have received full publication, this centre also stands out from the rest of the island in providing the valuable potential for a long-term diachronic perspective on mortuary dynamics. We have here the rare opportunity to study a micro-region in its own right with a degree of chronological refinement that is sensitive to changes over just a few generations, comparable with the cemeteries of Mycenae and Prosymna on the mainland (Wace 1932; Blegen 1937). Developments can be observed in every individual ceramic phase from LM II to LM IIIB, though this potential has rarely been recognised in the past, due to the common tendency to group the tombs into broader analytical categories, such as 'LM II-IIIA' (*e.g.* Driessen and Macdonald 1984; Kilian-Dirlmeier 1985). Moreover, the 184 tombs securely datable to this period provide a density of data unrivalled elsewhere on the island, apart from the Armenoi cemetery. They probably fall far short of the original number constructed at Knossos over the LM II-IIIB period, but we still have a large and varied sample to work with in the data set available, thanks to the intensive investigations in the valley over the last century. [10]

The latter theme, of diachronic change, will be explored in detail in Chapter 5. The

[10] A small number of further tombs possibly belonging to this period are listed in Appendix F, while the frequent mentions of robbed or destroyed tombs in Hood and Smyth's survey (1981) hint at the original presence of many more.

present chapter, meanwhile, will concentrate exclusively on LM II, the initial and most dramatic horizon of changes in mortuary practices, and also the time when Knossos was seeking to consolidate a new administrative system within its extended Cretan hegemony. As mentioned above, the lack of chronological control employed in previous approaches to this issue means that the LM II data have rarely been isolated from those of the succeeding IIIA phase (a footnote by Popham et al. (1984: 264 note 23) providing a rare exception). It is surprising that scholars willing to entertain the idea of a single event horizon (that is, an invasion) as responsible for these changes have not been accordingly scrupulous in the refinement of their tomb dating. In fact, LM II itself, although a brief phase in relative terms, still probably encompassed at least one generation (see Table 0.1), according to Warren and Hankey's estimate of three to four decades' duration (1989: 169), and Manning's of up to nine (1995: 217). A rebuttal of this criticism could be made, of course, by those willing to envisage a more gradual process of external infiltration at Knossos – for example, longer-term, repetitive waves of intrusive settlement and/or cultural influence. However, even within such a scenario, a lack of discrimination between the LM II and LM IIIA data remains problematic, patricularly, as will be seen, because of the significant differences discernible between the burial customs of the two phases (discussed in Chapter 5).

The first part of the present chapter will discuss the nature and extent of the LM II changes in burial practices through a retrospective comparison with the Neopalatial evidence at Knossos presented in Chapter 3. An attempt will then be made to *account* for the innovations observed, considering the evidence in the light of the approach to cultural interaction advocated in Chapter 2, which is sensitive to alternative models for understanding mechanisms of cultural influence to the traditional mainland invasion/occupation hypothesis. It will be suggested that the evidence in fact points to a deliberate manipulation of externally-derived ideas in a context of social tension, within which, it will be argued, expressions of cultural affiliation were not as significant as has previously been assumed. This horizon at Knossos will then be situated within its broader Cretan and Aegean framework, to consider the implications of these changes for the relationship between Crete's dominant centre, the rest of the island and the mainland.

4.2 LM II – change and continuity

4.2.1 Introduction

The geographical boundaries of the 'Knossos area' as defined within the present study follow the Knossos valley limits as defined by Hood and Smyth (1981) on the east, south and west sides, but extend north as far as the coast in order to embrace the harbour town at Poros. This inclusion of the harbour settlement is justifiable on the basis that this was surely as crucial an area of immediate palatial control as the valley itself. This close bond between the palace and harbour is certainly reflected in the mortuary landscape of the LM II-IIIB period; there is no clear spatial distinction between the tomb locations of the port area and the valley, which instead form a linear chain stretching from the settlement around the palace down to that of the harbour area (Figure 4.1).

Within these boundaries, the present analysis will deal only with the securely datable cases of LM II mortuary deposition, which at present comprise twenty-three tombs (see Appendix E and Table 5.1). These account for at least twenty-seven burials and comprise a variety of tomb types: one round and two rectangular corbel-vaulted built tombs (**KN KE, KN IS 1** and **8**), one shaft grave (**KN NH 2**), a possible pit-cave (**KN ETT 3**) and the rest chamber tombs.[11] **KN AI 2** and **KN TT 1** provide further possible cases of burial use in this period. Within the first of these, at Agios Ioannis, the only ceramic vessel was a brazier, a type not useful for dating on such a refined scale. The ceramic vessels associated with the human remains in the rear pillar crypt of the Temple Tomb included both LM II and IIIA1 material. It is not possible to establish whether we are dealing with a single or combined assemblages here, especially as the associated bodies were found disarticulated by the entrance, rather than in their primary positions. Finally, the Nea Alikarnassos tomb (**KN NE**) has also been attributed to LM II on the basis of its architecture (Lembessi 1977: 565), since its plan is very similar to that of the Isopata 'Tomb of the Double Axes' (**KN IS 3**). However, the datable ceramics in the tomb are LM IIIA1. Moreover, there is also a close architectural parallel in this later phase at Isopata in **KN IS 7**, which is also closer to the Nea Alikarnassos tomb in terms of dimensions, although still over double its size.

---

[11] Tombs codes are provided in the text (in bold) for purposes of cross-reference with the Figures, Tables and Appendices E to O.

4.2.2 Comparison with LM I

There is clear evidence of discontinuity from the preceding, LM I, phase in almost every aspect of LM II burial practices. First, there was a cessation in the use not only of almost all of the Neopalatial tombs in the valley and port areas, but even of the very cemetery locations (Figure 4.2). Only the Lower Gypsades area and the Mavro Spelio and Poros cemeteries continued in use. Of these, Mavro Spelio and Poros have possible evidence for the re-use of individual tombs (**KN MS 7** and **9**, and **KN PO**), though from neither of these tombs were any intact burial assemblages recovered. A further Neopalatial Poros tomb (Tomb 1994b in Appendix A) also contained a few LM II sherds, but according to the excavators, these were not associated with burial activities (~~Demakopoulou~~ Dimopoulou 1999: 709-10).

The newly established mortuary locations no longer clustered solely in the vicinities of the harbour and palace settlements, as previously. They now extended up the length of the valley on an axis towards the port, with the Isopata tombs providing a link between the palace and the harbour town through their intervisibility with the latter. In fact, one of the most conspicuous innovations of LM II was surely this creation of a new mortuary landscape. It should be noted that more tombs may well have been sited around the northern limit of Knossos' town, which is now concealed under Roman and Hellenistic levels. These may well include Neopalatial burials (and almost certainly involve LM III activity, to judge by the accidental discovery of a larnax – Hood and Smyth 1981: no 229). However, it remains the case that beyond the northern border of the Iron Age settlement, which appears to be roughly level with the Zapher Papoura and New Hospital Site cemeteries (according to Hood and Smyth's survey), there is a significant discrepancy between the complete lack of evidence for Neopalatial mortuary activity and the numerous LM II-III cemeteries so far discovered. This rapid transformation of the northern part of the Knossos valley as a visual and ideological landscape would have been consciously effected and would have had considerable repercussions, not only upon the burying groups concerned, but also upon the general community whose cultural space was being so visibly transformed. Hood and Smyth also propose that LM II saw the abandonment of a Neopalatial scattered settlement distribution up the length of the valley (1981: 11), with the settlement contracting to the town area in the south. Intensive survey is needed to investigate this hypothesis, but whether or not the valley was actually appropriated from the living for the dead in LM II, the siting of LM II tombs in the northern part of the valley was probably strategic,

for the main thoroughfare between the palace and port surely ran up along this valley route. Evans argues for one main road running north along the route of the modern road to Heraklion (1928: 153-4). Traces of others were noted passing the Isopata Royal Tomb and Zapher Papoura cemetery (Evans 1928: 230, fig. 131A), which suggests that the cemeteries were located with a view to continuing interaction with the living community.[12]

Second, all of the tombs first used in LM II were of architectural types new not only to Knossos, but also to Crete as a whole. Although the chamber tomb remained the predominant grave type, the large, irregular and often multiple-chambered Neopalatial form was replaced by a markedly different form: small, single-chambered and more symmetrical tombs, with a long, keyhole-section dromos (Figure 4.3).

Third, there is a clear contrast between the Neopalatial preference for multiple burials within a tomb, often comprising tens of burials, and the single or double interments preferred in those LM II tombs for which we have the relevant data. The low numbers of burials per tomb for LM II-IIIB as a whole at Knossos (Figure 5.12) indicate that this change in LM II was not simply a consequence of interruptions in the use of individual tombs, but rather marked a deliberate preference for restricted numbers, as indicated also by the reduced dimensions of most of the chambers.

Fourth, although both phases saw the simultaneous practice of floor, pit and receptacle deposition within the tombs, there were marked changes in each respect. The floor burials in the MM III Gypsades tomb 18 (the only Neopalatial tomb for which we have a published plan of the interments) seem to have had no standard method of arrangement, but were placed contracted or extended, on their side, supine or even perhaps sitting (Hood *et al.* 1959: 222-4, fig. 22). By contrast, the arrangement of LM II floor burials was much more regular: supine, with legs extended. Turning to the pits, the chamber cavities in the Kephala and Isopata tombs (specifically, **KN KE, KN IS 1** and **KN IS 3**) were well-cut and, at Isopata at least, covered and lined with slabs. These cists appear to have been original architectural features of the tombs. As such, they contrast with the irregular pits of the Neopalatial chambers, secondary features of the tombs serving to hold human remains displaced during subsequent inhumations. With

[12] Hutchinson (1956: 74) also proposes that the principal palace-harbour route through the valley passed near to the corbel-vaulted tomb on Kephala, but this assertion seems to be largely speculative.

regard to the burial receptacles, finally, the popular Neopalatial use of pithoi and tub larnakes ceased entirely in LM II. The only receptacle type now in use was the wooden coffin or bier, whose only indigenous antecedents were in the Poros cemetery, as will be discussed further below.

Finally, we should consider changes in assemblage deposition, in terms of both artefact and material types. On a general level, the LM II assemblages were wealthier and more diverse than their predecessors. The common occurrence of ceramic vessels and jewellery (including seals) continued. However, the nature of the vessel types changed, in tandem with the general ceramic repertoire at Knossos. Kylikes, squat alabastra and Palace Style jars were added to the traditional repertoire of jugs, cups and braziers, while conical cups all but disappeared from the mortuary context. With regard to the non-ceramic artefacts, most of the known LM I tombs of the area (with the possible exception of the Mavro Spelio cemetery and the certain exception of Poros) were relatively poor in assemblages.[13] The Poros tombs deserve closer attention, however, as they provide intriguingly close parallels with their successors in several respects. Apart from the fact noted above, that they provide the only antecedents for the LM II use of wooden receptacles, the range of valuable material types in these tombs (especially Poros tombs 1967, 1986 and 1994a and b), is comparable with the LM II assemblages (see Table 4.1). In terms of artefact types (Table 4.2), they lack the precious metal drinking vessels of the LM II tombs, but otherwise show close similarities, including the deposition of jewellery, seals, grooming artefacts and weaponry. Unfortunately, the plundering of the Poros tombs renders it difficult to establish the precise phases within the Neopalatial period to which these wealthy burials belonged, but in tombs 1967 and 1994a, the burials with weapons at least appear to be among the latest interments (LM IB and LM IA respectively).

4.2.3 Challenges to the LM I – LM II boundary

Dramatic changes occurred between LM I and LM II at Knossos, therefore, in terms of the mortuary landscape, tomb architecture, depositional practices and (in most cases) assemblage composition. Indeed, it is as much the *range* as the nature of these changes that makes the contrast so striking. As will be discussed in Chapter 5, there were further

---

[13] The problems with dating the non-ceramic artefacts in the Mavro Spelio tombs with LM I ceramics were discussed in the previous chapter. Generally, these tombs do appear to have been cumulatively wealthier than their contemporaries within the valley, but the range of valuable material types recovered from them would not match those of Poros, even if all could be securely dated to the LM I phase.

developments in various individual aspects of burial customs at Knossos in subsequent ceramic phases. However, at no point until the virtual abandonment of formal burial in LM IIIB is there a horizon where the changes encompass so many different aspects of the mortuary sphere.

There are, however, three methods by which the scale of the contrast presented above could be, and indeed has been, questioned. One is to push back the date of several of the tombs assigned here to LM II, thereby placing their initial construction and use within the Neopalatial period. A second is to postulate an indigenous ancestry for various features of the LM II Knossian tombs. A third is to view the Poros material as evidence that the horizon of change in mortuary practices really began in LM I, not LM II. All of these proposals would contribute to making LM II a less pivotal phase in terms of the cultural transformations underway at Knossos, and we should consider the arguments presented for each in turn.

There have been suggestions that five of the tombs whose first use is here ascribed to LM II, were in fact of earlier date: these are the Agios Ioannis 'Gold Cup tomb' (**KN AI 1**), the Acropolis chamber tomb (**KN AC**), Isopata tomb 5 and the Royal Tomb (**KN IS 6** and **8**), and the Kephala corbel-vaulted tomb (**KN KE**). However, these datings appear to have been primarily motivated by a desire to account for the Neopalatial elite in death, as discussed in Chapter 3, and they do not enjoy much empirical support. The evidence regarding each tomb is presented here in brief.

The absence of diagnostic ceramics in the Gold Cup tomb at Agios Ioannis makes dating difficult, but the excavator's choice of late LM IB (Hood 1956: 81) is not necessarily the most persuasive, since the brazier, dagger and sword have been argued to be more appropriate to an LM II context (*ibid.*: 83 note 1, 92-3, 95; Sandars 1963: 132). The problem concerning the dating of the Acropolis tomb revolves around Evans' dating of the squat alabastron to LM IB on the basis of its 'canopy' motif (1935: 849). While this motif is indeed most common in LM IB, Sandars (1963: 146) and Rutter (pers. comm.) suggest that it could equally belong to the LM II phase, which is also the earliest date of the contexts from which type Cii swords, such as that retrieved from this tomb, have been recovered (Evans *ibid*,; Sandars *ibid.*; Driessen and Macdonald 1984: 58).

Isopata tomb 5 was assigned an LM I date in its original publication, on the basis of the ritual vessels in the assemblage, whose closest parallel was identified as deriving from an LM I context at Agia Triada (Evans 1914: 27). However, it is interesting that the occurrence of a vessel of similar form in the Tomb of the Double Axes in the same cemetery did not prompt Evans to argue for an LM I date there also. In the event, Evans subsequently changed his opinion: although he still favoured an LM IA date in 1930 (1930: 309), he revised this to LM II in 1935 (1935: 881). A similar revision took place with regard to the Isopata Royal Tomb. This was, unfortunately, disturbed by extensive re-use, but its construction was originally dated to MM III by Evans (1905: 560) on the basis of perceived architectural parallels in Egypt, the presence of mason's marks and the general size and monumentality of the structure. However, following the discovery of fourteenth-century comparable tomb forms at Ugarit, a later date was deemed preferable, and LM II was assigned on the basis of the earliest ceramics in the tomb (Evans 1935: 774).

Finally, the difficulties surrounding the dating of the Kephala corbel-vaulted tomb are the most challenging. Sherds dating from MM I through to LM IIIC were recovered from the fill of the main chamber, but the re-use and plundering of this tomb rendered stratigraphical sequencing difficult. This problem is further exacerbated by the fact that the tomb's contents have never been fully published. The excavator proposed an LM IA date for the tomb's construction, and the presence of MM I and II material in the lower levels of the chamber was explained as "deriving from the surrounding earth when the cutting for the tomb was excavated" (Hutchinson 1956: 77-8). The pre-LM IA Neopalatial ceramics from various levels of the chamber were similarly explained, as trenches immediately beyond the tomb's walls, within a nearby modern building and in five intervening locations between the two, all revealed material of this date, the latter also producing settlement foundations (*ibid.*: 79).

In opposition to Hutchinson's proposal of LM IA, however, Popham has argued that "joining sherds" among the ceramic material from the tomb indicate an LM II date for its earliest use (Popham 1964: 210; see also Popham 1977: 186). Indeed, it is noteworthy that among the few sherds published from the tomb, there are several fragments of LM II Palace Style jars (Hutchinson 1956: Pl. 11c), a vessel type which would have been appropriate for the original use of such a high status tomb (compare the earliest ceramics from the Isopata Royal Tomb). Turning to the non-ceramic

evidence, Hutchinson saw the closest architectural parallels for this tomb at Mycenae as fifteenth century in date, which would correspond with either LM IB or LM II. The inscription at the entrance to the chamber, referred to by Hutchinson as Linear A, could actually belong to the Linear B script, though Hutchinson's interpretation would not necessarily preclude a LM II date anyway, as the older script may well have survived in non-administrative contexts.[14] Finally, the architectural affinities of the tomb with the Isopata Royal Tomb and Isopata tomb 1 (especially in the similar, and unparalleled, designs of the forehalls) also argue in favour of a date close to LM II. Overall, pending full publication of this tomb, it seems most probable that the tomb was first used in LM II, and was simply cut into an area with abundant earlier settlement material, some of which collapsed into the fill of the tomb at a later point.

To summarise, therefore, the dating of the earliest use of most of these tombs to LM II seems reasonably secure, bearing in mind that the transition between LM IB and LM II is based primarily on changes in ceramic usage, which may not have been adopted simultaneously at all social levels or in all social spheres.

Turning to the second issue, of an indigenous ancestry for the various elements of LM II mortuary practices, there have been several tenuous proposals that these burials were merely continuations of Cretan traditions stretching back into the MM or EM periods. For example, Hiller (1984: 30) and Kilian-Dirlmeier (1985: 208-9) have argued that the burials with weapons were continuations of a long-established Cretan custom previously manifested in the dagger burials of EM and MM round tombs. In terms of architecture, meanwhile, Niemeier (1983: 226) proposes that the chamber tombs were simply local developments of the indigenous form, while Kanta (1997a: 231) sees the Kephala corbel-vaulted tomb as a direct evolutionary descendant of the Gypsades round tomb in the same valley. The first of these arguments, regarding burials with weaponry, is flawed in that it attempts to forge a link with an older (but largely abandoned) practice which had been grounded in a completely different cultural and social milieu. The later, LM burials with full sets of weapons were emblems of a specific, closely coded elite cultural package that enjoyed a wide currency in central Europe, albeit with regionally specific permutations. The daggers common to burials of the Pre- and Protopalatial periods, by contrast, although probably also signifying status, represented individuals within small-scale, generally egalitarian communities (Whitelaw 1983: 337,

[14] Compare the LM IIIA1 Poros figurine with painted Linear A signs (Olivier 1994: 165).

343 note 16). Within this different social structure and cultural environment, daggers and dagger burials would have carried a vastly different ideological significance to the accoutrements of the Late Bronze Age elite warrior. Simultaneously, Hiller and Kilian-Dirlmeier dismiss out of hand the numerous mainland antecedents for the Knossian weapon burials that were both more recent and closer to the Cretan warrior burials in terms of form, thus providing far more compelling candidates for their inspiration (specific examples are cited in section 4.3.1). The second argument, regarding architectural ancestries, similarly refuses to acknowledge LH I and II mainland (and particularly Argolidic) antecedents. The Kephala corbel-vaulted tomb was far more reminiscent of the mainland versions than of the local (and abandoned) Gypsades round tomb. In terms of the chamber tombs, similarities with the traditional chamber tomb type here surely contributed significantly to the LM II popularity of the new form at Knossos, but the architectural details of the latter appear derive more closely from the mainland than from any Neopalatial antecedents (compare Figures 4.3 and 4.4). In short, there is no practical reason to deny that there were strong mainland-derived elements in many of the innovative LM II tomb customs at Knossos, and previous attempts to do so have largely involved a biased and overly selective approach to the data determined by wider interpretive agendas, whether revolving around stances within chronological debates or else general Creto-centric tendencies. As a result, the important point that has been overlooked is that these aggregate practices in this specific historical context differed overall from both previous Cretan *and* contemporary mainland customs in significant ways. Indeed, it is ironic that the very concern with emphasising Cretan agency which has led to reactionary stances regarding mainland influence, has simultaneously contributed to the neglect of the way in which Crete was actually controlling, and indeed forging, its own cultural destiny – that is, through the conscious acceptance and adaptation of these external ideas.

However, the third argument, for Neopalatial antecedents at Poros for several LM II mortuary features carries more weight, and as such must be acknowledged and incorporated into the present picture. It is unfortunate that only one of these Poros tombs has been fully published, as a more detailed picture of this cemetery would considerably elucidate our understanding of the local transition between Neopalatial and LM II funerary customs. At present, though, it is clear that both the use of wooden biers and the practice of burials with weapons were introduced at Poros in the Neopalatial period, and therefore that these specific mortuary traits were not strictly innovations of

the LM II phase in the Knossos area.

This does not, however, invalidate the argument that LM II was a genuine horizon of transformation. The fact that this phase followed a longer period of contact and experimentation does not alter the fact that the most significant horizon of mortuary changes at Knossos is still located in this later phase. To begin with, on present evidence, these antecedents at Poros comprise a very localised and relatively small-scale phenomenon, possibly, as was suggested in the previous chapter, representing a wealthy sector of the local population, but not the highest palatial elite. They are, moreover, absent from the immediate valley itself. Admittedly, this quantitative imbalance may well be rectified in the future, following further tomb discoveries there. More importantly, though, these new finds would have to bear much closer similarities to the LM II tombs than do the Poros burials. It was pointed out above that the significance of the transitions at Knossos lay in the *range* of the innovations involved, and the presence of a few mainland features (biers and weapons) in multiple burial contexts that in all other respects conform closely to local traditions, cannot bridge this gap.

A development of this interpretation has been proposed (Driessen and Schoep 1999: 395, 400), that the warrior burial in the published Poros tomb (the 1967 tomb), which seems to have been the final burial to take place here (Muhly 1992: 184), represents a LM IB 'usurpation' of this particular tomb. This argument implies that the deceased in this case was not a member of the normal burying community, but rather that this burial constituted an intrusive re-use of an abandoned tomb. The aim of this argument appears to be to move back the postulated infiltration of Knossos by mainlanders to the LM IB phase. In fact, the idea of recourse to ostentation in the mortuary sphere increasing in LM IB is by no means implausible. However, there are drawbacks to the hypothesis of intrusive re-use of this particular tomb, since it does not necessarily fit in with the evidence from the wider Poros cemetery. It appears that not all the burials with weapons at Poros were LM IB in date. In the preliminary report on the 1994a tomb at Poros, the burials with weapons were similarly dated by the excavators to final phase of tomb use, but this was stated to be LM IA (~~Demakopoulou~~ Dimopoulou 1999: 708). Moreover, the use of wooden biers was almost certainly not an innovation of the LM IB phase. Muhly notes the remains of at least one bier in a sealed pit deposit of the published Poros tomb (Muhly 1992: 184, 192) dating to late MM III, while the reports of numerous biers in

tombs 1986, 1994a and 1994b suggest that, although the majority are probably undatable due to disturbance, they constituted a long-term and established Neopalatial practice at Poros, rather than a late intrusion. A further feature to note is that these innovative features at Poros fit well with the general character of these Neopalatial tombs, which contained a number of wealthy burials and where mortuary ostentation was probably deliberately practised in a number of ways, of which the borrowing of mainland ideas was just one. Thus intrusion and appropriation by individuals outside the normal burying community is not necessary to account for the presence of these particular elements.

At present, therefore, the most plausible explanation for introduction of mainland-derived ideas into the Poros tombs is as follows. In the climate of intensive Neopalatial contacts between the harbour town and mainland trading centres, surely involving movements of people as well as of products and ideas, certain individuals within the groups practising tomb burial at Poros may have chosen to experiment with mainland ideas within the local mortuary context. This context was conducive to such manipulation in that formal burial for purposes of display was already practised there. These innovations were not confined solely to a late, LM IB, horizon, though LM IB may well have seen a significant rise in their deployment. On present evidence, these Poros burials were a local-level strategy, but the experience or knowledge of these particular burial ceremonies by other high status groups in the area surely played a part in facilitating the wider receptivity to external mortuary practices in LM II.

In short, certain members of the Poros community (perhaps second-order powerful families, on the fringe of the Knossian aristocracy) were picking up on mainland ideas before LM II. However, although Driessen and Macdonald (1997) may prove correct in their hypothesis that LM IB saw the escalation of a wider political crisis that resulted in the sweeping cultural and political changes seen at LM II Knossos, present evidence indicates that the high status strategic recourse to tomb burial as a sphere for social competition commenced only in LM II, in conjunction with the broader changes in elite material culture and practice of this phase.

4.3 Implications of the LM II changes: cultural identity versus status advertisement

4.3.1 Introduction

The main focus of interest with regard to the Knossian tombs in the past has been to establish the geographical origins of their users – that is, whether they represent the intrusive mainland elite that is widely believed to have taken control of Knossos in this period or local Cretans (*e.g.* d'Agata 1999: 52; Dickinson 1996; Driessen and Macdonald 1984: 66; Hood 1992). The evidence advanced for strong mainland influence on burial practices is, as highlighted above, extensive, drawing upon assemblage composition, tomb architecture and the use of wooden biers or coffins. The assemblages contain specific artefact types that have close associations with contemporary mainland burial customs, especially weaponry (Dickinson 1996: 66; Hood 1956: 81; Pini 1968; Popham *et al.* 1974: 253), grooming articles and precious metal vessels, and mainland-derived ceramic shapes, especially the squat alabastra and Ephyraean goblets. Examples of LH I-II burials with weaponry include Mycenae Tombs 515, 517 and 529 (Wace 1932: 53, 73, 101), Prosymna Tomb 28 (Blegen 1937: 82, no. 36) and Dendra Tomb 8 (Persson 1942: 51, nos. 8, 9, 13 and 17). Examples of grooming articles in burials of the same period are found in Mycenae Tomb 529 (Wace *ibid.*: 100-1, nos. 26 and 33) and Dendra Tomb 8 (Persson *ibid.*: 51, no. 10). Precious metal vessels were recovered from every grave within Shaft Grave Circle A (Karo 1930), and finally, Ephyraean goblets and/or squat alabastra come from Mycenae Tombs 518 and 529 (Wace *ibid.*: 80-1, 103-4), Prosymna Tombs 28, 30 and 45 (Blegen *ibid.*: 74, 82, 219).

All of the new tomb types so far found in the Knossos valley (small chamber tombs, corbel-vaulted tombs, the shaft grave and the possible pit-cave) have been attributed to mainland inspiration (Dickinson 1994: 230, 1996: 65-6; Driessen and Macdonald 1984; Popham 1980a: 171; Popham *et al.* 1974: 255; Rehak and Younger 1998: 152; see also the discussion in section 4.2.3). The shaft graves at Knossos, although internally homogeneous, do contrast with the Argolidic type in terms of form, dimensions and numbers of interments. Figures 4.5 and 4.6 illustrate the basic disparities in size and structure between Knossos and Mycenae (see also Cavanagh and Mee 1998: 43-4;

Dickinson 1983: 56).[15] Unlike the Knossian versions, the Grave Circle A shafts were lined with walls of stone and had pebble floors. Two of them did have rock-cut ledges, like those of Knossos, but these supported wooden beams, as opposed to the stone slabs found at Knossos. However, despite these adaptations, the tomb form at Knossos still appears to be mainland-derived in its inspiration, rather than drawing upon indigenous precedents.

Thus the arguments for mainland influences in the new burial practices at LM II Knossos are overwhelming, and, as argued above, opposing claims of a purely indigenous ancestry for any of these features may be dismissed. However, this scenario of mainland influence requires qualification in several respects. First, it was argued in Chapter 2 that the culture historical method of reconstructing the geographical origins of the individuals from mortuary symbolism is fundamentally flawed. Second, it was also proposed that regardless of the origins of those responsible for the introduction, the transferral of a social practice into a new social and cultural context will inevitably involve modifications to its significance and perhaps also its form, especially if the transferral is politically strategic and the need to adapt the idea to suit the new context is consciously perceived.

At this point, it is useful to focus upon the tombs at Kephala and Isopata, which show extensive evidence for the *adaptation* of mainland ideas, as opposed to the straightforward imitation that is usually emphasised in studies of Knossian burial practices in this period. The innovative features of these tombs have often been overlooked, which is surprising, given their monumentality in comparison with the other Knossian tombs (Figure 4.7), and the clear high status assertions reflected in their assemblage wealth, even in those that had been plundered. In short, given the obvious importance of these tombs, one might question why these details have received so little attention in the past, in comparison with the contemporary burials in the rest of the Knossos area. The main reason seems to be that they do not support the traditional invasionist model. Indeed, the inspirations for these tombs are not only distinctly heterogeneous, and diverse in their cultural and contextual origins, but they are combined here in such innovative ways that the overriding impression they convey is of

---

[15] Figure 4.5 illustrates the areas of the largest and smallest of the shafts in Grave Circle A (as given in Wace 1949: 59, presumably referring to Graves IV and II respectively), as well as that of a smaller shaft grave discovered under the Granary (Wace 1923: 55-58, Pl 17). It is interesting that this latter tomb was closer to the Knossian ones not only in terms of size, but also of structure (though still stone-lined). The date of this tomb is, unfortunately, uncertain.

eclectic experimentation with mortuary symbolism (cf. Preston 1999).

4.3.2 Isopata and Kephala

As no information is available regarding **KN IS 9**, a chamber tomb in the vicinity of the Isopata Royal Tomb excavated by Evans, this analysis will concentrate on the other five tombs at these locations: **KN IS 1, 3, 6** and **8**, and **KN KE**. Of these, all but that at Kephala (**KN KE**) have been published in detail.

In terms of their architecture, none of these tombs have any local antecedents, and indeed each also differs from the others within this group (see Figures 4.8 to 4.12). The 'Tomb of the Polychrome Vases' at Isopata (**KN IS 6**) closely imitates the mainland-inspired regular chamber tomb form (Figure 4.8), and through its spatial association with the other monumentalising LM II tombs here, it forms a bridge between their innovative designs and the more explicitly 'Mycenaeanising' chamber tombs in the Knossos area. Of the other tombs, the 'Tomb of the Double Axes' (**KN IS 3**) is also a rock-carved chamber tomb, but is deliberately individualistic, utilising not only mortuary ideas of mainland derivation, but also religious and palatial symbolism new to this context, most of which is indigenous in its inspiration. In plan the tomb forms almost a double chamber (Figure 4.9), divided by a central buttress facing the entrance. As such, it may be reminiscent of the irregular arrangement of the multiple chambers of the Neopalatial tombs at Mavro Spelio (Figure 4.3), while clearly deriving inspiration simultaneously from the mainland chamber tomb form, especially in the long, keyhole-section dromos. At the same time, the arrangement of the chamber around the central buttress, especially when viewed from the entrance, has also been compared with the pillar crypt (Evans 1914: 36), a high status architectural feature of the Neopalatial period, whose function is usually supposed to have been cultic (Gesell 1985: 26-9; N. Marinatos 1993: 93-4). The Neopalatial pillar crypt also has clear mortuary associations, occurring in funerary contexts in Knossos, Agia Triada and Archanes (see Chapter 3), but its association with formal burials is new. Further evocations of indigenous high status symbolism incorporated into the architecture of this tomb are the carving of the burial cist in the shape of a double axe and of a half-engaged column in the face of the buttress, both unique and entirely innovative features in a mortuary context. Evans suggested that the latter recalled the iconographic motif of an

architectural column found in other media, such as ceramic and stone vessels, frescoes, seals and even the Lion Gate at Mycenae. In such cases, this motif appears to have been used to represent palatial architecture (Evans 1914: 36; Mylonas 1966: 173-5; Younger 1988: 278-9).[16] Overall, therefore, this tomb appears to have incorporated indigenous Neopalatial symbolism from various spheres of high status expression into a tomb context.

The remaining three tombs are the most extravagant, in that they were not simply carved from the bedrock, but were built subterranean structures of ashlar masonry. All had corbel-vaulted chambers, but one was circular in plan, the other two rectangular. The basic architectural inspiration for the round-chambered tomb (**KN KE**) is straightforward to reconstruct, being clearly attributable to the mainland corbel-vaulted tomb type (Figure 4.10). However, similarly clear antecedents for the two Isopatan tombs (**KN IS 8** and **1**; Figures 4.11 and 4.12) are lacking, and the most plausible explanation for these designs is of an innovative combination of ideas from different sources, in addition to the incorporation of entirely original elements (as with Isopata Tomb 2, above). Following the discovery of the high status tombs at Late Bronze Age Ugarit, Evans and Schaeffer were convinced that there was an architectural link between them and Isopata (Schaeffer 1939: 30, 78; Evans 1935: 771-776). Indeed, they share striking parallels in the roof structures, rectangular chambers and central niches in the back walls of the chambers (Figure 4.13). However, it should also be noted that the Ugaritic tombs were invariably intramural, in direct contrast to those at Isopata, and that they had much shorter dromoi. Moreover, the most monumental of the Ugaritic tombs, which are most closely akin to those at Isopata in terms of size and quality of masonry, are usually dated to at least half a century later than their Knossian counterparts, to the late fourteenth-thirteenth centuries BC (Salles 1995: 173). Indeed, this caused Schaeffer to postulate that the influence was rather in the opposite direction (Schaeffer 1939: 92). However, this hypothesis is also problematic, since the basic tomb type at Ugarit (rectangular subterranean chamber with dromos) had an indigenous ancestry dating back to the eighteenth century BC.

The problem of the extent of Levantine influence at Isopata, therefore, remains unresolved for the moment. If we turn to the mainland, we find that Tomb Rho in

---

[16] Evans also observes, however, that such representations usually depict a column which tapers towards the base, whereas this carving has parallel sides.

Mycenae's Grave Circle B (dated to LH II A or B) also provides an interesting parallel. This tomb too has been compared with the Ugaritic tombs (Mylonas 1973: 221), although it lacks both a dromos and chamber niches, and is also a monumentalisation of the shaft grave concept. Comparison with the mainland round corbel-vaulted tombs is also worthwhile, especially with respect to the corbel-vaulting and the presence of long dromoi and burial pits in the main chambers (the latter two features not paralleled at Ugarit). Nevertheless, there is the alteration of the fundamental feature of the chamber shape and the use of niches.

The sources of architectural features from which the builders of these tombs selectively borrowed extended also to the non-mortuary sphere, in the use of ashlar masonry to construct these monuments, with mason's marks on several of the blocks within each tomb.[17] This feature, and indeed the use of ashlar masonry generally, is strongly reminiscent of Neopalatial high status symbolism in settlement architecture, but its appearance in a mortuary context is unprecedented (Hood 1992: 137).[18] Finally, there was also a readiness to deploy entirely innovative ideas, as shown by the covered forechambers in all three of the Knossian corbel-vaulted tombs, those within **KN IS 8** and **KN KE** also having side niches.

Turning now to the assemblages within the tombs, a similar pattern of variation can be observed, involving both mainland derivation and local tradition. Whereas the tombs of Agios Ioannis, the New Hospital Site, Gypsades, Katsambas and the Acropolis conform quite straightforwardly with mainland parallels in their artefact choices, the assemblages in the Isopata tombs display more variability.[19] The wealthiest of the Isopatan tombs (**KN IS 3** and **8**) displayed the greatest material and artefact diversity of all the Knossian tombs (Tables 4.3 and 4.4). Three of the Isopatan tombs were also remarkable in supplementing the 'standard' mainland-inspired assemblage components with other artefact types of exotic or indigenous derivation, all with high status

---

[17] Although it is uncertain whether such marks were an important visual symbol in the tomb, or else simply a functional aspect of the production process of the masonry. That in Isopata tomb I was on a stone found in the burial pit of the main chamber. Those in the Isopata Royal Tomb were more prominent, on the walls of the main chamber and forehall, as well as in the burial pit. One block, remarked upon by Evans because it had a series of four mason's marks on one face, may have formed the coping stone of the niches at the back of the main chamber (Evans 1905: 557).

[18] Although one mainland parallel has been found in the LH I-II Peristeria corbel-vaulted tomb, where two mason's marks were carved into one of the door jambs at the entrance to the chamber (Hood 1961: 13).

[19] Due to extensive re-use, the original assemblage of the Kephala tomb, apart from the Palace Style jars, is uncertain, and so this tomb cannot be included in the present comparison.

associations. Within tomb 2 (**KN IS 3**), weaponry, a squat alabastron and a precious metal drinking vessel were accompanied by several items of Cretan cult paraphernalia, comprising a stone bull's head rhyton, three double axes and a ring-handled vessel. The deposition of artefacts with religious associations fits well with the various architectural appeals to high status symbolism noted above for this tomb. Tomb 5's (**KN IS 6**) assemblage also comprised artefacts of both mainland and Cretan inspiration. The two squat alabastra provide a link with the former, but were accompanied here by four polychrome ring-handled vessels similar to that of **KN IS 3** and of indigenous derivation (see section 4.2.3 above). Given this, it is interesting to observe the martial symbolism with which one of them is decorated, of a helmet and figure-of-eight shield, motifs with strong mainland associations. Here, therefore, one can see on a single artefact the juxtaposition of diverse cultural symbols that characterises this tomb group as a whole. Finally, the Isopata Royal Tomb (**KN IS 8**) produced, apart from the characteristic mainland-style artefacts, a set of stone vessels, apparently from the earliest burials in this tomb, which appear to be of Egyptian inspiration, if not origin (Evans 1905: 554-6; supported by Warren 1969: 105), contributing further to the cultural eclecticism of this tomb.

Overall, the Isopata and Kephala tombs clearly indicate that certain individuals at LM II Knossos were deliberately using the mortuary context for purposes of ostentation, introducing and experimenting with a number of different types of prestige symbolism, not only of diverse geographical and cultural origins, but also from contexts other than the specifically funerary. Thus the main point of interest with regard to these tombs clearly moves beyond simply establishing the cultural identities of the individuals involved, as the theme that unites them is rather their opportunistic appropriation of high status symbolism of diverse origins.

First, the monumentality and individuality of these tombs, as well as their wealthy assemblages, indicate that significant expenditure had been devoted to these burials. Moreover, the chamber vaults of the three corbel-vaulted tombs would have protruded above ground level, presumably covered by a mound.[20] Considering the positioning of **KN KE** and **KN IS 8** near ridge summits and the traces of roads noted near the latter

[20] Indeed, the reconstruction of the Isopata Royal Tomb by Fyfe (1905: 552, fig. 145) proposes a height of just over 8m for the corbel-vaulting of the chamber, which would therefore have protruded "some 8 feet or 9 feet above the present surface level" (Fyfe 1905: 553).

(see above, section 4.2.2), they were probably deliberately sited to be conspicuous in the landscape.

The third indication that status advertisement was a significant factor in the construction of these tombs is the deliberate appropriation of specific symbols that already enjoyed high status associations in their previous contexts. It is widely agreed that corbel-vaulted tombs were being employed for purposes of political competition in the Argolid at both community and regional levels (Voutsaki 1998: 41-58) in this period. In fact, the very idea of using monumental tombs of any form for status negotiation surely derived from the same origin. The incorporation of indigenous cultic symbolism within the tombs, as in **KN IS 3**, also fits this model, given the apparent extension in the Neopalatial period of palatial control over certain religious practices as a means of power legitimation (Peatfield 1987: 89-93; Rehak and Younger 1998: 141-2). Indeed, this combination of formal burial practices with more traditional spheres for the expression of status was probably at least partly responsible for the appropriation of the pillar crypt of the Temple Tomb for formal burials in LM II-IIIA.[21]

Finally, the use of ashlar masonry for the construction of all three of the stone-built tombs is highly significant, given the existing high status associations of this masonry type. Hood has observed that these blocks of masonry might have belonged formerly to earlier, non-mortuary structures, from which they were removed in order to build these tombs (1992: 137). This would not affect the present hypothesis, since the issue at stake is not the source from which these particular blocks derive, but the reasons for their deployment in this context. The very act of appropriation (whether literally or metaphorically) of ashlar masonry to construct these tombs suggests a desire to emulate in death what was probably one of the key mechanisms for expressing and reinforcing elite status and authority in the Neopalatial period – that is, the construction of monumental buildings in the settlement context. Indeed, if the masonry for these tombs was re-used, it would be interesting to consider whether it was not only the material that was being appropriated, but also the ideological associations of the structures of which it originally formed a part.

[21] Though the choice of this location for formal burial was probably also influenced by the previous associations of the building with mortuary practices, as discussed in Chapter 3.

Thus ostentation, and an innovative requisitioning of high status symbolism from other contexts, are the factors that unite these tombs, and it appears that these symbols were deliberately selected for deployment in the tomb context in a similar way. Within this common strategy, however, each tomb was structurally unique, and the sources, nature and arrangement of the different ideas deployed vary from tomb to tomb. In other words, although the basic idea of utilising symbols from various contexts for social advertisement is consistent throughout these tombs, the results are widely divergent. The overall impression created is of a segment (or segments) of the community with a common purpose, and the idea that mortuary ostentation might be an effective strategy for achieving it, but lacking any agreement as to how this medium and its high status vocabulary should most effectively be utilised in this new social situation.

4.3.3 Implications for the wider LM II Knossian context

If we now reintegrate these five tombs with the more straightforwardly 'Mycenaeanising' ones that are usually highlighted in discussions of Final Palatial Knossos, two alternative explanations of their respective roles and significance are possible. One is that LM II Knossos saw the simultaneous appearance of two distinct mortuary strategies for advertisement purposes: one in which a mainland ethnic identity was intrinsic, based upon the existing cultural affiliations of the buriers (in the Acropolis, New Hospital Site and Gypsades tombs); the other culturally eclectic due to a cynical manipulation of high status symbolism irrespective of personal origins (at Isopata and Kephala). Alternatively, one could view all of these tombs as variations in response to mainland ideas within the second of these strategies – that is, the manipulation of cultural symbolism for purposes of social competition, in which questions of cultural affiliation played little part. In other words, the different tombs and tomb groups could be seen as occupying different positions on a continuum from overt Mycenaeanisation in some to a more selective adaptation of mainland ideas in others. The most extravagant, and conspicuously innovating, experimenting and individualising tombs and assemblages at Isopata and Kephala would thus simply represent one extreme within this scale. This latter explanation seems the more plausible, especially since the different tombs and their assemblages at Knossos do share a basic commonality in their ultimately mainland-derived inspiration, in being reactions to the same local socio-political upheaval, and in their reordering of the local landscape.

This does not necessarily imply that the social backgrounds of the individuals responsible for these tombs were identical. For example, one could argue that at least some of the tombs represent a high status social group not already established within the traditional, Neopalatial local ruling elite at Knossos, but who had precipitated, or simply taken advantage of, an opportunity to contend for greater power in this sphere. The Isopata tombs could be marshalled in support of this hypothesis, since they congregate to the north of the valley and may thus represent a symbolic territorial encroachment upon the domain of the Knossian elite by excluded individuals, perhaps more closely associated with the harbour area. The very decision to employ such a novel mechanism as monumental mortuary architecture for social advertisement may have resulted from exclusion from access to the methods traditionally employed at Knossos, rather than a conscious rejection of such ideas in favour of new strategies. At any rate, it needs to be stressed that the fact that these are the most impressive tombs in the valley in this period does not necessarily indicate that they represent the highest ranking individuals at Knossos, as opposed to those who were simply making the most effort through this particular, archaeologically prominent, means of status negotiation. We should avoid the pitfall of assuming that the elements of past activities that are most conspicuous in the archaeological record were also the most prominent, and successful, at the time.

Alternatively, the tombs could be seen to represent the palatial elite at Knossos, who, regardless of their individual origins, were experimenting with a medium novel to their group, in order to secure their position within an unstable political environment. Indeed, although a mixture of both scenarios could be envisaged, it is likely that the members of the palatial elite were responsible for at least some of these innovations, for several reasons. The first is the sheer wealth of the assemblages at a number of the locations. Second, the weaponry in the tombs particularly seems to have had strong palatial associations, given the concern in the surviving archives from the Final Palatial period with the production and distribution of corselets, wheeled chariots and horses (Ventris and Chadwick 1973: 379-80). Third, the appropriation of new areas of the valley landscape for mortuary purposes suggests at least palatial acquiescence. In particular, the siting of the tombs at Isopata above the harbour, in a position of clear symbolic dominance, may have been a strategic ploy to reinforce the link between the crucial port and the palace. Not only this, but the Isopata tombs were ideally placed to act as conspicuous monument for palatial advertisement not only to the local population, but also to those arriving at the port from elsewhere.

4.4 Knossos and its neighbours: wider Crete and the Argolid in LM II/LH IIB

With regard to the wider Cretan arena within which Knossos was consolidating its hegemony, the systematic introduction of a new mortuary practice for the Knossian elite was surely significant. The lack of standardisation in the mortuary evidence suggests that political competition at Knossos was to a large extent internally directed, as individuals competed for their position within a changing palatial hierarchy. On a broader level, however, the restriction of the practice of high status tomb burial to this centre alone on Crete suggests that its symbolic power was very clearly perceived and that it was therefore actively controlled. The effect of this difference, which was to continue into the LM IIIA1 phase, was surely to create political distance between Knossos and other centres that had been powerful in the preceding Neopalatial period.

It is difficult to pinpoint with certainty the area, or areas, of the mainland which provided the principal inspiration for the ideas being borrowed at Knossos, but the Argolid is a prime candidate. This region provides a plausible source not only of the specific tomb types being borrowed but also of very idea of using the mortuary sphere as a forum for political competition, though none of the Knossian tombs are on an architectural scale to parallel the contemporary corbel-vaulted tombs at Mycenae (Figure 4.14). Even the eclecticism of the Knossian tombs can be paralleled in the Argolid in the immediately preceding and contemporary phases of LH I and II (Dickinson 1983: 60-1). The diversity of the tomb types being introduced there, plus the anomalies and hybrids such as Tomb Rho and the Kokla corbel-vaulted tomb (Demakopoulou 1990; Voutsaki 1995a: 610), indicate that a standardised code of tomb type symbolism had not yet been established in the Argolid either. These parallels certainly show that the exploitation of the mortuary context as a response (and contributor) to social changes was not unique to Knossos, but was in fact a wider Aegean phenomenon at this time, though limited to just a few innovative centres. Thus the changes seen at LM II Knossos, while locally specific in many ways, also need to be integrated into a wider horizon of social and political transformation. Indeed, the very idea of a unidirectional flow of influence from Mycenae to Knossos may be exaggerated, as the elite at the latter site appears to have been as dynamic in this area as that at the former, with each centre drawing innovatively upon both external ideas and more local traditions (Neopalatial prestige symbolism at Knossos and the shaft graves and Messenian corbel-vaulted tombs at Mycenae).

4.5 Conclusions

• The relationship between LM II and the preceding Neopalatial mortuary practices at Knossos is a complex one, wherein innovations can be seen to have taken place in a cultural context that was receptive to such developments. The LM I ostentatious tomb burials at Poros, and especially the cases of experimentation with mainland ideas, albeit by social groups below the apex of the Knossian hierarchy, surely facilitated the further local development of this strategy in LM II. However, LM II was still clearly a horizon of extensive change, in the introduction of status competition through tomb use at the highest status levels. Clear discontinuity from previous practices is observable in tomb types, assemblage composition and in the modification of the mortuary landscape. Thus, while LM IB may have seen political instability, the fact that tomb use begins to play a central role in political competition only in LM II suggests a shift, if not a further escalation, in power contestation that was specific to this phase.

• That political instability underlay the strategic recourse to tomb burial practices in LM II is suggested by the extent of the resources being poured into this new sphere of elite expression at Knossos, and by the diversity of the results. The fact that it was deployed in mainland contexts for status advertisement within political competition reinforces the idea that this was probably the principal reason underlying its introduction at Knossos. There is no reason to question the hypothesis that the mainland provided the immediate inspiration for the adoption of such a strategy at Knossos, although the ways in which it was exploited here were distinctive to the local cultural tradition and current socio-political context, which suggests that these tombs were far from being passive markers of ethnic identities.

• The fact that these mortuary innovations were exclusive to Knossos suggests that they were also connected with the changing political circumstances of this centre within Crete. This restriction of such a mechanism for status advertisement may well have been a deliberate ideological strategy, given Knossos' fragile situation as controller of a broad political regime with a new administrative system.

This very distinctive, if short-lived, mortuary horizon differed not only from preceding, but also from succeeding, practices, as shall be explored in Chapter 5. However, although the mortuary sphere was to continue to develop at a rapid pace both at

Knossos and on Crete more generally well into the Post-palatial period, LM II was the horizon of its most dramatic reorientation. More importantly, it was also the point after which the systematic use of tombs as a forum for competition at the highest social levels began to turn gradually from being an innovation at Knossos to become a part of the Cretan cultural environment.

Chapter 5

The Knossos area, Late Minoan II-IIIB

5.1 Introduction

The preceding chapter dealt exclusively with the initial impact of elite tomb use at Knossos and looked back to the LM I phase, both as the source of the unrest that led ultimately to the rise of the new political and ideological regime, and as a period of active tomb use at this centre that facilitated the acceptance of the LM II innovations. The present chapter turns to look forward in time, placing the LM II mortuary horizon within a longer-term perspective and exploring how this strategy, once established, continued to engage with the changing fortunes and agendas of the Knossian elite.

It was observed in the previous chapter that one of the main assets of the Knossian data set is the level of chronological refinement available, allowing us to chart changes within each ceramic phase. Different tombs and individual burials are datable with different degrees of refinement, depending upon the presence of ceramic vessels and occasionally upon stratigraphy within the tomb. Larnax decoration is not employed for the dating of tombs, as the reliability of directly transposing stylistic dating criteria from the different medium of ceramic vessels is not yet secure (Kanta 1980: 293). 75 of the 184 tombs (41% of the total) provide period-specific information about burial practices relating to one or more of the individual phases of LM II, IIIA1, IIIA2 and IIIB (see Table 5.1). Also, a further 15 tombs (8%) are datable at a broader level – that is, falling within the categories of LM II-IIIA1, LM IIIA1-2 or LM IIIA2-B. For the remaining 94 tombs, there is no possibility of secure dating even on this level, and although they are classified in the present study as securely datable to within LM II-IIIB (through their spatial association with datable tombs), they themselves can only be assigned to some stage (or stages) within this chronological range, often simply to LM III.

These tombs cannot contribute to the present analysis in every respect, therefore, but the remaining data set is still likely to produce reliable results. The undatable and datable tombs were closely integrated both spatially and in terms of their architecture, interment

practices and assemblage compositions, apart from the lack of ceramics in the former. These similarities suggest that the undatable tombs did not belong to a discrete temporal phase, but were simply tombs which fell somewhere within the general timespans of use of their particular cemeteries, but which happened not to contain ceramic vessels. In short, we should be aware of the problems posed by the partial nature of our data set, but nevertheless, we can be optimistic that the patterns produced are fairly reliable, especially as significant patterns of variation *do* emerge between each phase in the datable tombs.

5.2 LM II to IIIB – an outline of developments

This section presents a thematic overview of the evidence for mortuary change from LM II through to IIIB, according to cemetery distribution, tomb architecture, assemblage composition and corpse deposition choices. These different aspects of the mortuary sphere are then drawn together into an overall temporal sequence, whose implications for our understanding of changing elite identity and political concerns at Knossos are considered.

5.2.1 The mortuary landscape (Figures 4.2, 5.1 – 5.4)

Table 5.2 illustrates the approximate use phases of each location in the Knossos area, on the basis of the published evidence. It should be stressed that Figures 5.1 to 5.4 illustrate only the locations where *definite* evidence of use in the specific phase concerned is known. As such, they may be (and in Figures 5.2 and 5.3 they almost certainly are) only partial representations of the actual extent of tomb use in that phase. Given these limitations, changes are visible in the spatial arrangement of the mortuary landscape. In LM IIIA1, the general linear formation linking the palace to the harbour town was retained. However, the New Hospital Site cemetery was abandoned by the end of LM II, as was possibly also the case for the Agios Ioannis area. On the other hand, Isopata, Katsambas, the Lower Gypsades and Temple Tomb areas and probably Mavro Spelio continued in use without interruption, while several new tomb locations were also established, at Sellopoulo, Zapher Papoura, Upper Gypsades and Nea Alikarnassos.

The scale of these disruptions in tomb location between LM II and LM IIIA1, in terms of both abandoned and newly founded cemeteries, was far smaller than that of LM II.

However, it was more marked than in subsequent phases, which saw general continuity in the use of locations in use in LM IIIA1. Unfortunately, the data do not allow us to chart changes within the extensive LM IIIB phase with precision, but it is probably significant that while most locations see some LM IIIB use, only the Upper Gypsades cemetery (specifically, **KN UGY 7, 9** and **11**) has secure evidence of burials continuing into the later part of the phase. It seems, therefore, that the main decline in tomb use at Knossos took place before late LM IIIB.

5.2.2 Tomb architecture

The passage of time between LM II and LM IIIB at Knossos saw a steady decrease in the levels of labour and skill resources devoted to tomb architecture, as manifested in comparisons of both tomb dimensions and the extent of architectural elaboration between the different phases. A comparison of known chamber areas of chamber and corbel-vaulted tombs constructed within each phase is set out in Figure 5.5. On the one hand, this shows that most tombs in every phase were in fact small, with a chamber area of less than ten square metres. On the other, there was a steady and notable decrease with time in the number and dimensions of larger tombs being constructed. Indeed, no subsequent phase of the Late Bronze Age at Knossos was to produce a mortuary structure on the scale of the LM II Kephala and Isopata tombs.

Changes in tomb *type* preferences also corroborate this trend. The distribution of the different tomb types within the Knossos area does not bring out any clear spatial segregations (see Figure 5.6), other than an absence of shaft graves and pit-caves in the harbour area. However, their temporal distribution does show some changes (Figure 5.7). The construction of the corbel-vaulted tomb type (which was also the only type to be stone-built rather than rock carved) virtually ceased after LM II – the sole exceptions being the small round corbel-vaulted tombs at Sellopoulo (**KN SE 6** – whose date within LM II-IIIB is uncertain) and possibly Ambelokipi (see Appendix F). By contrast, the popularity of the small shaft grave and pit-cave tomb types appears to have increased, especially in LM IIIA. Unfortunately, only 10 of the 43 shaft graves for the Knossos area, and 13 of the 22 pit-caves, are datable, so that the results presented in Figure 5.7 are not entirely reliable. However, the fact that most of the datable tombs in each case belong to LM IIIA, while most of the undatable ones occur in cemeteries without any documented LM II use, argues at the very least that these two smaller tomb types were mainly popular after the LM II phase. The relative amounts of effort

expenditure required for the construction of chamber tombs, shaft graves and pit-caves in the Zapher Papoura cemetery have been roughly calculated in Figure 5.8 on the basis of the average ground area of each type.[22] The results demonstrate that the construction of chamber tombs generally involved the most effort expenditure in terms of the amount of earth or rock to be extracted, followed by the pit-cave, and then the shaft grave, thus corroborating the impression of post-LM II reductions in architectural expenditure.

Turning to architectural elaboration, there is a similarly clear pattern of decreasing investment through time here as observed in tomb dimensions. This was not simply a result of the cessation of monumental constructions on the level of complexity of the ashlar Isopata and Kephala tombs, with their forehalls, chamber and dromos niches and corbelled roofs. In fact, the majority of the LM II chamber tombs, which were no larger than their later counterparts (Figure 5.5), also stood out from the latter in terms of the attention devoted to their embellishment. In these features, these smaller LM II tombs held more in common with their more grandiose contemporaries at Isopata and Kephala, thus strengthening the link between them that was postulated in Chapter 4. The temporal decline in the occurrence of several of these features is charted in Table 5.3 (see also Appendix J). The category of columns and buttresses does not follow the same pattern as the others, instead seeing an increase in numbers in LM IIIA. However, this is partly because two of the LM IIIA tombs (**KN NE** and **KN IS 7** – both LM IIIA1) appear to have deliberately imitated the form of the LM II 'Tomb of the Double Axes' (**KN IS 3**) (cf. Figures 4.9 and 5.9), though on a smaller and less elaborate scale.[23]

Overall, therefore, changes in tomb elaboration and dimensions are consistent with each other in charting a general decline through time in the devotion of interest and resources to funerary architecture, from the height of its popularity in LM II, to its complete abandonment by LM IIIB in favour of simply cut, smaller tombs and tomb types.

5.2.3 Assemblage composition

The main artefact types of the LM II-IIIB period may be roughly categorised according

---

[22] Including the dromoi in the case of the chamber tombs, and the shafts in the case of the pit-caves. Unfortunately, any more detailed calculation of tomb areas is precluded by a lack of data regarding chamber heights.

[23] **KN NE** has steps and a cist in the chamber, like **KN IS 3**, but neither of the later tombs has a carved column on the buttress face, and both are much smaller than their LM II prototype (**KN IS 3** is roughly half the size, **KN NE** roughly a quarter).

to the themes of body adornment (beads, rings, pins and, very rarely, rosettes and bracelets), grooming equipment (razors, mirrors, tweezers and combs), knives, weaponry (swords, spearheads, daggers, arrowheads and occasionally helmets) and vessels of various types and materials (mainly consumption, preparation/pouring and storage shapes).[24] Levels of artefact quantity and material diversity varied, with each phase producing comparatively richer and poorer burials, but some general temporal shifts in assemblage quantities and composition through time can be observed. Little significant *spatial* variation is apparent, though, in the distributions of the different material and artefact types, as illustrated in Figures 5.10 and 5.11. On the contrary, most cemeteries comprised burials with varying levels of wealth, and most of the artefact types involved were universally recognised as being appropriate for the burial assemblage, rather than being specific to particular burying groups within the area.

Tables 5.4 and 5.5 set out the changes in material and artefact preferences that can be charted for each specific phase. Only burials that can be securely dated to a single phase have been used, with the result that the core data set of the present analysis is small. However, these few burials do present some interesting and consistent patterns of change. Some artefacts and materials are more informative than others, often depending upon whether (and if so, how heavily) the datable burials in each case are outweighed numerically by the 'undatable'. However, it will be found that a number of the burials included in the 'undatable' column can actually contribute positively to the analysis, in being attributable to broad date ranges within our period, if not at the refined level of individual phases. Other tombs, such as Sellopoulo tomb 3 (**KN SE 3**), are actually datable to specific phases, but cannot be included in the core data set because the individual burials within the tombs cannot be distinguished. Where relevant, therefore, these burials and tombs will be drawn upon to supplement the picture presented by the core data set.

A note on value

Unfortunately, it is not possible to enter into a detailed discussion of the subject of value here, but two points should be made. The first is to justify the segmentary treatment of assemblage material in the present section. Assemblages do not always benefit from consideration as reified 'artefacts' in their own right, whose significance as an entity is more than simply the sum of their parts. Yet it will be argued later in the present chapter

[24] These ceramic classifications are discussed in the introduction to Appendix N.

that such a model does generally apply in the case of the Knossian tombs. Within this system, a number of the individual artefact types carry significance largely through their participation in the whole that is represented by the assemblage in its totality. Given this holistic emphasis, however, the constitutive parts of the assemblage can justifiably be separated out for individual consideration, since each made a specific and unique contribution to the overarching whole.

The present analysis also goes a step further, in separating out the material components and forms of individual artefacts. It is, of course, artificial to try to reconstruct the value of an artefact through such a method alone, as these two elements of an object are often inextricably linked in the construction of its symbolism and significance. But for certain artefact types at least, such as jewellery (and, as discussed below, certain metal vessels), such a distinction does appear to be significant, in that different composite materials endowed the same artefact form with different levels of value and prestige.

Second, it is now widely accepted that the value of an artefact not only shifts through the course of its use span, but is also subjectively, contextually and multiply constructed (Appadurai 1986). Features that may contribute to its determination include the life history of the artefact, the labour intensity of its production, the existing generic associations of the artefact type in general and its level of availability. These are flexible and socially specific determinants, however, so that scarcity and labour investment are not always directly proportionate to value, in contrast to common modern western assumptions (Voutsaki 1995b: 7).

Given our knowledge of Aegean Bronze Age exchange systems and comparative studies of mainland mortuary assemblages, several suggestions can be put forward regarding the ways in which value was constructed in the LM Knossian assemblages. Individual life histories of artefacts are difficult to reconstruct in our context, though doubtless could have held great importance in the construction of value, especially within the elite systems of gift exchange in the Late Bronze Age eastern Mediterranean. Accessibility of material also appears to have been a significant factor in creating value in the complex palatial societies of the Late Bronze Age Aegean, whether the rarity which lent value was a result of external supply constraints or else an exclusivity artificially created locally (see Voutsaki 1995b: 9). Under this criterion, metals, ivory, glass, amber and most stone types would probably have imbued their objects with a

certain amount of value through being imported materials. Relative accessibility must be estimated through the analysis of multiple archaeological contexts, however: abundance or rarity in the assemblages is not in itself reliable as an index of relative accessibility, as some materials or artefact types may simply have been considered more appropriate than others for the mortuary context. Bronze, for example, is fairly common in assemblages, but is known to have been a valuable material, especially through the degree of palatial control over its production in the Neopalatial and LM II-III periods, and its relative scarcity in settlement contexts (recycling may account for this scarcity, but this too is an index of value).

Finally, resources of skilled individuals to work raw materials into finished luxury products seem also to have added to the value of an artefact, as the production of prestige artefacts through such industries was one of the mainstays of the palatial elites of the Neopalatial and Final Palatial periods.

Material types (Table 5.4)

Ceramics were not included in Table 5.4: since they comprise the main dating mechanism for burials, their frequency within each period would naturally be 100% or just under, and their ratios in comparison with the numbers of undatable burials would simply reflect the ratio of datable to undatable tombs. Bone and shell were not included either, as they occurred so rarely (less than three times in the datable burials).

The only conspicuous pattern of temporal change in Table 5.4 in which all material types participate is the decline of wealth deposition in LM IIIB. The extent of the poverty of assemblages in this final phase is probably slightly exaggerated in some cases, but overall seems to be a genuine trend. For example, although gold probably did occur in a few LM IIIB contexts (tombs **KN SE 1, KN SE 2** and **KN ZP 99** being good candidates), no examples of whole necklaces of identical gold beads are recorded for LM IIIB burials, in contrast to each of the preceding phases.[25] In the category of bronze, the only artefact types certainly found in burials of this latest phase are a bead in **KN UGY 6**, an ear-ring in **KN UGY 9** and a 'point' in **KN UGY 11.**

Apart from this conspicuous shift, no other large-scale diachronic changes in material depositions are discernible within LM II-IIIB. Little information can be derived from

[25] In **KN IS 1** for LM II, **KN SE 4** for LM IIIA1, and **KN ZP 40** and **KN ZP 67** for LM IIIA2.

the results for stone, glass, faience and amber – for the first two because the datable burials are so far outweighed by the undatable, and for the latter two because the overall quantities for the Knossos area are too small to reveal any meaningful patterns. Even among the remaining materials, only the grossest trends can be discerned, due to the large proportion of undatable burials in each case. Silver is the only exception, and the only material for which we can confidently point to diachronic change within the LM II-IIIA2 period. Although this was never a common material type in burial assemblages, there is a notable decline in the frequency of its deposition between LM II and LM IIIA1. The three 'undatable' burials in this category are the LM IIIA2-B tomb **KN SE 3** and two genuinely undatable tombs (**KN MS 3** and **KN ZP 84**). The hypothesis that greater quantities of this valuable material were deposited in LM II is also corroborated by a consideration of the sizes of the artefacts involved. The largest items of this material (vessels) mostly belong to LM II (four burials), while the later and the undatable artefacts are mainly either rings or pins.

Artefact types (Table 5.5)

In terms of artefact preferences, diachronic changes are easier to discern than in material types. As with the materials, artefact types occurring less than three times in the datable burials have not been included in the analysis.[26] In other cases, such as beads, rings and stone vessels, the high proportion of undatable occurrences renders it impossible to pinpoint temporal shifts, if any significant changes did take place (and items of adornment at least appear to have been consistently popular throughout the period). Shifts in artefact preference do come out more clearly in other categories, however, and these shall be discussed in chronological order.

To begin with LM II-IIIA1, appeals to Neopalatial high status symbolism in the assemblage ceased after LM II. There were no further occurrences of the bull's head rhyton, tall ring-handled ritual vessels or double axes found in the earliest Isopatan tombs. One of the LM IIIA1 assemblages of this cemetery did include a breccia mace head (**KN IS 4**), but this was an isolated exception (and one in keeping with the eclectic traditions of this cemetery). Also sharply declining in popularity after LM II (though not completely disappearing) were squat alabastra and precious metal vessels (that is, vessels of gold and/or silver). In fact, of the four 'undated' burials with squat alabastra

[26] That is, plaster tripod altars, bracelets, ceramic cauldrons, tall alabastra, amphorae, figurines, kernoi, flasks and rhyta.

in Table 5.5, two may in fact belong to LM II (both were in **KN KA 1**), and even if all were to prove to be of post-LM II date, they would not rival the significant quantities that were deposited in this first phase. Meanwhile, all but two of the precious metal vessels deposited in Knossian graves belonged with LM II burials, the exceptions being the bowls at Sellopoulo (**KN SE 4**).

On the other hand, bronze vessels entered the assemblage for the first time in LM IIIA1,[27] while tin-coated ceramic vessels and mirrors now became a common feature, in contrast to the isolated LM II examples (in **KN IS 6** and **8** respectively). Six burials with bronze vessels are listed as 'undatable', but some of these artefacts can in fact be securely dated to post-LM II (those in **KN KA 2** and **KN SE 3**, both LM IIIA tombs), while those in **KN ZP 15, 36, 37** and **99** are unlikely to be LM II since there is no evidence for the use of the Zapher Papoura cemetery this early. The three simultaneous shifts in material preference regarding metal and metal-coated vessels (that is, away from gold and silver and towards tin-coating and bronze) are particularly interesting. As Table 5.6 illustrates, the different metals were used for different vessel types, which suggests that we are witnessing a more complex process than simply a straightforward LM IIIA1 substitution of more expendable materials (bronze and tin) for gold and silver. On the one hand, substitution does appear to have been one factor. Tin-coated vessels did generally follow the same forms (that is, drinking shapes) as those of precious metal, and these may well have been direct replacements of more valuable gold and silver drinking prototypes, evoking wealth that the buriers were no longer willing to sacrifice permanently to the grave. On the other hand, though, the tin-coated vessels also included three storage vessels: a squat alabastron at Isopata (**KN IS 6**) and two miniature stirrup jars in (**KN ZP 99**).[28] The bronze artefact types, meanwhile, include a few examples of drinking forms, but mainly comprise storage, pouring and cooking vessels. The significance of their introduction in LM IIIA1 will be discussed below.

Turning to LM IIIA2, there is greater continuity from the preceding phase in artefact preferences than was the case between LM II and LM IIIA1. The main change apparent in the results of Table 5.5 is the comparative absence of weaponry in this phase.

---

[27] With the technical exception of the LM II precious metal vessel in **KN TT 3**, which had a bronze core beneath its gold and silver exterior.

[28] Kanta (1980: 327) also records the analysis of a tin-coated sherd from **KN MS 13**, but the vessel type and date are not mentioned.

Admittedly, there are a number of burials with weapons that are undatable, but it is interesting that all of the datable burials with swords and spearheads are LM II or LM IIIA1 in date. Two LM IIIA2 tombs have produced arrowheads (**KN ZP 10** and **KN IS 2**). A 'dagger' was recovered from **KN ZP 95** (an interesting item, in that it was described by Evans as possibly being a short sword), and a "pointed instrument" from **KN ZP 81** that looked like a javelin head "but seems to be too narrow for such an use" (Evans 1905: 470). Also interesting are the probable remains of a boar's tusk helmet in **KN KA 8**, associated with the handle of what was probably a dagger. This is the sum of the military equipment definitely associable with LM IIIA2 burials at Knossos, and if these few burials are indeed representative of the phase, they suggest that burials with full sets of weapons were no longer being practised, as opposed to a few assemblages that included occasional pieces of equipment with military associations, though not of the same standard or quality of their predecessors. In other words, it may be that LM IIIA2 saw some burials that were consciously perpetuating the mortuary ideals of previous generations, but on a greatly reduced scale of actual sacrifice of military equipment.

Otherwise, the deposition of items with clear prestige value, such as bronze vessels and gold necklaces, did continue into the LM IIIA2 phase. Mirrors, razors and knives were also common features of the assemblages, as were bronze items of jewellery, and there are single examples of an amber bead, faience bead, silver ring and ivory vessel. None of the tombs securely datable to this period match the wealth of the wealthiest LM IIIA1 tombs, however, though tombs 1 and 2 of the Sellopoulo cemetery do appear from the preliminary reports to have been cumulatively quite wealthy.

Finally, LM IIIB saw the most conspicuous changes of the entire period in artefact preferences, as also noted above with respect to the different material types. Not only did general quantities of artefacts within assemblages drop dramatically, but also, no razors, mirrors, weapons or bronze or tin-coated vessels have been recovered from a securely datable LM IIIB burial context, while gold was rare and silver absent.[29] Jewellery continued to be deposited, but the quantities were reduced and the materials involved generally poor.

[29] The part-bronze, part-iron knife in **KN UGY 6** is not included because its associated burial may be LM IIIC in date, to judge by one of the ceramic vessels beneath the larnax.

5.2.4 Corpse deposition practices

Numbers of burials per tomb remain fairly consistent from LM II through to LM IIIB, though the high number of only vaguely datable burials precludes any detailed assessment. Tombs usually contained up to three inhumations (Figure 5.12), although it is clearly the case (on the basis of the larnax counts) that in a number of tombs, not all of the skeletal remains have been preserved or noted in publication. In terms of burial numbers per tomb type, all of the main types usually contained single burials, though where there were more, they usually occurred in chamber tombs (Figure 5.13), whose use spans often covered two ceramic phases (usually LM IIIA1 and 2 or LM IIIA2 and IIIB). The preference for extended supine burials in chamber tombs, noted in the previous chapter for the LM II phase, continued in the subsequent phases (see Appendix O), while the same appears also to have been the practice for pit-caves and shaft graves, to judge by the information provided in the Zapher Papoura publication (Evans 1905).

The only discernible innovation that took place in interment practices during the course of the LM II-IIIB period was in receptacle use. Use of the wooden chest and bier was confined to the LM II and LM IIIA periods. The documented examples break down as follows: seven are LM II, two are LM II or IIIA, eight fall within the LM IIIA period (of which two are certainly LM IIIA1 and one is certainly LM IIIA2), and four are of uncertain date. The introduction of the clay larnax, by contrast, was a later phenomenon. Ninety-three larnakes (all chests) have been recovered from the secure tombs in the area, as well as a number of others from chance finds or tombs that cannot be securely dated. It is unfortunate that of the ninety-three examples from securely dated tombs, only sixteen are directly associated with datable ceramics. However, it is interesting that these sixteen are all dated to either LM IIIA2 or LM IIIB. Although a further four have been dated stylistically to LM IIIA2 or LM III B, on the basis of their decoration, this is not a reliable method of dating, as noted at the start of this chapter. By the same token, the fragmentary larnax recovered from tombs with post-Bronze Age use in the Knossos North Cemetery and dated on stylistic grounds to LM IIIA1 (Morgan 1987) does not thereby constitute adequate proof of the use of larnakes in this phase. The problem of the dating of the introduction of the chest larnax at Knossos requires further investigation, therefore, but at present there is only evidence for its use in LM IIIA2 and LM IIIB.

5.3 Discussion

5.3.1 LM IIIA1

In the previous chapter, LM II mortuary customs were seen to be characterised by their wealth and ostentation, and by their willingness to introduce external ideas and to experiment with cultural symbolism of various contextual and geographical origins. The succeeding generations of the LM IIIA1 palatial elite upheld many of the mortuary ideas embraced by these predecessors, and this fact is significant in itself. The innovation of tomb use as a high status competitive sphere at Knossos proved viable enough to be accepted and reproduced by succeeding generations as an element of elite social behaviour.

Within this general framework of continuity, however, two shifts in emphasis apparent in LM IIIA1 should be noted. One is the alteration to the mortuary landscape, as certain cemeteries were abandoned and new ones established, which may reflect either redivisions of land or dislocations in elite lineages. The mortuary landscape appears to have become more stable from LM IIIA1 onwards, however, when few changes in cemetery locations took place. The second notable change in mortuary practices that took place in LM IIIA1 involved the shifts in artefact and material preferences and in architectural expenditure outlined above. When we explore these shifts in detail, it appears that they were actually moves towards increased consolidation and conformity within the mortuary sphere, towards a more unified and comprehensive elite ideology in death.

Ideological consolidation – the warrior ideal

The current evidence suggests that the LM IIIA1 burying elite at Knossos had abandoned the LM II recourse to indigenous prestige symbolism. Instead, they now universally embraced the mainland-derived high status cultural 'package' that had been a conspicuous feature of the preceding LM II practices, if not their sole ideological resource. This move to a more standardised assemblage was mirrored by a decline in architectural 'experiments' too, in favour of tomb types more standardised in form and dimensions. Naturally, future discoveries of innovative and eclectic LM IIIA1 tombs at Knossos, like those of LM II Kephala and Isopata, cannot be ruled out, which would alter the current picture of increasing standardisation. However, the LM IIIA1 tombs of Isopata, which one might expect to continue the experimentation of their predecessors if

eclecticism in the mortuary sphere was indeed ongoing in this later phase, generally conform rather to the wider Knossian pattern of standardisation.

Proceeding on the assumption that the symbolic standardisation presented by the existing evidence is an accurate reflection of the original situation, therefore, the ideological rationale behind these increasingly focused artefact choices is useful to consider at this point. Burial was just one element (though an extremely important one) of the new ideology surrounding the 'warrior lifestyle' that was being embraced by the Knossian elite. The different themes contributing to this overall ideological system were closely inter-linked, and this cohesion was both reflected in and further reinforced by the juxtaposition of their symbolic referents within the tomb context. The burial assemblage was a crucial element of this display, though there were at least two other potential mortuary foci for the celebration of the elite ideological system: the burial rituals and the corpse itself. Within the assemblage, different artefact types were intended to evoke particular ideas and associations in the mind of the onlooker or participant in the funerary ceremony, and the choice of the artefacts to be placed in the tomb would have been a crucial part of the burial process. Through these emblems the deceased, and the living connected with them, would be representing themselves to their peer group and legitimating their claim to membership of that group through commonly recognised status symbols. As a result, the significance of the assemblage cannot be accounted for solely through such abstract measurements of value as quantity, quality or diversity of artefacts or material, though all of these aspects were involved to a greater or lesser extent. We need also to consider the specific ideas conveyed by the different artefact types – that is, the individual elements of the ideology of a particular high status as projected through the mortuary record.

Three general 'themes' into which the various artefacts types can be divided are masculine physical and martial prowess, embodied display (including both grooming equipment and artefact adornment), and food and drink consumption. Several artefact types had associations with more than one of these themes, which is unsurprising as the themes themselves were closely interconnected within their overarching ideological system. Within the first theme, of masculine prowess, the association of military symbolism with privileged status in the Late Bronze Age Aegean requires no defence here, following the numerous treatments of the subject in the past (most recently, Deger-Jalkotzy 1999; Driessen and Schoep 1999: 393-5). Apart from the instances of

actual weaponry, there are numerous examples of military iconography occurring on other media within the assemblages, especially figure-of-eight shields and boar's tusk helmets depicted on ivory plaques and on ceramic and stone vessels (in **KN ZP 15, KN MS 10, KN IS 6, KN TT 1, KN KE** and **KN SE 2**). There is even a stone vessel in the form of a corselet in **KN TT 3**. Hunting, as well as human combat, was probably an important arena for the display of physical prowess, perhaps as a male 'initiatory' activity (C. Morris 1990). Macdonald has argued that human combat was the most crucial feature, since swords are the most common weapon type recovered from tombs, and they seem to carry the highest prestige associations (Driessen and Macdonald 1984: 56-58). However, hunting is also represented in iconography, and was closely linked with warrior identity on the mainland (N. Marinatos 1990; C. Morris 1990). The mortuary evocation at Knossos of such activities is attested in the boar decoration of a sword in **KN ZP 37**, and in the boar's tusk helmet in **KN ZP 56**. The latter use of a trophy of the hunt as armour provides a symbolic link between hunting and combat, and the links between sanctioned aggression against other humans and against animals, particularly dangerous prey, have been explored by Morris (1990). The consumption of the prey, meanwhile, could have been a focus of the feasting activities also integral to this lifestyle.

The second theme, of embodied display, is represented by a range of artefacts in the Knossian assemblages. Grooming equipment included mirrors (popular from LM IIIA1), razors, tweezers and combs, while items of adornment mainly comprised necklaces and bracelets (often including sealstones), pins, finger rings and earrings. Treherne's study of the elite warrior lifestyle as a general Late Bronze Age phenomenon in central Europe has emphasised the importance of embodied display, both in life and death. The human body was "central to the ideology [of the warrior]" (1995: 106), and the corpse was the material focus around whose physical deposition the whole mortuary ritual was constructed. This idea finds support in the mortuary evidence at Knossos in several respects. First, the common practice of single burial in tombs facilitated a concentration on the deceased as an individual at the time of burial, rather than emphasising their membership of (and potentially, therefore, greater anonymity within) a larger ancestral group, by the use of large family tombs. Second, the body was usually arranged in a supine extended position, thus facilitating display and concentrating attention on the physical form of the deceased, as befitted the warrior ideology, whose main emblem and focus was the human body. It was often adorned

with jewellery (two burials at Sellopoulo (**KN SE 4**) were also covered by shrouds adorned with gold rosettes), and the other artefact types were also often arranged in such a way as to emphasise the body. Swords, in particular, were almost always placed by the hand – again, focusing attention upon the body as the principal physical focus of the warrior ideology, recalling its actions to the mind of the observer. Third, the toilet articles found in tombs might have been used on the bodies of the deceased themselves during the mortuary rituals (Treherne 1995: 121, though the popularity of mirrors at Knossos warns us to be cautious on this point).

The final theme to consider is that of consumption, where the artefact types concerned are mainly drinking and food preparation and serving vessels. Again, Treherne has noted that feasting and drinking (particularly alcohol) activities are often closely associated with the warrior elite ideology, and Knossos was no exception, as the frequent deposition of metal and metal-coated vessels indicates. Hamilakis (1998a) has discussed the significance of such activities as a mechanism for social control and status advertisement in the Late Bronze Age, and he suggests that the tomb vessels were physical remnants of the mortuary feast itself. Such an explanation is entirely plausible. However, I would suggest that it was not just one occasion that was being recalled by the inclusion of such items in the assemblage, but the role of the feast more generally as a high status activity. Moreover, it is interesting that where more than one bronze vessel is found with a burial, only one of each vessel type is usually included. This choice indicates that it was not simply the *quantity* of bronzes being deposited that mattered, but rather the symbolic representation in a few vessels of as wide a range as possible of the activities involved in the feast.

Economic consolidation – sumptuary control and palatial alignment

In parallel with the symbolic standardisation of assemblages in LM IIIA1, there was also a slight but perceptible move towards greater conservatism in terms of the architectural and artefactual resources devoted to this arena. In other words, the consolidation of a symbolic code for mortuary competition was accompanied by that of a code of practice regarding the *scales of expenditure* to be devoted towards this ideology. The decline in architectural monumentality and elaboration attests to this, as does the substitution of tin-coated vessels in the assemblages for the earlier precious

metal versions.[30] Although the deposition of wealth in this phase could vary markedly from tomb to tomb, with extremely wealthy burials like those of Sellopoulo continuing, the impression gained is that *in general*, the resources being devoted to the mortuary sphere had decreased. One could argue against this that such resources were simply being channelled elsewhere now, such as into the mortuary rituals surrounding the burial, but although such rituals were surely impressive, and although social competition certainly continued to be enacted through burial as a whole, an increased sense of restraint is prominent. Various explanations could be envisaged to account for these changes: the introduction of sumptuary laws, a more stable political situation that rendered extreme gestures no longer necessary, or a shifting of the main focus of elite competition to other material arenas.

Mortuary display was not only increasingly enacted through an agreed symbolic system, but it also tied in more closely than before with the palatial economy. The increasing emphasis on bronze in the tombs was noted above, in terms of the greater range of artefact types of this material being deposited (rather than absolute quantities, which are difficult to estimate). The economic significance of bronze in the second-millennium Aegean has long been recognised, and in many ways this metal appears to have functioned as a proto-currency. More accessible than gold or silver, and more practical to work into functional items, it was a useful form of mobile wealth that could be exchanged and recycled. This significance was by no means new to Final Palatial Knossos, for bronze vessels and other artefacts have been recovered from various Neopalatial high status contexts on Crete and contemporary contexts on the mainland – the former mainly settlement or votive, the latter predominantly funerary (Dickinson 1994: 137; Popham and Catling 1974: 247). The continuing local production and central control of bronze in the Final Palatial period are demonstrated by the Linear B archives and the LM II bronze workshop in the Unexplored Mansion (Catling and Catling 1984; Popham *et al.* 1974; Driessen and Macdonald 1984).

To conclude, LM IIIA1 was a phase of consolidation and stabilisation in burial

---

[30] It is not important to the present study whether tin was evoking gold or silver, though this is an interesting question to pursue. Early studies of the phenomenon of tin-coating on the mainland assumed that silver prototypes were being recalled, especially because of the blackened colour of the tin when excavated and because of the contextual association of silver and tin-coated examples in mainland tombs (for example, Dendra tomb 10 - Persson 1942: 92, 137; Immerwahr 1966). However, Gillis has argued that they were in fact recalling the latter metal, since experimental reconstructions of the process of affixing the tin to the ceramic shapes by heating produced a colour change to gold (Gillis and Bohm 1994).

practices, though status advertisement was still a prime concern. The mortuary sphere was now used as a mechanism for expressing *membership* of the elite system, rather than being a tool for experimentation and possibly the challenge and re-negotiation of status, as in the previous phase. Competition was played out within a universally acknowledged set of rules and material standards, rather than as a free-for-all that eclectically seized upon both traditional and innovative sources of prestige symbolism. These changes could either reflect a decreasing desire to experiment with new mortuary ideas (whether in a situation of greater social stability or one of greater attention to other spheres for competitive display), or else an active suppression of experimentation by a more centralised and secure authority.

5.3.2 LM IIIA2 and IIIB

The clay larnax

The assemblages of LMIIIA2 and IIIB, though progressively poorer on average than the LM IIIA1 predecessors discussed above, utilised the same symbolic vocabulary. The major shift in this respect occurred in deposition practices. It was stated above that the take-up of larnax use as a method of corpse deposition seems at present to have taken place in LM IIIA2. The significance of this innovation lies in it being a clear departure from the otherwise close parallels with mainland developments in mortuary habits. The clay larnax had always been a phenomenon peculiar to Crete, and if its reintroduction at Knossos was indeed in LM IIIA2 (or even late LM IIIA1), this would coincide neatly with the spread of formal burial practices to other areas of the island (see Chapter 6).

The association advocated here between the clay larnax and Cretan tradition requires more detailed explanation at this point, as there is an ongoing debate regarding the origins of this artefact type between those who see it as a purely indigenous phenomenon and those who advocate instead an external derivation. Indeed, much past research into the cultural significance of the chest larnax has focused upon this issue of identifying its ultimate cultural origins. Its immediate origins are universally accepted to be a wooden prototype, given the indications of skeuomorphism in its cuboid shape, inset panels, feet and gabled lid of the clay version. It may be that the wooden coffins in LMII and LM IIIA1 graves at Knossos and Katsambas represent these prototypes (at Poros we have only evidence for the use of biers so far). However, there is no way of demonstrating this, as these coffins are not well enough preserved for us to determine whether they had such features as panels or gabled lids. However, even if these specific

examples did not provide direct inspiration for the clay versions, they at least show that wood was considered an acceptable material for coffins.

The main argument that has arisen, therefore, is whether these wooden prototypes were Cretan, mainland or Egyptian in origin. The unspoken implication of this debate seems to be that resolving this matter would provide a key to understanding the *ideological significance* of the end form, the clay chest. However, such an approach is only partly adequate, as it neglects to address the social, political and cultural circumstances that led to this innovation in LM IIIA2 Crete – that is, *why* the wooden version should have been skeuomorphed into clay at all at this particular point in time. These are similar methodological problems to those observed regarding 'origins' debates generally in Aegean archaeology (Chapters 1 and 2), and show the same tendency to polarise advocates of mainland or indigenous derivations.

On the one hand, Rutkowski (1961, 1968) proposed that the wooden chest (in both domestic and mortuary contexts) was a Cretan innovation of the Neopalatial period. He argued that it was directly derived from the traditional clay tub form, but was skeuomorphed into wood, a change which necessarily involved changing the shape to a rectangular form as being more suitable for its new medium (1968: 223). From this point, influence then began to move back again in the other direction, as indicated by the occasional occurrence in the mortuary context of rectangular clay larnakes already in the Neopalatial period and later by the LM III phenomenon of the chest larnax proper. This hypothesis was refuted by Hägg and Sieurin (1982) and Hood (1956: 86-7) on the one hand, who argued that wooden coffins were introduced to Crete by invaders/settlers from the mainland in LM II, and by Watrous (1991) on the other, who advocated an Egyptian origin.

Rutkowski's argument for a direct evolutionary link between the clay tub and the wooden chest is generally unsatisfactory, mainly because of a lack of sufficient supporting data. There is no evidence for the Neopalatial use of wooden coffins, nor does Rutkowski explain why the clay tub might have been skeuomorphed into wood in this period. The arguments for mainland and Egyptian origins, however, also have limitations. Recourse to extra-Aegean influences is in this case unnecessary, and Watrous' argument for direct Egyptian inspiration is tenuous. The hypothesis that the wooden coffin was initially introduced from the mainland is more plausible. Admittedly, few definite examples can be cited of wooden chests in use on the

mainland prior to the LH IIB phase (the point of its introduction at Knossos). A wooden chest that has been plausibly interpreted as a coffin was recovered from Grave III of Grave Circle A at Mycenae (Åkerström 1978), and an LH IIA example has been noted in Dendra tomb 8 (Persson 1942: 50-1; Hägg and Sieurin 1982: 180; Cavanagh and Mee 1998: 55). However, even if the use of wooden chests quickly became more popular at Knossos than on the contemporary mainland following their LM II introduction, the fact that this introduction was an integral part of a wider acceptance of clearly mainland-inspired mortuary ideas suggests that this was the origin of this artefact type also.

Yet in postulating a mainland derivation for the wooden coffin, its subsequent adaptation into clay, and wide acceptance across Crete as a suitable method for interment, is not thereby explained. Hood alone has addressed this specific problem, and he suggests an economic motive for the skeuomorphism, with the clay versions taken up as cheaper imitations of the higher status wooden coffins (1956: 86-7). The alternative explanation that is proposed here is that the wooden larnax was skeuomorphed into clay simply because the latter was considered a *more suitable* medium than wood for mortuary use, specifically because of the long ancestry of the use of clay receptacles on Crete.[31] Such an explanation forms a compromise between the extreme stances of Hägg and Sieurin and of Rutkowski. Both hypotheses are valid to an extent – the former in identifying the mainland influence behind the introduction of wooden receptacles to the island, and the latter in observing the existence of a link between the earlier and later clay forms on Crete. However, as outlined in the introductory chapters, more subtle and complex avenues need to be explored (allowing for multiple sources of influence and for changes in significance) than the inherited model for such debates within Aegean archaeology allows. The explanation presented here for the skeuomorphism from wood to clay is also more positive than Hood's hypothesis, in proposing that the clay version was viewed as an *appropriate translation* of the wooden version, rather than as a second-rate substitute for a more valuable and desirable original.

The political demise of Knossos

The other important issue to address with regard to the LM IIIA2-B mortuary data is the

---

[31] The continuity of the use of the clay tub larnax on Crete into LM IB has not yet been demonstrated, though this may simply be a factor of the general invisibility of burials of this phase (see above, section 3.2.1). Thus whether the appearance of the clay chest larnax in LM IIIA constitutes continuity or revival of this indigenous tradition is unclear.

dating of the collapse of the Knossian palatial administration and wider Cretan hegemony. It was observed above that according to the data available, LM IIIB saw the most conspicuous decline in the quantities and wealth of burial assemblages, while architectural elaboration had been entirely abandoned. However, LM IIIA2 had already been showing signs of declining mortuary expenditure, although burials of this phase were on average wealthier than their LM IIIB successors. In general, artefact deposition in LM IIIA2 was not on the same scale as in the wealthier LM IIIA1 tombs, while **KN SE 1** at Sellopoulo was perhaps the only newly constructed tomb with elaborate architecture. It is frustrating not to be able to date several of the important burials with bronze weaponry and vessels, such as **KN ZP 15** and **37** at Zapher Papoura. However, if we proceed on the basis of the dated contexts that are available, it appears that the sacrifice of valuable artefacts necessary to furnish a fully equipped warrior tomb was no longer required or feasible in LM IIIA2. Instead, the *evocation* of military prowess was substituted, through the deposition of random items of weaponry. If Knossos saw the demise of its Cretan hegemony in this phase, as is argued in the present study, these items could be interpreted either as heirlooms or as increasingly scarce resources continuing in production and circulation, deposited by a reduced local elite that was no longer receiving the former distributions of valuable materials and artefacts from the palace. The same interpretation could be applied to the bronze mirrors, razors, knives, bronze vessels (now usually single rather than in sets) and items of precious jewellery, such as the gold necklaces. The deposition of such small, curatable artefacts need not imply the continuing existence of a large-scale Knossian administration in LM IIIA2, as opposed to a surviving but impoverished elite continuing its inherited customs to the best of its means.

It is not possible to pinpoint the specific event horizon of palatial collapse through the analysis of the mortuary evidence, and the Knossian data by themselves cannot be taken to *prove* that this event took place in the LM IIIA2 phase. As was argued in Chapter 1, it is the wider Cretan picture that most strongly supports the argument for the end of the Knossian regime in LM IIIA2. The main point that needs to be made here, therefore, is that the evidence for the continued, though reduced deposition of valuable items in LM IIIA2 burials does not *negate* the argument for dating the end of the Final Palatial period to this phase. We should not expect the collapse of Knossian hegemony to have resulted in an immediate cessation of elite activity in every social sphere at Knossos, though the decrease in extravagance that we *would* expect in such a context is evident in

the mortuary data.

5.4 Further themes in the mortuary record

The above analysis has concentrated upon mortuary variation on the temporal axis, rather than upon the equally abundant evidence for synchronic diversity within each ceramic phase. This is a problematic area that has certainly been the focus of interest in the past, but which has never been resolved satisfactorily. It actually encompasses several separate themes of variation, each of which appears to articulate a different facet of social identity. Four of these will be highlighted here. The first involves the relationship between the burying groups represented by the spatially distinct cemetery groups. Membership of these cemeteries seems most likely to have been based upon kinship affiliations, since these cemeteries do not display the differences in assemblage preferences (Figures 5.10 and 5.11) or wealth that might indicate that rank was the determining criterion in burial location.

It should also be noted here that although kinship was probably the key factor in this case, this does not imply that we are witnessing the spatial segregation of tombs on the basis of the geographical origins of the burying groups, as Driessen and Macdonald (1984: 65-6) have suggested. The argument they followed was that new mortuary locations in LM II-IIIB represented intrusive mainlanders and continuations of Neopalatial cemeteries indigenous Cretans. However, their statement that the cemeteries involved are "very different" (1984: 66) is not correct, in terms of either tomb type choices or assemblage compositions. More recently, d'Agata has advanced a similar line of argument to that of Driessen and Macdonald, this time proposing that the use of kylikes symbolises Mycenaean identity, and the use of cups, Minoan identity (1999: 52). On this basis, Zapher Papoura and Sellopoulo are argued to be 'Mycenaean' burying grounds, and Mavro Spelio, the Temple Tomb and the Gypsades area 'Minoan'. Here again, the empirical evidence does not support such distinctions, as Zapher Papoura and Mavro Spelio have produced both vessel types.

A second feature of variation concerns choices of tomb type. As observed above, the chamber tomb, pit-cave and shaft grave all occur widely within the Knossos valley, and mingle within individual cemeteries. Nor are there any clear differentiations between

them in terms of the wealth or composition of the assemblages they contained. Factors of availability of human labour to construct the tomb are not very satisfactory as an explanation. Each type was very standardised in its form and construction, especially within the Zapher Papoura cemetery, and the fact that formal burial itself was probably a fairly exclusive privilege at Knossos, suggests that one cannot dismiss the choices made in each case merely as the results of expediency. Thus the underlying criteria in this case remain obscure. However, whatever their social and ideological associations at Knossos were, it is at least clear that these were internally constructed rather than imported, since the relative proportions of these tomb types are vastly different to those of the mainland. Indeed, shaft grave burial is not documented on the mainland at all after LH I, while only a handful of pit-caves are known there, usually as isolated exceptions within chamber tomb cemeteries (Voutsaki 1993: 74) in contrast to the high ratio of pit-caves to chamber tombs (18:49) at Zapher Papoura.

A third axis of variation concerns the choices made between receptacle and floor deposition from LM IIIA2 onwards. For the introduction of the larnax did not replace earlier practices completely, but continued to be practised side by side with a continuing occurrence of floor burials, and in a cross-section of cemetery locations (Figure 5.14). **KN ZP 17** is the only secure example we have of a floor burial taking place *after* a larnax burial (if one follows the principle that the burial furthest from the entrance probably occurred first), but there are several other examples of chamber tombs with both types of deposition. The strong association of larnakes with chamber tombs, rather than pit-caves or shaft graves, may be relevant,[32] in that chamber tombs were also more strongly associated with multiple burial. However, more cannot be said at present, especially in light of the lack of skeletal data,[33] which prohibits us from investigating the possibility that age or sex were relevant. Comparisons with the preceding Neopalatial practices of larnax and floor burials within the same tomb are not helpful, partly because of the lack of published mortuary data for this earlier period. However, the results of the sexing of some skeletal data from Ailias and Upper Gypsades (Appendix D) suggest that gender was not a criterion for differentiation in that period.

The fourth, and by no means simplest, factor is that of variations between the

---

[32] The only exceptions are in **KN ETT 2** (a pit-cave) and **KN UGY 12, KN MS 20** and **KN ZP 35** (shaft graves).

[33] The Upper Gypsades cemetery publication constituting a notable exception (Hood *et al.* 1959: 200, note 4).

assemblages of contemporary burials. This issue has received the most attention in the past, most notably in the form of Kilian-Dirlmeier's analysis of assemblage variation in LM II-IIIA Knossian burials (1985). At the time of its publication, this study constituted the most detailed analysis to date of social differentiations in the burial evidence here. It was also more comprehensive in terms of its data set than most previous studies, which had tended to concentrate exclusively upon the minority of wealthy burials (particularly the 'warrior burials' and 'burials with bronzes'). The result of this study was a tripartite structure of assemblage classification, according to the criteria of gender, social status and military function.

However, there were two major methodological flaws involved which cast doubt on the validity of each of these explanations. The first was a lack of chronological control. The LM II-IIIA burials were treated as though synchronous, overlooking the evidence for marked temporal changes in mortuary habits that was outlined above. As Chapman and Randsborg observe (1981: 13), in periods of rapid social change, what we see as differences in rank in the mortuary evidence may in fact be changes in the way of expressing rank, and this is exactly what happened in at least one case here, as will be shown below.

The second problem is that the burials were assumed to be neatly assignable to rigid classificatory slots that 'reflected' a social reality, and neither the potential for symbolic manipulation nor the existence of multiple social realities was taken into consideration. Therefore, although an exploration of social hierarchy in burial could theoretically yield useful results, especially within the centralised and standardised system of social structure and depositional practices proposed here for LM IIIA Knossos, such an approach was not in fact successful for the present data set. To demonstrate this, each dimension of social identity proposed should be discussed briefly in turn.

To take the analysis of military organisation first, from the burials with weapons, Kilian-Dirlmeier constructed a "hierarchy of the military aristocracy" (*ibid.*: 202-3) comprising six categories, based upon the combinations of weapons present. The first category – with the 'full equipment' of a sword, dagger and spear - represented the highest social and military rank, while the other groups – sword and dagger, sword and spear, sword only or spear only – were interpreted as different types of fighter of more humble status. Three of these latter categories also included one wealthy burial, which

Kilian-Dirlmeier interpreted as a higher status 'subcommander'. Such a fine level of resolution was rather ambitious, given the limited size of the data set available: this complex reconstruction of the military command and organisation at Knossos was achieved using only twenty burials. Moreover, three of the four burials of Group 1 were of LM II date, suggesting that here at least, Kilian-Dirlmeier has actually picked up on the temporal distinction between levels of funerary ostentation in LM II and IIIA observed above, rather than any hierarchical differentiation.

The results proposed with respect to gender in the assemblages were potentially more valid, but the main problems were that gendered female and male assemblages were both assumed to be present and that they were expected to reflect passively the biological sex of the deceased. In the virtual absence of anthropological data for any of the LM II-IIIB Knossian tombs, Kilian-Dirlmeier worked on the assumption that weapons, razors and/or 'tools' in an assemblage indicated that the individual was male. Thus, by default, those without these artefact types were classed as 'female', although children were also included in this category, for reasons unexplained. Although Kilian-Dirlmeier omitted to defend the criteria she had chosen for gendering the assemblages, they can be supported through archaeological analogies. The identification of weapons as male in gender is supportable by reference to iconography and to the sexed burials of Mycenae Grave Circle B (Mylonas 1973: 269; Kilian-Dirlmeier 1988), although the difference in temporal and geographical context should be borne in mind. The close association between 'warrior' identities and masculinity has been discussed by Treherne (1995) for Europe generally, Nikolaidou and Kokkinidou (1997) for the Aegean, and Morris (C. Morris 1990) for mainland hunting practices specifically (as a male initiatory ritual). Indeed, there is little doubt that this was a very male-oriented ideology. Razors and tools are not represented in iconography, but the frequent occurrence of the former in association with weapons in burials at Knossos and on the mainland (especially in Grave Circle B) supports an interpretation of male associations for this artefact type at least.

Thus the criteria for male gendering are generally supportable. The apparent lack of female equivalents is more intriguing. Kilian-Dirlmeier found no convincing method of positively identifying a 'female' burial, beyond the mere absence of 'male' artefacts. The appeal to the absence of precious metal vessels in the 'female' graves is not persuasive, since these items are so rare anyway. The same applies to the two artefact

types that do appear in her 'female/child' category, but in no 'male' burials: the bronze arm ring and ivory casket, each of which occurs only once. Potentially more promising is the difference Kilian-Dirlmeier notes in the positioning of seals on the body between these two tomb categories (around the neck for 'females', as opposed to around the wrist in the 'male' burials). This pattern works for most of the fifteen burials involved, although **KN ZP 36, 67** and **82**, burial III of **KN SE 4** and **KN NH 3** are problematic.[34] Unfortunately, iconographical evidence does not corroborate this distinction, since of the ten examples noted by Younger of the wearing of wrist seals in LBA Cretan (including Knossian) and mainland iconography, eight are by females. Indeed, he interprets this form of adornment as a status symbol used primarily by women (Younger 1992: 258).

This is as far as we can go at present in reconstructing gender symbols in the assemblages, but it may be significant that male symbols are more prominent among the artefacts. If the general ideology of high status identity at Knossos was primarily male oriented, 'female' artefacts may not have been considered appropriate for the burial assemblage at all. By extension, there is no reason to reject the possibility that females also expressed their claims to such a status by displaying male emblems in death. Identifying the *gender* of an artefact, or even of an entire assemblage, does not constitute proof of the *biological sex* of the deceased individual.

Finally, Kilian-Dirlmeier's reconstruction of vertical social status involved a five-fold rank division within the 'male' burials and a three-fold one within the 'females'. Although the overall breadth of variation between wealthier and poorer assemblages is well illustrated by her chart, the divisions between 'classes' seem overly rigid and often rather arbitrary. Nor do they take into account diachronic change (as noted above) or decisions at the individual level to advertise status instead through media that are not archaeologically recoverable.

The tendency to categorise the Knossian burials is by no means restricted to Kilian-Dirlmeier, as frequent references to 'warrior burials' and 'burials with bronzes' attest,

---

[34] The unusual steatite bead in **KN ZP 36** interpreted (debatably) as a seal, is by the foot of the burial. The "bead-seal" in **KN ZP 82** was at "about the middle" of the larnax. **KN ZP 67** and burial III of **KN SE 4** are not strictly applicable, as the seals are of Egyptian faience, and may therefore count as exotica, rather than as seals proper. Finally, apart from the two seals in **KN NH 3** at the side of the burial with weapons (which match Kilian-Dirlmeier's pattern), there are also two more by the head. Although they appear to accompany, rather than actually adorn, the body, they were found with three glass-paste beads, possibly suggesting that they were part of a necklace.

though hers is the most complex framework and systematic analysis to have been produced so far. This disposition to ordering and categorisation has not proved successful so far, however, partly through the neglect of the important chronological changes that took place in mortuary customs during the course of the LM II-IIIB period. The relatively small size of the data set and lack of physical anthropological data have also contributed.

To conclude, future analyses of the various axes of mortuary variation outlined above would certainly be useful. However, they will need to be flexible in their proposed categorisations of identity and to allow for the potential of individual actors to make conscious decisions to deviate from standards for reasons that may never be known. In short, they will need to work with the complexity of the patterns discernible in the empirical evidence, rather than treating it as an obstacle to be overcome.

5.5 Comparisons with the mainland

A discussion of the relationship between the mortuary patterns of Knossos and the mainland will be postponed until Part III and the wider framework of Post-palatial Crete as a whole. However, several comments should be made about Final Palatial Knossos, ~~however~~, and particularly the LM IIIA1 phase, since LM II practices were discussed in the previous chapter.

In LM IIIA1, Knossian mortuary customs moved more closely in line with those of the mainland. Moreover, an increasing stabilisation of customs can be seen both here and in the Argolid. This does not necessarily imply, however, that the elite ideology developed at Knossos was identical to that of the mainland in every respect. At Knossos, just as everywhere else, the warrior ideology would inevitably have been conditioned by the specific cultural, social and political circumstances within which it was introduced and developed. Indeed, the lack of interest in the culturally specific differences that would have been inherent in the integration of this ideological system with the cultural traditions of the regions in question is an omission in Treherne's otherwise attractive study of this phenomenon in Late Bronze Age Europe. The contrasting popularities of tomb types here to those on the mainland are one aspect of this. The warrior lifestyle

certainly cannot have been lived unconsciously, as Treherne argues for the warrior elites generally, in reaction to the picture of 'cynical' political manipulation often portrayed. Although in some European contexts, use of this particular ideology to reinforce social distinctions ~~were~~ would probably have been more naturalised than in others, at LM II-IIIA Knossos, it can hardly have been unconsciously lived, given how innovative most of the mortuary practices were and the clear evidence for competitive experimentation in tomb use in the initial horizon of introduction.

5.6 Conclusions

Final Palatial Knossos saw a shift in the political role of tomb use. Introduced initially as an innovative mechanism for challenging the traditional elite structure, it became an established and intrinsic element of the new high status ideology that replaced it. The LM IIIA2 evidence, meanwhile, is suggestive of a decline in wealth deposition, but the Knossian elite was clearly still active, continuing the use of their now established cemeteries and tomb types, and using burial as a forum for display just as before. If, as is argued here, these burials represent a Post-palatial elite at Knossos, the material deposited now in the assemblages would have been inherited wealth and/or items continuing in local circulation on a much smaller scale than before. Little is known of the sphere of influence or economic activities of this elite now, but the collapse of Knossos' hegemony did not have an immediate and dramatic impact on mortuary practices. Rather, the effects were seen more gradually and by LM IIIB, the sacrifice of wealth to the grave had become unnecessary, undesirable or unfeasible. Indeed, tomb use as a whole was in decline by LM IIIB, and was only to continue to the end of the phase in one cemetery (Upper Gypsades). By this point, therefore, it appears that the groups at the upper levels of the local social hierarchy had diverted their attention to other social spheres for status display.

The rather different fortunes of tomb use across the rest of Post-palatial Crete will be considered in the remaining chapters, developments within which Knossos was involved (as the use of larnakes demonstrates), though not participating at the highest levels of expenditure and display. However, although the focus shifts away from Knossos from LM IIIA2, the crucial role of this centre in introducing tomb use to Crete as an integral element of high status display should not be forgotten. The central role of

the mortuary sphere within political competition and consolidation at Final Palatial Knossos had set a precedent, demonstrating the power and potential of this particular forum to elites at other centres on the island. Moreover, the specific mortuary code developed here, in conjunction with a broader high status lifestyle, provided a model that could be drawn upon in the individual choices made elsewhere on Crete in the following, Post-palatial period.

PART III CRETE

Chapter 6

Wider Crete – an Introduction

6.1 Introduction

Following the focus on the funerary evidence within the Knossos area specifically in Part II, Chapters 6 to 10 broaden the scope of enquiry to consider the evidence for the take-up of similar mortuary practices on Crete as a whole. This will involve the exploration of variations in tomb use across the island on several different levels, from the regional down to individual cemeteries. The data from the Knossos area will be incorporated into this analysis, but, for reasons outlined later in the chapter, will comprise only those tombs that are known to have been used in LM IIIA2 and/or LM IIIB (see Table 5.1). Chapters 7 to 9 will consider the data thematically, according to tomb types and architecture, assemblage composition and interment practices. The present chapter serves as an introduction to these analyses and is divided into two main parts. The first (sections 6.2 and 6.3) outlines the organisation of the data set and discusses its reliability. The second (section 6.4) commences the analysis by investigating the chronological range of the data, and the implications of this for our understanding of political and demographic changes on the island on a general level.

6.2 Data organisation

6.2.1 The analytical areas

In order to explore regional-level variations in the mortuary evidence, greater spatial refinement than the common east-central-west Cretan divisions was deemed desirable (contrast Löwe 1996), on the reasoning that smaller geographical units would be sensitive to finer spatial variations. On the other hand, the primary division of the island into a large number of micro-clusters was considered unnecessary, since this would reduce the individual sample sizes below the level of any statistical reliability. Also, it was unnecessary since each analytical area could be subdivided for analysis according to its individual sites where appropriate. The modern administrative units of Crete,

employed by Kanta (1980), would have provided areas of an adequate size, but they were considered inappropriate for the analytical purposes of the present study since they would have imposed anachronistic spatial divisions onto the Late Bronze Age data.

Recent advances in our understanding of political organisation on the island in the period of the Knossian Linear B administration were felt to be more appropriate and so were taken into consideration in the construction of the analytical areas. However, they were not the main criterion, for three reasons. First, our understanding of the political geography of Late Bronze Age Crete is still at an early stage – for example, it is not yet possible to locate with confidence all of the second-order centres mentioned in the Linear B records (as discussed in Chapter 1). Second, as will be demonstrated later in this chapter, most of the tomb use with which we are dealing falls within the Post-palatial, rather than the Final Palatial period. Given the potential for political reorganisation on the island in this later phase, it would be hazardous to assume that the regional power structures of the island were identical to those of the previous Knossian administration, although there were probably broad elements of continuity in some respects. Third, it would restrict the interpretive scope of the present study if we were to try to fit the mortuary data into a political framework immediately, since this would introduce an *a priori* assumption that political organisation was a dominating factor in any regional patterns. Instead, a more inductive approach to the data was felt to be more appropriate at this stage, which could contribute to our understanding of the political situation on the island, but could equally allow the detection of any variations in mortuary practices that did not conform to political boundaries.

With these considerations in mind, the main criteria in the establishment of analytical areas were a) clusterings in the known *mortuary* site distributions, b) natural topographical divisions, and c) obvious regional patterns of variation or similarity in mortuary practices. The resulting analytical areas are presented in Figure 6.1, with the distribution of all secure and possible LM II-IIIB mortuary sites. In the west, two groups can be seen to emerge clearly from the site distribution patterns alone. However, in the centre and east of the island, corresponding fall-offs in distribution are less clear cut. Thus the northern and eastern borders of the Mesara area have been established at the points where the occurrence of re-used round tombs ceased (so that this area in effect encompasses only the central and western parts of the valley). The border between the Central and Mid East areas is defined by the foothills of the Lasithi range;

and that between the Mid East and Far East is placed on the Ierapetra isthmus, on the basis of a notable increase east of this line in the density of known tomb locations and in the popularity of tub larnakes. Apart from the Knossos area, neutral labels have been chosen for these areas, as shown in Figure 6.1, rather than the toponyms of their principal sites (modern or ancient), for the reasons outlined above.

While the criteria employed in establishing these analytical areas requires explanation, it is also important to emphasise that these categories are intended to be flexible working models, a first step in building up a picture of regional variations in different aspects of mortuary practice which can be refined in the light of the conclusions reached. Moreover, as mentioned at the start of the chapter, regional-level analysis is not the only aim of the present study, since we are also looking for other types of variation within, as well as across, these boundaries. To this end, the areas here defined are still useful, in dividing the data into manageable groups for discussion, while not precluding the consideration of the evidence on other spatial levels as well.

6.2.2 Terminology

In the forthcoming analysis, two spatial levels of tomb groupings will be referred to: the 'location' and the 'site'. 'Locations' refer to individual cemeteries – that is, groups of tombs that were clearly clustered together as a formal burial area, such as Armenoi or Zapher Papoura, for example. In cases where tomb groups have been located in close proximity to each other, but have not actually been demonstrated to be part of the same cemetery by full excavation, they have been categorised here as individual locations (the tomb groups within the town of Chania being the classic example – see Figure 6.14). The 'site' is a larger spatial unit, referring to a general catchment zone around a modern village or town, which contains one or more locations of LM II-IIIB activity.[35] For example, within the Mesara area, the site of Apodoulou comprises four distinct mortuary locations: at Agiodomandra, Psila Chomata, Phrangou to Louri and Sopatakia. While the 'location' is a category that reflects the choices and perceptions of the burying communities, therefore, by recognising their distinct formal burial areas, the 'site' is an imposed category that groups locations together purely in order to facilitate regional-level analysis in the present study.

---

[35] Within the analysis of the Knossos area in Chapters 4 and 5, this category was not deemed necessary, as the area is so small that there were in fact only two major settlements within it.

The criteria used for the categorisation of individual tombs as 'secure' (that is, definitely used within the LM II-IIIB period) or 'possible' (possibly used within this period) are set out in the introduction to Appendix E. With regard to the settlement sites plotted in Figures 6.3, 6.5, 6.7, 6.9, 6.11 and 6.13, sites are considered 'secure' (i.e. definitely falling within LM II-IIIB) if they have been dated from excavation or from surface sherd scatters whose ceramic material clearly points to use at some point within this period. 'Possible' settlement sites include excavated remains, surface densities or chance finds assigned only to 'LM III' (though chance finds that comprise intact vessels or other objects that point to their deriving from a burial are listed instead as possible tombs).

6.3 Data reliability

6.3.1 The analytical areas

Distribution maps of the mortuary and settlement sites for each analytical area are provided in Figures 6.2 to 6.13. It is worth describing briefly the data distributions within each area, in order to highlight specific potential gaps in the mortuary evidence that are brought out by comparison with the known settlement patterns.

In the *Far West* (Figures 6.2 and 6.3), there is a clear congregation of the known areas of LM II-IIIB activity in the north coastal area. Settlement and burial sites are both few in number, but this picture will surely change in the future, since intensive archaeological investigation in the west of the island only really began in the 1960s.[36] This high potential for future discoveries means that it would be unwise to treat the mortuary data available at present as a representative sample *for the whole area*, as opposed to selective windows on to the types of practices employed at specific locations within it. The only site in the area where we can assume we have an adequately representative sample of tombs is Chania, which accounts for 90% of the total tomb count for the Far West. It is inevitably, therefore, on this material that much of the discussion of Far Western mortuary practices in this study must concentrate.

[36] For example, Moody's intensive survey of the Chania Akrotiri peninsula (Moody 1987a) has produced several further possible mortuary locations in this small area alone.

Post-Bronze Age re-use of tombs (see Löwe 1996: nos 1057-8, 1089, 1102-3, 1105 and 1119) and modern building activities have certainly destroyed some tombs at Chania, but the surviving sample after a full century of excavation is still substantial. Andreadaki-Vlasaki cited a total of 60 tombs in 1990 (Andreadaki-Vlasaki 1997a), but more recent excavation has revealed a further group at Odos Demokratias, and the current total according to the published data is over 80 (although some of these were possibly never used).

There are two potential ways to interpret this Chaniote bias in the evidence for the Far West. Chania was probably the largest Late Minoan centre in the region, and was the main administrative centre of the region in the Final and Post-palatial periods. Moreover, it may well have been the route by which tomb use was first introduced to this area of the island. For these reasons, it might be anticipated that the greater density of tombs at this one site reflects the original situation. At the same time, however, the concentration of known tombs here is surely due at least in part to a high incidence of chance discoveries resulting from building activities in the modern town overlying the site. In view of this, the potential significance of further investigations in the Kalami-Souda area and around Stylos should be borne in mind, especially if the *A-pa-ta-wa* of the Knossian archives is to be located in one of these areas (see Chapter 1, section 1.3.3). The corbel-vaulted tomb at Maleme hints at there also being settlements on this coastal stretch west of Chania, whether the tomb was linked with one of them or with Chania. Overall, therefore, while tomb use may well have been more popular at Chania than at other settlements in this area, the present rather extreme bias in the distribution of tomb evidence is surely a significant exaggeration of the original situation.

In the *Mid West* (Figures 6.4 and 6.5), as in the Far West, the known mortuary locations cluster in the north coastal plain, although here an axis of communication down towards the south east is likely, hinted at by the Apostoloi and Genna tombs, as well as by the north western sites of the Mesara group. No central site to parallel that of Chania in the Far West has yet been excavated, but the size of the Armenoi cemetery (the largest known on the entire island) indicates the existence of a substantial population at one or more settlements in the vicinity. The 221 tombs that have been excavated to date at Armenoi (Tzedakis 1996: 245-6) account for 88% of the area's total. In 1992, by which time 216 tombs had been excavated, 50 or 60 more tombs were anticipated here (Godart and Tzedakis 1992: 86), which would bring us to an estimated total of at least 270

tombs for this cemetery. The contrast in size between Armenoi and the other mortuary locations in this area seems to be a realistic reflection of the original situation, although more tombs have been noted, or are suspected, at several of the other locations (Rethymnon Mastambas, Genna, Moni Arsaniou and Pigi). The fact that the mortuary sites in this area outnumber the known occupation sites makes potential gaps in the mortuary record hard to discern. There has been one intensive survey carried out within the area, around Agios Vasilios (Moody 1998), which has produced several possible mortuary locations, but, as in the Chania Akrotiri survey, none have been securely dated to our period.

In the *Mesara* (Figures 6.6 and 6.7), the known tomb sites are concentrated mainly in the plain and surrounding foothills of the western Mesara. It is interesting to note that no LM II-IIIB evidence was observed in the surveys of the lower Agiopharango valley and the coastal strip between Agiopharango and Chrisostomos (Blackman and Branigan 1975; Blackman *et al.* 1977). As in the Mid West, mortuary sites generally outnumber settlement sites, but the three central settlements of the region are all currently under-represented in terms of burial evidence. The cemetery (or cemeteries) associated with Kommos has not yet been located. Agia Triada is currently represented by only a small group of tombs adjacent to the settlement (**M AT 1-4**), but a more substantial cemetery of this period seems to have been located on the slope to the south west, which has so far produced four larnakes (see Appendix F). Surface material possibly indicative of mortuary activities has also been reported from the north and northeast slopes here (Vallianou 1992: 548). Finally, most of the mortuary evidence from the region around Phaistos is LM IIIC in date (for example, at Liliana and Zaimoglou to Choraphi, Löwe 1996: nos 722 and 738-748). The LM IIIA Kalyvia cemetery, about 2km distant, is usually associated with the settlement, but the Alesandraki location, described as being "a few kilometres" to the south-east of Phaistos (Tomlinson 1996: 44), may be too distant to be associated with this centre.

In the *Central* area (Figures 6.8 and 6.9), the number of known mortuary sites is high, especially in the north, though the southern and eastern regions of this area are probably under-represented. Unexcavated tombs have been noted or are suspected at the locations of Agia Pelagia, Anopolis, Archanes Aniphoros and Karnari Tragomandra, Gournes, Nirou Chani and Stamnioi Palialona. Kanta (1980: 1) has suggested that the central part of the island (in which she includes the Mesara) was "probably the most densely

inhabited area of Crete" in LM III, largely on the basis of this high density of mortuary evidence (particularly in the north). However, the central area of the island has been more intensively studied than the other regions, especially the north and west, which is very likely to account, at least in part, for the relative abundance of mortuary evidence here.

In the *Mid East* (Figures 6.10 and 6.11), the comparatively sparse tomb and settlement distributions in this area are at present confined mainly to the lowland coastal areas on the north, northeast and south sides of the Lasithi range, although the intensive survey of the Lasithi plateau has demonstrated the archaeological potential of this upland region (Watrous 1982). The majority of the known tombs are actually located at two sites – Malia and Elounda (or Olous/Olontes) – but more tombs may come to light at Kritsa (Kanta 1980: 139), in the Malia area (for example, at Azymon and Pervolia) and in the modern Viannos district. Although relatively unknown at present, this latter region is a potentially significant area of Late Bronze Age activity, as presaged by Evans' reported tomb from Arvi (Löwe 1996: no 398) and more recently highlighted by Banou and Rethemiotakis (1997). The hypothesis set forward by the latter regarding changing cultural orientations in this area between central and Far Eastern Crete over the Late Bronze Age period will be particularly interesting to follow up as and when new material comes to light.

In the *Far East* (Figures 6.12 and 6.13), tomb burials are concentrated mainly along the northern coast, and into the plain behind Siteia, as far as the foothills. This predominantly lowland distribution may reflect the original extent of settlement activities in the eastern area of the island, but it is also likely to reflect, at least to some degree, selective archaeological investigation. The latter is suggested by Branigan's recent survey in the uplands around Ziros (Branigan 1998), where LM III occupation evidence and two further burial sites were found to add to Davaras' corbel-vaulted tomb (Löwe 1996: no 344). Settlement evidence is fairly well attested in this area as a whole, including sites for which associated mortuary evidence is also available, such as Mochlos, Achladia and Palaikastro, and sites whose size and importance leads us to anticipate the discovery of further tombs in their vicinities, such as Petras and Gournia.

6.3.2 Discussion

One methodological problem with the above review that could be highlighted is that trying to discern potential gaps in the mortuary evidence by looking for settlements currently lacking associated cemeteries does carry the implicit but undemonstrated assumption that the inhabitants of all settlements actually practised tomb burial. While it is not problematic to suggest that the discovery of a burial ground shows a strong likelihood of there having been a settlement in the vicinity, can we argue in the other direction, that discovery of a settlement presupposes the existence of nearby tombs? Obviously, such an inference is not necessarily valid. Our understanding of the relationship between settlements and cemeteries in this period is very limited at present, but factors such as the nature, size and social status of a settlement will probably be relevant to assessments of the likelihood that there were associated tombs in the vicinity. For example, settlements with only seasonal occupation may not have had associated burial grounds. Also, small settlements and those on the lowest levels of the island's site hierarchy would probably be less likely to have used tombs since, as will be argued in the following chapters, tomb use functioned as a medium for status advertisement across Crete in much the same way (though less exclusively) as at Final Palatial Knossos. The specific ceramic phases within which the settlement was occupied will also be relevant to this issue, as discussed below.

Given the above caveats, however, the general principle seems sound that in an area where settlement densities are high, or where a sizeable settlement is known, one should anticipate the discovery of tombs, unless these have been destroyed. It is no doubt the case that some areas of Late Bronze Age Crete were more receptive to the idea of tomb use than others, but the available evidence demonstrates that tomb use was practised across the island and so was accepted in every region at some level. Moreover, in those regions where mortuary site numbers are currently low, settlement site numbers are also low, such as the Far West and Mid East. This suggests that the lack of known mortuary sites in these areas is the result of either a genuine absence of settlement activity or a lack of archaeological investigation, rather than of lesser enthusiasm for practising tomb burial.

Bennet (1986: 34-45) has carried out an assessment of the relative reliability of the archaeological sample of LM II-IIIB data (including mortuary, settlement and cult sites) for different parts of Crete, which would be useful to consider here. To determine which

areas are "most likely to reflect actual prehistoric site densities for the LM II-III period" (1986: 40), the level of archaeological interest in each of the modern eparchies was calculated as a numerical value, by the following method. For every (pre-1970) survey that covered the area of the eparchy, a score of 1 was allotted. If the survey covered more than one eparchy, each eparchy concerned scored a corresponding fraction of 1 (i.e. .5 each if the survey covered two eparchies, .3 each if it covered three, etc.). A further point was then added if one or more major sites in the eparchy was excavated before 1970. The resulting score was divided by the area of the eparchy in square km, multiplied by 10, 000, and then divided into its square root, in order to bring it to a manageable number.

The results of these calculations are reproduced in Figure 6.15. Within the four highest scoring eparchies (with scores of over 10), Bennet concluded that we have a reliable picture of the relative settlement densities in LM II-IIIB (1986: 40-1). The eleven medium-scoring eparchies (those scoring between 5 and 8) were considered less reliable, although the four within this category that have a medium-range absolute density of sites (Chania, Rethymnon, Pediada and Siteia) were suggested to have been more densely settled in the past. This argument was supported by pointing out that intensive surveys within all four of these areas have revealed dense occupation. For the five lowest scoring eparchies, however (those scoring less than 3), it was suggested that site distributions were not necessarily reliable or representative. Overall, it was predicted that future surveys on the island would, on average, double the number of known LM II-IIIB settlements (1986: 45), though even this would probably not account for the original total.

The correspondence between the eparchies and the analytical areas employed in the present study is shown in Figure 6.15, while for comparison, Table 6.1 sets out figures regarding the absolute numbers and relative proportions of tombs, mortuary locations and mortuary sites in each analytical area. Most of the analytical areas embrace at least two eparchies, often with different levels of archaeological interest, so that little would be gained by comparing the areas as a whole, as opposed to exploring internal variations in each. Within the Far and Mid West, we cannot rely on the current evidence – settlement or mortuary – as being at all representative, and particular areas from which to anticipate more data in the future are the Chania and Rethymnon regions. The southwestern area of the island is also under-represented, according to the several

surveys conducted in various micro-regions (Catling 1988: 76; Dunbabin 1947; Hood 1965a; Hood 1967; Hood *et al.* 1964; Hood and Warren 1966; Nixon 1993), though it was probably not densely settled (Bennet 1986: 44). Within the Central area, Pediada was probably more densely settled than it appears at present. It remains to be seen whether the drop-off in mortuary sites in the Monophatsion district (cf. Figure 6.1) is the result of a lack of research or of a lighter settlement density originally. Within the Mid East, the presence of two zones of relatively intensive investigation – Lasithi and (to a lesser extent) Viannos – should make us relatively optimistic regarding the accuracy of the picture we have. However, the lack of investigation into the coastal regions of this area, apart from Malia (Müller 1992, 1996) considerably decreases the overall reliability of our picture here, especially given the tendency noted in the rest of the island for occupation to concentrate in the north coastal area. In the Far East, finally, the distributions are fairly reliable and broadly spread, although we can anticipate the discovery of more sites. The main problem in this area, as will be highlighted below, is the lack of published information regarding excavated tombs.

Overall, these results suggest that the tomb distributions in some areas are more representative of original patterns than in others, taking into account that in no area of the island do we yet have a reliable picture of the extent of original settlement activity. However, despite these considerable gaps in our picture of the intensity and distribution of tomb use on Crete, the recovery of regional patternings in mortuary customs is within the scope of the current data set. There are large numbers of individual tombs with which we can work, while there is a scattered distribution of mortuary sites within each area, even if many locations (and indeed sites) are represented by only a handful of tombs (see Figure 6.16). Although some micro-regions are poorly represented, only in western Crete are significant swathes of territory omitted entirely. The result of this wide coverage is that any regional patterns produced should be generally reliable. Indeed, if consistent broad patterns of spatial variation across the island do emerge clearly from the data set – and it will be argued that they do – then we may be fairly confident that they are representative of the original situation. We cannot reliably reconstruct relative settlement densities for much of the island, or attempt to quantify the number of tombs still missing. However, consistency among the existing data set in producing broad regional variations will allow us to be reasonably confident regarding the validity of the results of this analysis for the areas covered.

6.4 Chronology

6.4.1 Dating problems

Bennet has noted that the refinement with which a context can be dated is often dependent upon the type of investigation by which it was discovered (1986: 30-32), an observation applicable to mortuary and settlement contexts equally. Figure 6.17 compares the investigation methods for individual tombs in the present study's catalogue of 'secure' and 'possible' LM II-IIIB tombs (Appendices E and F respectively). It illustrates that excavation has produced most of the securely datable tombs – in fact, many of these tombs are datable on a far more refined level than this. Survey has the undoubted advantage of demonstrating where the most densely populated areas of the landscape are, and indeed, excavated tombs are often initially discovered through survey or chance finds. However, artefacts recovered from survey or chance finds alone (without subsequent excavation) are often brought to the ground surface as a result of the (at least partial) destruction of the tomb through agricultural or erosional activities. The effect of this is often the retrieval of an incomplete assemblage, and the fragmentation, weathering and possibly dispersal of the ceramic material by which the tomb may be dated.

Once tomb material has been retrieved, there is then the further filter of publication that determines the level of information available regarding the use phases represented. It is important to the present study that specific ceramic phases are assigned to the tomb in publication – a tomb described simply as 'LM III' could have been LM IIIC in date and cannot, therefore, be included in the present analysis. Ideally, of course, the datable ceramics are also illustrated. In practice, however, only a small proportion of the Cretan Late Bronze Age tombs outside the Knossos area have been fully published. The majority are known only from preliminary summaries in the annual archaeological reports. The large number of 'possible' tombs, and sometimes whole cemeteries, in Appendix F, is often due to the lack of detailed dating in these publications, rather than to a lack of datable ceramics in the tombs themselves. Examples include the sizeable Agios Georgios (Volakas) and Palaikastro (Kastri and Sarantari) cemeteries in the Far East, which are highly likely to fall within the LM II-IIIB period, but which cannot be included in the present study since they are dated only to 'LM III'.

6.4.2 The Final Palatial hiatus

Given these dating problems, there is still a large amount of datable material with which to work in wider Crete, and it is interesting that this material, almost without exception, dates to the Post-palatial period (LM IIIA2 and LM IIIB). While we can be confident of LM IIIA2 and LM IIIB tomb use in every area, there is no fully published tomb outside the Knossos area with an intact assemblage datable to LM II or LM IIIA1. In many cases, re-use of the tomb has often disturbed the original interments and their assemblages, rendering it impossible to assess whether we are indeed witnessing evidence of tomb use beginning in the Final Palatial period, or simply the inclusion of earlier ceramics within early Post-palatial burials. Appendices G and H present the evidence that has been claimed for tomb use beyond the Knossos area in these two phases, with an assessment of the validity of the argument in each case. The assessments of the tombs with postulated LM II use (Appendix G) found them all either implausible or only 'possible'. This lack of LM II tombs in wider Crete cannot be attributed simply to the limited number of ceramic diagnostics for this phase. LM II material has been brought to light in increasing quantities in settlement contexts over the past two decades (Popham 1980b; B. Hallager 1990, 1997 for Chania; Watrous and Blitzer 1997: 511 for Kommos, Agia Triada and Phaistos; Sakellarakis and Sapouna-Sakellaraki 1997: 149-50 for Archanes; Poursat 1990 for Malia; MacGillivray 1997 for Palaikastro). Even if such contexts are confined mainly to the regional second-order centres, one would expect to find similar material in tombs associated with these settlements, if tomb use was indeed practised in this early phase. This is especially so given the fact that LM II diagnostics are found on fine ware vessels, such as one would expect to find in a tomb context (see Appendix N).

In Appendix H, however, there are a few tombs that have produced 'probable' evidence of LM IIIA1 use, in the Armenoi cemetery in the Mid West and at Psari Phorada in the Mid East. Pending full publication of the Armenoi cemetery, there is no reason to preclude the possibility that tomb use began on a small scale in LM IIIA1 outside the Knossos area. Further evidence regarding the other tombs in Appendix H, or future tomb discoveries, may produce still more evidence that tomb use started to be picked up outside Knossos in this phase. The large number of tombs dated simply to 'LM IIIA' must also be borne in mind as potential candidates. At present, however, even if most of the tombs catalogued in Appendix H were to prove genuine examples of LM IIIA1 use, they would still be vastly outnumbered by the evidence for LM IIIA2 burial on Crete as

a whole.

The overwhelming evidence, therefore, is for the introduction of the new tomb types as a significant element of social practice throughout Crete in LM IIIA2. This is not to suggest that formal burial was simply not practised in wider Crete in the Final Palatial period, but rather that the archaeologically conspicuous chamber tombs and other tomb types used at Knossos were not taken up on any significant scale during this period. Instead, the wider population of the island surely continued to dispose of their dead by the same means as they had in the Neopalatial period – that is, pithos burials (which were not accompanied by diagnostic LM II-IIIA1 ceramics) and other methods that are entirely invisible archaeologically.

It is worth briefly considering the implications of the above observations for our understanding of changing settlement densities on the island. It has been argued that the number of settlements on Crete gradually increased from LM II through to LM IIIA2, on the basis of the overall evidence for human activity in each phase (Bennet 1986: 32-34, Table 2.2, reproduced here in Table 6.2). However, mortuary sites comprise a significant proportion of our overall evidence for the distribution of Late Bronze Age activity on Crete, often being more enduring, conspicuous and attractive to illicit diggers and archaeologists than are settlement remains. Indeed, cemeteries are frequently the only key to the identification of settlement activity in a particular micro-region, as a comparison of the settlement and mortuary site distributions shows (Figures 6.2 to 6.13). Thus, if tomb use beyond Knossos was virtually confined to the Post-palatial period, it is not viable to use mortuary evidence in a reconstruction of comparative settlement densities in different phases of the Late Bronze Age. For example, of Bennet's total of 444 locations with evidence of LM II-IIIB activity on Crete (1986: Appendix II), 63% (278 locations) included or comprised secure or possible mortuary evidence, while 46% (202 locations) comprised securely datable mortuary evidence *only*. This is a significant proportion of the total data set, on the basis of which an increase in settlement activity from LM II was postulated. Given the facts that archaeologically conspicuous tomb use was a Post-palatial phenomenon and that it is often easier to detect than settlements themselves, this apparent population rise in LM IIIA2 may well be entirely artificial. Other methodologies need to be used to assess changing population densities on Crete from LM II to LM IIIB, therefore, which do not rely upon mortuary evidence, but which concentrate rather upon settlement numbers

and settlement sizes. Unfortunately, the preliminary publication of many surveys does not yet allow breakdown by phase for settlements in LM III. However, known settlements with LM II and IIIA1 remains are steadily increasing in number, and the disparity between Final Palatial and Post-palatial settlement densities may eventually prove to have been vastly exaggerated (see above for LM II material; a recent summary of the LM IIIA1 evidence is provided in Andreadaki-Vlasaki and Papadopoulou 1997: fig 63).

6.4.3 The Post-palatial period

There are two issues to address in this section. The first is whether we can discern the mechanisms by which tomb use was taken up across the entire island. For example, is there evidence that the idea diffused out from Knossos, to the central areas and then the further reaches of the island, or else of a simultaneous filtration across the island through the former second-order centres into their hinterlands? Can one even assume that the mechanisms would have been identical in different areas of Crete? Unfortunately, it is not possible to resolve this issue at present. It has not yet been demonstrated whether the use of the new tomb types in fact started in LM IIIA1 or IIIA2, while refinement of chronology within LM IIIA2 is practically impossible. Given that in all the areas of the island there is evidence for LM IIIA2 tomb use in both large centres and smaller settlements, neither regional nor hierarchical distinctions in the process by which the idea was adopted can yet be perceived, although the process of dissemination could have taken up to three generations. The Far West is the only potential exception, with its confinement of LM IIIA tomb use almost exclusively to Chania, apart from a single exception at Kalami (**FW KA 2**), while tomb use then appears to spread in LM IIIB to the surrounding region. This is an interesting pattern, and a potential example of the central settlement-hinterland model of dissemination. However, this hypothesis should be treated with caution, given that Chania has been so much the focus of archaeological attention in the past and that so little tomb material has been recovered from elsewhere in the area. For example, the territory around Kalami and Stylos may well produce evidence of LM IIIA tomb use to balance the current Chaniote bias, especially if secondary regional centres were located there.

The second issue to consider is whether we can see any evidence for changes in the frequency of tomb use generally within the LM IIIA2 and LM IIIB phases. This too is a problematical question. Rethemiotakis, for example, says that he finds "no distinction

between LM IIIA2 and IIIB in tomb groups at least in Central Crete. We find the two phases together in single graves" (Rethemiotakis 1997: 190). This stylistic overlap between the phases means that tombs and individual assemblages are often assigned to LM IIIA2-IIIB1 transitional. In Figure 6.18, which illustrates, for each analytical area, the comparative numbers of tombs with IIIA and IIIB use, these 'transitional' tombs are classified as LM IIIB early. Tombs described simply as 'LM IIIA-B', with no information regarding whether this means that they are transitional, that they simply fall somewhere within this general period or that they embrace both phases are problematic. They are presumed here to denote the latter (i.e. LM IIIA *and* IIIB use).

The above ambiguities mean that these bar charts do not give a very accurate indication of changing patterns of use over time. However, since this lack of precision in dating is an island-wide phenomenon, cross-comparison between the areas should reveal *relative* diachronic variations or similarities. The balance between tombs with 'pure' LM IIIA use and those with 'pure' LM IIIB use is usually in favour of the latter (the Mesara being the only exception). On the one hand, this should come as no surprise, since the vast majority of the tombs assigned simply to 'LM IIIA' probably belong to the latter part of this period, which was of shorter duration than LM IIIB. On the other hand, the lack of refinement currently possible in dating ceramics within the LM IIIB phase hinders any attempt to try to 'weight' these frequencies for the periods of time they cover. In other words, it is impossible to tell whether the LM IIIB evidence available represents continuity in frequency throughout this ceramic phase, a gradual increase or decrease in use, or fluctuations in popularity.

The number of archaeologically-attested destruction horizons in settlement contexts during this phase leads one to suspect that we are usually dealing with a shorter time span than the whole LM IIIB phase (see section 1.3.2 for an outline of the destruction horizons and the problems of distinguishing LM IIIB subphases). At Chania at least, Andreadaki-Vlasaki (1997: 507) actually states that the bulk of tomb use belongs to LM IIIA2 and early LM IIIB, though use of the cemetery does continue until the later part of the LM IIIB phase. In general, where subphase attributions are specified, the ratios of IIIB early to IIIB mature so far recorded per area are: 10:0 in the Far West; 44:9 in the Mid West; 1:1 in the Mesara; 9:1 in the Centre; 3:2 in the Mid East; and 11:5 in the Far East. It would be hazardous to place too much reliance on these figures, since we are entirely dependent on those few analysts who chose, or felt able, to specify the span

within LM IIIB concerned, but there is a generally higher proportion of early LM IIIB use when such details are provided. If the apparent weighting towards LM IIIB early within the general LM IIIB phase is correct, and we can assign most of the 'LM IIIA' tombs to LM IIIA2, we do seem to be witnessing an increase in tomb use from LM IIIA2 into LM IIIB early, followed by a sharp drop in frequency in LM IIIB mature. This latter pattern would correspond closely with the fortunes of the known regional centres and of the political and social hierarchies that they supported. However, the continuation of tomb use into LM IIIC in many parts of the island (and particularly the eastern regions) indicates that tomb use continued to play an important social role within the period of instability that succeeded these LM IIIB destructions, a role which has been documented for the sub-Minoan and Early Iron Age periods in the cemeteries of Knossos (Coldstream and Catling 1996).

6.5 Conclusions

Several observations arise from this introductory chapter, some of which look forward to the more detailed analyses of the data in Chapters 7 to 9. Thus the following points comprise not only a summary of the points made above, but also a preliminary discussion of their implications, thereby raising issues that will be explored further in the subsequent analysis.

- The dating of the large-scale introduction of Final Palatial Knossian tomb types on wider Crete to LM IIIA2 (or LM IIIA1 at the earliest) has important implications for our understanding of the changing political organisation of Crete. As set out in Chapter 1, this study has proceeded on the working hypothesis that the Post-palatial period began in LM IIIA2, rather than LM IIIB. According to this hypothesis, the take-up of high status tomb use at this point ties in closely with the revival of large-scale architectural activities at the regional centres, following a Knossian hegemony that had reinforced itself partly through its monopoly on high status emblems.

- Although the processes by which tomb use spread are not yet clear, the phenomenon was certainly not restricted only to the regional centres of the island, but was taken up by lower-level sites also. This opening up of a previously exclusive sphere in itself suggests that the political situation in LM IIIA2 was somewhat fluid, and the various

choices made in tomb practices within this situation will be interesting to explore. It is interesting also to note that this shift in LM IIIA2 Crete, wherein the mortuary sphere facilitated the expression of more open competition than had been possible before, is in direct contrast with the contemporary situation in the Argolid, where burial customs were actively reinforcing an increasingly rigid political and social hierarchy (Voutsaki 1993: 103).

- In terms of inter-regional politics within the island, it will also be interesting to consider how far, and in what ways, eastern Crete, outside the sphere of direct Knossian control in the previous Final Palatial period, chose to participate in the acceptance of the new tomb types. The preliminary evidence presented in the present chapter suggests that the idea was embraced there as warmly as elsewhere on the island, indicating at the very least close ties of interaction with other areas of Crete. An exploration of the extent of inter-regional similarities within this sphere will have important implications for our understanding of the strength of cultural affiliations between east Crete and the rest of the island, since each area may be expected to have adapted this new forum to their particular local cultural framework.

- The potential impact of the introduction of these new mortuary practices across Crete is an issue that should be emphasised. By virtue of its earlier establishment at Knossos, both the concept of tomb use as a high status practice and its material forms would have been fairly familiar to the inhabitants of Crete by LM IIIA2 (though probably to differing extents at different social levels). However, its actual dissemination on such a large scale to the rest of the island in LM IIIA2 must have had a huge ideological as well as social effect on different communities and regions. Burial practices, one of the core elements of the social fabric, would have had to be adapted to this new forum, albeit only for certain elements of the population, and the physical and cultural landscape would have been altered for everybody by the introduction of the new cemeteries. Thus the Post-palatial period, and LM IIIA2 particularly, saw very conscious choices being made at different social levels regarding whether, and if so how, to receive the innovation of tomb use.

Chapter 7

Tomb Architecture

7.1 Introduction

This chapter considers the architectural choices that were made in the adoption of tomb use across Crete in LM IIIA2-B. It will look first at the different tomb types being introduced, at their relative frequencies and distributions, and at variations within each type (in terms of form, dimensions and elaboration). The aim is to reconstruct any temporal, spatial or hierarchical patterns in the data, and so to investigate whether, and if so how, choices made in mortuary architecture played a role within the political dynamics of the island. This will also provide a model against which to compare interment practices and assemblage composition in the following two chapters.

There are several factors to consider regarding the choices being made in tomb architecture. A first point to emphasise is that for the LM IIIA2 period, it would be artificial to treat this issue in isolation from the very decisions taken to adopt tomb use at all, as though we were witnessing two distinct and independent stages in a decision-making process. In fact, these two issues cannot be separated. The ideological associations of the specific tomb type being imitated may have been the principal inspiration for the uptake of tomb burial in the first place, while more generally, the sources that inspire an innovation also shape ideas regarding the appropriate way to do so, whatever the receiver's specific motives for accepting it or the modifications made to its structure and significance. In other words, these sources, while on one level opening up new prospects and possibilities for social negotiations, would simultaneously influence the range of choices available regarding the appropriate form to introduce. As noted in Chapter 2, the social status of the individual or group concerned would probably also have played an important part in determining the range of options that were recognised as accessible or viable. Not least, skilled labour would be required to build a chamber tomb, and especially a structure as complex as a corbel-vaulted tomb.

Given these constraining factors, however, there was still the potential for active choice. The very attractiveness of tomb use, as introduced as a forum for display at LM II Knossos, lay in its enabling properties and its potential to act as a mechanism for affirming or improving social status. Tomb use in itself was a status indicator within the Final Palatial Knossian system, but within this, the specific tomb type employed was an important aspect of the mortuary vocabulary developed here, as was also the case on the contemporary mainland.[37] This was especially the case during the initial horizon of tomb introduction at Knossos, and it will be interesting to explore the extent to which this potential was exploited in a similar way across the rest of Crete in LM IIIA2.

As discussed in Chapter 6, the available data do not always allow us to chart chronological developments in tomb architecture on a refined scale. Ideally, one would wish to approach the tombs as elements within dynamic local sequences, wherein the physical appearance and relative social roles of different tomb types may well have changed. Such changes would have been influenced by, and acted back upon, not only shifting social conditions but also, just as importantly, the practicalities of tomb construction itself, and could potentially have involved later architectural modifications to earlier structures. However, the data set is large enough to allow us to distinguish between architectural anomalies and site- or regional-level architectural trends, and to map significant spatial and temporal patterns in the use of architectural ostentation as a social strategy.

7. 2 Tomb types

7.2.1 Classifications, relative frequencies and overall distributions

The classifications of tomb types largely follow those employed for Knossos in Chapters 4 and 5. The number of clearly definable and internally consistent forms taken up is actually very few, restricted mainly to chamber tombs, pit-caves and corbel-vaulted tombs. Other types are either rare or unique phenomena (such as the limited re-use of round tombs or the Agia Triada built tomb **M AT 3**), or simple forms classified together for convenience due to basic shared features that probably had little to do with the intentions of the builders (such as pits and caves). Corbel-vaulted tombs include all

[37] Although, as observed in Chapter 5, we do not understand clearly the social significance of every Knossian tomb type.

tombs with this method of construction, regardless of whether or not they were subterranean or had a dromos – only the re-used pre-LM round tombs are excluded from this category.

Appendix I lists the known types and dimensions of secure tombs. Almost every tomb type was in use in both the LM IIIA2 and IIIB periods (Table 7.1), and Figure 7.1 illustrates their relative frequencies for the island as a whole. This is broken down into their relative percentages in each analytical area in Figure 7.2, and their spatial distributions within each area are mapped in Figures 7.3 - 7.6. Chamber tombs clearly account for the vast majority of tombs throughout the LM IIIA2-B period, and their predominance is island-wide, rather than regionally-specific, with the sole exception of the Mid East. Here, though, the present preponderance of cave burials may be misleading (especially given the current paucity of our evidence for this area as a whole), as it is due mainly to just one cemetery, Elounda Stous Traphous, rather than to a consistently high frequency of this tomb type across the area. Other tomb types are much rarer and vary more in their regional distributions. The different corbel-vaulted tombs and their relative distributions will be discussed below, while most other forms are either the idiosyncracies of individual cemeteries or fairly randomly occurring instances of simple pits or natural cavities.

7.2.2 The chamber tomb

Form

The most remarkable aspect of the dissemination of the chamber tomb is the consistency with which its basic plan was replicated throughout the island (Figure 7.3). Figure 7.7 illustrates examples from each analytical area of typical chamber tomb forms (with the exception of the Mid East, for which we have no published plans). In each area, the standard form is like that already observed at Knossos: displaying a dromos, usually key-hole in section, a narrow stomion blocked with dry-stone walling, and a chamber roughly round, hemispherical or square in plan. It was noted in the previous chapter that the rapid diffusion of tomb use across the island in LM IIIA2 indicates that a close network of inter-regional exchange, both of material goods and of knowledge, was already in place. The almost ubiquitous preference for the chamber tomb type and the standardisation of its form further reinforce this impression. Moreover, they suggest strong links of common practice that contrast with the emerging regional differentiations in ceramic styles. Whether or not the Far East area of Crete had been

directly involved in the administrative network established by Knossos, and whatever the degree of involvement of the Far West within this same system, both areas embraced the chamber tomb as willingly as did the rest of the island.

Variations on this basic form do exist (as listed in Appendix K), but they are rare, accounting for less than 5% of the overall number of chamber tombs. They are found in most areas of the island, but usually as isolated anomalies, in terms of both their own cemeteries and their wider regions. Chania may be argued to have developed a more systematic variation on the standard type, but this is debatable. There are several examples of chamber tombs possibly influenced by the pit-cave type, especially at Odos Palama. Here, the standard chamber tombs and pit-caves introduced in LM IIIA2 as distinct tomb types appear to have influenced the form of two hybrids (**FW CH OP 8** and **15** – see Figure 7.8) constructed in LM IIIB, possibly contemporaneously, to judge by the joining sherds in their respective dromoi (Hallager and McGeorge 1992: 25). **FW CH OL 6** also appears to be of this type (Andreadaki-Vlasaki 1997: 498 fig 7), and similar explanations may be applicable to **FW CH DE 11** in its original form (Andreadaki-Vlasaki 1992: fig 3), **FW CH DE 5** (Andreadaki-Vlasaki 1992: 574) and **FW CH MA 2** (Andreadaki-Vlasaki 1997: 496, fig 3). These variations, however, if indeed they are linked with each other, are still rare at Chania, and as yet there is not enough evidence to postulate a consistent departure from the imported chamber tomb type on any significant scale, that would suggest that this centre was consciously developing a new tomb form.

It is also worth noting here some chamber tomb variants excavated at Armenoi. In this cemetery, as well as the 'standard' chamber type, which comprises the vast majority of the cemetery, there are twenty-three examples of dromoi either ending in a 'hollow' or 'niche', rather than a chamber proper, or having instead one or more cavities (side niches or pits) at some other point along their axis. There are also sixteen 'dromoi' that apparently lack any cavities at all. Several explanations have been advanced for the existence of these dromoi without chambers or cavities, of which the most plausible is that they were simply chamber tombs abandoned during construction (Godart and Tzedakis 1992: 87). This explanation is supported by the fact that none of these 'tombs' has any published record of interments. Regarding the twenty-three dromoi with some sort of cavity, only five held human remains, suggesting that the same explanation applies here as well. There is also, however, the possibility that some of these tombs

were intended for child burials, of which no traces have survived, as Tzedakis suggests for tomb 116 (Tzedakis 1985: 380). Alternatively, some may never have been intended for burial use at all, as opposed to fulfilling other functions within mortuary rituals at the cemetery.

Rather than being deliberate deviations from the chamber tomb form, therefore, the majority of these unusual cases at Armenoi had surely been intended as chamber tombs but were simply abandoned during construction, whatever the reason. As such they have not been included in the present catalogue of 'secure' tombs. That the intended burial was of a sub-adult may occasionally have been a contributing factor also, but as children were also frequently placed in the chambers of fully constructed chamber tombs, this is probably not the primary cause for the variation. Nor does there appear to be any spatial distinction within the cemetery between these tombs and the standard chamber type, though full publication should clarify this issue.

In summary, although there are probably further examples of deviations from the standard chamber tomb type still awaiting excavation or publication, the current evidence suggests that they were exceptional phenomena, and at no known location do we have evidence of new derivative forms being consistently developed or widely embraced. Whatever the reason for their exceptional forms (for example, a result of expediency, or lack of familiarity with the chamber tomb design), the variations usually operated at the level of the individual or the family group, rather than of the community, and they show no inter-site consistency.

Dimensions and elaboration

The chambers within this tomb type were generally small (Figure 7.9), rarely exceeding 12 square metres (or 6 in the Mid and Far East). Outstanding tombs do occur, however, in the Armenoi and Kalyvia cemeteries, where the largest (**MW AR 24** and **159**; **M KA 1**) rival the Cretan corbel-vaulted tombs in their dimensions (cf. Figure 7.12). In terms of the dromoi (Figure 7.10) a similar pattern is seen, wherein most of the recorded lengths are under 9 metres and only a handful of exceptions exist. The latter occur at three locations, Armenoi, Chania Olympia and Gournes. However, only at Armenoi does it appear that dromos length was directly linked with chamber size as a feature of mortuary ostentation, since the tombs in question are again tombs 24 and 159. The outstanding dromoi at the other sites (**FW CH OL 1** and **2**, and **C GO 1** and **2**), by

contrast, are not matched by proportionately large chambers (6.7, 7, 5.4 and 3.1 square metres respectively).

Turning to architectural elaboration, Appendix J lists the occurrences in chamber tombs of features such as pits, niches, benches, columns and buttresses, as well as any published observations regarding unusually well-cut chambers, stomia or dromoi. Of these features, pits, which are the most common, were probably functional rather than ostentatious in purpose. Usually roughly cut and shallow, they appear to have been secondary additions to the chamber, often for the redeposition of earlier primary burials in the tomb. Niches seem also to have been subsequent additions to the original structures for the purpose of creating space in the chamber for further interments, rather than as decorative elements. By contrast, benches and columns in the chambers, elaboration of the chamber entrance and fine carving generally, appear to have functioned primarily as display features, as observed at Knossos in LM II especially. The benches and columns at least reflect decisions that would have to be made at the time of construction, as they require rock to be left *in situ*; this contrasts with niches, pits and possibly elaborate carving, which, as further extractive processes, can happen at any subsequent time. The occurrence of such display features is anyway limited, to Armenoi (at least sixteen tombs), two tombs each at Kalyvia and Chania, and one tomb each at Galia, Anopolis, Episkopi and Mochlos. At Armenoi and Kalyvia they are found in, but are not exclusive to, the more monumental tombs noted above, which suggests that while both size and elaboration were used as strategies for status advertisement, elaboration was slightly more common.

Finally, there are two further features to note at Armenoi and Kalyvia that may represent additional strategies to the same end. One is the presence of stelae in five of the Armenoi tombs (tombs 24, 140, 159, 210 and 211). These tomb markers may not have been intended to act as indicators of privileged status in every case, but it is significant that the two which were decorated (one with inscribed horizontal and vertical lines, the other with painted cross-hatch decoration) were found in the largest Armenoi tombs, 24 and 159 respectively (see above). The second case is more tentative, based upon Savignoni's observation that **M KA 9** at Kalyvia had an unusually accentuated domed roof reminiscent of a corbel-vaulted tomb (Savignoni 1904: 514, fig 5). His similar interpretation of tomb 1 of the same cemetery is more tenuous, considering the paucity of the surviving remains (*ibid.*: 528, fig 15), and it would be

hazardous to attach a great deal of importance to the reconstruction of tomb 9, especially as in the early years of the century (the period when these tombs were excavated), a close link was perceived between chamber and corbel-vaulted tombs, to the extent that the former were occasionally referred to as 'tholos' tombs (as, for example, Evans 1921: 299 for **C APE**; E. Hall 1914: 123 for Vrokastro). However, the roof in **M KA 9** does appear to have been genuinely unusual in its height, and may indeed reflect an appeal to the prestige symbolism of the corbel-vaulted tomb through the incorporation of one of its most distinctive architectural features.

To summarise, the standardisation in the form of the chamber tomb across the island extended also to details of size and internal features. The general lack of architectural ostentation exhibited may either suggest that this tomb type was generally not considered to be an emblem of the highest social status, or reflect a general lack of concern with devoting effort expenditure to this particular aspect of mortuary practices. Kalyvia and Armenoi were the most outstanding of the exceptions, with examples of chamber tombs ostentatious in more than one aspect of their architecture. Most of the other chamber tombs with elaboration, however, although employing the same vocabulary as these high status cemeteries, operated within lower status social contexts (for example, **FE MO 13** and **M GA 5** at Mochlos and Galia). These tombs, which lacked monumentality and often appeared as isolated cases within small cemeteries, were presumably primarily directed towards negotiating or reinforcing status within the local community hierarchy.

7.2.3 The pit-cave

The only certain occurrence of this type beyond Knossos, so far, is in the Odos Palama and Olympia locations at Chania (Figure 7.6), where the form is very close to that at Zapher Papoura, if less finely cut (Figure 7.11). However, as the known tombs appear to belong only to the LM IIIA2 phase, their survival seems to have been short here, continuing only indirectly into LM IIIB, in the form of the two hybrids noted above (section 7.2.2). The reason for their introduction here is unclear, a problem exacerbated by the ambiguity of their social significance at Knossos. Yet what is most remarkable about their presence is the contrast that this apparently Knossian-inspired introduction presents with the overall picture of the Far West, which is as the region least willing to participate in a Cretan mortuary koine (see Chapter 9).

7.2.4 The corbel-vaulted tomb

Form variation and ideological symbolism

While the corbel-vaulted tomb was relatively rare in comparison with the chamber tomb, its distribution was similarly island-wide (Figure 7.4). However, the range of variation visible between individual corbel-vaulted tombs on Crete, in terms of form, dimensions and elaboration, stands in marked contrast to the standardisation of the chamber tomb type. This diversity could lead one to question whether all the corbel-vaulted tombs had similar ideological and social associations, an issue which deserves some consideration.

Variation between the different corbel-vaulted tombs can be explored in three aspects of the mortuary sphere: in their spatial relationships with each other and with other tomb types; in dimensions; and in architectural form and elaboration. In none of these cases can one fit all of the corbel-vaulted tombs neatly into categories, as gradations and anomalies are created by whichever axis of variation one chooses to employ. One of the few features uniting them is their spatial distinction from chamber tombs: save at Armenoi, no cemetery has yet been found which contains both tomb types. Even at Armenoi, this juxtaposition may not originally have been envisaged if the corbel-vaulted tomb was, as Papadopoulou suggests (1997: 339), the first tomb to be built, and the chamber tombs were subsequent additions (although this is not yet demonstrable on the basis of the published evidence).

Regarding the spatial relationships of the corbel-vaulted tombs with each other, most of them appear to have been isolated monuments, but those in the north-western Mesara occurred in groups. Five such cemeteries are known so far: at Kamares, at Phrangou to Louri, at Psila Chomata-Agiodamandra,[38] at Sata and at Sopatakia.[39] This clustering is reminiscent of the grouping of chamber tombs elsewhere in the Mesara and across Crete. The two Archanes Phourni tombs, finally, are also within the same cemetery as each other, but have the added distinction of being associated with other built mortuary structures also.

---

[38] Although Chomata and Agiodamandra are listed as distinct tomb locations in the publications (and also, therefore, in the present catalogue), these tombs were only 300m apart and may well have been part of the same cemetery.

[39] At both Sata and Sopatakia, only one tomb has been excavated, but further possible corbel-vaulted tombs have been noted in the vicinity.

Turning to dimensions, a bar chart comparing the chamber areas of the different corbel-vaulted tombs (Figure 7.12) shows no clear groupings, but rather a general gradation from the relatively monumental (with which the larger chamber tombs were compared above) to those on the scale of the smaller chamber tombs, though the isolated tombs tend to be higher on the scale, and the grouped tombs of the Mesara lower. A comparison of the dromos lengths (where dromoi are present at all) presents a similar result (Figure 7.13). Finally, the chart of chamber forms and elements of architectural elaboration on Table 7.2 shows that no two tombs were identical in their design.

Overall, therefore, no clear groupings emerge within this overall diversity, although in the north-western Mesara, one or more communities do appear to have been ascribing to this tomb type, chamber tomb-like attributes. Yet even if these tombs were perceived in this area as a local alternative to the chamber tomb, it would be unrealistic to divorce them entirely from the other corbel-vaulted structures on Crete as a separate tomb category. Rather, they would be more plausibly interpreted as representing one extreme of a *scale of ostentation*, within which the primary role of corbel-vaulted tombs generally was for status display (Belli 1997: 252), although the social levels at which status was being asserted could vary. An interesting mainland comparison may be found in Voutsaki's study of the social roles of contemporary corbel-vaulted tombs in Messenia and the Argolid. The relative chamber sizes there are reproduced in Figure 7.14 (cf. Voutsaki 1998: 52, fig 3.4). The scales under consideration are vastly different between Crete and the mainland. However, the *pattern* produced is similar: the limited sizes and range of the Messenian corbel-vaulted tombs in comparison with the Argolidic is closely akin to that of the Mesaran with the other Cretan examples here. Voutsaki interprets the mainland difference as reflecting a primary emphasis on this tomb type as a tool for political competition in the Argolid, whereas "small tholoi (whether free-standing or in complex tumuli) and built tombs *took the place of* chamber tombs in western Messenia" (1998: 52; my emphasis). This comparison between the mainland and Crete should not be pushed too far, as we are dealing with different social and political contexts. However, the parallel does serve to bring out the point that the Mesaran tombs were not media within political competition on the scale or social level of tombs such as Archanes or Maleme, and indeed, were actually blurring the social distinction between corbel-vaulted tombs and the chamber tomb form. They were status markers insofar as the tomb practices introduced on Crete in LM IIIA2 ~~was~~ were generally strategic and focused towards the expression of status, but they were much more low-

key and internally focused.

Form and inspiration

The above argument acknowledges the form variations in the corbel-vaulted tombs, but at the same time it emphasises the ultimately mainland-derived inspiration of the tomb type, in terms of both its basic design and its ideological and political significance. As such, it directly contradicts Kanta's argument (1997a) that the LM corbel-vaulted tombs on Crete were in fact the end products of an *indigenous* evolutionary development from the round tomb,[40] though not rejecting the idea that existing tomb types influenced the architecture of the new tomb type as it was introduced in certain areas (specifically, in the Mesara and at Archanes Phourni). Kanta's argument is a useful illustration of the assumptions highlighted in Chapter 1 and 2 regarding both cultural categorisations, especially of mortuary practices as culture group diagnostics, and the ideological significance of material culture, whose mutability is not recognised. It also demonstrates a clear Creto-centricity and a resulting partial view of the evidence, especially in its reluctance to acknowledge the clear mainland inspiration of many of the corbel-vaulted tombs, including Archanes Phourni tomb A, one of the central cases on Kanta's argument. It would be instructive to consider some of the empirical arguments presented by Kanta in order to clarify this issue. This will serve to rectify any Creto-centric bias by placing both Cretan and mainland contributions to the corbel-vaulted tomb's form and social role into perspective, with respect to the Mesara and Archanes particularly. It will also serve as a means to explain certain of the architectural variations we witness in the corbel-vaulted tombs at these particular locations.

In the Mesara, Kanta correctly highlights a number of common structural features between the round tombs and corbel-vaulted tombs, such as the occasional lack of dromoi in the latter and their frequent location either entirely above ground (**WM AP PS**) or only partly subterranean (**WM AP AG, WM AP PH 1-4**). Indeed, Kanta remarks that "had they [the Apodoulou and Sata tombs] been found totally pillaged and robbed, without any finds except a few human bones, most of them could have been considered as Mesara-type circular tombs" (1997: 235). At Archanes too, there is sound evidence for local structural influence on the LM corbel-vaulted tombs (**C AR PH 1**

[40] Kanta categorises Archanes Phourni tomb B (**C AR PH 2**) as a round tomb. In the present study, it is classified rather as a 'built' tomb, because by the Post-palatial period the structure incorporated, rather than solely comprised, the round tomb feature. For this reason it is not included in Figure 7.3, where the distribution of round tombs is illustrated.

and 3) by the existing round tombs (Beta, Gamma and Epsilon) in the same cemetery (Kanta 1997a: 231-2, 242), including the corbel-vaulting of Gamma, and the long dromos and side chamber in Beta. Both of the latter features are also present in tomb Alpha (indeed, Alpha's side chamber is unique among the known Cretan LM corbel-vaulted tombs, though rare contemporary mainland parallels exist, such as in Mycenae's Treasury of Atreus and Orchomenos' Treasury of Minyas).

However, Kanta's argument fails to acknowledge the equally clear (if not more conspicuous) evidence for ultimately externally-derived inspiration in the Cretan corbel-vaulted tombs generally. First, there are the clear structural parallels in Final Palatial Knossian and mainland tombs, as noted above, including the use of dromoi in the corbel-vaulted tombs of both Archanes and the Mesara. On a more general level, the timing of the appearance of these particular tombs in LM IIIA2 cannot be explained without *any* recourse to externally-derived inspiration. It cannot be coincidental that their appearance was contemporary with the horizon in which new tomb practices were being taken up across the whole of Crete. In short, the very decision to construct tombs from LM IIIA2 involved the acceptance of what was ultimately a mainland-inspired phenomenon. There is no evidence to support the opposing argument that the LM IIIA2 tombs were continuations of unbroken tradition, since the Mesaran and Phourni round tombs did not see uninterrupted use from MM right up to this phase. It is in fact more likely that the LM IIIA and IIIB material in the round tombs signals instead a *revival* in the use of these structures following long-term abandonment (or at most, sporadic use) in the interval, probably in direct connection with the LM IIIA2 horizon of interest in the new tomb types. This does not decrease the probability that the re-used round tombs, revived as active participants in local mortuary practices, rather than obsolete monuments in the landscape, influenced the acceptance and structure of the corbel-vaulted tomb in the Mesara and at Archanes. However, it undermines the picture of a thriving and deeply embedded Cretan round tomb tradition that Kanta presents as the context in which the corbel-vaulted tombs emerged.

In fact, to turn Kanta's argument around, at Archanes Phourni the architectural modifications made to Beta in LM IIIA phase suggest a renewed interest in the round tomb that could be directly connected with the introduction of the corbel-vaulted tomb

there (see Figure 7.15).[41] These include the construction of a new dromos (no. 3), and the use of the side chamber (no. 4) for one or more burials, before the room was permanently sealed off. The latter event particularly is reminiscent of the roughly contemporary burial use and sealing of Alpha's side chamber. The blocking of the old dromos (no. 1) in Beta, the raising of the floor level within the round chamber (no. 2) and construction of a bench around its inner wall, were also modifications carried out in LM IIIA, which, although not imitating the typical corbel-vaulted tomb's design, further reflect a renewed interest in this round chamber that may well have been stimulated by the ideological significance of the mainland-derived tomb type. It may not be coincidental that this period also saw ritual activity in the Gamma round tomb, involving ceramic 'offerings' made through the window adjacent to its entrance – a feature remarkable mainly because the latest ceramics prior to this phase belong to the tomb's original EM III burial use.

In summary, we need to take *both* internal and external sources of inspiration into account when seeking to explain the acceptance and the design of the corbel-vaulted tomb in the Mesara and at Archanes. The Mesaran type may also have been the product of a local reinterpretation of an idea received indirectly via centres in closer contact with Knossos. A possible parallel for such a development would be Carter's study of the importation of Cycladica in the Early Minoan period, wherein the same refraction of significance and expression was seen in the Mesara (Carter 1998). The north coastal location of most of the Cretan corbel-vaulted tombs is certainly worth noting in this respect, reinforced by their absence from either Kalyvia or Agia Triada.

We are therefore witnessing complex networks of ideological and structural influence within the island that drew on both indigenous and ultimately externally-derived ideas to different extents and in different ways, and Figure 7.16 illustrates this diagramatically for the Mesaran tombs specifically. The importance of innovation should also be brought into the equation when considering architectural developments, not simply innovation in combining external and internal ideas, but also in trying completely new ideas, as in the unique Building 21 at Phourni. A profitable way forward in this issue of the significance of the LM Cretan corbel-vaulted tombs, therefore, would be to

---

[41] No indication is given in the publications about whether this was LM IIIA1 or LM IIIA2. However, the fact that there is no evidence for LM IIIA1 use of the cemetery, but plentiful evidence for LM IIIA2 architectural and burial activities, suggests that the modifications to tomb Beta probably also belong to this latter phase.

recognise that a) there was a variety of social levels upon which the prestige symbolism of the corbel-vaulted tomb was deployed, and b) the inspiration for any one of these roles could have developed from more than one source. In this way, we could start to explore the potential for complex interactions of cultural ideas and influences, rather than continue an unproductive debate between extremes.

Scales of competition

In the above discussion it was asserted that the Mesara tombs operated as social statements on a purely local level, perhaps purely intra-community. In the larger corbel-vaulted tombs of the island, it would be interesting to speculate upon the audiences at whom they were directed. For example, we could draw upon Wright's hypothesis regarding the changing political role of corbel-vaulted tombs in the Argolid in LH IIIA2-B, wherein their focus turned outwards to represent "a changing conception of territory, now extended beyond [the resource area] to include a political boundary determined in relation to other centres of power in the region" (1987: 176). On Crete, similarly, it may be that the largest corbel-vaulted tombs were advertising the status of the burial group or the community as a whole on a regional level. An interpretation of such apparently isolated structures as Phylaki and Maleme as markers of political boundaries would fit well with the latter hypothesis of an increasing orientation towards "an outward expression of power" (Wright: *ibid.*). Our lack of knowledge regarding the primary travel routes across the landscape and even settlement locations in this period renders it impossible to demonstrate that the more monumentalising tombs were always deployed as visual markers in the landscape in the same way as at LM II Knossos or contemporary Mycenae, but such a scenario is nevertheless possible. On a purely speculative level, for example, Phylaki may have been deliberately located as a territorial boundary between Chania and the settlement represented by the Armenoi cemetery; while Maleme, with its view of both the north coastal plain and the coast 1.5 km away, may have targeted Chania's maritime trading partners.

However, one could equally argue against this large-scale regional model, that we are in fact witnessing in these tombs status display on a much more local level, involving elites within smaller territorial areas. The current lack of settlement evidence in the Maleme and Phylaki areas was noted in Chapter 6 to be a situation that will almost certainly be reversed in the future, with increased levels of archaeological investigation. In such a case, these tombs, like those at Stylos and Armenoi, could simply represent

the assertions of local elites within a situation where the political landscape of western Crete was fragmented into several territorial spheres. The same could be argued for central Crete, for the relationship between Archanes, Smari and Damania, the latter two not representing large-scale regional centres, as opposed to local elites within a politically fragmented landscape. Again, in the east, a number of the corbel-vaulted tombs, including Achladia, could be interpreted similarly.

Of these two hypotheses, the latter seems the more plausible at present. The different levels of the resources devoted to the individual tombs suggest that they were the products of local elites of varying fortunes and levels of power. These individuals and groups acknowledged the significance of the corbel-vaulted tomb as a symbol of status and were keen to draw upon it within the current political environment, but they could not devote equal levels of resources to this end. This would help to explain the level of variation in architectural details noted above (and in Table 7.2). Cavanagh and Laxton (1982) have begun to explore the possibility of structural similarities between the Cretan corbel-vaulted tombs that contrast with the designs of mainland versions, but their sample (Achladia and Stylos) is too small to support a hypothesis of a distinct Cretan tradition, and such uniformity is certainly not reflected in the other aspects of the tomb architecture. It may have been partly that architectural individuality was actively sought, much as at LM II Knossos. However, it was probably mainly due to the different levels of resources available to different elites, especially in terms of skilled labour. Thus, at the lower end of the scale, the small Smari tomb was fairly roughly built, with an almost circular chamber and a dromos that was not on its central axis, while at the other end, the monumental Maleme tomb had a stone-walled dromos, wooden portals at the entrance, a façade partly of ashlar, a paved chamber floor and plastered chamber walls.

In summary, it was primarily the high status symbolism of the corbel-vaulted tomb type, as previously exploited at Knossos and derived ultimately from the mainland, which made it attractive on Crete. Its form was altered in different ways, occasionally through architectural influences from existing local tomb forms, but more often because of different levels of resources, knowledge and skill.

A final note on the subject of these tombs concerns the corbel-vaulted tombs in the eastern area of the island, which have been relatively neglected in the above discussion.

This is mainly because so few of them can be dated with certainty to our period, and more secure dating, as well as a more detailed understanding of the architectural elements and contents of these tombs, are needed before these tombs can be integrated and understood within their broader Cretan context. However, present evidence suggests that they held similar social significance to the parallels elsewhere on the island. They were isolated from chamber tombs, though they varied in the levels of their isolation from each other, with several cases of tombs in the same vicinity, if not the same location. The continuing popularity of corbel-vaulted tombs in this area of the island through to the Orientalising period (Belli 1991: 440-449) is interesting, but outside the range of the present study, as this divergence in mortuary practices from the rest of the island only begins to emerge towards the end of the period under consideration here.

7.2.5 Caves, pits and receptacle burials (Figure 7.5)

Rock cavity and rock shelter burials (both classified here as 'caves'), which took place in both LM IIIA2 and IIIB, required less effort expenditure to construct than the chamber tomb, but did not necessarily represent lower status family groups for this reason alone. They certainly do not form an internally coherent tomb type that might be equated with a specific social status. Most are located in the east of the island, though examples are known from every analytical area except the Mesara. They usually occur very sporadically, and the only systematic use of natural hollows is in the Elounda Stous Traphous cemetery. They may often have been used simply as substitutes for the chamber tomb where there was a lack of the skilled resources required to carve a tomb and where the presence of natural hollows formed by local geological processes rendered unnecessary the carving out of chambers by hand. An alternative explanation for their appearance, i.e. a lack of familiarity with the chamber tomb, is not likely, given the dissemination of the latter across the length of the island, and the fact that caves have been found in areas where chamber tombs also occur, such as at Psari Phorada and Malia in the Mid East.

Pit tombs were in use throughout LM IIIA2 and IIIB and also appear to have been an expedient alternative to the chamber tomb type, rather than forming a distinct type with an attendant specific social significance. For example, the form of **C GO 5** suggests that here at least, the pit was simply intended to be a simplified chamber tomb (Chatzidakis 1921: fig 29). It may be the earliest tomb constructed in this cemetery (having been

dated to LM IIIA2-B, as opposed to the rest of the dated tombs, which are assigned to LM IIIB). If so, it may reflect an early attempt to imitate the unfamiliar chamber tomb form here. Pits occurred either with chamber tombs or as isolated burials, but seem never to have formed cemeteries by themselves. This is a similar trend to that witnessed on the contemporary mainland (Dickinson 1983: 62), wherein pits were rare and usually inserted in chamber tomb cemeteries, though regionally specific examples are known of a preference for the pit type over the chamber tomb. They were often associated with child burials on the mainland, but otherwise do not appear to have represented a particular social status.

Finally, the receptacle burials, which are so far known at only three locations (Maroulas in the Mid West, Malia in the Mid East and Agia Triada in the Mesara), deserve special note, as either continuations or revivals of an indigenous tradition (see Chapter 3). None comprise receptacle burial cemeteries, however, in contrast to the norm in the Neopalatial period. The Maroulas burials are actually within a chamber tomb cemetery, in an interesting juxtaposition of traditional and innovative mortuary practices. The Malia burial comprises a re-use of the abandoned 'Maison de Morts' near the palace, while at Agia Triada, the double larnax burial is adjacent to the re-used round tomb.

7.2.6 Other types

Of the remaining minority of miscellaneous tomb types, the re-used round tombs of the Mesara and Archanes Phourni have already been discussed in association with the corbel-vaulted tombs. Interestingly, most of the other tombs in this category can be associated with high status pretensions of various degrees, whether through the symbolism evoked by the tomb type itself, if borrowed, or simply through its insertion within a prestigious cemetery. Among the former are the two shaft graves at Kalyvia, which probably appeal to the high status associations of predecessors at Knossos, although lack of detail regarding their architecture prevents any closer analysis of this borrowing. Archanes Phourni's grave enclosure pits, meanwhile, seem to evoke the shaft grave circle A of Mycenae, as will be discussed below. The latter include the cists at Malia, which required little effort expenditure but utilised an earlier high status mortuary site, as did the re-used structures at Agia Triada and Archanes Phourni.

7.2.7 Site-level variations

The above discussion of individual tomb types has been chiefly concerned with

highlighting internal variations, relative statuses and patterns of regional distribution. The very use of tombs was probably a mark of status, differentiating between groups within the community that did and did not receive tomb burial. However, if these tombs did confer status, this was rarely communicated through the architecture itself, whether the tomb type or its internal elaboration. Exceptions include a number of the corbel-vaulted tombs and several chamber tombs, but generally, architectural ostentation was rare.

Most of the burying population used the standard chamber tomb form, though the cave, pit, pit-cave and other less popular forms were occasionally employed also, without any discernible implications of association with lower social status groups than the chamber. This does not imply that all these tombs, including the chamber tomb, represented a single social stratum, but rather that the majority of the burying population expressed internal status variations through other means than architecture, such as assemblage composition or ritual sumptuousness.

However, interesting site-level variation does become apparent if one considers the choices being made regarding tomb elaboration and (more frequently) tomb types and by a very few high status cemeteries. It would be useful here to focus on these locations to highlight this variability. To take the LM IIIA2 period first, elaboration and monumentality were noted earlier in the chamber tombs of Armenoi and Kalyvia, and can also be seen in the Phourni tomb Alpha and the isolated corbel-vaulted tombs of Achladia and Phylaki, though their associated centres are unknown. *Evocations* of prestige symbolism, however, are also apparent in the inclusion of shaft graves at Kalyvia, the small corbel-vaulted tomb at Armenoi and the 'shaft grave enclosure' of Phourni. The latter, for example, appears to be a diminutive version of Mycenae's Grave Circle A, covering an area of roughly 40 square metres, in contrast to the roughly 530 square metres enclosed by the LH IIIA2 circular wall of its ultimate prototype (Sakellarakis 1974: fig 1; Wace 1949: fig 3).

However, although the burying elites represented by Kalyvia, Phourni and Armenoi stand out from the majority by their willingness to use mortuary architecture for purposes of high status advertisement, it is equally striking that there was no universal consensus regarding the appropriate tomb types to employ to this end. Table 7.3 charts the different tomb types constructed at each site in the LM IIIA2 period, adding for

comparative purposes the equally singular cemetery of Agia Triada, a known high status centre of this period, but one whose elite chose not to use any externally-derived architectural influences at all.

Within the Mesara, we have two extremes of receptivity to external ideas in the two known high status sites of the region. The elite at Agia Triada rejected all externally-derived tomb types, and indeed, devoted few resources to architecture at all, the unique **M AT 3** being the only new construction, in contrast to the re-used round tomb, the re-used Neopalatial structure associated with the cemetery[42] and the larnax burials. Kalyvia appears, in stark contrast to this, as a newly created cemetery whose burying group embraced the chamber tomb and shaft grave types (the former occasionally monumental), though with innovative results, such as the double chambered tomb 2. The elite at this cemetery appears to have rejected corbel-vaulted tomb symbolism, however, with the possible exception of tomb 9, as discussed above.

The elite at Archanes Phourni cemetery was, like that at Kalyvia, receptive to external inspiration (as well as re-using existing structures, as at Agia Triada). However, this group preferred the corbel-vaulted tomb to the chamber tomb, and indeed appears to have rejected the latter entirely (though the spatial relationship of **C AR PH 12** to the cemetery proper is unclear). It also imported the shaft grave symbolism, but while the shaft graves at Kalyvia were arranged individually, as at Knossos, at Phourni the Mycenaean grave circle format was imitated. The closest documented parallels for such an enclosure wall are Mycenae's two shaft grave circles, of which only one (A) was apparently still celebrated by the LM IIIA period. Parallels with this grave circle include not only the use of an enclosure around a group of rectangular tombs sunk into the ground, but also an associated bothros and the use of grave stelae. It is interesting that the apparently pre-planned nature of the complex suggests that it was the enclosed group of tombs as an architectural monument that was the most significant element of this structure, rather than the individual tombs. This implies that the original designs of the Mycenaean shaft graves had been forgotten, or their significance superseded by that of the grave enclosure symbol as a whole.

The burying population of Armenoi, finally, deployed the prestige potential of both the

---

[42] The 'Tomb of the Gold Objects' discussed in Chapter 3 as being a possible parallel to Building 4 at Archanes Phourni and the Temple Tomb at Knossos.

chamber and the corbel-vaulted tomb types. There is a possibility that a temporal shift took place in this respect within LM IIIA2, wherein the corbel-vaulted tomb was the earliest tomb in the cemetery, or at least pre-eminent on the site at the time of its construction. However, if so, this status was short-lived, since the elaboration of chamber tombs at the cemetery had certainly begun by the end of LM IIIA2. Moreover, the largest of the later chamber tombs (tomb 24) in the same cemetery was five times its size (and twice the size of the Phylaki corbel-vaulted tomb), not to mention as elaborate in its architectural details. It is also interesting to note here the possible significance of the dromos niche in the Armenoi corbel-vaulted tomb, a feature commonly found in the dromoi of the chamber tombs in this cemetery. Whether an original feature of, or a later addition to, the original tomb structure, it further reinforces the impression that this tomb came to be perceived (if it was not originally) as little different in its mortuary role from the chamber tombs that surrounded it.

Overall, the elites at these four specific centres clearly felt a need to exploit funerary architecture to assert their status, within their own communities and perhaps also in opposition to elites at centres elsewhere. The strategies employed for this purpose differed markedly from site to site, and often from tomb to tomb. It is, in fact, similar to the phenomenon already witnessed at LM II Knossos – experimentation and selective adaptation at the elite level within a context of social and political instability that opened up wider possibilities for active choice. However, competition was being played out over a larger spatial area, and more than one regional centre was participating (though apparently not all, as Malia seems not to have deployed this method of advertisement at all). In general, though, sub-elites were not participating in this architectural experimentation, but rather accepted the standardised chamber tomb form.

It must be emphasised that the period of architectural competition at these centres was short-lived. At Armenoi, all but one of the chamber tombs with areas of over 10 square metres had their first use in the LM IIIA period (unfortunately, tomb 159 is undatable). Only three of the twelve (datable) Armenoi chamber tombs noted for architectural elaboration were LM IIIB in date (tombs 11, 17 and 132), and of these, tomb 11 is dated only by larnax decoration, while the only elaborate features in the latter two are carefully carved steps in the dromos. At Archanes Phourni, mortuary construction activity can be pinpointed quite precisely to the LM IIIA2 phase; the only new structure that might belong to the LM IIIB horizon is Building 21. At Agia Triada and Kalyvia,

finally, all of the newly constructed tombs belong to LM IIIA2, with the sole exception of the two larnax burials (**M AT 2**).

By LM IIIB, therefore, expenditure on elaborate mortuary constructions had all but ceased at these centres. However, the idea was taken up elsewhere, as the Far West now began to employ this mechanism. Only three Cretan corbel-vaulted tombs are dated to this phase for their earliest use: the relatively small-scale Damania tomb in the Central area and the Stylos and Maleme tombs of the Far West, of which the latter was the largest tomb constructed on the island since LM II. On an inter-regional level, this may indicate that a further power shift was taking place on the island at some point within this ceramic phase, wherein the importance of the Far West was being increasingly asserted. It is unfortunate that the dating of the corbel-vaulted tombs cannot be refined any further within the LM IIIB period at present, as none of the sherd material from either of these tombs has been published.

These Far Western corbel-vaulted tombs also have interesting implications for our understanding of the power dynamics taking place within this region of the island. It was noted in the previous chapter that there seems to have been an expansion in tomb use out of Chania in LM IIIB, and the fact that neither of the corbel-vaulted tombs is spatially associated with Chania is probably connected with this in some way. It should be stressed again here that our mortuary evidence for the Far West area as a whole is still very limited, and future discoveries of such tombs in the immediate vicinity of the Chaniote settlement should not be ruled out. However, Chania has been well investigated in comparison with the surrounding region, so that it is probably significant that the only two examples of this tomb type that have found are *outside* this centre. Two alternative scenarios could be proposed to account for the presence of these corbel-vaulted tombs: one in which they reflected Chaniote hegemony across the region, and an alternative in which they were status assertions by elite groups at settlements beyond this principal centre (which would have attendant implications for developments in the regional settlement hierarchy and administrative organisation of this region). Either way, developments in the mortuary landscape of this area as a whole suggest that the changing relationship of Chania both with its immediate neighbours and with the rest of the island during the LM IIIA2-B period, would be a rewarding subject for further exploration.

7.3 Comparisons with Knossos and the mainland

Of the externally-derived tomb types taken up on wider Crete from LM IIIA2, only the grave enclosure at Archanes Phourni has no Knossian precedent. This suggests that Final Palatial Knossos, rather than the more remote mainland, provided the primary inspiration for the spread of tomb use across Post-palatial Crete (although equally, certain Knossian tomb types were generally rejected, such as the shaft grave and pit-cave). The possibility of some contributing influence also deriving directly from the mainland in the Post-palatial period should not be dismissed entirely, as Crete was now becoming increasingly involved in the Aegean contact networks previously dominated by Knossos. Indeed, mainland influence can be seen in the Cyclades and other islands in the LM IIIA2-B period, where high status corbel-vaulted tombs have been discovered on Mykonos (Tomlinson 1995: 55) and Tinos (Belli 1991: 435-6). Yet the practice of high status tomb use already established at Knossos surely not only facilitated, but actually motivated, its take-up elsewhere on the island in LM IIIA2. For by this stage, the ultimately mainland-derived customs introduced at Knossos in the late Neopalatial and LM II periods had probably been incorporated into the Cretan environment, to the extent that they were probably no longer considered as being customs 'external' to the island (though the vast majority of the island's population would not have seen them before LM IIIA2).

The extent of the architectural resources devoted to this strategy was less than witnessed in the most monumental of the LM II Knossian tombs: even the largest of the non-Knossian Cretan corbel-vaulted tombs was far smaller than the Kephala tomb and Isopata Royal Tomb. Yet the disparity is even more striking with contemporary Mycenae, where the most monumental of the Late Bronze Age corbel-vaulted tombs were now being constructed. Architectural display on Crete was often through the symbolic *evocation* of prestigious prototypes rather than their actual reproduction in terms of scale and elaboration. This comparatively diminished level of expenditure is unsurprising, however, for two reasons. First, the regional elites appear to have established a system of standards in ostentation that was introspective, rather than having any view to comparison with the mainland, largely because social and political competition on Post-palatial Crete was primarily internally directed, and often played

out at local levels. Second, although there was a common agreement that mortuary architecture was an important forum for high status display on Post-palatial Crete, it was not the most crucial one, especially since architectural elaboration was also being practised in the *non*-mortuary sphere at several of the regional centres.

7.4 Conclusions

The results of this architectural study can be summarised in the following points:

- On a general level, LM IIIA2 saw a remarkable degree of homogeneity across the island in terms of the almost universal preference for the standard, ultimately mainland-derived chamber tomb form, which indicates the existence of close communication networks across the island. A few regional trends are apparent (such as the Mesaran corbel-vaulted tombs and the Elounda caves) and they tend to be small-scale in their geographical distribution. The only possible indication provided by mortuary architecture of a distinctive regional identity emerges later, in the survival of the still poorly understood corbel-vaulted tombs in the east of the island.

- Within this broader picture of homogeneity and general lack of architectural ostentation, a few sites stand out in exploiting the by then well-known potential of this sphere as a mechanism for status display. In LM IIIA2, the elites involved were mainly in the Central and Mid Western areas of the island, perhaps because they were more familiar (due to closer spatial proximity) with the mortuary strategies that had been explored previously at Knossos. Within these areas, architectural ostentation was most marked at the centres of Armenoi, Archanes, Kalyvia and, to a lesser extent, Agia Triada, all but one of which (Armenoi) are associated with former second-order centres of the Knossian administration. However, isolated examples of elites beyond these centres drawing upon this strategy (at Smari and possibly Phylaki) hint at the existence of a more politically fragmented landscape.

- There was also a distinct lack of consensus between the elites at the regional centres themselves regarding the appropriate way to exploit high status architectural symbolism. This may reflect either deliberate expressions of individuality by elite groups between or within these sites or a genuine lack of experience of this form of

advertisement. It almost certainly depended also upon the levels of wealth, labour and skill that they were able to mobilise, but there is equally evidence of a shared reluctance to devote huge resources to this sphere of advertisement, which led to the development of an internalised Cretan system of relative levels of ostentation.

- In LM IIIB, as mortuary ostentation was largely abandoned in the central area of the island (with the exception of Damania), the initiative was taken up by the Far West. As yet, the nature of, and circumstances surrounding, this shift are unclear, especially in the absence of more refined dating for the two corbel-vaulted tombs and a clear understanding of the internal site hierarchy in this region in this period (although the continuation of the Chaniote administration in the early part of this phase is clear from the Linear B tablets).

These results demonstrate the value of mortuary architecture as an archaeological resource for reconstructing the political and cultural dynamics of Crete in LM IIIA2-B, although it was clearly not the only, or even necessarily the principal strategy for elite advertisement. Particularly, it has highlighted several particular cemeteries with high status aspirations, and a central to far western temporal shift on the island in the recourse to elaborate tomb architecture at the highest social levels. More immediately, it also provides a model with which to compare and contrast other archaeologically retrievable aspects of the mortuary sphere.

Chapter 8

Assemblage Composition

8.1 Introduction

The discussion of tomb assemblages will be structured around several parts. The introduction will set out the main artefact and material types with which we are dealing, and section 8.2 will consider their regional distributions, to try to detect any broad spatial variations in assemblage preferences. Sections 8.3 to 8.5 will then focus in on site-level variations, seeking to establish what, if any, strategies for status display through artefact deposition were in play, and whether these changed through time. Section 8.6 will compare these results with Final Palatial practices at Knossos and consider the implications for our understanding of the developing political geography of the island in LM IIIA2-B, before the overall results of the chapter are collated and summarised in Section 8.7.

The assemblages will be considered in terms of both material composition and artefact types. An analytical distinction between materials and forms will be used to begin with, but will not be maintained rigidly, since, as discussed in Chapter 5, the two factors are not always strictly separable, especially in any consideration of the overall value and significance of specific artefacts.

The range of material types in the wider Cretan area (see Appendix L) is almost identical to that observed above at Knossos, with iron the only addition (occurring in only two tombs). The overall relative frequencies of the different material types are presented in Figure 8.1. The popularity of ceramics in relation to the other material types is surely exaggerated, both as datability through ceramic material is the main criterion for inclusion as a 'secure' tomb within the present study and because sherds are more likely to survive plundering than materials more valuable to the non-archaeologist intruder. However, to judge by the frequency of their occurrence in intact tombs, ceramics were still among the most popular material types.

Appendices M and N catalogue the main artefact types recovered from the securely datable tombs, and overall relative frequencies are illustrated in Figure 8.2. The range of forms being deposited is again similar to that observed in Chapter 5 for the LM III Knossos area. Ceramic vessels are the most popular, partly for reasons outlined above, though vessels classified under 'ritual' are far more rare than those used for storage or for food/liquid preparation and consumption. Jewellery is the next most popular category, while artefacts connected with combat, grooming and high status feasting are relatively rare.

8.2 Inter-regional comparisons

8.2.1 Material types

The spatial distributions of the different material types across the island are presented in Figure 8.3, while Figure 8.4 shows the percentages of secure tombs in each area in which each material type occurs. Iron and amber are excluded from Figure 8.4 because they occur in such small quantities, and wood because differential preservation conditions may be biasing the results. Clearly, looting must also have affected the statistics presented here, but the effects of this have been minimised as far as possible by excluding from the totals used for Figure 8.4 all secure tombs that were found completely empty (unless they are explicitly stated to have been intact upon excavation).

The results show no outstanding regional disparities in choices of material types, and the range in each case between the highest and lowest percentages does not exceed about 20%. However, one recurring feature may be picked out: that the Mesara, Knossos and Central areas are consistently high in their percentages of the more valuable of the main material types (that is, gold, ivory, glass, silver, iron and bronze),[43] though faience shows the opposite tendency. By contrast, the Far West, Mid West and Far East frequently have lower counts for the more valuable materials, except for bronze and faience. The greater concentration of the valuable materials of gold, ivory and silver in the central part of the island may indicate that although universally prized across Crete, their main area of circulation was in these central regions, and they were

[43] See the discussion of relative values of different material types in Chapter 5.

not actually being disseminated on a large scale beyond this area. The comparative spatial distributions of bone and ivory appear to reinforce this hypothesis, wherein the former seems to be acting as a more accessible substitute for the latter in much of the western part of the island (that is, beyond the wealthiest cemeteries). The two materials were certainly used for the same artefact types: mainly handles, combs, beads, pins and inlays. The same may also be the case for faience and glass, with the former acting as a cheaper substitute for the latter in jewellery (though one must also bear in mind the possibility that some archaeologists have used these terms interchangeably in describing artefacts of these materials).

This central focus in wealth may have been partly a result of greater access to extra-island exchange networks enjoyed by the regional centres at Archanes, Agia Triada and Phaistos, and probably also the reduced elite of Knossos (indeed, it would be interesting to gauge the level of activity at Poros in the Post-palatial period). In the west and east, by contrast, it may be that equivalent regional centres (Chania; the mid western polity or polities responsible for the tombs at Armenoi, Phylaki and the Stavromenos area; Malia; and Palaikastro) either did not enjoy access to the same external networks that the central centres had inherited from the Final Palatial era, or else they were more concerned to restrict the circulation of valuable materials in their regions beyond the highest status sites. An alternative (or supplementary) explanation for this north central focus of wealth on Crete is that we are seeing a legacy of the fallen palatial centre at Knossos. It was suggested in Chapter 5 that the valuable items that continued to be deposited in Knossian tombs in LM IIIA2 may have comprised, at least partly, wealth curated from the days of the palatial distribution of prestige artefacts. Similarly, this wider halo of mobile wealth in the regions around Knossos could be part of the same phenomenon, the archaeologically-visible after-effects of the Final Palatial administration.

8.2.2 Artefact types

The distribution of each artefact type is illustrated in Figure 8.5. The only absence in comparison with the Knossian repertoire explored in Chapter 5 is the arrowhead (the sole example so far recovered, in **MW AR 139**, appears to have entered the tomb through being embedded in the spine of the deceased, rather than as a funerary offering). Additions to the Knossian corpus are more numerous, but occur only in ceramic vessel forms: mainly the ring vase, tankard, askos, thelastron, krater, kalathos

and incense burner. These show a fairly clear distinction between Knossos and the rest of the island in every case except the incense burner, where the boundary line can be widened to embrace the north central area as a whole (see Figure 8.5m). Plaster tables have also been included in this distribution map as, although comparatively rare, they may have fulfilled a similar mortuary function and they show a similar spatial patterning to the braziers. Otherwise, apart from the absence of flasks in the Mid East and Far East, most ceramic vessel types recur fairly consistently across the island.

The new ceramic vessel types now introduced to the tomb context beyond the Knossos area cover the whole range of functional categories set up for ceramic vessels in Appendices M and N. This makes it all the more likely that these innovations were a function of the regional workshops that emerged in LM IIIA2 and continued at least into LM IIIB1, rather than marking differences between Knossos and the rest of Crete in mortuary practices and ideologies. In other words, the regional variations noted above may simply result from different areas using different vessel forms to fulfil the *same mortuary function*. A comparative study of ceramic vessel preferences in settlement contexts is needed in order to clarify this issue, though this is, unfortunately, beyond the scope of the present study. If the pattern seen in the mortuary practices proves to be mirrored in the settlement repertoires, this will support the above hypothesis, that we are simply witnessing workshop preferences (though these could potentially have implications for our understanding of constructions of regional identities that could link in or contrast with mortuary patterns). Otherwise, genuinely different mortuary ideologies in different areas may indeed be represented in these artefact choices. Pending such a study, the lack of flasks in the eastern area of the island does not seem to mark different regional mortuary customs, if they held the same types of contents as the ubiquitous pyxis and alabastron. Equally, the almost mutually exclusive distributions of the brazier and incense burner are intriguing from the point of view of workshop choices, but it is likely that the two distinctive forms fulfilled common purposes within mortuary rituals – that is, for lighting and fumigation (cf. Georgiou 1977 for **KN KA 2** and one of the **KN ETT** tombs) and/or the burning of aromatics (compare Evans 1914: 13 for **KN IS 3**).

A more pertinent issue to investigate with regard to the ceramic vessels, therefore, would be the consistency with which the functional categories recurred across the island, as this should be more indicative of similarities or differences in mortuary

practices than analyses of individual forms. Percentages of secure tombs in which each category occurs across the island are provided in Figure 8.6, using the same dataset as for Figure 8.4 (see above). The Far East contains the highest percentages in most categories, though this may be a result of our reliance on dated tombs for our dataset (this area also has the highest number of 'possible' tomb locations). Otherwise, the popularity of each category is quite consistent across the island. The higher proportion of 'lighting/burning' vessels at Knossos is not particularly significant since the difference between the greatest and least percentages for this category is only 11%, the smallest difference of all the categories. The comparative lack of consumption vessels in the Mid West is more significant, as the total range here is 39%. This is a result of a specific trend particular to Armenoi, however, the dominating cemetery in terms of tomb numbers, as is clear from comparing the ratios of vessels of each category at Armenoi and the rest of the Mid West (Table 8.1). This difference seems to be attributable to a practice peculiar to this specific cemetery of not depositing within the tomb the drinking vessels used within the mortuary ceremony (to which the common occurrence of kylix sherds in the dromos fills attests – *e.g.* Tzedakis 1988: 513 for tombs 121 to 142).

Turning to other artefact types, the comparative popularities of individual and generic types are set out in Figures 8.7 to 8.11, excluding the two rarest types (arrowheads and chisels) and whorls, since confusion over the distinction between the latter and beads means that a detailed distribution analysis of this type would probably not produce useful results. The patterns produced show a maximum range of 38% between the highest and lowest figures. There is a consistently higher proportion of deposition within each category in the central areas of the island (specifically, the Mesara, Knossos and Centre), though relative positions fluctuate according to the category concerned. This coincides with the observation above that the central regions were expending greater proportions of material wealth in the mortuary sphere. The Far West, meanwhile, is consistently low in each category, while the Mid West varies in its alignment with the central regions or the Far West, depending on the category concerned. It is closely in line with the central regions in terms of the popularity of adornment artefacts and weaponry,[44] but grooming artefacts, stone vessels and metal vessels are less common. The lack of bronze artefacts is most striking – that is, mirrors,

[44] The low levels of weaponry at Knossos (see Figure 8.9) may be exaggerated – as discussed in Chapter 5, several burials with weapons here are undatable and some may belong to LM IIIA2.

razors and vessels, of which mirrors are entirely absent from Armenoi. This does not appear to be solely the result of a lack of access to bronze, however, as weaponry and bronze jewellery are commonly found in the graves of this cemetery. Rather, conscious preferences regarding appropriate artefact *types* for the mortuary context are being expressed. At this point, it is also pertinent to remark upon the absence of chisels in the Mid West, for which the 'knife-axe' found in seven of the tombs in this area (and exclusive to this area) may have acted as an alternative with similar function and/or ideological significance. The eastern area of the island, finally, and particularly the Far East, generally participates quite actively in each category, though to a lower extent than the central regions.

8.3 Inter-site comparisons

8.3.1 Introduction

In the study of the Knossian assemblages in Chapter 5, attempts to grade individual tombs according to their relative levels of wealth were generally avoided, and the strict 'class' categorisations of Kilian-Dirlmeier's study were criticised. It is potentially hazardous to try to quantify wealth in the tombs, as we have only a general understanding of the relative values of different artefact and material types. Between individual burials, differences in assemblage composition may well have been associated with social identities not directly connected with the status levels under exploration here. Even when comparing whole cemeteries caution must be exercised, as there were occasionally different *choices* being made at different cemeteries regarding appropriate artefact types to include (as already observed above for Armenoi). However, some attempt must be made to gauge the relative importance of assemblage ostentation at different cemetery sites, in order to assess whether the cemeteries which were prominent in terms of architectural expenditure were also making use of this aspect of burial practices. If so, how were they doing so, and how clearly do they stand out from the other cemeteries on the island and from each other?

8.3.2 Strategies for status display

One method used here to try to access differences in site-level assemblage choices was through an index of material diversity. This method of wealth measurement in tombs was first applied by Voutsaki on the LH mainland (1983). Its applicability of course

depends upon the premise that diversity was (directly or indirectly) an index of value in the specific historical context in question, a premise which requires demonstration. However, the potential usefulness of this method for exploring Cretan assemblages is suggested by its successful application on the contemporary mainland.

Using the materials indexed in Appendix H (excluding wood, because of potential biases due to varying degrees of preservation), totals were drawn up of the total range of types exhibited at each location. The results are tabulated in Table 8.2, showing an average range of one to five material types per location across the island. Looting has certainly led to some locations scoring lower than they would have originally. However, it is surely not coincidental that the locations that stand out in containing the greatest range of material types (8-10) correspond closely with the cemeteries that emerged as prominent within the architectural analysis, of which some are associated with known regional centres. Four of the Knossian cemeteries also produce very high levels of material diversity. In the case of Mavro Spelio, Zapher Papoura and Upper Gypsades, it may be that some of the artefacts included here in fact belonged to earlier assemblages. However, if the dating of the unpublished Sellopoulo tombs 1 and 2 is accurate, then we do appear to have a genuinely high level of material diversity at Knossos in the LM IIIA2 period at least, as discussed in Chapter 4. In the Mid East, it is interesting that Milatos, rather than Malia, ranks with these high status sites, but in the Far West and Far East no individual location scores so highly (Odos Palama and Mochlos respectively being the closest contenders).

The data presented in Table 8.2 further suggest that locations with higher levels of material diversity also generally correspond with those in which the more precious material types occur (from bronze up through ivory and gold to silver, amber and iron). It must be emphasised that this is only a general correspondence, though the large number of locations that have been disturbed through plundering may also be distorting our picture (on the reasonable assumption that materials such as metals and ivory are those most likely to have been removed). However, the correlation between the two indices does reinforce the impression that both were strategies for status negotiation, and that they were used in tandem with each other.

A very basic grading of cemetery sites according to levels of assemblage ostentation can demonstrate this correlation. The three levels within it are:

1. Locations which contain iron, amber, ivory, silver or gold. Examples occur in every area of the island, from Chania to Palaikastro, but, as noted above, they have a particularly strong bias in distribution (and in the concentrations of silver and ivory) to the northern part of the Central area, to sites surrounding Poros, Knossos and Archanes. Mapheze, Episkopi and Sellopoulo are particularly outstanding, all with silver, ivory and gold; and also, to a lesser extent, Nirou Chani, Katsambas and Athanatoi (with silver and ivory or silver and gold).

2. Locations containing bronze but not the above materials. This is a fairly clear distinction, as no locations on the island contain silver, iron or amber but not bronze, while the only undisturbed locations to contain gold or ivory but not bronze are Adromyloi, Epano Vatheia and Malia Stous Aletrivopetres. These locations are distributed evenly across the island.

3. Locations whose tombs contained no metal contents at all. The true size of this rather large category is not clear (the locations currently included are as numerous as those containing metals), but a substantial number of them do appear to have been discovered intact. Again, their distribution is island-wide.

The correlations between these levels and the material diversity index are tabulated in Table 8.3. Thus, for example, in the Mesara area, locations included within Level 1 have material diversity counts ranging from 5 up to 10, those in Level 2 from 2 to 5 and those in Level 3 from 0 to 2. This is one of the areas where the correlation between material diversity and levels of material wealth is most straightforward. In others, there is a greater degree of overlap between the counts in the three levels. Generally, however, all the areas conform to a pattern wherein greater material diversity is directly linked to the occurrence of more valuable material types.

In terms of choices of artefact forms, a common overall vocabulary across the island was stressed above in the regional analysis, but symbolism reflecting martial prowess and feasting paraphernalia was generally rare. This can also be seen in the distribution of military iconography on artefacts other than actual weaponry. These have so far been found at Phourni (finger rings, beads and inlays in **C AR PH 1, 3** and **4**), Kalyvia (a finger ring in **M KA 10**), Phylaki (inlays), Armenoi (inlays in **MW AR 138**), Agia

Triada (a jug in **M AT 1**), Mapheze (a stone lid in **C MA**) and Gournes (a seal in **C GO 1**).

A broader strategy for status differentiation was through the value of the *material* of which the artefacts were composed, particularly in the case of jewellery, for which the precious materials of silver, iron, gold and amber were almost exclusively used. One could also cite the deposition of a silver bowl at Archanes (**C AR PH 4**), the only example of a precious metal vessel so far known outside Knossos, as well as the tin-coated ceramic vessels at Gournes and Kritsa (**C GO 1** and **2** and **ME KR**), which appear to evoke precious metal versions. Another strategy could be played out through the relative quantities of artefacts being deposited. An example of this is found in the deposition of gold artefacts. In many tombs gold was present only as one or two beads or rings, but two tombs at Chania (**FW CH OL 10** and **FW CH IG 4**) stand out in containing necklaces of six and twelve identical gold beads respectively, while at the upper end of the scale were tombs at Archanes (**C AR PH 1,** with 40 beads - two necklaces; **C AR PH 3**, with 86 beads - three necklaces), Phylaki (**MW PH**, with 55 beads, of which 21 formed one necklace), Kalyvia (**M KA 4**, with at least 95 beads) and Zapher Papoura (**KN ZP 7** with 40 beads and **KN ZP 67** with 67 beads). Moreover, in the two Phourni tombs cited here, large numbers of gold rosettes were also used to adorn the clothing of the deceased (67 in **C AR PH 3**), as previously seen in LM IIIA1 at Sellopoulo.

Finally, two further strategies for ostentation in artefact choices can also be observed, though both are fairly rare. The first is the additional incorporation of exotica, as in the Egyptian diorite vases in **C AR PH 4** and **6**, the scarab in **M AT 4**, the Egyptian faience cylinder seal in **KN ZP 67** and the possibly Cypriot glass vessel in **C MA**. The second is the deposition of heirlooms, such as the frequent examples of curated stone vessels, the bead with a Linear A inscription in the Armenoi corbel-vaulted tomb and the Early Minoan seal in **M PA.**

Several summarising remarks can be made about the strategies for status expression and differentiation proposed above. First, all have been observed already at LM II-IIIA1 Knossos and on the contemporary mainland, and their recurrence here in LM IIIA2-B Crete affirms that in this respect the island was using the same tactics in terms of tomb goods as other parts of the southern Aegean. It also suggests that the Final Palatial

Knossian models did have a substantial impact on later practices across the island. Second, these various strategies were used in conjunction with each other, though some were more common than others. In other words, it is not the case that, for example, some communities were using heirlooms as an index of status, others exotica, others symbolism connected with the high status warrior lifestyle, and others precious materials. All were universally accepted as indicators of status, and indeed were inextricably linked with each other within a common system of status display, wherein privileged access to externally-derived materials and artefacts, participation in the common Aegean elite lifestyle, and hereditary rights to status expressed through heirlooms all played a part.

The most interesting result of the above analysis is how much more common ostentation was in assemblage deposition, in comparison with the patterns witnessed in mortuary architecture. In the latter, the pattern was one of limited effort expenditure on elaboration, tomb size, experimentation and the evocation of high status symbols. Such were mainly restricted to just a few regional centres, though occasional references were made elsewhere. By contrast, none of the strategies highlighted above for the expression of status through assemblage composition were limited to these centres alone, and iron is the only material to be entirely restricted to this sphere. Variations naturally occurred within individual sites which frequently concerned hierarchy. Yet no clear stratification of sites is immediately apparent, as opposed to a gradation from the wealthier to the poorer. This is probably because exclusive control of movable material status symbols would have been far harder than mobilisation of labour and the other requisite resources for the construction of a large-scale tomb.

As mentioned above, some strategies were more restricted than others, such as the deposition of amber or exotic artefacts, or the evocation of military symbolism through media other than weaponry. Yet while the cemeteries of Kalyvia, Phourni, Armenoi and Agia Triada are conspicuous in their wealth (though again, some tombs more than others), they do not stand out from the rest of the island as clearly as through tomb architecture. Phourni is consistently dominant, in whichever index for the quantification of wealth one chooses to use, and was probably richer originally, given the evidence for secondary mortuary activities at the cemetery that may have involved the removal of much of the original assemblages (discussed in Chapter 9). Kalyvia was not far behind, and it is unfortunate that **MW AR 24** and **159**, potentially the richest of the Armenoi

tombs, have been plundered, thus precluding comparison here. The more monumental of the corbel-vaulted tombs on the island surely also contained very rich assemblages, as indicated by the remarkable wealth retrieved from the Phylaki tomb even after plundering. However, specific tombs within the Knossian cemeteries of Gypsades, Mavro Spelio, and especially Sellopoulo and Zapher Papoura, also continue to compete in more than one respect, while the Mapheze and Nirou Chani sites, as well as the number of other cemeteries in this region with gold, silver and ivory, alert us to the presence of a wider network of wealth in the north central area than just Knossos and Phourni. A similar pattern of wealth distribution occurring outside the regional centres is seen in the Mid West and Mesara, though on smaller scales, with the tombs in the Stavromenos-Mesi and Galia-Goudies areas respectively.

The few wealthy tombs at Chania and Palaikastro that have survived intact (especially **FW CH IG 4, FW PAL AN, FW PA LA 8** and **FW PAL PE 1**) indicate an active interest of individuals at these regional centres in the deposition of grave goods, but the extent of the wider distribution of wealth in the Far West is not known, while in the Mid and Far East, the secondary sites in the ranking system proposed above are mainly distributed along the north coast, perhaps indicating independent access to certain imported materials.

At the same time, it should also be observed that other sites that might be expected to have been lavish in the deposition of artefacts in the same way are conspicuous by their lack of assemblage wealth. This is particularly the case for the regional centres of Agia Triada and Malia, the former distinguishing itself mainly in terms of the material diversity of its artefacts, but lacking in the quantities of deposited wealth witnessed at Kalyvia and Phourni, the latter as conspicuous by the absence of assemblage wealth as it was by the lack of ostentatious tomb architecture.

8.3.3 Site-specific preferences

So far within this analysis, little attention has been given to the possibility of variations between the known high status tomb locations regarding preferences in assemblage composition. Such a consideration would be useful, given the observation in the preceding chapter that among the elites of those regional centres that used architecture as a mechanism for display, there was a lack of consensus regarding the appropriate method for exploiting this potential. To what extent, therefore, did high status centres –

particularly Phourni, Kalyvia, Armenoi and Agia Triada – express their individuality through mortuary assemblages as well?

In order to highlight any such differences, Figures 8.13 and 8.14 compare the quantitative distributions of the prestige materials of gold, bronze and ivory at different cemeteries, first looking at the percentage of tombs in each cemetery containing the material, then calculating an average number of artefacts per tomb for cemetery in each material. As well as the high status cemeteries under consideration here, a sample of lower status sites with the relevant material is also included for comparative purposes. The other valuable materials of iron, amber and silver are not used in this analysis, as these occurred so rarely (usually as single artefacts in each cemetery).

Such an analysis has its limitations, not just in failing to bring out artefact type variations, but mainly with respect to comparing cemeteries of markedly different sizes. Armenoi, for example, was clearly not an exclusively high status cemetery in the way that Phourni, Kalyvia and Agia Triada appear to have been. In this sense, we are not strictly comparing like with like, and there is a danger that the significance of the minority of wealthy tombs at Armenoi may not be recognised through either of the methods of quantitative analysis employed here. The same problems apply also to Chania, where such lavish tombs as **FW CH IG 4** are obscured when placed in the context of the wider cemetery. In the case of Chania, this is unavoidable, as the higher status tombs simply cannot be isolated, given our lack of knowledge of the cemetery's sub-groupings and individual tomb assemblages. At Armenoi, there is a similar lack of clarity, especially given the lack of data regarding the spatial relationships of the different tombs within the cemetery, and the plundering of both of the most monumental tombs. However, enough intact tombs remain (the corbel-vaulted tomb being especially important), with sufficient published information regarding their assemblages, to allow us to reconstruct a fairly reliable picture of the material preferences of this cemetery, even if precise quantitative comparisons with the wealthy Kalyvia and Phourni tombs are not possible. Variation in cemetery sizes also provides a problem at the other end of the scale – Agia Triada is the smallest to be included in this analysis, and the presence of bronze and gold in two of the four tombs produces a deceptively high percentage in comparison to other sites, of which we must be aware in making interpretations.

In the event, conscious choices at the community level can only be suggested at Phourni, where a greater concentration of each material is visible, especially from the calculation of average numbers of artefacts per tomb (Figure 8.14). Interestingly, although the Phourni cemetery stands out least in terms of bronze, a clear preference for metal feasting vessels at this cemetery is apparent. When averages of different artefact types per tomb were compared between the different cemetery locations, the most significant pattern of variation to emerge was for metal vessels (see Figure 8.15, showing all locations with more than one tomb from which metal vessels have been retrieved). The proximity of Knossian precedents may have been a formative influence on this conspicuous popularity of metal vessels in the Phourni assemblages. It is probably no coincidence, moreover, that Phourni is also the only cemetery on the island in the Post-palatial period to contain a precious metal vessel as well as the usual bronze types, as noted above.

8.4 Intra-site variations

It should be emphasised that the gradation system set out above (section 8.3.2) was being applied to whole locations, though sample sizes range from isolated tombs to extensive cemeteries. Thus it was largely dictated by the wealthiest of the tombs within each, as not every tomb in each cemetery held the same range of material types (an observation as applicable to the highest as to the lowest ranking cemeteries). An in-depth analysis of intra-cemetery status variations between individual tombs will not be attempted here, but two comments can be made. First, while some cemeteries consisted of tombs of roughly similar status in terms of the material types, diversity and absolute quantities deposited, in most cemeteries, a range of wealth can be discerned, from relatively lavish assemblages to tombs with no assemblage at all, as can be seen in Appendices L to O. Second, it is interesting to note that the rare instances of architectural tomb elaboration observed in the previous chapter tend to conform with the patterns of wealth distribution in their cemeteries, since they coincide with the wealthiest tombs, as at Mochlos and Galia, in **FE MO 13** and **M GA 5**. It is unfortunate that one cannot so easily assess the correlation between architecture and assemblage wealth in the higher status cemeteries: at Kalyvia, the largest tomb (**M KA 1**) was largely destroyed, while at Armenoi the two monumental chamber tombs were both

plundered. However, at Archanes Phourni, the burial in the side chamber of the largest new tomb, Alpha, was the richest within that cemetery.

8.5 Chronology

Unfortunately, it is not possible to obtain a detailed picture of the types of artefacts in use in LM IIIA2, as opposed to LM IIIB, due to a lack of intact individual and datable assemblages. Table 8.4 plots those securely datable occurrences of each artefact type that can be retrieved, and though relative quantities cannot be calculated, this simple presence-absence chart implies that there was no dramatic temporal shift in terms of artefact choices on an island-wide scale. Regional trends may have existed, as has already been observed for the Knossos area. However, Knossos is exceptional in the quality of its published data set: elsewhere, the numbers of examples of each artefact type whose deposition date cannot be securely assigned means that if diachronic changes did take place, they are at present difficult to retrieve. This is particularly unfortunate, in that it hinders comparison with the clearer diachronic developments in architecture observed in the previous chapter, but an attempt should nevertheless be made.

The problem of a lack of secure dates is most severe in the eastern area of the island, resulting in the exclusion of many tombs from the present catalogue of secure tombs and precluding any attempt to document changes in assemblage composition or ostentation during the LM IIIA2 and IIIB periods for this part of the island. In the central regions, it has been observed that the main sphere of mortuary activity at the regional centres of Phourni, Kalyvia and Agia Triada was in LM IIIA2. Artefact deposition virtually ceased in these cemeteries in LM IIIB – entirely in the case of Kalyvia, and to a large degree at Phourni and Agia Triada. Phourni saw continuing activities in Building 21, Tomb Gamma and possibly Tomb Beta, but no actual assemblage deposition within the cemetery. The nearby 'Cenotaph' chamber tomb (**C AR PH 12**) does appear to belong to the LM IIIB1 phase, but its assemblage was not particularly wealthy, despite the inclusion of a Cypriot-style jug. Agia Triada is alone, therefore, in seeing LM IIIB deposition of at least one wealthy assemblage, in **M AT 2**. It would be interesting to gain a clearer picture of how other cemeteries in the vicinities of these centres reacted to the general cessation of ostentatious assemblage deposition at

the centres in LM IIIB. In the north central area, deposition of wealth appears to have continued, as indicated by the dating of the earliest use of the wealthy tombs **C MA** to LM IIIA2-B transitional (Kanta 1980: 40) and **C NI 1** to LM IIIB. In the Mesara, the situation is more ambiguous, The Galia tomb (**M GO**) belongs solely to LM IIIA, but the weapon burials in the wealthiest tomb at Galia (**M GA 5**) may be LM IIIB.

In the Far West, meanwhile, where the opposite trend in architecture was observed, of increasing ostentation in LM IIIB, it would be interesting if this is also reflected in artefact deposition. Of the tombs which contained metals or ivory, most span both phases or else are not securely dated to any one ceramic phase in the publications. However, **CH IG 4** (with weaponry, and the only tomb to contain silver) is dated to LM IIIB1, while **KA 4** (also containing weaponry), **CH DE 4, MA** and **CH IM 1** are also LM IIIB. It is also notable that although **CH DI 2** and **CH IM 2** have been assigned to the LM IIIA period on the basis of the bronze vessels within them, the ceramics in the latter are in fact of LM IIIB date, which suggests that bronzes do not provide a reliable dating mechanism. On the other hand, **CH OP 2** and **11**, and **KA 2** have been dated to the LM IIIA2 period, but in the former tomb at least, the metals were in the form of jewellery, rather than weaponry, utensils or vessels.

8.6 Comparison with Final Palatial Knossos

It has been observed that a similar assemblage vocabulary to that introduced at Knossos in LM II, and dominant from LM IIIA1, can be seen across the rest of the island in the Post-palatial period. It was noted in the preceding chapter that in terms of architecture, the efforts of the regional centres in LM IIIA2-B did not rival the monumental tombs of the LM II phase, and it would be interesting to know whether the same was true of assemblage wealth. It is unfortunate that this cannot be established because of the plundering of the Kephala and Isopata tombs. In terms of material diversity, the LM II tombs in the Knossos area as a whole have a score of nine, which is roughly equal to that of the cemeteries of the Post-palatial regional centres. However, in the earlier phase, greater emphasis was placed on the accumulation of exotica and indigenous Neopalatial prestige symbolism in the tomb than was subsequently witnessed anywhere on Crete. This suggests that material diversity was only one of several important

strategies for status expression in this period, rendering a comparison between LM II Knossos and LM IIIA2-B Crete on this basis alone unproductive.

For the LM IIIA1 period, comparisons are more valid, as closer parallels can be seen in assemblage choices as well as in architectural effort expenditure: the elites of this period also placed emphasis on material diversity (scoring eight cumulatively), but emphasised warrior symbolism, as opposed to exotica or indigenous Neopalatial prestige artefacts. The wealthiest individual burials at Knossos that have survived are the three in **KN SE 4**, and these can be compared with the only intact individual burials from the high status cemeteries outside this centre (**C AR PH 1** and **3**). Such a comparison shows not only strikingly similar choices in artefact and material types, but also similar quantities of wealth deposition, though the former were slightly richer in silver and amber and the latter in faience, iron and ivory.

8.7 Conclusions

- Assemblage composition was actively used as a medium for status display in the mortuary sphere, employing strategies already familiar from Final Palatial Knossos. These were mainly material diversity and the deposition of valuable materials in the form of artefacts reflecting the standardised high status emblems of the Aegean in this period. Exotica and heirlooms were also deposited, but far more rarely. These different strategies were not mutually exclusive, but were used in conjunction with each other, though some were more prevalent than others.

- Ostentation was much more common in this sphere than in mortuary architecture, though where the two co-existed, they corroborated each other, rather than acting as alternative strategies. In particular, the assemblages highlight a broader spatial distribution of mortuary display than did the evidence for architectural differentiation. This may have been because elites could not control the distribution of prestige artefacts very closely, and so where possible, expressed their greater *actual* power architecturally. In other words, in a situation where symbolic expressions of status were accessible on a broad level across the island, few could also demonstrate the practical resources to match these claims – that is, mobilisation of human labour, architectural skill and construction materials. This was where several of the centres stood out,

therefore, and where those few peripheral elites who could muster the resources similarly devoted their energies. A further tactical advantage of tomb grandeur over assemblage wealth was the relative permanence of the statement thereby made: ostentation within the tomb was conspicuous only as long as the mortuary ceremonies lasted, and as social memory survived. Tomb monumentality, by contrast, was a permanent symbol within the landscape.

- No clear regional differences are discernible in choices of strategy, and the overall lack of conspicuous regional trends in terms of material and artefact types is entirely consistent with the architectural data. Relative levels of assemblage wealth were probably broadly connected with differing levels of accessibility to valuable materials, dependent upon proximity and contact with the regional centres and the ports. Within this framework, communities further away from such nodes of wealth tended to have less access to such resources through trade and exchange. However, the halo of wealth within and around the Knossos area in north central Crete may also have been due to the deposition of valuable objects curated from the period of Knossian hegemony and palatial distributions of prestige artefacts.

- Finally, it is unfortunate that few temporal patterns can be drawn out to complement or contrast with that presented by the architectural evidence, wherein the deployment of mortuary ostentation seen in the centrally located regional centres in LM IIIA2 was taken up instead by the Far West in LM IIIB. Overall, however, there appears to be a decline in wealth deposition in the centre of the island in LM IIIB.

Chapter 9

Treatment of the Dead

9.1 Introduction

The analysis of corpse treatment in the wider Cretan area will be informed by the results of the previous chapters, but the interpretations reached here will also be compared with those results, in order to highlight both similarities and differences in the patterns they present. This chapter will explore various issues: numbers of burials per tomb, the location of human remains within the tombs, the arrangement of primary burials and incidences of secondary treatment. Finally, the material will be compared with depositional practices at LM II-IIIA1 Knossos. A catalogue of the deposition data for all secure tombs is set out in Appendix O.

Before commencing, three factors must be acknowledged which limit the scope of the present analysis:

1. While the location and arrangement of the corpse within the tomb can be analysed, other aspects of corpse treatment, which may be more significant for answering the types of question being asked here, are more elusive. These are primarily such preparation processes as the cleaning, anointing, decorating and dressing or wrapping of the corpse or secondary remains. Fortunately, however, artefacts of enduring materials compensate somewhat for our loss of the more ephemeral. On the one hand, taphonomic conditions have naturally resulted in the preservation of only skeletal remains, and almost all textiles have entirely decomposed (the sole exception being a scrap recovered from **FW CH IG 4**). The latter particularly is a significant loss, as garment types, fabric types and woven decoration probably played very important roles as status indicators in the mortuary ceremony, as in other social spheres. On the other hand, however, indirect evidence for corpse treatment may be suggested by instances of unguent containers included in the assemblage, while there is no shortage of surviving evidence for bodily adornment that compensates to a great extent for our ignorance of the nature of the clothing itself.

2. In studying the treatment of *individuals*, rather than dealing with burying *groups*, as represented by tomb architecture, there is a potential problem of confusing expressions of status with other types of social identity, such as gender or age. This should not affect the broad analyses of regional variations in depositional practices, but may be problematic on a smaller scale. In general, however, it should be possible to distinguish between the expression of different types of identity, on the assumption that the status differentiations under consideration here operate mainly through variations on an inter-tomb or inter-cemetery level. Variations *within* tombs with multiple burials, meanwhile, are more likely to have been associated with social distinctions based on age or gender, or else due to temporal changes in burial customs.

3. Finally, there is a general problem with the quality of the available data set since, although some information is often provided regarding the interments in each tomb, it is rare for all of the retrievable information to be fully published. This relative lack of interest in human remains, as opposed to assemblage compositions, means that it is often not clear how many burials a tomb originally held, and while the locations of the burials are often cited (floor, pit, etc.), their arrangement (for example, contracted versus extended) are not. The presence of larnakes is very useful in the first respect, as these are often mentioned in the reports and thus compensate to a certain extent for the frequent lack of explicit information regarding the recovered human remains by at least providing a minimum number of burials for the tomb. It is largely due to this factor that the results in Figure 9.1, showing the percentages of tombs in each area with *any* information, look fairly satisfactory – the reason that the Far West is exceptionally low is the almost complete absence of receptacle use in this area, as will be discussed below.

9.2 Interment numbers

Figure 9.2 shows the burial numbers per tomb for each analytical area, as derived from the published data (including receptacle numbers). As noted above, these results provide only *minimum* numbers per tomb: for many of the tombs, the total number of interments was probably greater, but both poor preservation conditions and a lack of

detailed published information prevent us from gaining a more accurate picture. For example, when a tomb is reported to have contained human remains on the floor, but receptacles are also mentioned (without information regarding their contents), it is difficult to tell whether we are dealing with both receptacle and floor burials in the tomb, or receptacle burials that were subsequently removed and placed on the floor. Thus the results tabulated here are conservative estimates to allow cross-regional comparisons, rather than providing reliable statistics regarding burying group sizes.

The mean number of burials per tomb for each area produced by these results varies from 1.5 to 4, as presented in Table 9.1. Of these averages, the Mid West is probably the most accurate, as the preliminary publications of the Armenoi cemetery, which accounts for 80% of the secure tombs in this area, are relatively thorough in recording the total numbers of burials found in each tomb. The Far West, by contrast, is probably the least reliable, as there are virtually no receptacles that could be used to compensate for the lack of published information regarding the human remains themselves. Finally, the Mid East has the lowest average because the Elounda cemetery, with its predominance of individual receptacle burials in rock cavities, provides most of the published interment data for this area. Thus this average is the product of a site-specific phenomenon, rather than a regional trend; for example, the average number of burials in the chamber tombs in this area is 2.7, which is more in line with the other analytical areas. Overall, therefore, on the basis of the admittedly poor quality of our data in this respect, it can be stated that there is little discernible regional variation in tomb burial numbers, with most tombs being used for small family groups over a generation or so.

A similar lack of significant difference emerges if we compare the average burial numbers in different tomb types (Table 9.2). The caves show a lower average because of the Elounda cemetery, but otherwise there is, again, little apparent variation.

In the absence of reliable data, it would be futile to attempt to investigate this issue in much more depth. However, it is probably the case that most variations were fairly minimal, that they were as often tomb-specific as site-specific, and that they were the result of differences in the time spans of tomb use, rather than of conscious strategies of differentiation according to group identity or status.

9.3 Interment locations within the tomb

9.3.1 Introduction

The main categories of deposition location are on tomb floors or benches, or in receptacles, pits or dromoi, though combinations of these also existed. These categories were devised primarily for the chamber and corbel-vaulted tomb types, as together these comprise 75% of the secure tombs. However, they are still analytically applicable to the rarer tomb types, such as the pit and pit-cave, for although these types do not include dromoi or pits as internal features, a differentiation between floor and receptacle inhumation in these cases is still useful to maintain.

Figure 9.3 presents the comparative popularities of these different location types (including both primary and secondary interments). Floor and receptacle burials are clearly dominant, with the remaining 10% comprising interments in pits, niches, chamber fills and dromoi, on benches, burials of uncertain location and a few anomalies such as floor burials placed on receptacle fragments. This predominance of the floor and receptacle burials is island-wide, and all of the different tomb types have examples of both. However, their popularities in relation to each other vary from area to area (Figure 9.4). These regional variations become still more complex when we turn to look at the different *types* of receptacle involved. In fact, as will be shown below, it is in receptacle use that the main axes of variation in depositional practices across Crete are apparent, and it is upon this area that most of the present analysis will concentrate. Pit burials (primary and secondary), though more rare, are still recorded in every analytical area except the Mid East. Other burial locations are still rarer, and generally indicate either individual anomalies or site trends (such as the nine tombs with primary dromos burials at Armenoi, which seem to be child burials). Bench burials, occurring only in the Kalyvia cemetery (**M KA 1** and **9**) and Chania (**FW CH IG 1**), may be associated with status advertisement, as it was noted in Chapter 7 that benches acted as features for display in tombs.

9.3.2 Receptacle burials

The analysis of receptacle use on Crete is a complex issue, as these burial types comprised several different forms, whose inter-relationships must be explored, and which have important implications for our understanding of constructions of social identities on more than one level. Most of the known burial receptacles fall under one of

the following categories: chest larnax, tub larnax, pithos and wooden bier or coffin (often indistinguishable from each other because of poor preservation).

The first, and perhaps the most important, point to make regarding receptacle use is that, apart from the category of wooden receptacles, this is primarily a Cretan phenomenon and is seldom found elsewhere in the Aegean. Mainland examples of clay (or stone) chest and tub larnakes and pithoi are all known in LH IIIA and B, but they were rare, often isolated occurrences. Although pithos burials had been very popular on the MH mainland, they were scarce from LH I (examples are cited in Cavanagh and Mee 1998: 52, 75). Clay and stone larnakes did not have a Middle Helladic ancestry on the mainland. They occurred only sporadically in the LH II-III periods (apart from the unique Tanagra cluster), both on the mainland and in the Aegean islands (at Kolonna, Vreseka, Mycenae, Prosymna, Athens Agora, Thebes, Ialysos, Karpathos and Naxos) (Mee and Cavanagh 1998: 69, 72, 74, 75; Vermeule 1965: 124 note 3), often in association with child burials.

Thus the popularity of the clay chest and tub larnakes, and, to a lesser extent, pithoi, on Crete stands out very clearly as a phenomenon peculiar to this island, through their links with previous (EM and MM) tub larnax and pithos use on Crete. Although this maintenance (or revival[45]) of local traditions is well known, its implications have not been emphasised sufficiently in the past. Especially significant is that on present dating, clay receptacle use was an integral part of the uptake of the new tomb practices on wider Crete in LM IIIA2, one of the conscious choices that were undoubtedly involved in the whole process of the innovation, which argues against any straightforward migrationist explanation for the introduction of tomb use on wider Crete in this period.

This impression of a strong link with an indigenous tradition is further reinforced by certain elements of the decoration of the larnakes. A list of the different motifs on larnakes in the different analytical areas (from secure tombs only) is presented in Table 9.3, showing the common occurrence of horns of consecration, bulls and double axes, all symbols with strong associations with Neopalatial religious iconography. Moreover, if the unprovenanced larnakes and those from tombs not securely dated to our period are

[45] As noted in Chapter 6, the deposition practices of wider Crete in the Final Palatial period are unknown. They may have involved pithos, and less commonly larnax, burials that are not datable due to lack of associated ceramics. Thus the extent of the resurgence in the popularity of tub and pithos use in LM IIIA2 is unclear at present.

also taken into consideration, the number of occurrences of such motifs rises considerably. The precise significance of these iconographic elements had surely undergone some transformation since the Neopalatial period, not least in becoming a less exclusively elite preserve, yet they appear to have remained powerful and evocative symbols with a continuing active currency in ideological beliefs on the island. Thus the fact that such iconography is rarely found on other media within the tomb context (though it does occur occasionally on vessels, especially products of the Chaniote workshop), but is introduced predominantly through the revived larnax form, reinforces the significance of this burial type for our understanding of cultural continuity on the island.

Regional-level diversity

Within the overarching framework of pithos and larnax use being primarily a Cretan phenomenon, there are interesting variations internal to the island, both in the extent of receptacle use and in the receptacle types preferred. These provide interesting insights into the potential existence of different regional identities which did not emerge as prominently from the analyses of assemblages and architecture.

Figure 9.4 shows a general increase in the popularity of receptacle burials from the west to the east of the island. In fact, the proportion of receptacles in the Far East may increase following the full publication of the Mochlos cemetery. All of the tombs in this cemetery for which we have published interment evidence contain receptacles, and the published summary of the remainder has noted the occurrence of receptacles here also (Tomlinson 1995: 68). If all these tombs did in fact contain one or more receptacle burials, the total percentage of tombs with receptacles in this analytical area would be 89%.

In terms of receptacle types, meanwhile, Figure 9.5 presents the totals of each type in the secure tombs. This demonstrates a clear overall popularity of the chest larnax, but when broken down into regional frequencies (Figure 9.6), it can be seen that the chest's predominance is not ubiquitous. The broad regional variations that emerge are as follows (see also Figure 9.7). The entire Far West region used virtually no receptacles whatsoever, with the exception of a tub larnax in **FW CH KO**, a possible wooden receptacle in **FW CH OL 1** (not illustrated in Figure 9.7 because of this ambiguity), and a pithos in **FW ME**. The Mid West, Mesara, Centre and Knossos used mainly the

chest form, though tubs, pithoi and wooden receptacles occurred occasionally. In the eastern areas of the island, finally, the chest was also common (particularly in the Mid East), but the pithos and tub were also frequently used, the former especially in the Mid East, the latter predominating in the Far East.

In exploring the potential reasons for these regional variations in receptacle choices, it is important to bear in mind the fact that we do not yet understand the criteria that determined whether or not a burial was placed in a receptacle at all. Every area except the Mid East and Far West has examples of individual tombs containing both primary receptacle and primary non-receptacle burials, suggesting that specific social identities within the burying group, such as gender or age, were one key factor. Yet, as there are also clear cases across the island of the secondary transferral of bodies, or parts of bodies, both out of and into receptacles, a strict association of one particular identity type with this specific burial form was not being rigidly maintained.

Far West

This is not a particular concern with regard to the Far West, however, which stands out conspicuously in its virtually complete rejection of the use of any receptacle type. Even though our knowledge of the mortuary practices in this region (beyond Chania) is currently limited, this absence of receptacles at least cannot be explained as a result of bias in our data, as clay receptacle fragments, being durable, conspicuous and highly diagnostic, are one of the most common means of identifying tomb sites. Yet survey has failed to recover any larnax burials of this period, nor are there any published reports of such being recovered during agricultural or building activities.

Thus a clear rejection can be seen, in the Far West area as a whole, of a type of deposition with wide and popular currency across the rest of Crete. That the Far West was not indifferent to the importance of the placing of the dead is shown by the occasional use of special beds of sand or stones (**FW CH IG 1** and **2**). This rejection of the use of receptacles, therefore, reflects the existence of a genuinely different mortuary trajectory here that may have been a self-conscious expression of a regional identity distinct from the rest of the island. It is also intriguing that the only clay larnax that has so far been recovered from this region is a tub, rather than a chest, since the latter type was predominant in the rest of western Crete. The tub larnax was in fact mainly an east Cretan phenomenon, and apart from the example in **FW CH KO**, no other securely

datable occurrences of tub larnakes are known further west than the Central area. This isolated example in the Far West, therefore, serves to highlight still further the fact that this region was deliberately rejecting the practices of its immediate neighbours on the island. Not only this, but the very presence of this larnax, regardless of its form, demonstrates that individuals in the Far West had knowledge of, and the means to acquire or imitate, larnakes, but that they chose not to do so. It would be interesting, in fact, to provenance the clay of this larnax to determine its geographical source.

Finally, this difference in customs in the Far West is significant in complementing the impression created by the architectural evidence of a disparity between this region and the rest of the island. The difference in the case of architecture was a temporal one, wherein the same strategies for ostentation were used in LM IIIB in the Far West as had been employed by the LM IIIA2 central and mid western regional centres. This late adoption of the potential of mortuary architecture was surely the result of changes in the political geography on the island at this point. However, the receptacle data takes us further, by suggesting the possibility that a cultural distinction from the rest of Crete was perceived on the part of the Far West at an earlier phase – that is, from the very start of tomb use in LM IIIA2.

Mid West, Mesara, Centre and Knossos areas

Turning to the Mid West, it is interesting to observe that this area is, in terms of receptacle choices, clearly oriented towards the central part of the island, rather than to the Far West. Nor is this pattern due simply to a site-specific choice being made by the users of the largest cemetery, Armenoi, as was observed to be the case for certain artefact types in the previous chapter. In fact, the reverse is the case, for whereas Armenoi accounts for 88% of the total tomb count in this area, it accounts for only 29% of the receptacles.

Apart from the predominant chest larnax, examples of all the other receptacle types are also found in these four areas. Wooden receptacles actually occur only in these areas, apart from the single possible example at Chania, noted above. This pattern of the highest concentrations of chest larnakes *and* virtually all of the wooden receptacle fragments being in these four areas suggests that the chest larnax was not simply an area-specific substitution for the wooden prototype which it skeuomorphed. Pithoi occur in the Mid West and tubs in the Centre, though fragments of a possible LM

funerary tub larnax have also been found in a re-used North Cemetery tomb at Knossos (Coldstream and Catling 1996: 392, cat. no. 132.38). Overall, however, both tubs and pithoi occurred at only a limited number of sites. For example, of the only seven tombs in the Central area that contained tub larnakes, most were at the site of Episkopi. Moreover, two of these tubs were re-used MM receptacles, rather than artefacts manufactured for mortuary use in the LM IIIA2-B period (see **C AR AN 1** and **C EP MA 2**).

Mid East and Far East

This scarcity contrasts clearly with the common use of pithoi and tub larnakes in the eastern regions of the island, a number of which appear to have been intended primarily for mortuary use, rather than simply being re-used domestic items, as discussed further below. The popularity of the more traditional receptacle forms in the east may reflect a desire to express closer links with the past than the more innovative chest form evoked. The extent of this contrast with the central and western areas of the island is marked, but there are reasons for proposing that the expression of regional difference from the central region was not the only, and perhaps not even the primary, reason for the popularity of the tub and pithos within the Mid and Far East.

The first is that the chest form was not rejected in these areas, as one might expect within such a scenario. In fact, an analysis of the distributions of the tubs, chests and pithoi shows that they frequently occurred within the same mortuary contexts, that is, the same cemetery and even the same tombs (Tables 9.4-6). In the Centre and Mid East, tubs occurred more frequently in association with chests than in isolation from them (Table 9.4), and although the Far East had a greater proportion of tubs that were isolated, this does not appear to reflect any regional trends in receptacle preference that were taking place *within* this analytical area, as both larnax types were fairly randomly distributed (as illustrated in Figure 9.7). The pithos presents a slightly different distributional pattern to that of the tub larnax, but a similar spatial overlap with chests as was observed above between the two larnax forms (Tables 9.5-6). It is interesting, and surely significant, that the pithos appears never to have actually occurred in the same tomb as a chest or a tub. However, it still frequently occurred in the same locations as both larnax types, and in these cases, it was not more closely associated with the tub than with the chest.

The second reason for this reasoning is that in the eastern regions, there are possible examples of one ceramic workshop producing both chest and tub larnakes, based on identifications derived from stylistic parallels in decoration (see Appendix P). The relevant links so far suggested are between a tub in **FE PA AL 1** and chest larnakes in **FE EP 3** and **FE EP 1**, all associated with the so-called 'Episkopi' workshop (Kanta 1980: 143, 150, 156-8, fig 56.1, fig 63.1); and the chests in **FE AC** and tubs in **FE PA AL 2** and **FE EP 1**, associated with the 'Petras-Achladia' workshop (Tsipopoulou and Vagnetti 1997; Kanta 1980 fig 55.9, fig 63.6). It must be emphasised that stylistic attributions of LM III larnakes is a subject still very much in its infancy and is fraught with methodological problems, as will be discussed in more detail below. Nevertheless, if the above attributions are correct, they suggest that chests, rather than being externally-derived artefacts imported into the eastern regions for use, perhaps by individuals of central Cretan origin, they were actually an integral element of eastern mortuary customs.

Finally, there is no evidence to suggest that the observed spatial overlaps between chests and the other receptacle types in the east can be explained away as the result of a temporal change in mortuary customs, whereby chests were introduced in the initial, LM IIIA2, horizon of tomb use, to be replaced at a later phase by the use of tubs and pithoi as part of a developing regional identity. The dating of the use phases of the different receptacle types is very poorly understood at present, especially in the eastern areas, where it is most needed. However, even if one rejects the decoration of the receptacles themselves as providing a reliable independent dating mechanism, secure cases of LM IIIA2 and LM IIIB assemblages in association with chests can still be cited. In the east specifically, these occur in **ME TE** (LM IIIA2) and in **FE PAL AA, ME MA, ME ELO ST 7, 8, 13** and **23** (LM IIIB). For the tub larnax, the only securely dated burials are LM IIIB, such as **FE PA AL 2, FE GO** (both IIIB1) and **ME EL ST 25**; conversely, for the pithos, the only dates so far available in the east are LM IIIA (**ME EL ST 27, 28** and **39, ME PS** and **ME PS KE**). The only potential temporal variation coming out in receptacle use, therefore, is from pithos to tub use. But whether or not this is genuine (it is based on very few datable examples), the important point here is that the pithos and tub together spanned LM IIIA2 and LM IIIB, and were therefore used contemporaneously with the chest.

To conclude, the use of pithoi and tubs alongside chests in the eastern areas of Crete does indicate a broad regional distinction from the central part of the island. However, the difference is one of gradation, rather than an abrupt shift-over such as we see between the Far West, with its single tub larnax, and the rest of Crete. Also in contrast to the Far West, receptacle use was probably not a medium around which regional identities were being constructed and expressed in the east. Rather, it appears to have functioned as a regional characteristic inasmuch as the eastern areas were using the greater variety of available receptacle forms to distinguish between intra-community social identities in death at a more complex level than elsewhere on the island.

The nature of the identities around which choices between the different receptacle types were made in the eastern areas is not clear, and it is by no means certain that such associations would have been universally applicable, as opposed to varying between individual communities. At present, Mochlos is one of the few eastern cemeteries where detailed anthropological studies of the human remains have been carried out, and the results there so far show no gender or age distinctions between occupants of the two larnax types (see Appendix O). Pithoi, on the other hand, show a clearer bias, in that they tend to be associated with infants or young people, as is also the case for pyxides and stamnoi. However, this is not a universal rule, as there are also examples of adults placed in such vessels, while children were also placed in larnakes and on floors.

Whatever the factors underlying these choices, it is important to emphasise that the ideological distinction between the different receptacle types must have been significant, if only in the light of the clear distinction that was consistently maintained between these different and internally homogeneous forms, especially the tub and chest larnakes. The lack of experimentation within each type, and more importantly, the lack of *hybrids*, is intriguing. The only examples of hybrids of the chest and tub so far known are two tubs with lids (in **FE EP 3** and **FE PA AL 2**), and possibly also the unpublished 'elliptical' larnakes of **C EP KE 2** (Kanta 1980: 61). The random occurrences of chests without feet are less likely to be hybrids with the tub, as opposed to anomalies specific to individual workshops or larnax makers (see **M GO, C ART, C ME 1, C ME 5, KN UGY 6, FE SP**). Altogether, these anomalies in total account for only 1.7% of just the datable chest and tub larnakes on Crete. Since, therefore, we see two clearly discrete forms consistently reproduced wherever they occurred on the island, they probably also carried different social and ideological associations.

This impression is further reinforced when one considers that the effort expenditure required to manufacture a larnax is not insignificant, in terms of material resources, skill or time. To take the latter factor alone, the entire process of manufacturing a single larnax (including acquisition of clay, manual construction, firing and then often painted decoration) would take days, if not weeks, to complete.

Given these considerations, factors of availability at the time of death seem unsatisfactory as a universal explanatory mechanism to account for individual occurrences of one or other receptacle type, though they may have played a role in certain cases. A more active role must surely be assigned to the burying groups generally, whereby conscious choices were made between the chest and tub form, and a range of possible explanations for the intra-regional distinction between the two larnax forms in eastern Crete should also be sought.

Site/location-level variations

There are no outstandingly unusual sites or individual cemeteries in terms of choices of burial location within the tomb, apart from the common practice in the Armenoi cemetery of employing dromos pits and niches for interments. However, if we return again to consider receptacle choices, a few sites stand out as being worthy of mention on the basis of their conspicuously individualistic choices.

There was general uniformity in larnax size and formal and decorative elaboration, but a few examples stand out as having had greater effort expenditure devoted to their production. The most obvious, and certainly the most elaborate, is the famous limestone 'sarcophagus' in the built Agia Triada tomb (**M AT 3**). The effort expenditure required to carve this coffin was far greater than that required for the production of the clay versions, while the elaboration of its exterior decoration has been extensively discussed elsewhere (most comprehensively by Long 1974). In terms of dimensions, with an area of 0.69 square metres, it is at the top of the range of published sizes for Cretan chest larnakes (illustrated in Figure 9.9). On a lesser scale of ostentation are elaborately decorated clay larnakes, not all of which correspond with the highest status cemeteries, but which demonstrate the perceived potential of the larnax as a medium for communication with participants in the mortuary rites. Especially notable in this respect

are the polychrome chests produced by a workshop in the Mid West, and found at Armenoi (**MW AR 10** and **24**) and Dramia (**MW DR**).

The reaction of the burying group at Kalyvia to the idea of larnax use is equally as dramatic as that of the group at Agia Triada, but in an entirely unexpected (and indeed, the opposite) way, for this cemetery appears to have rejected clay larnakes entirely as a burial form.[46] This rejection is particularly conspicuous in the context of the general popularity of the larnax in all areas but the Far West, and in particular in the Mesara, where there are only two locations (Kalyvia and Kamares) that have not produced examples.

Overall, the unusualness of Agia Triada in its production of an outstandingly ostentatious version of the larnax, and of Kalyvia in rejecting the use of larnakes entirely, fits well with the pattern so far observed for the highest status cemeteries in terms of architecture – that is, of experimentation, elaboration, individualism, and lack of common consensus regarding appropriate high status mortuary symbolism.

Future research into larnakes

The results of the above analysis reconfirm the importance already placed on the issue of larnakes in Aegean archaeology, as evidenced by numerous past studies. However, despite decades of interest in the iconographical symbolism of the decoration and cultural origins of the form, of the larnax, we remain today fundamentally ignorant of the significance of larnakes in many respects. In this section, several particular aspects of these artefacts that would repay further research will be highlighted, as the results would inform our understanding of political and cultural dynamics on the island as much as they would elucidate the significance of other types of social identity outside the remit of this study.

---

[46] Kanta notes that a box of larnax fragments in Heraklion Museum is labelled as coming from Xanthoudides' original excavation of these tombs (Kanta 1980: 99), but these fragments are somewhat incongruous in both form and date. First, at least one of them was a tub larnax, which would be extremely unusual for this area of the island. Second, according to Kanta's analysis of their decoration, two of them are of a later date (LM IIIB) than that usually assigned to this cemetery as a whole (LM IIIA2). Moreover, no mention was made of any clay receptacles recovered from these tombs in Savignoni's publication (1904). For all of these reasons, it is likely that these larnax fragments are not actually from the Kalyvia tombs, and that Kalyvia was unique among the LM IIIA high status cemeteries in its rejection of this burial form.

The potential significance of the larnax for our understanding of the mortuary ritual and ideology is huge. The burial receptacle was immediately associated with the central focus of the entire process, the dead body itself, as its container within the tomb and thus, potentially, in mortuary ceremonies outside and within the tomb. The common occurrence of exterior decoration on larnakes shows that this potential for communication with the observers and participants in the funerary ceremonies was perceived and exploited. The decorative motifs, painted and moulded, which often recur consistently across different cemeteries and regions, clearly carried important ideological significance within the mortuary sphere.

Various attempts have been made to decipher the meanings that these motifs imparted to the onlooker, and indeed, this is one of the main issues with which previous considerations of the larnax have struggled. Comments on the various interpretations proposed so far, or suggestions of alternative interpretations, are not within the scope of the present study. Indeed, an understanding of these iconographical motifs will almost certainly continue to elude us until their study is integrated within broader considerations of the social significance of larnax use. The obsession with larnax iconography, aimed explicitly at the reconstruction of the mortuary customs and beliefs of Late Minoan Crete, has diverted attention for too long from considerations of the wider social significance of larnakes. Perversely, this lack of contextualisation has had detrimental effects on the study of iconography itself, for such contextualisation is essential if we are to achieve any understanding of the meanings that this mortuary symbolism was intended to convey. In its absence, iconographic studies are somewhat abstract ventures, ungrounded in any social framework that could lend them credence or benefit from their observations.

The results of the present study go some way to redressing this problem of the larnakes being viewed as isolated phenomena, divorced from their mortuary roles and physical tomb contexts. Particularly important has been the reintegration of the pithos into this research area, the third most popular receptacle type but completely neglected in favour of larnakes because of its lack of comparable decoration. However, there remains much more work to be done in this area.

One example of the type of quandary that larnax research has found itself in, through a lack of contextualised perspective, is the problem of whether the chests and tubs (and, it

should be added, pithoi) found in tomb contexts were primarily constructed for funerary or domestic purposes. This has mainly arisen as a significant issue through its importance for the interpretation of the iconographic motifs – that is, the problems of distinguishing explicitly 'funerary' iconography on larnakes produced for the tomb from similar decoration on other ceramic media not clearly related to or destined for the mortuary sphere (for example, Morris 1995: 193). Watrous is probably correct in viewing chests as primarily funerary, but some tubs as primarily domestic and others funerary (1991: 303), and possible examples of each can be cited. However, these are simply anecdotal observations and no systematic investigation of this issue, based on a rigorous and explicitly defined methodological framework, has yet been attempted. Indeed, the basic prerequisites for such a comparative study are still absent: the compilation of catalogues of all larnakes so far recovered from domestic and mortuary contexts.

Another angle from which the social context of the receptacles could be explored is the anthropological study of the human remains that were recovered from them. Equally useful would be the development of research on production and distribution networks, begun by the workshop attributions of Kanta (1980: 291-3) and Tsipopoulou and Vagnetti (1995, 1997). There have been justifiable backlashes against past uses of stylistic attributions to individual hands or workshops, especially for prehistory (compare Cherry 1992 for Getz-Preziosi's study of Cycladic figurines and Walberg's of Kamares ware, and Chippindale and Gill 1993 in reaction to Morris 1993). However, as Cherry also states, this often discredited field of study should not be entirely dismissed. If one is cautious about making assumptions regarding artistic self-consciousness, is explicit about one's methodology for attribution, and uses an appropriately detailed data set, then such a study in this case could contribute useful information regarding the inter-relationship between the production systems of the two larnax forms.

Unfortunately, the data set does not meet all of the criteria advocated by Cherry as basic prerequisites for such an undertaking (1992: 137-8), especially in terms of its relatively small size. If useful results are to be gained, much more caution needs to be applied, avoiding especially moves beyond the identification of individuals to actually postulating reconstructions of their professional relationships, as attempted by Tsipopoulou and Vagnetti for two hypothetical Kritsa potters (1997: 477). The precise criteria by which attributions are made should also be laid out explicitly and in detail, as

has been pioneered by Morris (C. Morris 1993, 1995) and Tsipopoulou and Vagnetti (1995). Such work would also be furthered considerably if conducted in conjunction with petrographic analysis. For example, this might help to establish whether the two larnax types were indeed the products of the same areas, if not individual workshops, or were instead acquired through different distribution networks. So far, it does appear that the producers, if itinerant, as has been suggested (Rutkowski 1961: 132; Godart and Tzedakis 1992: 93), moved within a restricted geographical area. This is supported by the workshop attributions that have been made so far, which are generally very regionally specific (see Appendix P), but this would benefit from corroboration by petrographic analysis. This is an issue that could have significant implications for our understanding of their relative symbolic values and social roles. Yet no published analyses are available, and the nearest substitutes are two macroscopic observations "based on the long acquaintance of one of the authors with the local Minoan fabrics of Eastern Crete" (Tsipopoulou and Vagnetti 1997: 476).

In order to advance further in our understanding of the different significances of the larnax forms, therefore, new approaches and new questions are needed. At present, however, there has not even been a comprehensive compilation of the iconographical motifs on Cretan larnakes, from which to attempt a systematic study of the aspect of the larnakes in which scholars seem to be most interested (as lamented by Rehak and Younger – 1998: 172). Overall, a more contextualised and holistic approach is urgently needed for larnax studies, and a move away from traditional art historical approaches. To cite the most obvious example, the significance of the decoration of the Agia Triada sarcophagus is clearly crucial for our understanding of high status mortuary rites as carried out at this particular centre, but without a wider study of receptacle use and mortuary practices generally, the role and representativeness of this particular artefact cannot be fully appreciated. Contextualising it in terms of receptacle types, forms and decoration generally on Crete in the above analysis demonstrated just how anomalous this sarcophagus was. More importantly, the results of the wider mortuary analysis carried out in the present study, which have highlighted the individuality of customs at different high status cemeteries, argue strongly against any assumption that the rituals portrayed on this sarcophagus are representative of funerary ideology on Crete as a whole (as Long and other analysts have implied), as opposed to the idiosyncratic customs of this particular centre.

9.4 Corpse arrangement and secondary manipulation

In this section, the physical positioning of primary inhumations, and the types of secondary treatment in different regions and cemeteries will be analysed and compared. Table 9.7 shows that there is little regional variation in terms of the preferred locations for both primary and secondary burials. In most areas with the relevant information, there are examples of both primary and secondary depositions in each of the different location categories, though examples of primary pit inhumations are quite rare.

Inhumation is almost universal as the method of primary burial, though two isolated examples of cremation have been noted at Melidoni and Elounda (**FW ME** and **ME EL ST 27**). Regarding the arrangement of the primary inhumations, there is again little regional diversity. Pit burials were usually contracted and all receptacle burials were also, naturally, contracted. Floor burials varied in their positioning, as illustrated on Table 9.8, which gives the minimum totals of burials known to have been found in various arrangements. These totals represent a tiny proportion of the total numbers of floor burials in each area (and for some areas, no information is available at all). However, they at least demonstrate that there was a variety of ways in which bodies could be deposited, with no clear indication of any standard method of arrangement in any area apart from Knossos, where the practice of extended supine burials introduced in LM II was still widely upheld.

Turning to the secondary manipulation of burials, their redeposition on the floors of chambers (often in heaps) or in pits is commonly found across the island, while the rearrangement of bodies in receptacles, though less common, also occurs (see Table 9.7). In most cases, these instances of relocation appear to have occurred simply to make room for subsequent interments inside the often limited chamber space of the tombs, though a few sporadic instances occur (**C EV VA, C EP KAL 1, FE PA AL 2, FE PAL PE 1** and **2**) of the deliberate selection and reburial in a new location of specific body parts (usually skulls).

There are two sites that exhibit more consistent deviations from this general rule regarding secondary treatment, suggesting the existence of locally specific customs within their communities for the active processing of human remains as a central aspect

of mortuary practice; both represent regional centres. The first is Armenoi, where several cases have been noted by Tzedakis of apparently intact tombs wherein all of the bodies were disarticulated (particularly **MW AR 92, 145** and **160**). These tombs suggest that secondary treatment of human remains in this cemetery comprised more than simply the moving aside of old interments to make way for new, and indeed, may have involved their own specific mortuary rituals not associated with primary burials. Full publication of the cemetery is needed before this issue can be explored in any more depth, however. The second is Archanes Phourni, where the secondary removal of whole bodies from their original graves, with part or all of their assemblages, is attested in several instances. The grave enclosure is the most well known, where all seven of the pits were revisited and the interments removed *in toto*. The skull fragments and teeth in the fill of pit 2 provide evidence that primary interments had indeed taken place, so that we are not dealing with cenotaphs; the fact that parts (if not all) of the assemblages were left *in situ* further suggests that these removals were not an indirect result of looting activities. The deliberate destruction of the larnax receptacles in each of these graves, with the partial removal of certain parts of them, constitutes a further anomaly specific to this cemetery. The same interpretation could be applied regarding the fate of the original burial in the main chamber of Tomb Alpha (**C AR PH 1**). Here, no human remains are mentioned in the report, but the chamber pit was found to contain fragments of a broken larnax – and, although this pit was reported to be only .32m deep (Sakellarakis and Sapouna-Sakellaraki 1997: 162), it appears from a published photograph to have been of an adequate depth to have originally contained a larnax burial (*ibid.*: 164). The excavators comment on the fact that the chamber was completely empty of finds, suggesting that the assemblage was probably removed when the chamber and artefacts were still relatively intact – that is, in "Minoan times" (Sakellarakis and Sapouna-Sakellaraki 1997: 164, though they see this removal as the act of robbers). Thirdly, the body in **C AR PH 12** was also removed, from which the name 'Cenotaph' has been attached to this tomb, and although this tomb was not strictly within the boundaries of the cemetery proper, it shows that this local practice continued into the LM IIIB phase (Sakellarakis 1966).

Evidence for the processing and redeposition of removed primary interments at Phourni can also be detected. The former may have taken place in Building 21, whence human remains and evidence for ritual activities have been recovered, in a context dating to LM IIIB. Evidence for the latter is provided by the LM IIIA2 larnax recovered from a

sealed cavity within tomb Beta. This contained the remains of at least nineteen individuals. Sakellarakis and Sapouna-Sakellaraki note that the bones were bright red, "as though they had been washed with wine" (1997: 258). Whether or not some of these remains account for the actual individuals removed from Tomb A and grave enclosure, they show that the secondary processing of burials continued to be an important aspect of mortuary customs at this cemetery, much as it had been in earlier periods.

To summarise, the arrangement of primary burials and their subsequent rearrangement and relocation within the tomb follow a fairly consistent pattern across the island. The main anomalies are two cemeteries associated with regional centres, which have varying customs for the reprocessing of primary burials.

9.5 Conclusions

- Some aspects of corpse treatment are more relevant than others for our understanding of status hierarchies and group identities on Crete. The analysis of burial numbers, and the location and arrangement of primary burials, apart from receptacle use, showed basic uniformity across the island as a whole. It is in receptacle use that regional differences emerge, and three clear geographical groupings are apparent, of the Far West, a central group comprising the Mid West, Mesara, Knossos and Centre, and the eastern area of the island (the Mid and Far East). These groups are particularly significant because regional variations did not emerge as distinctly from the analyses of other aspects of the mortuary sphere, even with regard to the Far West. However, while the pattern of differentiation in the Far West may mark the existence of a distinctive regional identity there, the same seems less likely to be the case for the eastern area of the island.

- The pattern of the high status cemeteries of Armenoi, Kalyvia, Phourni and Agia Triada using various strategies for ostentation, through experimentation, effort expenditure and individuality, is borne out again here in the arena of corpse treatment. Individuals at Agia Triada and Armenoi are conspicuous by their use of elaborate burial receptacles (at the former location especially), while by contrast, the burying group at Kalyvia stands out through its complete rejection of clay receptacles as a suitable burial

form. The elite of Phourni, finally, differed by virtue of its emphasis on the secondary processing of human remains.

Chapter 10

Synthesis of the Post-palatial evidence

10.1 Introduction

It has been argued in the present study that the LM IIIA2 development on wider Crete of the tomb practices previously exclusive to Knossos coincided with the end of Knossos' Final Palatial hegemony, and was indeed directly connected with this political change on the island. The elite at LM II-IIIA1 Knossos had reinforced their position of dominance through the restriction of certain prestige symbols to this centre alone, including large-scale building activities in the settlement context (a method of status advertisement with a long Cretan ancestry) and ostentatious tomb use (a strategy inspired by mainland precedents). Upon the demise of this centralised regime in LM IIIA2, these strategies were taken up elsewhere as means of status legitimation. New central buildings were constructed within Knossos' former second-order centres, as the elites there rediscovered their political independence, while the adoption of tomb use as a strategy for status advertisement across the island involved not only the elites at these centres, but also a broader cross-section of society, comprising communities of different social levels.

It is not necessary to look beyond Knossos to find the principal inspiration for the take-up of these new tomb practices across the island in the Post-palatial period, though continuing contacts with the mainland and other areas of the Aegean where similar mortuary customs were in use were probably contributory factors. Apart from the Archanes Phourni grave enclosure, no aspect of the borrowed mortuary ideas taken up on Post-palatial Crete lacked a Knossian precedent. Knossos was not only closer than the mainland, and therefore more familiar, but it also provided an exemplary model of the political potential of ostentatious tomb use. Indeed, it is unlikely that by the LM IIIA2 phase these mortuary ideas were seen as 'external' (that is, intrusive to Crete) at all, as they had been to a much greater extent in LM II. Rather, following roughly three generations of use at Knossos, they had probably become an integral element of the island's cultural environment by LM IIIA2, albeit one restricted to a single centre.

However, given these close Knossian links, the clearly diverse choices being made in mortuary symbolism at the known regional centres must also be emphasised, not least because they reinforce the impression gained from other spheres of the material evidence that LM IIIA2, rather than LM IIIB, was indeed the start of the Post-palatial period. The experiments and innovations at the several elite cemeteries of this phase, as well as the rejection of certain aspects of the mortuary symbolism developed at Knossos (particularly the shaft grave and pit-cave forms), do not tie in with a picture of a consolidation of Knossian power on Crete in LM IIIA2. Rather, they are reminiscent of the situation of political and social flux at LM II Knossos that had allowed (and indeed encouraged) greater freedom of choice in the recourse to new strategies for purposes of status negotiation.

10.2 The political structure and dynamics of Post-palatial Crete

Although ostentatious tomb use was certainly not the only, and was probably not the primary, medium for status advertisement at the highest social levels on Post-palatial Crete, it was nevertheless recognised as an important arena for status advertisement, and as such, it can provide an insight into the political developments of this period. As remarked above, the combined mortuary and non-mortuary evidence suggests that while the LM IIIA2 demise of the Knossian palatial administration seems not to have precipitated a political 'crisis' on Crete on the scale of that which undoubtedly surrounded the collapse of the Neopalatial polities in LM IB, it would have resulted in a climate of political fluidity. It almost certainly saw a rapid decentralisation and fragmentation of the political landscape into a patchwork of regional interests and power structures. This basic model of multiple political domains was to remain the rule on the island into the Iron Age, and indeed, as Bennet suggests, it appears to have been a system more suited to Crete's geography than had been the centralised power structure of Final Palatial Knossos (1990). However, the organisation of this newly fragmented landscape is not yet clear.

As observed above, the mortuary data complement the picture already observed in LM IIIA2 architectural developments at Knossos' former second-order centres, in showing a decentralisation of the use of specific high status ideological strategies in this phase. At

the same time, though, it also expands upon this picture, by providing a window into a more complex political situation on the island than the architectural evidence from these few regional centres alone can reveal. Since much of our non-mortuary evidence for LM IIIA2-B Crete has been gained from the excavations of such centres as Archanes, Agia Triada, Phaistos, Chania and Malia, it is natural that our picture of this period is very much centred on and around these specific settlements. The mortuary evidence, however, suggests that although these Post-palatial centres were probably important regional foci following the demise of Knossos, they were not necessarily the only power bases in the political landscape.

To take the known centres first, the second-order sites of the Final Palatial administration (that is, Agia Triada, Phaistos, Chania and Malia) appear to have continued as important regional centres in the Post-palatial period, as architectural activities in all of them suggest, as well as the high status cemeteries associated with Agia Triada and Phaistos. Archanes was surely a further such centre (although it is not yet securely associable with any toponym in the Knossian archives), since it also saw new central building activities in the settlement and the revival of its traditional high status cemetery. In the Mid West, the settlement associated with Armenoi appears also to have been a significant regional centre in the Post-palatial period, to judge by the size of the cemetery and the wealth of a number of the tombs. As noted in Chapter 1, this centre may well have had a similar ancestry to the other sites mentioned above, especially if it corresponds with the toponym *da-22-to* of the Knossian archives. Finally, there is no reason to dismiss the possibility that Knossos too continued as a regional centre in the Post-palatial preiod. The Final Palatial economic administration had been, to a degree, decentralised, in that responsibilities were delegated to local administrators, in the Knossos area as well as the other regions within the palace's hegemonic sphere. Just as these administrators elsewhere seem to have survived (and, indeed, flourished) with independence from LM IIIA2, so we can expect their counterparts in the Knossos area to have survived as well, even if they were somewhat impoverished, no longer benefiting from tribute from the wider polity, channelled through the palace. While there is no evidence for architectural projects in the settlement at Knossos to match those of the former second-order centres, wealth deposition with burials in the established cemeteries of this centre certainly continued.

The continuing importance of these centres from the Final to the Post-palatial periods fits well as an extension of Bennet's model of general continuity in site hierarchy in central and western Crete from the Neopalatial to the Final Palatial period. However, caution must be exercised in simply assuming that this transition was so straightforward. These particular sites have received most archaeological attention (ironically, mainly because of their importance in the preceding Protopalatial and Neopalatial periods, rather than the Final or Post-palatial). Given how limited our knowledge of the settlement geography of Crete is for the LM II-IIIB phases, the bias in excavation towards these few specific centres will naturally focus our attention towards them in any discussion of the political hierarchy in this period.

On the one hand, it is not unreasonable to suppose that the Post-palatial regional elites at these centres maintained the territorial concerns for which they had been responsible under the Knossian administration. They certainly enjoyed a certain amount of power, to judge by the level of resources being devoted to the architectural and mortuary spheres. The higher level of material diversity in their cemeteries, paricularly, suggests that these elites had a higher level of access to exchange networks of prestige goods or to the resources for their production, which rendered the sacrifice of valuable materials to the tomb less problematical.

On the other hand, though, the analysis of tomb architecture in Chapter 7 hinted at the existence of a wider arena of high status advertisement in the centre and west of the island, in the several isolated corbel-vaulted tombs (at Stylos, Maleme, Phylaki, Damania and Smari). The assemblage analysis in Chapter 8 showed a still more complex picture. As with mortuary architecture, the most outstanding tombs in terms of assemblages were often situated in the cemeteries associated with the known centres. However, these cemeteries did not stand out in stark contrast to the rest of the island, ~~greater~~ despite their greater levels of material diversity. Indeed, the assemblage patterns indicated that mortuary ostentation was actually a widespread phenomenon, with wealthy burials taking place at a number of locations beyond the centres themselves, sometimes as wealthy as, if not more ostentatious than, many of the individual assemblages of the centres' elite cemeteries.

This wider distribution of mortuary display is intriguing, and could be interpreted in various ways. It certainly points to a climate of active negotiations of social and

political statuses, but the nature and purpose of these assertions are unclear. These peripheral corbel-vaulted tombs and wealthy chamber tomb burials could have belonged to high status individuals within the sphere of authority of the known regional centres, perhaps corresponding with several of the third-order sites of the Knossian archives. Indeed, Tylisos, identified by Bennet as such a site, has also produced a corbel-vaulted tomb, although lack of published data renders it undatable beyond the 'Late Minoan' period generally (see Löwe 1996: no 776).

Equally, however, at least some of these peripheral tombs may signal the presence of independent elites beyond the control of the known regional centres. This would imply that the political organisation of central and western Crete was more complex than one of a smooth transition, with the resurgent elites of the former second-order centres simply dividing up Knossos' territory between them along the administrative boundaries they had held in the Final Palatial period. It was not necessarily the case that these elites could simply rely on their ancestries or their settlements' prestigious Neopalatial pasts as guarantors of their supremacy in LM IIIA2. Instead, this prerogative may well have had to be regularly asserted within the flexible social and political environment that succeeded the demise of palatial Knossos. In such a case, the role of the mortuary sphere would be interesting to explore. Status display through this medium was surely to a large extent internally directed, as individuals negotiated their positions within the hierachies of their own centres. The extent to which it was also externally directed is less easy to assess at present, but is a subject that would reward further investigation in the light of more detailed contextual evidence.

10.3 Mortuary choices

Whatever the precise political organisation of the island, and the nature of the audience at whom the various elites were directing their mortuary ostentation, it is interesting to consider the range of choices being made in mortuary symbolism in the Post-palatial period, and particularly LM IIIA2. The high status cemeteries of Phourni, Agia Triada, Kalyvia and Armenoi were seen in the analyses of Chapters 7 to 9 to stand out fairly consistently not only from other cemetery sites, but also from each other, in terms of the range and innovation of the choices being made. The situation is reminiscent of that of LM II Knossos, a similar context of rapid political transformation (albeit on a larger

scale) that involved experimentation with innovative mortuary ideas (see Chapter 4). In LM IIIA2 too, ideas of different origins were being combined in different ways, with markedly diverse results (sometimes between cemeteries, sometimes between individual tombs).

These differences were not merely functions of the unfamiliarity of tomb use across wider Crete. The standardised symbolic code employed in the contemporary Argolid and, more immediately, at later Final Palatial Knossos, may not have been familiar everywhere on Crete and at all social levels. But given the possible history of the elites of the regional centres as the 'overseers' of Knossos' economic concerns in the Final Palatial period, it would be very surprising if they were not cognisant of developments in Knossos' mortuary customs. This suggests that the regional centres were actually choosing to create their own mortuary code of practice and symbolism, albeit largely within the parameters of the choices offered by the Knossian and mainland precedents.

It would be useful to consider each cemetery in turn, to integrate the results of Chapters 7 to 9 regarding each and to demonstrate how unique each actually was. The variety of the choices available to these elites for redefining their status within the new political circumstances was extensive and could potentially involve numerous social spheres, not all of which we can reconstruct. Within the funerary sphere, we can discern a number of the different strategies deployed. However, even here our evidence is partial, not least because the continuation of more traditional and archaeologically non-visible mortuary customs, as opposed to the adoption of tomb use, was an option that may have been preferred by some members of the elites at each centre.

Archanes Phourni

Whether the resumption of mortuary activities at the high status Phourni cemetery in LM IIIA2 was the work of an indigenous elite able once more to resume their traditional practices, or whether it involved the appropriation of this cemetery for purposes of legitimation by an intrusive group (Cretan or external), it was clearly a deliberate political strategy. The complete lack of evidence so far for any Final Palatial use of the cemetery was surely due to sumptuary restrictions by the Knossian elite of this period, as proposed above. Given this hiatus of several generations, the elite resuming use of Phourni had a prime opportunity for 'reinventing' the traditions of this cemetery at a time of increased interest generally in the mortuary sphere, adapting the

impressive monuments and prestigious history of the location to their ends. In the event, more than one strategy was deployed, but all had in common, to a greater or lesser extent, the fact that they were deliberately integrating old and new elements in the cemetery, rather than simply imposing additional structures and practices upon a symbolically charged space. The new tombs were clustered mainly at the northern end of the cemetery, extending its former boundaries, but the simultaneous re-use of structures within the old quarter suggests that this was due to the spatial requirements for constructing new tombs, rather than any desire for dissociation from the existing mortuary complex.

The integration of old and new in the cemetery was partly achieved through architectural symbolism. Three of the four new structures (Tombs Alpha and Delta, and Building 21) evoked the symbolism of the innovative mainland corbel-vaulted tomb types, while simultaneously recalling the form of the older round tombs in the same cemetery. As explored in Chapter 7, this even involved two-way influence between the new tomb Alpha and the LM IIIA2 modifications to the older tomb Beta. There were also close links between the funerary practices in the old and new structures, including the grave enclosure, which was otherwise an incongruous addition to the cemetery, having no internal architectural antecedents. These links included the use of chest larnakes, in the new tomb Alpha and grave enclosure, as well as in the re-used Building 3 and Tomb Beta. The use of larnakes was by no means new to this cemetery, given the long tradition of tub larnax use, and its reintroduction in the chest form again neatly combined traditional practices and new ideas. The practice of secondary manipulation of human remains provided a similar link, being attested in Tomb Alpha, the grave enclosure, Building 21 and Tomb Beta. This too appears to have combined innovative and traditional practices. The innovation was primary inhumation in externally-derived tomb types and with externally-derived assemblages; the continuation of tradition was the subsequent removal of these remains for ritual processing. A further combination along the same theme that has not been highlighted so far in the present analysis involves two instances of animal sacrifice in this cemetery. The horse in Alpha constituted a powerful statement of both practical resources and symbolic allegiance with the mainland-derived warrior ideal, as this valuable animal was as much a part of the high status warrior ideology as were the weaponry and grooming and feasting items discussed in Chapter 5. Yet the bull's head in the same tomb simultaneously evokes a

much older symbol, and one more closely connected with Crete, since the bull clearly played an integral part in the religious and power ideology of Neopalatial Crete.

In short, the extension and re-utilisation of the traditional high status cemetery associated with the settlement involved the complex blending of innovative ideas received from Knossos, and perhaps the mainland, with the traditional customs and ideology of the cemetery itself. The very decision to return to this site and to re-work its monuments indicates that a reassertion of authority and the legitimation of power were strong concerns among the local elite. Different members of this elite tried out different strategies to this end (as attested by the contemporaneous introduction of both corbel-vaulted tombs and a grave enclosure), and were perhaps competing with each other in the process. At the same time, however, their common efforts to integrate the new and traditional elements of the cemetery, and above all the continuation of the traditional practice of secondary manipulation (almost unique to this location on the island) simultaneously suggests a degree of ideological conformity among this elite.

Armenoi

Full publication is needed to obtain a detailed understanding of the strategies and customs practised at this cemetery, including a map of the location's spatial development through time that will help to elucidate the ways in which different vertical and horizontal groups interacted and negotiated space. At present, the evidence suggests that the most ostentatious tombs architecturally were also among the earliest, so perhaps the cemetery originated as a purely high status location, opening up to a broader cross-section of the community subsequently. Alternatively, there may be a further, exclusively high status cemetery in this region that still awaits discovery. At any rate, Armenoi certainly seems not to have been a traditional mortuary location, in contrast with Archanes Phourni and, as discussed below, Agia Triada, but rather a newly established cemetery.

Strategies for status negotiation that can be picked up this location involve tomb elaboration (favouring the chamber tomb type particularly, rather than the corbel-vaulted tomb), larnax decoration, secondary manipulation of the dead and consumption activities within the mortuary rituals. Each of these features has been highlighted in the analysis above, but the final theme, of mortuary ritual, deserves fuller description, as it is unusual to be able to recover such extensive evidence of these activities. Indeed,

Archanes Phourni is the only other cemetery that provides an insight into this aspect of the mortuary sphere, in the form of the bothros adjacent to the grave enclosure and the faunal and artefactual remains from Building 21. At Armenoi, there is an architectural emphasis on the dromos that suggests that this, rather than the tomb chamber, was usually the prime focus of mortuary rituals (see Appendix J). Most of the pits and niches in the dromoi are of uncertain function (although a few contained human remains) and they were probably connected with these rituals in some way. Furthermore, the dromos of one tomb was connected by a zigzagging channel with an open, stone-strewn area. This area was at some stage covered by a fill that contained many kylix sherds, and such finds of debris from consumption activities also point to the ritual importance of the dromoi. The dromos fills of many tombs contained similar evidence, including kylix and cooking ware sherds, as noted in Chapter 8.

The extent to which the community using Armenoi was continuing local funerary traditions *within* the new sphere of tomb burial is unclear. However, the cemetery certainly developed individualistic traits in its ritual customs, tomb architecture, deposition practices and assemblage choices, that reflect the development of a common internal symbolic system.

Agia Triada and Kalyvia

Turning finally to the Mesara, two high status cemeteries are known within this region. One is definitely associated with Agia Triada, but the other is more isolated geographically, though within reasonable enough distance of Phaistos to be plausibly linked with this settlement, and certainly closer to Phaistos than to Agia Triada. If one accepts its traditional association with Phaistos, then, Phaistos and Agia Triada were clearly adopting very different mortuary strategies, as will be discussed below. Not the least of these was that the elite at Agia Triada preferred to devote greater resources to architectural projects within the settlement itself, rather than upon tomb construction. At Phaistos, meanwhile, the reverse was the case, in that no central buildings were constructed within the investigated occupation area itself, whereas considerable attention was devoted to the establishment of a new cemetery of wealthy tombs at Kalyvia. An alternative scenario should also be considered, however, wherein these two high status cemeteries represented different elements of a single elite in control of both Agia Triada and Phaistos. In such a case, the Kalyvia cemetery could well represent either a statement of territorial control on the part of the elite in control of both sites, or

else the exclusion of a specific element of this elite from the privilege of burial at the older and more prestigious Agia Triada cemetery, which enjoyed direct spatial association with the architecturally elaborated settlement.

Whatever scenario one prefers to follow, the two cemeteries concerned certainly contrast starkly with each other in almost every respect. First, while Kalyvia was newly established in the Post-palatial period, Agia Triada was an established mortuary location with a long history of use (although, just as at Archanes Phourni, there appears to have been a hiatus in use between the Neopalatial period and LM IIIA2). Second, Kalyvia's elite was more extravagant in terms of assemblage deposition than that of Agia Triada. Third, the burying group at Agia Triada employed the chest larnax as the main burial form, while that at Kalyvia rejected it entirely, preferring instead to lay out the dead on floors, in pits and possibly, in one case, on a wooden receptacle. Finally, the group using the Agia Triada location was not only sparing in terms of architectural expenditure (preferring to re-use the older mortuary structures), but in the one new tomb that was built, external influence was rejected in favour of an entirely innovative form. At Kalyvia, by contrast, the chamber tomb and shaft grave were both embraced (the latter being exclusive to this cemetery outside the Knossos valley). The corbel-vaulted tomb type may also have been evoked in Tomb 9 of this cemetery, though there is an interesting lack of such tombs as elite emblems in the Mesara as a whole that suggests that the idea of this tomb type as a symbol of elite identity simply had not penetrated into this south coastal area of the island at all except in distorted forms.

The two cemeteries did share a willingness to innovate – Agia Triada (with its stone larnax and novel new tomb form) more so than Kalyvia (where the main innovation was the novel form of several of the chamber tombs). However, in many respects the two cemeteries were almost diametrically opposed in their practices. This opposition may well reflect a conscious opposition on the part of the elites concerned, who reaffirmed their differences through disparate mortuary symbolism as well as through their use of separate cemeteries. It is also interesting to note that these different ideas employed by each group were not randomly chosen, but link together to form coherent symbolic and cultural packages. The burying elite at Agia Triada was not only resistant to the idea of borrowing mortuary symbolism from Knossos, preferring to re-use existing mortuary architecture, but indeed, it actively *celebrated* the newly introduced chest larnax through the manufacture of an exceptionally elaborate stone larnax. At Kalyvia, by

contrast, the burying elite embraced Knossian-derived mortuary symbolism, in architecture and deposition methods, but rejected the most conspicuous new contribution to this imported mortuary system – the larnax.

Finally, it should be noted that the absence of corresponding high status cemeteries at Chania, a known Post-palatial regional centre, and Malia, a probable regional centre, may not be accidental. At the former, the lack of intensive archaeological prospection renders it unfeasible to assume that no such cemetery existed here. At Malia, survey and excavation have so far failed to pick up any traces of such a cemetery, either at Chrysolakkos (where high status re-use might be anticipated, given the parallels at Archanes and Agia Triada) or further afield. Indeed, it may simply be the case that at not every Post-palatial regional centre did the local elite consider tomb burial an appropriate forum for status advertisement.

10.4 Regional differentiations

So far, this chapter has concentrated mainly on the area of Crete formerly under Final Palatial Knossian hegemony. The present section broadens out to consider regional-level differences across the island as a whole, particularly to incorporate eastern Crete. To such a discussion, the phenomenon of receptacle burial is central, due to its differential use in different areas of the island.

As discussed in Chapters 5 and 9, the re-introduced larnax use is highly significant for our understanding of mortuary practices on various levels. Given the current earliest secure dating of the use of receptacles in tombs to LM IIIA2 (at Knossos and elsewhere), this re-introduction appears to have been a feature of the Post-palatial period, coinciding with the take-up of the new tomb practices across Crete. As such, it would have been a deliberate introduction to a set of mortuary practices that did not already include clay receptacle use. Although it has been stressed that clay receptacle use was a distinctly Cretan phenomenon within the Aegean, it was probably not taken up on the island as a deliberate expression of cultural difference from the outside world. It has been observed in other respects that the deployment of tomb practices on Crete was principally for purposes of social and political negotiations that were internally, rather than externally, focused (for example, in relative levels of architectural

expenditure). Moreover, it was argued that the innovative tomb practices were probably not seen as being intrusive to Crete by LM IIIA2, which argues against the revival of clay receptacle use being reactionary in the sense of reflecting a need to express a distinct island-based identity.

Its introduction may rather have been connected with a concern to continue and reinforce traditional ideas regarding the dead in the face of new burial practices, a concern that was more to do with social traditions and ideological beliefs than with any political assertion of a Cretan identity. It was observed in Chapter 5 that the most common receptacle form, the chest larnax, was a skeuomorph of a wooden prototype which was apparently introduced to the island from the mainland in LM II. However, the form was appropriated and naturalised through its transferral to the medium of clay. Thus this type, along with the tub and pithos, may well have been seen as one appropriate vehicle for perpetuating traditional, indigenous ideas regarding death within the new tomb context. This was further reinforced by iconography, with the painting and moulding on the exterior of the larnakes of elements of religious symbolism with an indigenous Neopalatial ancestry. In other words, the large-scale introduction of clay receptacle use in LM IIIA2 may reflect a desire to uphold deeply embedded social beliefs regarding the appropriate treatment of the dead. The dead body particularly would have been a strong emotional focus, so that while the innovative tomb types and assemblages were attractive as symbols for negotiating various social identities, when it came to the actual treatment of the corpse, receptacle use may have been seen as a suitable means of ensuring the continuity of traditional mortuary ideas within an altered environment.

Given its importance within mortuary practices, then, it is interesting to consider how one should interpret the differential use of receptacles in different parts of the island. The extent of local level receptivity to the various forms (tub larnax, chest larnax and pithos) may have been closely connected with existing regional ideas regarding appropriate methods for treating the body and for differentiating between different members of the burying group in death. This seems to have been the case regarding the popularity of the tub and pithos in the eastern area of the island, which, for the reasons outlined in Chapter 9, appears not to have been a focus around which a distinct regional identity on the island was being constructed. Rather, this difference in receptacle choices probably reflected already existing disparities in the central and eastern regions

regarding the extent and nature of the expression of internal social differentiations in death. Indeed, the different receptacle forms may have carried varying social connotations in different sub-regions within the east of the island. In all other respects, the communities of eastern Crete appear to have adopted the innovative tomb practices in LM IIIA2 in much the same way as the rest of the island, which suggests that close cultural links, as well as established networks of contact and exchange, were already in place. This region had perhaps already been politically fragmented during the Final Palatial period, and the mortuary evidence shows no evidence that this situation changed in the Post-palatial era. No high status cemeteries have yet been recovered to parallel those of the Central and Mid Western areas, but the Achladia tomb hints at the existence of a local elite in this territory.

The Far West's individualistic choice to reject clay receptacle use entirely, however, may reflect the existence of a perceived distinctive regional identity here. This subject needs far more investigation, especially through the examination of spatial patterns in other aspects of the archaeological record as well as the mortuary. Yet this region does appear to diverge from the mid western and central areas of Crete in its political dynamics as well as its material culture preferences with respect to receptacle use. Not only had it held a different status within the Final Palatial Knossian hegemony, but the current mortuary evidence suggests that it continued on a different political trajectory in the Post-palatial phase also. For although the new tomb practices were introduced here in LM IIIA2, it was apparently not until LM IIIB that mortuary ostentation was developed, in direct contrast to the contemporary decline in mortuary expenditure in the centre and mid west, but in line with the evidence for a Linear B administration at Chania.

10.5 Concluding remarks

The Post-palatial period on Crete was a time of fairly rapid changes in the political environment, a number of which still remain largely unclear, though the analysis of the mortuary evidence has been able to throw new light on these processes. Particularly important issues that deserve further consideration are the mapping of the regional power structures that existed at various points within the period, and the ways in which arenas for high status advertisement might have changed with the changing political

context. For example, it would be interesting to explore further the reasons why mortuary ostentation at the highest levels should have lapsed everywhere but in the far west in LM IIIB, despite the fact that the other regional centres survived for a certain time within this phase before their destructions. Was it due to a consolidation of the political hierarchy in this phase, at both inter-and intra-site levels, that rendered ostentatious burial unnecessary, or had competition simply shifted away from the mortuary sphere?

PART IV CONCLUSIONS

Chapter 11

Conclusions

Traditional approaches to the mortuary data, and indeed to material culture in general, on LM II-IIIB Crete have frequently been based around a concern to establish the presence of mainland-derived individuals or groups within the island's population, particularly at the highest status levels. The present study has demonstrated that such a preoccupation constitutes a misguided approach to the data, both through being based upon an inadequate theoretical model, and through diverting attention from other, and arguably more interesting, issues about which the data *can* reliably inform us.

It is proposed that the continuing expectation that Cretans and mainlanders in the Late Bronze Age formed culture groups with normative and static behavioural patterns and material culture preferences is an unfortunate survival in the discipline of Aegean prehistory. Ethnicity is in fact a far more complex aspect of social interaction than this model assumes, nor will its material emblems necessarily be so immediately apparent in the archaeological record, especially since material culture can be used to negotiate many different types of social identity. In short, we need to move away from the 'Minoan' and 'Mycenaean' culture groups that have been used to populate the Late Bronze Age Aegean, as these are artificial and imposed constructs based upon unsound treatment of material patternings. If ethnic groups did exist on Crete and the mainland, which is highly probable, it is by no means assured that they were such tidy geographical constructs that they neatly divided the populations of the Greek mainland and Crete. This is especially so given the generations of contact between the two areas prior to the period under consideration, plus the potential for internal divisions within each of these areas. Nor are we aware of how such ethnic identities might have been reified through material culture. As demonstrated in Chapter 1, the types of data that have been assumed to reflect 'Minoan' versus 'Mycenaean' identities have repeatedly confounded attempts to make the clean distinctions between intrusive and indigenous population elements on LM II-IIIB Crete that underpin the culture historical model.

The potential for the manipulation of the meanings of material culture and social practices from diverse sources needs to be more fully recognised and explored with regard to this context than has been the case so far. The importance of human agency in this respect should not be underestimated. On the one hand, agency is inevitably constrained by certain given parameters, whereby, for example, status and social contacts determine the range of choices that are both available and appropriate. On the other hand, certain contexts often allow for a greater degree of conscious choice and strategic innovation than others. Among such contexts are situations of social and political fluidity, which open up opportunities for the negotiation of status and hierarchy that are not always available within the organisational structures of complex societies. The collapse of the Neopalatial systems on Crete in LM IB certainly precipitated such a situation, while the demise of the Knossian palatial administration in LM IIIA2 probably saw another, though perhaps less critical, transformation.

Within both of these horizons, tomb use was developed as a political strategy for the negotiation of status, first at Final Palatial Knossos, and in the Post-palatial period, throughout the rest of the island. The inspiration for its initial introduction at Knossos, and the material forms that tomb use took, certainly point to direct influence from the contemporary mainland, where tomb use had developed and was still developing, as an arena for political assertion. Thus its introduction on Crete was strategic, rather than constituting a passive reflection of the cultural affiliations and geographical origins of the tomb users.

As a result, while the mortuary sphere is just one of various material media that could potentially take on differential importance as arenas for social competition, the fact that its acceptance on Crete was principally due to its potential to act as a mechanism for status assertion means that it can be used to explore the political dynamics of the island in this period. It also means that the mortuary sphere itself was potentially dynamic. Rather than remaining static in meaning and form, it would have been altered by the choices being made by the individuals deploying the innovative tomb customs, especially given the new political and cultural climate into which it was being introduced.

In the light of the points made above, the analysis of the mortuary data for LM II-IIIB Crete leads to the following conclusions.

• For reasons as yet unclear, LM IB saw the failure of the Neopalatial high status ideological system as a means of elite legitimation on Crete. Thus, in the consolidation of a new political regime after the collapse of the other palace centres, members of the LM II elite at Knossos turned to other strategies for status assertion. One of these was the deployment of tomb use as a forum for political competition, an idea that was being developed on the contemporary mainland, having been introduced in the MH III phase, but which had not been utilised by the Neopalatial elite on Crete. This innovation involved not only the adoption of many of the specific mortuary symbols deployed on the mainland, but also, in several of the tombs, their experimental combination with certain elements of indigenous high status symbolism. Thus, while it is not unlikely that the Knossian elite comprised individuals of both Cretan and mainland ancestry (and had done for some time), the relevance of this issue to the mortuary sphere is limited, for whatever their personal backgrounds, these individuals ultimately had to negotiate their status within Cretan society.

• Successfully introduced as a forum for status competition, tomb use became an integral part of the elite cultural environment at Final Palatial Knossos. Yet the mortuary evidence indicates that its social and ideological role had shifted somewhat by this point. Whereas previously it had been a forum for experimental and eclectic deployment of cultural symbolism from various spheres, it now became more standardised as a symbol of membership of the palatial elite. Mainland-derived ideas, revolving particularly around the high status warrior ideal, were predominant in the mortuary context, while appeals to indigenous Neopalatial symbolism appear to have been abandoned entirely. Architectural elaboration and assemblage ostentation also decreased, hinting at either an increasing social and political consolidation that rendered extravagance less necessary, or else a centralised imposition of constraint on sumptuary practices.

• LM IIIA2 saw the dissemination of the tomb practices used at Knossos to the rest of the island. This was directly linked with the demise of the Final Palatial Knossian administrative system early in this phase, though the local elite at this centre continued to function on a regional level. The deposition of valuable artefacts in the tomb context continued, though on a reduced scale, and such artefacts were probably partly curated wealth from the palatial administration, and partly the products of continuing

production of prestige goods and exchange activities with other centres within and perhaps beyond the island, albeit on a much reduced level.

• The popularity of tomb use across Post-palatial Crete was due primarily to its demonstrated potential as a mechanism for negotiating social hierarchies. Previously restricted to Knossos as a power mechanism, it was now deployed on various social levels across the island as a channel for the negotiation of social position, as well as other aspects of identity. This function of tomb use, and the symbolic code through which it was effected, were ultimately mainland-derived, but had been filtered through the intermediary of Final Palatial Knossos. Indeed, by LM IIIA2, it was probably no longer considered to be a custom carrying mainland associations, but rather had by now been internalised through its establishment at Knossos and was a relatively familiar idea on Crete, though at some social levels more than others.

• Beyond Knossos itself, the Final Palatial tomb practices there would probably have been most familiar to the elites of the second-order centres, who seized upon this forum upon the demise of this regime in order to consolidate their positions in an altered political environment. The nature of the political organisation of Post-palatial Crete is far from clear, but the mortuary sphere certainly continued to be one arena (if not the principal one) in which statuses were being negotiated. The former second-order sites survived as regional and probably independent, centres, several of which (Archanes, Phaistos and Agia Triada) had associated high status cemeteries, while the settlement connected with the Armenoi cemetery is a potential further example, if this was the *da-22-to* of the Knossian archives. However, the existence of both corbel-vaulted tombs and tombs with very wealthy assemblages that were not spatially associated with any of these centres, hints at the existence of a more fragmented and complex political landscape than currently apparent. This perhaps involved other centres as yet unknown, or simply localised elites within or between the territorial spheres of the main regional polities.

• Whether status negotiations were being played out only internally through the mortuary sphere (that is, within the various nodes of power in the new political map of Crete), or whether we are also witnessing competition between elites at different centres, the eclecticism in the higher status tomb practices is conspicuous. The range of different decisions being made regarding the most appropriate way to deploy this new

mechanism, and the innovative blending of different cultural ideas are, in fact, features reminiscent of the situation at LM II Knossos, although involving lesser degrees of architectural expenditure.

• The central and mid western areas of the island saw the greatest use of tomb display at the highest status levels in LM IIIA2, but the focus shifted in LM IIIB to the far west and the region of Chania, where mortuary ostentation may only now have been picked up. This LM IIIB ascendancy of the far west ties in with the known use of Linear B archives at Chania early in this phase (though the internal organisation and political dynamics of this region are as yet unclear) and with indications in the mortuary record that this region had different cultural traditions to the rest of the island. The communities of eastern Crete, meanwhile, embraced the new tomb practices in LM IIIA2 as warmly as did the rest of the island, probably continuing as a politically fragmented region from the Final Palatial era, but using different methods for the expression of social identities through death.

Overall, the use of tomb practices as an arena for status assertion, originally introduced at LM II Knossos, continued as an important social arena in the constantly changing political environment of the island into LM IIIB. Within this period, some phases saw swifter and more dramatic changes than others, and this can be retrieved through the mortuary record precisely because this was one of the areas of social practice and material expression where these changes were negotiated.

This study constitutes a first step, not only in the study of the political and cultural dynamics on Final and Post-palatial Crete, but also of the wider social roles of mortuary practices in these periods. Tomb use, especially in LM IIIA2-B, was practised on a range of social levels, and incorporated the reproduction of a number of different social identities apart from that of rank. More anthropological data, but also, more urgently, more evidence regarding settlement patterns and the material cultural patterns from everyday practices in various social spheres, are needed in order to approach these issues in greater depth.

The main aim of this study, however, has been to highlight the potential importance of the active manipulation of cultural ideas for our understanding of Late Bronze Age

Cretan political dynamics. This is a very rich and promising area for future research, and it is hoped that the above analysis has served not only to elucidate further the political changes underway within this specific context, but also to demonstrate the need for a more open acceptance and sophisticated understanding of the complexities of cultural borrowings than has usually been entertained for the Late Bronze Age Aegean.